

Part 1: The Imam During The Era Of The Prophethood

1. The House of the Prophet Muhammad

All Muslims glorify the Members of the House of the Holy Prophet Muhammad who are called Aal Muhammad or Ahlul Bayt Muhammad. This attitude is in accord with the instructions of the Holy Prophet who commanded Muslims to pray simultaneously for the members of his House whenever they pray for him. By so commanding them he actually required the Muslims to reserve a place for them next to his. The Holy Qur'an made it mandatory to offer prayers for Muhammad and to greet him:

"Certainly God and His Angels honor the Prophet (Muhammad) O believers pray (God to honor) him and greet him repeatedly." The Holy Qur'an Chapter 33 Verse 57.

Many companions asked the Prophet to teach them how to comply with this command. Many highly respected hadith recorders (including Al-Bukhari and Muslim) reported in their "Sahihs" (authentics) that Kaab Ibn Ujah stated that the Prophet said:

"Say: God bestow honor on Muhammad and the members of the House of Muhammad as Thou bestowed honor on the members of the House of Abraham Thou Art praised and Glorious. God bless Muhammad and the members of the House of Muhammad as Thou had blessed the members of the House of Abraham. Certainly Thou Art Praised and Glorious."¹

When instructing his followers on a religious matter the Messenger of God did not speak out of his human desire.

The Qur'an testifies that he only said what was revealed to him.:

"Nor does he (Muhammad) say (aught about religion) of (his own) desire. It is not but a revelation sent to him." The Holy Quran, Chapter 53, verse 4-5.

Is the Honor Due to the relationship?

It may appear that inclusion of the members of the House of Muhammad in prayers for him is due to their blood-relationship. If so it would not be in accord with the spirit of the Islamic teachings. To bestow on them such a unique honor because of their relationship to Muhammad is to advocate a family supremacy and is in conflict with the following principles:

1. All people in the eyes of God are equal for the Holy Qur'an declared:

"Surely the noblest among you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you."
The Holy Qur'an, Chapter 49 verse 13.

2. God does not penalize or reward a servant of His for the sins or good deeds of his parents or his close or distant relatives. From the Holy Qur'an:

"And beware a day on which no parent avails his child; nor will a child avail his parent." The Qur'an Chapter 31 verse 33.

3. God does not penalize nor reward a human being for what is beyond his ability and without his choice.

Being related or unrelated to the Prophet is not a matter of personal choice. None of us chose before our birth to be related or unrelated to a particular family nationality or race.

Therefore it would be very difficult for Muslims to believe that they should include Muhammad's relatives in their prayers simply because they are his relatives.

It Is Due to Their Merits Not Their Inheritance

To dispel this apparent conflict it is important to know that the word "Aal Muhammad" which is repeatedly mentioned in the daily prayers does not include all his relatives.

Only a very small number of them are included. Had they all been included it would be a clannish or a tribal discrimination because many of them did not walk in the path of Muhammad and to place them above others is to advocate a clannish supremacy.

Kinship to the Prophet Muhammad does not mean acceptance by God; nor does it secure for his relatives a place in Paradise or insure them against Divine punishment. God according to Islamic teachings has created Paradise for whoever obeys Him and the place of punishment for whoever disobeys Him regardless of family affiliation nationality or race. The Holy Qur'an even contains a chapter defaming Abu Lahab who was an uncle of the Prophet Muhammad.

"Perish the two hands of the Father of Flame and perished he. His wealth and whatever he gained did not avail him.... " The Holy Qur'an Sura Lahab Chapter 111.

The truth is that the word Aal Muhammad means only the "chosen" relatives of Muhammad. These chosen individuals are not chosen nor honored because of their relationship to Muhammad but because of their virtues. They lived the true Islamic life followed the instructions of the Holy Qur'an and the Messenger and never parted with them in word or deed.

When God informs us in His Book that the noblest among His human creatures are the most righteous and His Messenger commands us to honor the members of his house when we honor him we infer that they are the most righteous after the Prophet.

Had they not been so they would not deserve such a unique honor and the Prophet would not have instructed us to honor them whenever we honor his name. To do otherwise would not be in accord with the Holy Qur'an. Thus by commanding us to pray for them whenever we pray for him the Prophet was actually informing us of their high merit being the most obedient to God and His Messenger.

The Record Attests to their merit

All Muslims agree that 'Ali the Prophet's cousin whom the Prophet "brothered" and his wife Fatimah (the Lady of Light) the dearest child of the Messenger and their two children Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein are from the chosen members of the House of Muhammad and that they are included in our prayers for him. The high qualifications of the chosen relatives of Muhammad are the main reason for the very unique honor bestowed upon them.

Imam 'Ali stood above all others after the Prophet. He was the strongest supporter of the Messenger of God. He never hesitated to give his life for the promotion of Islam.

The readers of history can easily know that Imam 'Ali was the top defender of Islam and the most adherent to its rules.

Imam 'Ali's attitude towards personal power and prestige was unique. Whenever he had to choose between adherence to his ideals and the pleasures of the earthly life he unhesitatingly chose the former. History testifies that he preferred to lose the leadership of the Muslim World rather than to accept a condition in which he did not believe.

He was offered this leadership contingent on his pledge to follow the Book of God the instructions of the Messenger and the traditions of the first two Caliphs in the absence of the Quranic and the Messenger's instructions. He replied:

"(I shall follow the Book of God and the instructions of His Messenger; and in the absence of specific teachings of the two sources) I shall endeavor to the best of my knowledge and ability."[2](#)

His knowledge was amazing in its depth and extensiveness.

His sermons lectures and the words contained in Nahjul-Balaghah (Path of Eloquence) testify to the authenticity of the reported statement of the Messenger:

"I am the city of knowledge and 'Ali is its gate; so whoever wants to enter the city should come through the gate."[3](#)

The record of the other three distinguished members of the House of Muhammad Fatimah and her two children Al- Hassan and Al-Hussein shows that they were the most sincere servants of Islam.

The authentic hadiths spoke of their distinctions and qualifications as permanent allies of justice and truth. Zayd Ibn Arqam reported that the Messenger of God said to 'Ali Fatimah Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein:

"I am at peace with whomever you are at peace; and I am at war with whomever you are at war."[4](#)

Abu Huraira reported that the Messenger of God said:

"Whoever loves Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein loves me; and whoever hates them hates me."[5](#)

Hubshi Ibn Janadah said that he heard the Messenger saying:

"'Ali is from me and I am from 'Ali and no one represents me but 'Ali."[6](#)

The Messenger did not intend to distinguish 'Ali simply because he was related to him. Al-Abbas (his uncle) and the rest of the Hashimites including Jaafar (the brother of 'Ali) are all related to the Messenger. All of them would have been qualified to represent him. But he said "No one represents me but 'Ali."

At one time Muawiya was criticizing 'Ali in the presence of Saad Ibn Abu Waqass. Saad said to him: "I heard the Messenger of God saying to 'Ali: 'You are to me like Aaron to Moses. But there shall be no Prophet (of God) after me.'"[7](#)

Thus the Messenger gave 'Ali a position next to his own for the position of Aaron was next to that of Moses.

Al-Bukhari recorded in his Sahih that the Messenger said: "Fatimah is the leader of the women of Paradise."[8](#)

No one enters Paradise but through righteousness and whoever enters Paradise is noble in the sight of God. If Fatimah is the leader of the women of Paradise she must be the most righteous and the noblest woman in God's view.

Al-Hakim recorded in his Mustadrak that Abu Dharr (a famous companion of Muhammad whose truthfulness is known to the Muslims) said that the Messenger said: "The example of the members of my House is like that of Noah's ark. Whoever embarked on it was safe and whoever failed to embark was drowned...." [9](#)

The Messenger of God commanded the Muslims to follow his chosen relatives. Therefore the relatives of Muhammad are considered to be the party of truth distinguished because of their merit and work as they rank among the most righteous servants of God.

Why were they so meritorious?

Why did the members of the House of Muhammad surpass other Arabs or non-Arabs in righteousness?

Precedents in History

To understand the reason we ought to remember that what took place in the House of Muhammad was not unprecedented in the history of Prophethood. There are many similar precedents. The Almighty God made Aaron a partner to his brother Moses in his heavenly mission. He did not bestow this honor on any other person from the Israelites. This was due to the high qualification of Aaron and in response to the prayer of Moses as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an:

"He (Moses) said: My Lord Open my mind and loosen a knot from my tongue; that they may understand my word. Appoint for me a minister from my folk Aaron my brother. Confirm my strength by him and let him share my task..." Holy Qur'an Chapter 20 verses 25-32.

The Prophet Abraham prayed to the Lord to make some of his offsprings imams of the people. God responded to his prayer and promised to make imams from his good offsprings without allowing any of their wrong doers reach that high rank. From the Holy Qur'an:

"And We gave (Abraham) Isaac and Jacob and We made recipients of Prophethood and revelation from among his progeny and We granted him his reward in this life and he was in the Hereafter of the company of the righteous." The Holy Qur'an Chapter 29 verse 27.

God also has chosen along with the relatives of Abraham the relatives of Imran and preferred them above others.

"God chose Adam and Noah the family of Abraham and the family of Imran above all people. Offsprings related to each other and God hears and knows all things." The Qur'an Chapter 3 verses 33 and 34.

Zakaria prayed to the Almighty to grant him a righteous child. God answered his prayer and the angels gave him good tidings:

"There did Zakaria pray to his Lord saying: O my Lord grant unto me from Thee a progeny that is pure; for Thou Art He that hears prayer."

"While he was standing in prayer in chamber the angels called unto him: God doth give thee glad tidings of Yahya (John) witnessing the truth of a word from God and (besides) noble chaste and a Prophet of the (goodly) company of the righteous." The Qur'an Chapter 3 verses 38 and 39.

According to these verses the Prophethood which preceded that of Muhammad took the same course. From among the offspring and kinsmen of these Messengers there were chosen persons who reached the highest degree of piety and therefore deserved to be commissioned by God.

Why Did God Give Those Prophets Such Distinguished Children and Relatives?

The Almighty God created persons among the kinsmen and offspring of these Messengers in response to their prayers or as a reward to them for their endeavors in spreading the Message of God.

Like other prophets Muhammad was given unusual relatives and offspring as a reward for his endeavor in the service of God and in response to his prayers.

He commanded us to say: "God honor Muhammad and the members of his House " and he prayed for the purity of these members on various occasions.

Al-Hakim reported that the Prophet covered 'Ali Fatimah Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein with a garment and prayed saying:

"God these are my family. I ask Thee to honor Mohommad and the family of Muhammad." In response to his prayer the following revelation came: "God wants only to keep abomination away from you and make you members of the family of Muhammad spotless."[10](#)

Thus it was not unusual to have in the kinsmen and offspring of Muhammad distinguished men and women of the highest degree of righteousness. On the contrary if such persons did not exist among the relatives of the Prophet it would have been very unusual.

God honored Abraham Moses Zakaria and other Prophets by creating in their progeny and relatives distinguished persons preferring them above other people. Why should He not honor His final and most important Prophet by creating in his offspring and relatives some people with highest distinction?

The Prophet's Reward

The Holy Qur'an makes it explicit clear that the love of relatives of Muhammad is an Islamic duty. God commanded Muhammad to ask the Muslims to reward him for his fulfillment of the heavenly mission by loving his close kins.

"That is (the bounty) whereof God gives glad tidings to His servants who believe and do righteous deeds. Say: No reward do I ask of you for this except the love of (my) near kins. And if any one earns good deeds We shall give him an increase of good in respect thereof God is Oft-Forgiving. Most ready to appreciate (service)." The Holy Qur'an Chapter 42 verse 23.

God is telling Muhammad to inform all Muslims that the only reward he wants for fulfilling his Heavenly mission is that the Muslims love his relatives.

This is only because those members are the most obedient to God and his most beloved servants among the Muslims.

By commanding His Messenger to do so He actually commanded the Muslims to glorify the chosen relatives of Muhammad place their confidence in them and walk in their path.

In compliance with this heavenly command the Holy Prophet asked all his followers to love them. He stated that he is at peace with whomever they are at peace and that he is at war with whomever they are at war. He considered them to be similar to the ark of Noah. Whoever embarked on it was safe and whoever failed to be on it was drowned.

The House of Muhammad can be a means of unity to the Muslims. This unity can be realized when Muslims take the attitude which God and His Messenger wanted them to take toward these people. It would be erroneous for the Muslims to separate Muhammad from the Members of his House while he himself wanted to be united with them. This is clearly evident by his instruction that his followers couple his name with his chosen relatives whenever they pray for him whether within or outside their daily prayers.

1. Of these hadith-recorders are the following:

A. Al-Bukhari, "Sahih Al-Bukhari" (Authentic of Al-Bukhari) Part 6 p. 101 (in the Book of the interpretation of the Holy Qur'an)

B. Muslim Sahih Muslim Part 4 (in the Prayer on the Prophet after the declaration of the Faith p. 136.

C. Muhammad Ibn Majah Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 1, hadith No.904.

D. Al-Tirmidhi, hadith No. 483, Part No. 1. Other hadiths are reported by Abu-Sa-eed Abu Masud Talhah and Ibn Masud. All Accord with the above-mentioned hadith of Kaab Ibn Ujrah.

2. Ibn-Athir, Al-Kamil (the complete history Part 3 p. 35.

3. Al-Hakim, Al-Mustadrak Part 3 p.26.

4. Ibn Majah, Sunan Ibn Majah hadith No. 145.

5. Ibid. hadith No. 143.

6. Ibid. hadith No. 119.

7. Ibn Majah hadith No. 121.

8. Al-Bukhari Sahih Al-Bukhari Part 5 (Chapter of distinction of relatives of the Messenger) p. 25.

9. Al-Hakim Sahih Al-Musradrak Part 3 p. 151.

10. Al-Hakim Al-Mustadrak Part 3 p. 148.

2. Members of the House of Muhammad

Relying on the tacit agreement among the Muslims we assumed the Imam 'Ali his wife Fatimah and their two children Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein are members of the blessed House of Muhammad. The most reliable evidence in this matter is the reported words of the Prophet Muhammad himself where he spoke of Ahlul Bayt, Muhammad or his Itrah. The reported words of the Messenger on this subject can be classified into two types:

1. The hadiths which contained descriptions that distinguish the House of Muhammad from others who would be excluded by the same descriptions.
2. The hadiths which specify these members.

Descriptive Hadiths

From the first type are the following: Jaber Ibn Abdullah a famous companion reported that the Messenger of God said:

"O people I have left for you that which if you follow you will never go astray: the Book of God and the members of my House who are my "Itrah" (close relative and progeny)."[1](#)

Zayd Ibn Arqam a well known companion of Muhammad reported that the Messenger of God said:

"I have left for you that which if you hold fast you shall not go astray after me: The Book of God a rope extended between Heaven and Earth and the members of my House who are my Itrah. Certainly both (the Book of God and the members of my House) shall not part from each other until they join me on the Day of Judgement. Beware how you will treat both of them after me."[2](#)

Zaid Ibn Thabit reported that the Messenger of God said: "I am leaving among you two successors: The Book of God a rope extended between the Heaven and the earth and the members of my House who are my Itrah). Certainly they (the Book and the Itrah) will not part from each other until the Day of Judgement."[3](#)

Zayd Ibn Arqam again reported that the Messenger of God said on the day of Ghadir Khum:

"I am about to be summoned by God and I shall respond. Certainly I have left for you the two most valuable legacies. One of them is bigger than the other: The Book of God and my "Itrah" members of my House. Beware how you will treat both of them after me. They will not part from each other until the Day of Judgement."

Then he said:

"Certainly God is my 'Mawla' (Guardian) and I am the Mawla of every believer."

Then he held 'Ali's hand and said:

'Whoever I am his Mawla this is his Mawla.' God love whoever loves him and cast out of Thy favor whoever antagonizes him." [4](#)

Accordingly the members of the House of the Messenger are the ones who possess the following qualifications:

1. To be of Muhammad's Itrah. Man's Itrah is his close relatives (by birth) and his progeny. By this definition the wives of the Prophet and his companions from the non-Hashimites are excluded.
2. Righteousness of the Highest Degree. The members of the House of the Prophet have been described in these hadiths as true allies of the Qur'an who will never part from it. Thus unpious men and women would be disqualified for the membership whether they are Hashimites or non-Hashimites.
3. To Possess the Highest Degree of Knowledge in the Contents of the Holy Qur'an and the Teachings of the Messenger. Those who have limited knowledge in religion are excluded even if they are closely related to Muhammad.

They are bound by their very lack of knowledge to fall intentionally or unintentionally into disagreement with all Qur'an. The members of the blessed House according to the hadiths are secured against disagreement with the Book of God. Such a security cannot exist without a profound knowledge in the Qur'an and all the Islamic teachings.

4. To Be in Agreement with Each Other. When there are persons or groups contradicting one another some of them will be wrong and in disagreement with the Qur'an.

Since all members of the House are in agreement with the Holy Qur'an they must be in full agreement with each other.

5. To Possess Certitude in all Religious Knowledge.

By this the Islamic scholars whom we call "Mujtahids" who are capable of conducting religious research and forming their own opinions are excluded even if they are Hashimites (related to the Prophet).

To understand this clearly a few points ought to be mentioned: When we try to know the Islamic rules of our devotional or non-devotional actions our main evidences come from the Qur'an or from the hadiths of the Prophet.

When we find clear and specific instructions in the Qur'an about a certain matter our knowledge reaches the degree of certitude whether we are Islamic scholars or laymen. When we do not have a clear Qur'anic instruction we solicit that from the hadiths of the Messenger. Some of the hadiths are clear in

their indication and reported by numerous companions. Again our knowledge through this type of hadith attains certitude.

The difficulty is that hadiths of this type are not numerous and the majority of them are reported by one or two or a very few companions. Through such hadiths our knowledge concerning the rules which we try to know never reaches the level of certainty because the conveying companion did not report it to us directly because he is not living in our time nor did he record it in a book.

A person received a hadith from a companion. He in turn reported it to another and so on. Later the hadiths were recorded in a book after they passed through many hands. Thus our knowledge through this type of hadith would be at best conjectural.

There are other places at which instructions of the Messenger have been reported unclearly or in two opposite ways. The conclusion can be drawn in such cases only by professional scholars or "mujtahids."

The conclusion reached and the opinions formed by the scholars in any of the above mentioned cases are mostly conjectural. They do not usually reach the height of certainty nor do they certainly agree with the Book of God.

The probability of disagreement with it is very high considering only one of the opinions in each case. If we consider two opposite opinions of two scholars we would be certain that one of them is in disagreement with the Holy Qur'an because the two opinions contradict one another and the Qur'an cannot agree with two contradictory views.

From this it becomes clear that the Mujtahids whether Hashimites or non-Hashimites are not included in the particular membership of the House of Muhammad. This is because the knowledge of Mujtahids is mostly conjectural and in many cases does not agree with actual teaching of the Qur'an while the knowledge of the members of the House is securely in agreement with the Book of God.

This is because the aforementioned hadiths clearly indicate that the knowledge of the members of the House of Muhammad is knowledge of certainty rather than a knowledge of conjecture; otherwise they would have parted in many cases with the Holy Qur'an.

By this we ought to consider a mujtahid such as Abdullah Ibn Abbas (a cousin of the Prophet) out of the circle of the House in spite of his extensive knowledge in religion and his close relation to the Holy Prophet. The rest of the companions who were not closely related to Muhammad nor reached the degree of knowledge of Ibn Abbas are obviously excluded.

How Could It Be Possible for the Members of the House of Muhammad to Obtain a Knowledge of Certainty in All the Islamic Teachings?" Possession of certainty in religious teachings was very possible at the time of the Messenger.

It is very logical to assume that the Prophet taught a disciple of his such as 'Ali all the contents of the

Holy Qur'an and informed him of all the Islamic laws which may number a few thousands. It is fair to assume that such a close disciple taught some of his disciples all that he received from the Prophet. These assumptions are supported by certain facts:

'Ali was with the Prophet from the time of his childhood until the time of the death of the Prophet. He was his trusted disciple and close associate. He was his keen-minded student who attended his public as well as his private teaching.

Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein (the grandsons of Muhammad and the sons of 'Ali) lived with their father many years. They were his close associates. They were his most brilliant disciples and the purest Muslims who resembled their teacher and his teacher. Thus we can say that the certainty of knowledge pertaining to the Holy Qur'an and the instructions of the Prophet was available and possible to some of the disciples of Muhammad.

The Specific Hadiths

Several hadiths of the Prophet named the members of the house of Muhammad. Muslim recorded in his Sahih the following:

"When the (following) verse came down (at the time of a debate between the Messenger and Christians from Najran): 'If anyone disputes in this matter with thee now after full knowledge has come to thee say: Let us summon our sons and your sons our women and your women ourselves and yourselves; then let us earnestly pray and invoke the curse of God on those who lie.' The Messenger of God called 'Ali Fatimah Hassan and Hussein and said: God these are the members of my family."⁵

Al-Tirmidhi Ibn Manthoor Al-Hakim Ibn Mardawaih and Al-Bayhaqi in his Sunan all recorded the report of Om-Salemah wife of the Prophet in which she said:

"In my own house the (Quranic) verse (from chapter 33): 'Certainly God wants to keep away all abomination from you members of the House (of Muhammad) to make you pure and spotless.'" 'Ali Fatimah Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein were at my house. The Messenger of God covered them with a garment then said: "These are the members of my House. God keep away abomination from them and make them pure and spotless."⁶

Muslim in his Sahih recorded that Ayesha Said: "The Messenger of God came out wearing a wide cloak made of black hair. Fatimah Hassan Hussein and 'Ali came successively then he covered them with his cloak and said:

'Certainly God wants to keep all abominations away from you ye members of the House of Muhammad and make you pure spotless."⁷

The two following hadiths are recorded in Al-Durr Al-Manthur by Al-Suyuti (his commentary on the

Qur'an)

"Abu Al-Hamra (one of the companions of the Messenger) reported that the Messenger of God continued eight months in Medina coming to the door of 'Ali at every morning prayer putting his two hands on the two sides of the door and exclaiming: Assalat Assalat (prayer prayer). Certainly God only wants to keep away all abominations from you ye members of the House of Muhammad and to make you pure and spotless."⁸

Ibn Abbas reported:

"We have witnessed the Messenger of God for nine months coming every day to the door of 'Ali son of Abu Talib at the time of each prayer and saying: Assalamu Aleikum Wa-Rahmatullah Ahlul Bayt (peace and mercy of God be upon you ye members of the House of Muhammad). Certainly God wants only to keep away all abominations from you members of the House and to make you pure and spotless."⁹

These hadiths clearly indicate that each one of the four is a member of the House of Muhammad. They also exclude all other individuals who were living at the time of Muhammad the Hashimites as well as the non-Hashimites from the Arabs and non-Arabs.

Members Born After the Prophet Muhammad

This restrictive statement however does not exclude all Hashimites who were born after the time of Muhammad. The first group of hadiths we advanced indicate that members of the House are to continue after his death and through numerous centuries because the members according to the hadiths shall exist as long as the Qur'an exists.

By commanding the Muslims to follow the Book of God and the members of his House and by declaring that 'Ali Fatimah Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein are the members of his House the Holy Prophet actually placed 'Ali and his two sons at the seat of leadership of the nation.

Thus the two sons did not need to be appointed by their father and Al-Hussein did not need to be appointed by his brother Al-Hassan.

¹. Al-Tirmidhi Sunan Al-Tirmidhi Part 5 p.328 (hadith No. 3874)

². Al-Tirmidhi Sunan Al-Tirmidhi Part 5 p. 329 (hadith No. 3876)

³. Imam Ahmad reported it in his Musnad by two authentic ways Part 5 p. 181.

⁴. Al-Hakim in his Sahih Al-Mustadrak Part 3 p. 109.

⁵. Muslim Sahih Muslim Part 15 p. 176.

⁶. Al-Tirmidhi Sunan Al-Tirmidhi Part 5 p. 328 (hadith No. 3875)

⁷. Muslim Sahih Muslim Part 15 p. 194.

⁸. Al-Suyuti Al-Durr Al-Manthoor Part 5 p. 198 (Conveyed by Sayed Taqi Al-Hakeem Al-Ossol Al-Ammah for Al-Fiqh Al-Muqaram pp. 155-156).

⁹. Al-Suyuti Al-Durr Al-Manthoor Part 5 p. 198 (Conveyed by Sayed Taqi Al-Hakeem Al-Ossol Al-Ammah for Al-Fiqh Al-Muqaram pp. 155-156).

3. The Indispensable People

When we review in retrospect the important events involving the history of a nation we find that those events and their early evolutions were not dependent on most of the individuals and small groups who lived in those particular times. The presence or the absence of this soldier or that farmer or worker or merchant or politician did not affect those events.

Every individual except a very few was dispensable or it was possible to replace any of them with another person who could have performed a similar role.

There are of course some small groups and some individuals who perform important roles which other people cannot or do not want to perform. These small groups and a few individuals would be indispensable and the big events therefore would be connected strongly to these groups and individuals.

The presence of any of the small-role performers (and these are the overwhelming majority in every nation) in relation to the important event ought to be called incidental and dispensable. We say that the presence of such people or small group is incidental and dispensable in relation to an important event because that event could have been realized with or without such persons or group for everyone of them is easily replaceable.

As we look retrospectively at the onset of the faith of Islam and its gradual spread during the time of the Holy Prophet we find that Islam was strongly connected with the presence of a small number of individuals and groups.

It is needless to speak about the connection of the faith of Islam with the presence of the Messenger for he is the one who received the revelation carried the message and faced what no other person faced. He is the only man whose qualities qualified him to receive the revelation.

As the faith of Islam was dependent on the person of the Holy Messenger in its commencement and continuity during the period of the Prophethood we find that the continuity of Islam during that period was connected strongly and positively with three small groups who protected the life of the Messenger and offered great sacrifices in his defense.

The Hashimites

The first of these small groups was the clan of Hashim.

This clan had offered what no other Meccan clan offered during the years the Holy Prophet spent between the beginning of his Prophethood and the beginning of his Hijra.

This group was privileged with the honor of defending the Holy Prophet during those years. No other

Meccan clan shared this honor. The rest of the clans had chosen to take a hostile attitude towards the prophet his message and his clan. That hostile attitude threatened the Messenger and the members of his clan constantly with serious dangers.

Thus it would be justifiable to say that the presence of the rest of the Meccan clans in relation to the development of the message during that period was not only incidental but also a negative force for those clans did not offer as groups any assistance to the Messenger; in fact they impeded progress.

Some men and women related to these Meccan clans had believed in the Messenger and offered some sacrifices for him and his message but they did that as individuals.

The groups to which those persons belonged had taken hostile attitudes towards the Messenger and persecuted those individuals because they deviated from their hostile line.

Had Umayyad Makhzoom Zuhra Jumah and the rest of the Meccan clans been absent the Holy Prophet and his message could have been freed from many dangers. The Imam 'Ali in one of his messages directed to Muawiya mentioned the following:

"Our people (the Meccan clans) wanted to kill our Prophet and annihilate our clan. They plotted and committed atrocities against us. They prevented us from the water and clothed us with fear. They forced us to live at a rugged mountain and started the fire of war against us and the Almighty decided for us to defend His religion and fight for His sacred cause.

Our believer was seeking the Divine reward and our unbeliever was trying to protect his honor. The rest of the Qureshite Muslims were free of what was surrounding us either through an alliance which protected them or through a relationship to a clan which was ready to defend them. Thus they were in a security against murder.

"Whenever the war became bloody and the companions were unwilling to fight the Messenger put the members of his House in the front protecting his companions through them from the heat of the swords and spears."¹

The Ousites and the Khazrajites

The other two small groups with whom the continuity of the faith of Islam was positively connected at another stage of the development of the Islamic movement were the two tribes of Al-Khazraj and Al-Ous. The two tribes were privileged from among the non-Meccan Arab tribes by honor of their defense of the Holy Messenger and his message after the Hijrah. Had other tribes wanted to share with the two tribes this honor they could have acquired it; unfortunately they chose to oppose the Messenger instead of assisting him.

Thus the continuity of the faith of Islam was connected to these three small groups. The presence of the

rest of the tribes and clans was dispensable and less than incidental in relation to the faith of Islam in that period. For the presence of those clans and tribes had a negative effect and was fraught with dangers which threatened the life of the Messenger and his message.

Abu Talib

As we find these three small groups connected strongly with the message of Islam the history of this faith presents to us two men whose existence was indispensable and necessary during the period of Prophethood.

One of these two men was Abu Talib uncle of the Messenger his guardian during the days of his childhood and his main defender after the commencement of his Prophethood. The protection by this hero of his nephew and his defense against the threats of the Qureshites (the non-Hashimite Meccan clans) was a main factor in the continuity of life of the Messenger and his message.

The Meccan clans were burning with hatred towards the Messenger and anxious to shed his blood. What prevented them from that was the presence of Abu Talib the chief of Mecca who led the Hashimites and made out of them and himself an unbreakable fortress around the Messenger.

The readers of the Islamic history know how the Qureshite clans delivered to Abu Talib an ultimatum to stop his nephew from defaming their fathers and belittling their gods and ridiculing their minds; otherwise they would confront him and Muhammad on a battlefield until one of the two parties perished.

Abu Talib did not have any doubt that his acceptance of the Qureshite challenge meant his death and the annihilation of his clan; yet he did not pressure his nephew to stop his campaign. He only informed him of the Qureshite ultimatum and then he told him kindly:

"Save me and yourself my nephew and burden me not with what I cannot bear."

When the Messenger rejected their ultimatum declaring to his uncle that he would not exchange his message with the possession of the whole universe Abu

Talib immediately reversed his attitude and decided to go along with the Messenger to the end. He called him after he turned his back: "Come back my nephew."

When the Messenger came back the great uncle said to him: "My nephew go on. Say whatever you like I shall never let you down at any time."² Abu Talib fulfilled this huge promise with distinction.

When a Meccan threw some dirt on the Messenger while he was prostrating Abu Talib went on brandishing his sword and holding the hand of his nephew until he came to the sacred Mosque. A group of the enemies were sitting there and when some of them tried to stand for Abu Talib he said to them: "By the One in Whom Muhammad believes if anyone from you stands up I will hit him with my sword."

Then he went on putting dirt on their faces and beards.[3](#)

The Qureshite clans formed a strong alliance against Abu Talib and his clan and resorted to the weapon of starvation instead of confrontation. They knew that the Hashimites would fight if fought; and that they could not be annihilated without costing their adversaries great losses.

Thus the Meccan clans imposed an economical and social embargo against the Hashimites. This continued for three years during which time the Hashimites were forced to live at a rugged mountain called "Shi-ab Abu Talib." The Hashimites during that period were forced sometimes to eat leaves of trees to alleviate the pains of hunger.

During that period the main concern of the old hero was to protect the life of the Messenger. Abu Talib during those years often made some members of his own family (especially his son 'Ali) lie at the bed of the Holy Prophet protecting him by his dearest son from danger of assassination.

Islam of Abu Talib

A number of historians and hadith-recorders reported that Abu Talib died while he was a pagan. Some of them reported that the verse "It is not permissible to the Prophet and the believers to ask God to forgive the pagans even if they were akin to them after it became clear to them that those pagans are from the people of Hell " was revealed in relation to Abu Talib for the Prophet wanted to ask God to forgive him and the Almighty prohibited him from doing that.

Such statements were fabricated as a part of the smear campaign which the Umayyads and their allies waged against Imam 'Ali. They tried by fabricating these hadiths to prove to the masses of the people that Abu Sufyan father of Muawiya was better than Abu Talib father of 'Ali claiming that Abu Sufyan died while he was a Muslim and Abu Talib died while he was a pagan.

The recorders of the hadiths and the historians took these hadiths without paying attention to the evidence of their forgery. They did not try to examine these hadiths yet the date of the revelation of the above mentioned verse testifies that it was not revealed about a matter pertaining to Abu Talib.

The verse is a part of the chapter of Bara'ah (number 9). This chapter is totally Medinite with the exception of the last two verses (129 and 130). The verse which is the subject of our discussion is the 114th. The chapter of Bara-ah was revealed during the ninth year after the Hijrah. The Prophet ordered Abu Bakr to announce the first part of it during the days of pilgrimage of that year when he sent him as an "Amir Al-Hajj" (commander of the pilgrimage).

Then he sent 'Ali to take that part from him and announce it because God commanded him that no one should deliver the revelation other than himself or a man from the members of his House. The chapter speaks of events that took place during the campaign of Tabouk which was during "Rajab" of the ninth year.

Since this chapter contains the above mentioned verse the verse could not mean Abu Talib. because he died in Mecca at least two years before the Hijrah.

Asking God to forgive a deceased usually takes place at the time of a funeral prayer. The wording of the verse indicates that for it says: "It is not permissible to the Prophet and the believers to ask God to forgive the pagans." This indicates that the Prophet was with other believers (in a congregational prayer) when he asked forgiveness for the pagans.

As a matter of fact the funeral prayer was not instituted before the Hijrah. The first prayer offered by the Messenger for a deceased was his prayer for Al-Bura Ibn Maarour from Medina.

It is likely that the verse was revealed after the Prophet offered a funeral prayer for one of the hypocrites who used to pretend Islam and conceal paganism. It is very likely that the verse was revealed when the Holy Prophet offered a funeral prayer for Abdullah Ibn Abu Salool who died during the ninth year and who was well noted in his hypocrisy his hatred to the Messenger and his adversity to the faith of Islam.

About him and his followers the chapter of Al-Munafiqoon (the Hypocrites) was revealed before that time. Had the historians and hadith-recorders (who inadvertently mentioned the fabricated hadiths about Abu Talib's paganism) thought with some depth and logic they would not have committed this terrible historical error.

To say that Abu Talib was a pagan is to say that he was a believer in the divinity of idols. But this belief cannot co-exist with his belief in the truthfulness of Muhammad who denounced idols and considered their deification and worship a defiance to the Creator.

For Abu Talib to believe in the divinity of idols he either had to believe that Muhammad was deliberately misinforming people about God or that he was hallucinating. If Abu Talib were pagan and in spite of that he offered so much sacrifice for the sake of Muhammad he must have been insane or an unusual fool. Had he believed that his nephew was unbalanced or a conscious misinformant about God Abu Talib should have confined Muhammad and become his strong opponent rather than his formidable protector for the mission of Muhammad was expected to bring destruction and death to Abu Talib and his clan.

Abu Talib tied his fate to the fate of his nephew. He was unconcerned with what might happen to him and to his clan. He witnessed the dangers surrounding him and his clan and the difficulties that were accumulating around him because of his protection of his nephew. In spite of all what happened to him and to the members of his clan history does not record any harsh word on the part of Abu Talib to his nephew. On the contrary he offered himself and the members of his clan as redemption to his nephew.

He treated him better than any compassionate father treated his most beloved son. He told him: "Nephew continue your mission and say whatever you desire to say. By God I shall never leave you to any danger." Abu Talib was a man of great faith and strong belief in the truthfulness of Muhammad.

He lived with that mission about eleven years and the difficulties for Muhammad and for him increased in size by the passage of time. He was a man of unusual faith in the truthfulness of Islam. History witnessed distinguished companions running away when the danger grew. But Abu Talib did not run away nor did he lose his determination. He continued his sacrifice for the Prophet for the duration of his life.

This should give credence to what Al-Tabarsi recorded through his channel to the Imam Jaafar Al-Ssadiq:

"While the Imam 'Ali was sitting at the 'Ruhbah' in Kufa " surrounded by a group a man stood up and said: "Commander of the Believers you are in this great position at which God has placed you while your father is suffering in hell."

The Imam replied saying: "Be silent. May God disfigure your mouth. By the One Who sent Muhammad with the truth if my father intercedes for every sinner on the face of the earth God would accept his intercession."⁴

He concealed his faith and God rewarded him twice. He concealed his faith only to protect Muhammad. Had he revealed his belief in Islam the relation between him and the rest of the Qureshites would have been severed.

He wanted to maintain the dialogue between him and the Qureshites and not let it be discontinued for this could have led to an armed conflict in a decisive battle which might have led to the destruction of his clan. By this the Hashimite wall around Muhammad would fall and the Meccan pagans could reach him.

In spite of concealing his faith Abu Talib on more than one occasion made his belief in Islam clearly known.

While on his deathbed he said to the Hashimites: "I command you to be good to Muhammad. He is the most trustworthy of Quraish and the ever-truthful of the Arabs. He brought a message which is accepted by the heart and denied by the tongue for fear of hostility.

By God whoever walks in the path of Muhammad shall be on the right road and whoever follows his guidance shall have the happy future. Had there been a balance in my years I would have shielded him against dangers and defended him against adversaries.

"And you the Hashimites respond to Muhammad's invitation and believe him. You will succeed and be well-guided. Assist Muhammad; certainly he is the guide to the straight path."⁵

We All Are Indebted to Him

All Muslims are indebted to Abu Talib for the continuity of the Islamic Message is a result of the continuation of the life of the Messenger until God completed His message to mankind. The protection of

Abu Talib to the Messenger was the main physical deterrent to the Qureshites.

I once made this statement in an Islamic seminar and the following question was raised: If God is the One Who wanted the message of Islam to continue and to spread was not He able to preserve it and spread it without Abu Talib and his protection to the Messenger?

In my reply I stated the following: Muslims believe that God was able to preserve the life of the Messenger and He was able to make all the children of Adam Muslims and believers in God His oneness and in the Day of Judgement. He could have made them obedient to all Heavenly laws. He was able to make all the Qureshite clans obedient to Muhammad. He was able also to make all people obedient to His command without creating Muhammad.

Yet in spite of our belief in all this we know that God did not do that. He did not make all people believers. He did not interfere directly to change their thinking and their belief. He rather left for them their freedom to choose. This means that God did not want to run the events of the world miraculously and through Divine intervention.

He rather wanted to run the affairs of the world in accordance with the natural means and courses. Therefore He sent revelations down to a human being named Muhammad and spread Islam through that person.

The Almighty did not choose to force the Qureshites to believe or disbelieve. The majority of the Qureshites chose to oppose Muhammad and Abu Talib chose to believe in his message and to defend him by all of what he had of men and means. This protection of Abu Talib to the Messenger was an important factor in preserving the life of the Messenger and the continuation of his mission until Abu Talib departed from this world.

To attribute paganism to a man such as Abu Talib who was so benevolent to all Muslims by guarding the life of the Messenger for about eleven years is one of the worst forms of ungratefulness. It is a reward of great favor by the worst insult.

Abu Talib was the first of two great men with whom the continuity of the faith of Islam was strongly connected and their presence in relation to the continuity of the faith of Islam was not incidental.

Imam 'Ali

The other man with whom the continuity of the faith of Islam during the days of the Messenger was strongly connected is the son of Abu Talib 'Ali who carried the same mission after his father's death but on a larger scale.

Numerous companions made great efforts for the sake of Islam and rendered to the Prophet of Islam assistance worthy of appreciation. It is sufficient to mention the three Caliphs: Abu Bakr 'Umar and

Uthman along with the numerous Meccan companions such as Al-Zubayr Talhah Abdul-Rahman Ibn Ouf Abu Obeidah Ibn Al-Jarrah Saad Ibn Abu Waqass Al-Miqdad Ibn Al-Aswad Abdullah Ibn Masud and Ammar Ibn Yasir.

Add to these people from the Medinites men such as Abu Dujana Qais Ibn Saad his father Saad Ibn Abadah Saad Ibn Maath and others from other communities such as Abu Dharr Salman Al-Farisi and hundreds of companions other than these. All these men endeavored in the way of God by sacrificing some of their wealth or their life or both.

If we review the period of the Prophethood and the roles which these righteous companions performed we find them indispensable as a group. Yet each one of them as an individual was replaceable by another companion to perform a role similar to his.

It was possible to replace Abu Bakr by 'Umar to perform a role in a manner similar to his. It was possible to replace Abu Bakr 'Umar and Uthman by Abu Obeidah Ibn Al-Jarrah Talhah and Al-Zubayr. It was possible to replace Saad Ibn Abadah by Saad Ibn Maath or by his son Qais Ibn Saad Ibn Abadah or to replace Abu Dharr by Salman or Ammar Ibn Yasir or Al-Miqdad Ibn Al-Aswad.

The roles of these companions were close or similar.

Had 'Umar been the companion of the Messenger in the Cave at the night of the Hijrah instead of Abu Bakr Islam would not have lost by the exchange. But 'Ali's role in guarding the life of the Messenger could not have been performed but by 'Ali. It was easy for 'Ali to perform the role of any other companion during the time of the Messenger but it was not easy for any other companion to perform 'Ali's role.

It was easy for 'Ali to be the companion of the Messenger in the Cave of Thaur at the night of the Hijrah. But it was not easy for Abu Bakr or any other companion to lie on the bed of the Messenger redeeming the Messenger by his life resigning to receive the Qureshite attack which was expected to come from ten warriors supported by the rest of the Meccan pagans.

It was not possible for any of the companions of the Messenger to perform the role of 'Ali at Badr where he destroyed nearly 50 percent of the Qureshites who perished at that battle. Thus he tipped the scale through his personal efforts in favor of the small Islamic army when the faith of Islam was at stake.

It was not possible for any companion to perform 'Ali's role at Uhud when the companions ran away climbing the mountain not turning their faces to the Messenger while the Messenger was calling upon them to come to him. The Messenger was singled out to face thousands of pagans. No one remained with him except 'Ali to confront the regiments which were seeking the life of the Messenger.

'Ali faced them one after another and forced many of them to retreat until a few of the companions came back to defend their Prophet. Had 'Ali run away as the others did and the pagans reached the Messenger the direction of the history could have been changed if the Almighty did not protect Islam and

His Messenger by a very unusual miracle.

These are only a few of many events which prove clearly that 'Ali's endeavor was a very substantial factor in bringing about the victory of the Faith of Islam and the defeat of its enemies. This proves that 'Ali was the protective shield of the Messenger against the numerous dangers which surrounded his precious life. This means that 'Ali had two important exclusive honors:

1. The continuity of Islam which was dependent on the life of the Messenger and his triumph during that period was strongly connected with 'Ali's presence and endeavor.
2. The strong connection between the birth of the Islamic State and his presence. It was impossible for the Muslim State to be established if the enemies of Islam were to be victorious and able to destroy the new power.

Since the endeavors of 'Ali had a clear effect in tipping the scale in favor of the new power at the decisive battles between the Messenger and his enemies it would be very true to consider the endeavor of 'Ali one of the most important factors in the birth of the Islamic State.

How true the word of 'Umar was when he said to a man accusing 'Ali with conceit: "By God the pillar of Islam could not have been established without the sword of 'Ali."

Unique Bravery Supported With Unique Sincerity

'Ali's unusual bravery and physical strength alone could not make out of him a protective shield for the Messenger nor could they tie the continuity of Islam and the birth of the Islamic State to his existence. What made him so transcendent was his unusual sincerity to the Heavenly principles and his deep insight by which he discovered the unknown truths and through which his bravery and physical strength were directed to the service of the truth.

History witnessed many men equipped with physical strength and bravery. But the lack of knowledge of the truth or the absence of sincerity toward the truth made them spend what they were given of power in supporting falsehood and combating the truth; or made them self-worshippers spending all their energy for obtaining a false glory or cheap material.

Unlike these 'Ali was an example of a different type of men whose knowledge made them directly witness the truth and enjoy sacrifices which other people found unbearable. He accompanied this world bodily while his soul was connected to the higher world. He and the ones whom he exemplified are the ones whom God had chosen to be the rulers on this earth!.

His Birth and Childhood

The strong tie between 'Ali's endeavor and the birth of the Islamic State was not a product of chance. It was rather the product of spiritual evolution started at an early stage of his life. 'Ali was being prepared

for the unique honor since the days of his childhood.

He had the exclusive honor of having the strong ties to the great Messenger who took him to himself during the days of his childhood as a member of his own family. He directed the child's clear mind and illuminated nature towards the truth. He saturated him from the strength of his faith knowledge wisdom and purity.

At the hands of that teacher 'Ali grew and his qualities developed. He became a mirror reflecting the lights of the Prophet.

"Abu Talib's wife Fatima the daughter of Asad (the lady whom the Messenger used to consider his second mother) gave birth to 'Ali at the Kaaba. Thus he was the first human to be born inside the Ancient and Sacred House of God. His birth was thirty years after the birth of the Prophet and twenty three years before the Hijrah. His mother named him Haidrah (lion) or Asad. His father named him 'Ali (high). The two names were appropriate for he was destined to be the lion of God and His Messenger as he was the highest person after the Messenger who "brothered" him among all Muslims.

"The capability of Abu Talib as a provider was below the need of his family especially with famine by which the Meccans were plagued at that period. The Prophet suggested to his uncle Al-Abbas that both of them try to lighten the burden of Abu Talib by taking some of his children. Abu Talib honored their request. Abbas took Jaafar and the Prophet took 'Ali and kept him with him until the day of the commencement of his Prophethood."[6](#)

The Messenger and Al-Abbas were well-to-do and they were able to offer Abu Talib what he needed of food during that hard period and leave 'Ali and Jaafar with their parents. But the Messenger chose that he and his uncle take the two children to them.

It seems that the Messenger seized upon the opportunity of the famine. He took 'Ali to him trying to provide him through his upbringing with his spiritual food along with his bodily food preparing him to the great future which was awaiting him.

It appears that he was willing to do so even if Quraish did not have the famine. 'Ali was the most valuable companion of the Messenger.

The Messenger himself informed us that his relationship to 'Ali was not incidental. He told him: "Ali people are from various trees but you and I are from one tree."[7](#)

Of course the Messenger did not mean by this statement that 'Ali was his relative and first cousin and that their grandfather was Abdul Mutalib because that is not important information. These facts are common place to people. Furthermore Al-Abbas and Al-Hamzah were children of Abdul Mutalib and Jaafar and Aqeel were brothers of 'Ali. Their relationship to the Prophet is like that of 'Ali to him exactly.

What the Messenger meant is that 'Ali's soul resembles the soul of the Holy Prophet and that he was

strongly connected to him as an extension of his personality. Thus he was from the Messenger of God as he spoke of himself: "And I am from the Messenger of God as one of two trees originated from one root and as the lower arm extending from the upper one."[8](#)

It seems that the Messenger took 'Ali to himself while 'Ali was still a small child for 'Ali himself stated the following: "And you have known my place from the Messenger of God with the close relationship and the special position. He seated me on his lap while I was a small child embracing me making me join him in his bed touching his holy body and smelling the sweetness of his fragrance. He used to chew the food and put it in my mouth."[9](#)

The Prophet lived before the days of Prophethood as a world by himself. He lived in a society in which ignorance and idol-worshiping were prevalent sanctifying superstition and legalizing the unethical conduct.

Yet he was able to think of what the minds of the people of his society were unable to discern. The purity of his nature enabled him to see and hear what people could not see or hear. He lived in the midst of his society as an island of knowledge wisdom and civilization surrounded by an ocean of barbarism and ignorance.

'Ali was destined to be a part of that independent world and to live in the atmosphere of that island without being affected by the surrounding society. He grew up as a light derived from the light of Muhammad.

His illuminated nature and keen mind enabled him to follow the steps of the Prophet living up to his principles and ideals. The Imam spoke of his growth under the direction of the Prophet Muhammad and the influence of his attachment to him in forming his high characters:

"And he (the Messenger of God) never found an untruth in my words or any wrong in my deeds. God had attached to him (Muhammad) from the time of his weaning the greatest of His angels to walk him through the path of virtue and to teach him the highest ethics of the world... and I was following him as a baby following his mother. He used to raise for me every day a banner of his ethics and command me to follow it.

"He used to seclude himself every year in Hira and I was with him while no one else could see him. And during the early period of Islam there was only one house sheltering the Messenger of God Khadijah and myself as their third seeing the light of revelation and smelling the fragrance of the prophethood."[10](#)

By that time 'Ali arrived in his spiritual ascendance to a degree by which he became able to hear and see what the Messenger was hearing and seeing at the days of the commencement of his Prophethood. He ('Ali) said that at an occasion which took place during the first few days from the commencement of his Prophethood the Prophet told him:

"... Certainly you hear what I hear and you see what I see but you are not a Prophet. You are a minister and you are on a good path." As 'Ali had covered so much distance in his spiritual development before passing ten years of age it was only natural for him to add to his special position with the Prophet the other exclusive honor of being the first of the believers in the Prophethood of Muhammad and the fastest in response to his call.

- [1.](#) Al-Sharif Al-Radhi Muhammad Ibn Al-Hussein Nahjul Balaghah collection of words of the Imam 'Ali Part 3 pp. 8-9.
- [2.](#) Ibn Hisham Biography of the Prophet Part 1 p. 266.
- [3.](#) Khalid Muhammad Khalid Fee Rihab 'Ali.
- [4.](#) Al-Tabarsi Al-Ihtijaj Part 1 p. 341.
- [5.](#) Khalid Muhammad Khalid Fee Rihab 'Ali.
- [6.](#) Al-Hakim Al-Mustadrak Part 3 pp. 5-6 and so in Ibn Hisham Biography of the Prophet Part 1 p.246.
- [7.](#) Al-Hakim Al-Mustadrak Part 2 p. 241.
- [8.](#) Nahjul-Balaghah Part 3 p. 73.
- [9.](#) Nahjul-Balaghah Part 2 p. 157.
- [10.](#) Nahjul-Balaghah Part 2 p. 15.

4. The First Muslims

'Ali's mental capability and the integration of his life with the life of the Messenger enabled him to think as a philosopher while he was ten years old. He was able to arrive at a logical conclusion. The overwhelming majority of the Meccans had for thirteen years refused to open their eyes to the light of Islam and prevented the Messenger of God from reaching their ears.

They could not free their minds because they took the attitude of: "We have found our fathers on a road and we are following their footsteps." The inclination to walk in the path of the ancestor was and still is the main guarantee against the change of religion. This inclination stood and is still standing as a barrier between great thinkers of Western Society and the acceptance of the Islamic teaching. But 'Ali at the tenth year of his age took the logical attitude.

While Muhammad and Khadijah were praying 'Ali entered their room. He stood until the Prophet finished his prayer. "To whom do you prostrate?" 'Ali asked. "We prostrate to God the One Who commissioned me as a Prophet and commanded me to invite people to Him " the Prophet replied.

The Messenger recited verses from the Holy Qur'an then invited his cousin to embrace Islam. 'Ali was fascinated. He asked the Prophet to give him time to consult his father. He spent his night excitedly and on the following day he came to declare his Islam.

He embraced the new faith without taking the advice of his father Abu Talib reasoning: "God had created me without consulting Abu Talib. Why should I need his counsel to worship God?"[1](#)

It is a short statement but it announces a great deal of independent thinking capability of forming opinion and depth in faith. It is a logic which is not marred by contradiction. 'Ali loved his father and believed that a child owes his father a genuine obedience. But he knew that the obedience of the father is not absolute. It has its own limitation.

His counsel ought to be sought only when the matter is not clear. When truth becomes evident consultation becomes useless. To 'Ali the truth of Muhammad was as clear as the daylight. And it had become the duty of 'Ali to respond to Muhammad's call and to respond to it immediately.

The message is new and he does not know what the attitude of his father will be toward the new faith. Abu Talib may believe in what his small child believed in.

Should this be the case it would please the father to see his son preceding him in accepting the truth. But Abu Talib may hesitate to accept the new faith and 'Ali cannot delay his response to the call of His Lord. The Creator of Abu Talib and of his son has much more right than Abu Talib to be obeyed.

It is well known that 'Ali was the first Muslim. Ibn Hisham recorded that 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib was the first male to believe in the Messenger of God and that he prayed with him while he was 10 years old.² It is reported that when the time of prayer came the Messenger used to go outside Mecca accompanying 'Ali to offer their prayer then come back in the evening.

It is reported that Anas Ibn Malik said: "The Messenger was commissioned on Monday and 'Ali believed in him on Tuesday."³

Muhammad Ibn Majah in his Sunan and Al-Hakim in his Mustadrak reported that 'Ali said: "I am the servant of God and the brother of His Messenger and I am the greatest believer in his Prophethood. No one says this after me but a liar. I prayed seven years before the rest of the people."⁴

Al-Hakim reported that Salman Al-Farisi said that the Messenger of God said: "The first one of you to drink from the Basin on the Day of Judgement is your first Muslim 'Ali son of Abu Talib."⁵

Imam Ahmad Ibn Hunbul recorded that Maaqal Ibn Yasar said that the Messenger of God said to his daughter Fatima: "Would it not please you that I have married you to the first Muslim in my nation their most knowledgeable and their wisest?"⁶

How Valuable Was His Islam?

Those who argue about his being the first Muslim are not numerous. But there are those who argue about the value of his early adoption of the new faith compared to the conversion of other prominent companions whose Islam was preceded by that of 'Ali. 'Ali was still a child in the tenth year of his age they argue.

It would not be expected from such a child to think like a man and base his opinion on logic and wisdom in choosing between alternatives he faces. He rather is expected to adopt Islam not because of a sound thinking but because of his attachment to the Holy Prophet for he was brought up by the Prophet as a member of his family.

Had 'Ali been an ordinary child this argument would be sound. But 'Ali was not an ordinary child during his childhood nor was he an ordinary man during his manhood. All evidences show that he was one of the genius types of individuals who reached the maturity in their early years and surpassed the average men in understanding the truth and high ideals.

Had 'Ali been motivated by his attachment to the Holy Prophet he would not have asked the Prophet to give him time to consult his father. The Prophet was his guardian and teacher and 'Ali was ready to follow his ethical instructions.

The Prophet used to raise for him every day a banner of his ethics and 'Ali used to follow him as a child follows his mother. He did not ask the Prophet to give him time to consult his father or to think by himself whether he will follow any of his ethical teachings. Yet when he offered him a new religion he asked the Prophet to give him time to consult his father.

He spent his night thinking and when the truth became clear to him he decided not to consult his father after all and immediately accepted the invitation of the Holy Prophet. He came to the Messenger declaring his Islam and uttering his wise words which neither the ordinary children nor the ordinary men can think of.

The invitation of the Messenger to 'Ali by itself tells us that the Messenger did not consider him an ordinary child.

We did not find in history that the Messenger ever invited any of the children except the Imam 'Ali. He used to invite only men and women expecting their children to follow them because children cannot think for themselves or distinguish between right and wrong. He privileged 'Ali by inviting him to adopt the new faith while he was ten years old.

In fact he bestowed on him two exclusive honors: He was the only child whom he invited to the faith and above all he invited him before he invited any of the men.

I would like to say that casting doubt on the importance of 'Ali's adoption of the faith because of his young age does not accord with our belief in the wisdom of the Messenger and soundness of his opinion. The event which we shall consider in the following chapter indicates that the opinion of the Messenger about 'Ali does not agree with the opinion of those who argue to the contrary.

Al-Jahith and other scholars tried to belittle the value of the Islam of 'Ali because of his young age. They ignored the fact that the Holy Prophet took him as his minister and brother while 'Ali did not exceed the

thirteenth year of his age. This took place at the conference which he held with his close relatives at his house in Mecca. He not only bestowed on him these honors but also told the attending men to obey him.

- [1.](#) Dr. Muhammad Hussein Haikal Hayat Muhammad (Life of Muhammad) p. 138.
- [2.](#) Ibn Hisham Al-Searat (Biography of the Prophet) Part 1 p.245.
- [3.](#) Al-Hakim Al-Mustadrak Part 3 p. 112.
- [4.](#) Ibn Majah Sunan Ibn Majah Part 1 p.44 (hadith 120)
- [5.](#) Al-Hakim Al-Mustadrak Part 3 p. 112
- [6.](#) Imam Ahmad Al-Musnad Part 3 p. 136.

5. Brother and Minister

During the first three years of the Prophethood the Prophet did not call people publicly to the new faith. The message remained an unannounced conversation for its announcement would necessarily lead to a confrontation with the clans of Mecca. The Prophet knew that the Meccan clans and the Masses of Arabia would not hesitate to use any violent means against him if he demanded from them to change their religion.

Yet this confrontation was inevitable and expected to be fraught with danger. The message was not revealed in order to be kept secret. It came down to reform mankind and to change the beliefs of the people and the ways of their lives. This could not be realized except by calling to them loudly warning them openly and informing them about the message.

For a new religious message or a new ideology to succeed the man of the message and his followers have to have freedom of speech and practice. Average individuals do not have the courage to embrace a new ideology when its embracement causes them to confront a society that does not sanctify the individual's freedom.

Such a society by its nature is inclined to violence and there are not many individuals who are ready to suffer the loss of position wealth and life for ideals. Just to make the spread of the new ideology feasible in such a society the freedom of speech and practice must be protected and secured for the potential converts.

Otherwise they would be too terrified to change their religion. This means that the new ideology will have only a limited success if any. Only the heroes of an unusual courage would rise above fear and these are not many.

As to the man of the message the chance of his success is very slim when his life and relative freedom are not protected though he may be a big hero. His rise above fear does not secure success in a violent society. His death by assassination or other means before establishing his religion will bring his whole

mission to an end.

Thus the first requirement for the success of a new religion in a non-democratic society is a protective shield around the life of the man of the message and his relative freedom. He needs strong supporters who will be ready to give their lives for protecting their leader and his message.

If such people are not available it would be necessary to have at least one supporter of an unusual quality who is similar to the Messenger in sincerity courage and strength.

Such a person would be expected to be found among the relatives of the man of the message since the relatives are expected to be more sympathetic to him than others.

The Holy Qur'an informs us that when Moses received the Command of God: "Go to Pharaoh certainly he has exceeded the limit

"He asked his Lord to strengthen him through a minister from his own family! "He (Moses) said: O my Lord expand my breast. Ease my task for me and remove the impediment from my speech. So they may understand what I say. And give me a minister from my family Aaron my brother. Add to my strength through him and make him share my task." The Holy Quran Chapter 20 verses 25-32.

Muhammad is the final of the prophets. His message is the conclusion of all heavenly messages. His message therefore must succeed and stay forever. God runs the affairs of the world usually according to the law of cause and effect and through natural courses.

Therefore He did not order His Messenger Muhammad to face the whole society at once with the invitation to Islam because this might lead to the failure of the mission rather than to its success. Wanting him to go gradually in his invitation He issued to him a command (after three years from the beginning of his Prophethood) to begin with his close relatives. From the Holy Qur'an:

"And warn thy nearest kinsmen. And lower thy wing to the believers who follow thee." The Holy Quran Chapter 26 verses 214-215.

When this command came down the Messenger of God invited the descendents of Abdul-Muttalib (they were forty men) to a banquet which contained little amounts of food and milk. They ate and drank until they became full.

Then the Messenger spoke saying: "O children of Abdul-Muttalib by God I do not know any young man from among the Arabs who has ever brought to his people better than I brought to you. I brought to you the goodness of this world and of the Hereafter and God has commanded me to invite you to it. Who is among you willing to be my minister in this mission and he will be my brother my executor and my successor in you?"

None of them responded but 'Ali who was the youngest among them. He stood up and said: "Messenger

of God I will be your minister in this mission."

The Prophet repeated his invitation but none responded except 'Ali who repeated his words. The Prophet put his hand on the neck of 'Ali and said:

"This is my brother my executor and my successor in you. Listen to him and obey him."

They laughed saying to Abu Talib: "He ordered you to listen to your son and to obey him."¹ Thus the Messenger of God invited his close relatives to embrace Islam but his main purpose was to find among them a person who would assist him in spreading the message.

Embracing Islam is very important but more important is to find among the converts a person who will be willing to pay a high price for its success. And how many millions of Muslims of today are unwilling to pay the least for Islam!

Conflicting Hadiths

The two sheikhs: Al-Bukhari and Muslim did not mention this important event though it was reported by many historians and hadith-recorders. Muslim and other hadith-recorders reported an event that took place after this event.

They reported the appearance of the Messenger on Al-Safa and his call to the Qureshite clans (the Meccans) and his invitation to them to believe in the new faith. Muslim and these reporters mentioned this late event and tied it with the verse of the warning of the closest relative of the Holy Prophet. Muslim recorded that Abu Huriarah reported the following:

When this verse was revealed: "And warn thy closest relatives " the Messenger of God called the Qureshites and they came together. He addressed them in general and in particular. He said: "O children of Kaab Ibn Lu-ay save yourselves from Hell. O children of Murrah Ibn Kaab save yourselves from Hell. O children of Hashim save yourselves from Hell. O Fatima save yourself from Hell. For I do not possess any protection for you from God except that you have relations to me which I would like to observe."²

It is amazing that God commanded His Messenger to warn the closest of his relatives who were the children of Abdul-Muttalib but the Prophet called upon the children of Kaab Ibn Lu-ay and the children of Murrah Ibn Kaab who are from the remotest of his relatives. It is inconceivable that the Messenger of God disobeys what his Lord commanded him to do.

And what is more amazing is that the messenger called upon his daughter (Fatima) publicly to save herself from Hell yet she was the purest Muslim girl whose father and mother were the purest parents.

Fatima at the time of the revelation of the above verse was according to the historians either two years

or eight years old.³ It would be illogical that the Prophet addresses himself to a two year old child or that he put a pure Muslim girl (who was still a minor not exceeding eight years of age) on the same level with the pagans of Banu Kaab and Banu Murrah.

And more curious is the hadith of Ayesah which Muslim recorded in his Sahih as follows: "When the verse of warning was revealed the Messenger of God said: 'O Fatima daughter of Muhammad Safia daughter of Abdul-Muttalib I have nothing in my power to protect you against God. Ask me from my wealth whatever you want.'"⁴

This hadith does not agree with the previous one. For this hadith reported that the Holy Prophet addressed himself to the children of Abdul-Muttalib alone while the other hadith reported that the Holy Prophet publicly addressed himself mostly to other than the Prophet's clan. And most curious in this hadith is that the Messenger addressed himself publicly while on the Safa mainly to his youngest daughter Fatima while she was living with him where he sees her every hour. It is also curious that the address which he directed to her and to the other members of the children of Abdul-Muttalib did not contain any message such as calling upon them to worship God or to avoid idol-worshipping.

Furthermore Ayesah was not born at the time of the event. The Messenger died when she was still eighteen years old.⁵ And this event took place ten years before the Hijrah (twenty years before his death). Abu Hurairah also was not an eye-witness to the event because he saw the Messenger for the first time when the Messenger was coming back from Khaibar. (In the 7th year after the Hijrah).⁶

And more curious than all is that Al-Zamkh-Shari reported that Ayesah daughter of Abu Bakr and Hafsa daughter of 'Umar were among the ones whom the Holy Prophet addressed after the revelation of this verse of warning (which was revealed before the birth of Ayesah).⁷ This clearly indicates that recorders or the reporters of these hadiths were seriously confused. They overlooked the fact that the verse commands the Prophet to warn his closest relatives who were the children of Abdul-Muttalib and that the Holy Prophet is not expected to disobey the order of God. What these hadiths reported is opposed to the verse itself and whatever disagrees with the Holy Qur'an has to be disregarded.

The event which the historians and many hadith re-corders reported of holding a conference with his immediate relatives is the only logical course which the Holy Prophet was expected to follow after the revelation of the verse.

The Offered Reward

The Prophet was about to come to a confrontation with the idol-worshippers. Therefore he needed a minister who had his courage sincerity and firmness. Forty men from the children of Abdul-Muttalib would be an important asset for Islam if they adopted it. But if they were ordinary people they would not be able to face the masses of Mecca and Arabia.

God will soon command His Messenger to extend his invitation to all of the Arabs then to other nations as well and they will violently resist the invitation for years to come.

Forty average persons will be terrified by the hostiles of Mecca and Arabia; yet one man of high courage will be able to face whatever the Messenger will face.

For this the Prophet spoke to them about this important goal after a very short introduction saying:

"Who is among you willing to be my minister in this mission? (Whoever is willing to be so) will be my brother executor and successor."

How Could the Prophet Make Such a Promise? Suppose all or most of them had accepted Islam at the meeting and promised him their assistance. What could he do? It may be conceivable that all of them would become his brothers but it is very hard to conceive that all of them would be his executors. And if this is probable it is not conceivable that everyone of them would be his successor.

With a little analysis one may know the answer.

The Messenger was well aware that the majority of them would not have the courage to pledge to him a genuine support of Islam. For such a pledge would put them face to face with the whole society and draw them into a war which might end with the loss of their lives. A true assistant of the Messenger must be an unusual person and the majority of the attendants were just average people.

What happened at the meeting clearly substantiates the truth of what the Prophet expected. None of them was willing nor had the daring spirit to pledge to him assistance except one person and the following years proved that he was the man for the job.

Why These Specific Rewards? The Prophet evidently wanted to follow the footsteps of Moses. Moses asked his Lord to give him a minister from his own family and here the Prophet Muhammad gathered his close relatives seeking from among them a minister. The minister of Moses was his brother Aaron.

The Prophet Muhammad did not have a brother because he was the only child of his parents Abdullah and Aminah. To follow the course of Moses he wanted to make his minister also his brother.

The same applies to the position of successor. Aaron was the successor of Moses among his people when Moses went to the mountain to hear the words of his Lord and secluded himself for forty nights. Before going to the mountain he said to Aaron according to the Holy Qur'an:

"Be my successor among my people and do good and follow not the path of mischief makers."
The Holy Quran Chapter 7 verse 142.

What the Prophet said to 'Ali many years after this event supports this understanding and confirms its soundness. Leaving him in Medina when he took his long journey to Tabouk he said to him:

"Ali will it not satisfy you to be to me like Aaron to Moses except that there will be no prophet after me?"⁸

Giving 'Ali all the ranks of Aaron with the exception of the Prophethood means that 'Ali was like Aaron in the rest of the ranks: The ministry the brotherhood and the succession. The statement of the Prophet at the above mentioned conference and this statement are consistent with each other and they aim at one purpose.

Why Such a Big Reward for a Ministry?

It may be said: Why should the Holy Prophet give 'Ali such a big reward for his ministry? Is not the rank of assistant (or minister) to the Prophet a high reward by itself? The answer is that the ministry of 'Ali is not a reward from the Prophet as much as it is a gift from 'Ali. This ministry or assistance is a tremendous sacrifice on the part of the minister. To make this clear I would like to say that there are two types of ministry:

1. A Ministry of Administrating the Affairs of an established state. The man of such a ministry is a counselor to the head of the state by authorization from his superior or from the congress or from the people.
2. A Ministry of Founding and Establishing a State.

The minister here would be the assistant of his superior in bringing into being a state which did not exist yet or in spreading a new faith which is not yet known to the people. The mission of a minister of this kind is to carry with his superior the tremendous responsibility of establishing a faith and a state and to face with him all dangers. He would be his protective shield constantly ready to sacrifice himself for the safety of his superior.

A ministry of the first kind is a gift from the head of the state to his minister and a great honor bestowed on him by elevating him to a high office.

The ministry of the second kind is not a gift from the superior as much as it is a gift from the minister. It is a tremendous sacrifice which the minister offers continuously for the protection of his superior and for making his mission a success. A minister of this kind faces with his superior dangers and difficulties which could not be faced by a human multitude.

The minister whom the Holy Prophet was seeking from among the members of his clan was from the second rather than from the first kind. There was no established state nor was there yet any Muslim community.

The Messenger of God was not (and even after the Islamic State was established) in need of a counselor to advise him how to spread the message or to found a state. He was in need of a person of unusual sincerity and heroism with an absolute obedience to God and His Messenger.

A person that deserves to be the brother of the Messenger of God and his successor after his absence from this world must have a soul that is virtuous enough to be an extension of the soul of the Prophet himself. He must resemble him to a high degree in knowledge wisdom and rise above self interest. In other words he must be a replica of the great Prophet.

Yes the Messenger of God was not in need of a person who advises him about the wise course he should take. The Messenger was the most intelligent and the wisest. He only was in need of a minister who would assist him by his big action sacrifices and heroic work. That minister would be the recipient of his knowledge and when the need arises he will be able to represent the Messenger and sit on his chair after him.

The Prophet Wanted to Have No Excuses

One should not doubt for a minute that the Messenger of God was aware of who will be his minister before he spoke to the members of his clan. He knew that there was none among the group that had the quality of the needed minister but 'Ali.

However the Messenger would not choose 'Ali to the high offices without leaving no excuse for the rest of his relatives. He would not let the coming generations say that if he had asked someone other than 'Ali he would have found many qualified persons. He would not let us wonder whether the Messenger had a favoritism towards 'Ali and distinguished him without a clear reason. It was necessary to give the rest of the members of his clan the opportunity to make them show their attitude and to make the merit of 'Ali evident.

The Outcome of the Conference of the House of The Prophet

The conference to which the Messenger called the children of Abdul-Muttalib produced a unique pact; history

has never witnessed its like nor has it witnessed its equal in nobility and high aim. It is a covenant between the final Prophet of God the Conveyor of the Message of the Heaven and his minister 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib who at the time of the covenant was not above the thirteenth year of his age.

The substance of the covenant was two items:

1. A pledge on the part of 'Ali to the Prophet to be his minister in fulfilling his great mission.
2. A promise by the Holy Prophet put in a form of a declaration in which he told the members of his clan while his hand was on 'Ali's head: "This is my brother my executor and my successor in you. Listen to him and obey him."

It is worthy to note that the Messenger fulfilled his promise immediately at the conference. He did not

wait for 'Ali to fulfill his pledge. The Prophet put his promise in a form of an immediate reward to his minister. He declared while he was still at the conference that 'Ali was his brother and made him his executor and successor.

He did not wait for 'Ali to fulfill his pledge because he knew that 'Ali's word carried its full meaning and that his word and his deed were united and never would contradict each other. 'Ali put himself at the disposal of the Messenger from the minute he uttered his pledge. Several years elapsed before the Holy Prophet needed 'Ali's immediate assistance.

'Ali's father was still alive and strong guarding the life of the Messenger; and the believers were not yet permitted by God to fight their adversaries. Also the danger against the Holy Prophet had not reached its peak.

The dangerous hour came ten years after the conference and after Abu Talib departed from this world. The Meccan chiefs in their "Nadwa" (club) conferred and decided to bring to an end the life of the Messenger by assassination.

The Prophet called upon his minister to start fulfilling his pledge. Thus the night of redemption came and 'Ali was the redeemer of the Messenger and his Trustee.

'Ali pronounced his word while he knew the magnitude of the mission in which he pledged to assist the Prophet.

He was fully aware that due to its magnitude the mission seemed to be impossible. The mission aimed at changing the beliefs of the society and its ways of life.

It aimed at making the society embrace Heavenly principles that do not agree with its nature. 'Ali knew that it would be opposed by all forces in society. He knew that the success of this mission could not be achieved unless it prevailed against all adversary forces and that this required the establishment of an Islamic state based on the foundation of the newly revealed principles. Such a state would protect those principles and the freedom of their followers.

Such a mission cannot be accomplished even by a whole nation regardless of what it may muster of forces. This mission is what the Messenger was determined to achieve and it is the mission which 'Ali promised to support by his assistance and by facing all what the Prophet will face in its achievement.

As the conference yielded this result it was expected that 'Ali will fulfill his huge pledge as it was expected that the Holy Prophet will declare in the future to all Muslims what he had declared to his immediate relatives concerning 'Ali.

We shall see in the following pages that 'Ali fulfilled what he pledged to the Messenger and that the Messenger after the birth of the Islamic State had declared to the Muslims what he declared to the forty men from the children of Abdul-Muttalib.

1. This hadith is recorded by the following authors:

A. Ibn Al-Athir Al Kamil Part 2 p. 22.

B. Al-Tabari History of Nations Messengers and Kings Part 2 p. 217.

C. Abu Al-Fida in his History Part 1 p. 116.

D. Imam Ahmad Al-Musnad Part 1 pp. 111-119.

E. Ibn Ishaq Al-Bayhaqi in Al-Dalail (Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi Muntakhab Kansul-Ummal in the margin of Musnad Ahmad Part 5 pp. 41-42 printed in Beirut by Sader)

2. Muslim Sahih Muslim Part 3 pp. 79-80.

3. Al-Hakim in his Mustadrak Part 3 p. 61 reported that she was born 41 years after the birth of her father.

4. Muslim in his Sahih Part 3 pp. 79-80.

5. Ibn Sa'd Al-Tabaqat Part 8 p. 61.

6. Al-Tabaqat Part 4 p. 327.

7. 'Ali Ibn Burhanuddeen Al-Halabi Al-Seerat Al-Halayah (Bio- graphy of the Prophet) Part 1 p. 321.

8. Muslim in his Sahih Part 15 p. 175; Al-Bukhari reported it in his Sahih Part 5.

6. The Redeemer

The rapid increase of the number of Muslims in Medina heartened the Medinites and encouraged them to invite the Prophet to move to their city pledging to defend him with all their power. Upon this pledge the Holy Prophet accepted their invitation. The Meccan pagans knew about what took place.

They conferred secretly and reached the conclusion that the death of Muhammad was the only means to stop the spread of Islam. From each clan in Mecca a strong and courageous man was selected to attack Muhammad at an appointed night. Thus all the Meccan clans would be participants in his murder.

The Almighty revealed to His Messenger the news of the conspiracy and ordered him to depart from Mecca at the appointed night. His departure while under their surveillance was expected to put him face to face with danger.

Like other Meccan houses the house of the Prophet was not sight proof. An outsider could see its inside. The bed of Muhammad therefore should not be unoccupied; otherwise the enemies would discover his departure and block the roads and search the houses to find him. But whoever occupied Muhammad's bed at that night should be ready to die for the attack was surely coming.

The Messenger revealed to 'Ali the news of the conspiracy and asked him to lie on his bed. As expected 'Ali neither declined the dangerous invitation nor did he think of his own fate. He only thought of one important thing: The fate of the Prophet. "Messenger of God " he asked:

"Will you be safe?" When the Prophet replied in the affirmative 'Ali went down to the earth prostrating thanking God for the safety of His Messenger.

The Holy Prophet commissioned 'Ali with another mission: He asked him to deliver to the Meccans in the following days their trusts which were in the possession of the Prophet. The Messenger was the trustee of the Meccans friends and enemies alike. He was to them the Trustworthy.

No one should deliver those trusts on behalf of the Prophet other than his trustee and representative 'Ali.

The recorders of the hadith reported that the Messenger commissioned 'Ali with a third mission that night. Al-Hakim reported that 'Ali said that the Messenger accompanied him to the Kaaba (on the night of the Hijrah) to try to destroy Quraish's biggest idol.

The Messenger mounted the shoulders of 'Ali in order to reach the roof of the Kaaba but he found some weakness in 'Ali. He went down and told 'Ali to mount his shoulders and he did. And the Messenger rose up. 'Ali felt that if he wanted to reach Heaven he could. 'Ali went up to the roof of the Kaaba.

He shook the largest idol which was made of copper being bound to the roof. When he took hold of the idol the Prophet told him to throw it down. He did and the idol was broken. [1](#)

It seemed that this mission was completed before the conspirators surrounded the house of the Prophet and that the Prophet and 'Ali came back to the house after fulfilling this mission; then the Prophet left when the enemies were surrounding his house. 'Ali remained to fulfill the other two great missions: Occupying the bed of the Messenger and delivering to the Meccans their trusts.

Ibn Al-Athir in his history (Al-Kamil) reported that Gabriel came to the Prophet and told him not to lie on his bed that night and that the Prophet ordered 'Ali to lie on his bed. He also commissioned him to deliver what was in his possession of the trusts to the Meccans and informed him that the enemies would not harm him.

The Prophet took a handful of soil and threw it on the heads of the enemies who were surrounding his house and left unnoticed reciting the chapter of Yasine. Seeing the bed of the Prophet occupied the enemies believed that Muhammad was sleeping on his bed. They waited until morning and when 'Ali rose from the bed they recognized him. "Where is Muhammad?" they asked. "I do not know"

'Ali replied. "You ordered him to leave and he left." They beat 'Ali up brought him to the Mosque detained him for one hour then freed him. [2](#)

It is also reported that when the dawn drew nigh they dashed into the house and were surprised to find that the occupier of the bed was 'Ali rather than Muhammad. 'Ali stood up and they asked him: "Where is Muhammad?"

He denied any knowledge about his whereabouts. Violence erupted and 'Ali pressed the hand of their

leader making the sword of the man fall from his hand. Seizing upon the sword he was able to drive them out.

The chiefs of Mecca realized that their conspiracy was abortive. The Meccans in groups went in every direction trying to find Muhammad. One group led by a tracker took the right direction until they approached the Cave of Thaur.

Hearing the rumble of their feet Abu Bakr who was hiding with the prophet was extremely frightened and sweating. As they came to the mouth of the Cave Abu Bakr whispered in the ear of the Prophet: "If one of them looks under his feet he will see us." The Prophet calmly replied: "Be not afraid God is with us."

The Almighty protected His Prophet from his enemies and the historical Hijrah by which the faith of Islam and the Muslims were transferred from a state of weakness to a state of dignity and strength commenced.

The Magnitude of The Mission

Let us try to evaluate 'Ali's sacrifice and the magnitude of his mission. When the Prophet accepted the invitation of the Muslims of Medina the Muslims in Mecca numbered about 150. The Prophet permitted or rather urged these Muslims to migrate to Medina. He did that in spite of his awareness of the new danger which resulted from his covenant with the Medinites. He knew that the Meccans would not let him depart from their city safely.

He could have kept a number of prominent Muslims around him to shield him against the imminent danger. He could also commission any one of them to occupy his bed at such a time. But he did not do that; instead he urged them to leave Mecca ahead of him and kept 'Ali for the hard task. He chose 'Ali because he knew that an occupant of his bed that night must have the following qualities:

1. His love to God His Messenger and His religion should be stronger than his love to himself.
2. He must be endowed with a courageous spirit that would enable him to face death for the Divine cause with satisfaction.
3. He should have an indomitable spirit with which he would not be frightened by his aloneness while facing the violent wrath of the Meccan community because he foiled their plot against the Prophet. In addition to this he had to be patient enough to withhold all information about the Prophet regardless of what he might face of torture.

It was extremely difficult if not impossible to find a person other than 'Ali ready to perform such a role and do it so calmly without fear.

Here we may understand the meaning of the ministry and assistance which 'Ali promised the Prophet

ten years before the time of this event.

Significance of the Delivery of the Trusts

It is worthy to note that the Prophet commissioned 'Ali with the delivery of the trusts to the Meccans. This clearly put in action what he promised 'Ali of executorship. The Messenger could have commissioned someone other than 'Ali to deliver the trusts. 'Ali's survival was highly in doubt because of his dangerous mission.

The rest of the Muslims were in no danger; thus the Prophet would be expected to commission Abu Bakr or another companion with the delivery of the trusts rather than 'Ali. Yet he chose 'Ali in spite of the dangers with which he was surrounded.

A Miraculous Prophecy

Choosing 'Ali to deliver the trusts proves that 'Ali was the only person representing the Prophet. Deputizing 'Ali by itself was a unique prophecy. God revealed to Muhammad that 'Ali would pass the crisis safely and that he would be in a position to deliver the trusts. Had the Prophet not been certain that 'Ali would survive the crisis he would have commissioned someone other than 'Ali with the trusts.

Their delivery was a duty whose imperativeness compelled the Prophet to choose the surest way in delivering them. Thus it was the duty of the Messenger to choose for such a mission a person who was expected to survive rather than a person who was expected to die.

Value Undiminished

The reader may think that 'Ali was certain of his survival and his certainty came from information of the Holy Prophet and from his being commissioned by him to deliver the trusts for this indicates that the Prophet was sure of 'Ali's survival. If this were the case the event would lose its importance for the occupant of the bed of the Prophet would not be harmed regardless of the magnitude of the danger.

The fact is that the Messenger of God commissioned 'Ali with the delivery of the trusts after he accepted the mission of redemption without hesitation or concern with what would happen to him during that night. It was equal to 'Ali to stay alive or to die as long as the Prophet was safe. 'Ali was the one who used to seek martyrdom as an ultimate goal. He believed that martyrdom is the great gain and the highest form of victory.

We know the truth of this when we read what is recorded in Nahjul-Balaghah where he speaks about the revelation of the following verse: "Do men think that they will be left alone saying: 'We believe ' without being tested?'"

The Imam tells us that when this verse was revealed he reminded the Prophet of a statement he made when the Imam was saddened because he did not obtain martyrdom which many other Muslims obtained at the Battle of Uhud.

The Prophet told him at that time: "Be cheerful martyrdom is coming to you." The Prophet confirmed his previous statement saying: "That will be so. How will your patience be at that time?" The Imam retorted: "Messenger of God this will not be a place of patience. It will be a place of cheerfulness and thanks."³

The Almighty informed the Messenger when he was migrating to Medina that he would come back to Mecca: "Certainly the one who commanded you to deliver the message of the Holy Qur'an will bring you back...."

This revelation was a promise from God to His Prophet to make him survive all difficulties until he returns him to Mecca regardless of any battles he attends. Thus the Prophet had attended numerous battles while he was certain of his safety. This did not diminish the value of his endeavor for he was determined to do that even if he were not promised with a Divine protection.

This is true also concerning 'Ali. His belief in his survival until he delivered the trusts does not diminish the magnitude of his sacrifice because he was ready to make that sacrifice and to redeem the Prophet whether he was informed of his survival or his martyrdom. The history of 'Ali after the Hijrah substantiates this conclusion.

The Prophet did not inform 'Ali that he would survive the battle of Uhud but that did not prevent him from staying with the Messenger protecting him by himself and combating the regiments one after another and forcing them to retreat after all companions ran away.

The Almighty protected His Messenger from the Qureshite conspirators and enabled him to arrive in Medina safely where he found strength and support. But Quraish was not expected to adopt a peaceful attitude or to sleep while Muhammad was alive.

To them his very existence was a tremendous danger threatening their religion and influence. They expected his power to grow by the passage of time and that he would come back accompanying an army that Quraish could not face.

Certainly the survival of the Messenger made the Qureshites more eager and determined to kill him and more violent in combating him. They were expected to wage a long war against him and his followers.

They were ready to use whatever they had of power and influence to fight him and to stir up the pagans and non-pagan tribes against him. They wanted to succeed in accomplishing by confrontation what they could not accomplish through attempts of assassination.

'Ali's redemption of the Holy Prophet at the night of the Hijrah was a fulfillment of the pledge which he made at the conference of the House where he promised the Holy Prophet to be his minister. The

events which followed the Hijrah demanded from 'Ali assistance to the Prophet much more and greater in size and magnitude year after year until the victory of the Heavenly message was realized.

The Faith of Islam could not have continued and spread unless the followers of Islam were liberated from fear and enabled to enjoy religious freedom. This could not be realized unless a powerful state based on the principles of the new faith is established. Such a state could not be established unless the evil forces which were threatening the faith are defeated.

We shall see in the following pages that 'Ali was that unique minister who was great enough to assist the Prophet to achieve these goals.

Thus 'Ali earned the two honors of being the Redeemer of the Final of the Prophets and the honor of being the executor of the Prophet (in action) whom he deputized to deliver to the Meccans what was in his possession of their trusts. Both honors were unique.

When his two missions were so successfully fulfilled 'Ali set out towards Medina. As he arrived to Qoba he found the Holy Prophet waiting for him to enter with him the city which was destined to be the capital of Islam.

[1.](#) Al-Hakim Al-Mustadrak Part 3 p. 5.

[2.](#) Ibn Al-Athir in his history Al-Kamil Part 2 p.72.

[3.](#) Nahjul Balaghah Part 2 p.5.

7. 'Ali's Role in Building the Islamic State

Self-determination is an inalienable right of every nation and every nation therefore has the right to establish a state and institute a national government.

Such a state has the right to unite all its people under one banner unless legitimate governments for sections of one nation had been already established. These rights are natural and no power has the right to prevent a nation or a people of a country from exercising them.

The Arab nation at the time of the Messenger was no exception. It had the right to establish a state and institute a government. This was not only a right but also the duty of the Arab nation. Yet due to unusual circumstances the Arab people in Hijaz Najd and Tuhama were living without government of any kind. There was no power to stop a public offender and enable people to live in peace and security for their wealth lives and honors.

The Arab tribes were reciprocating hostilities. No honor blood or property of a tribe was sacred to other tribes. Anarchy to them was a matter of course and no change was necessary; and if anyone thought of

a change he did not have the means to realize it.

The rest of the Arab people in Yemen Syria and Iraq were ruled by foreign powers who did not have the right to rule them.

It was a duty of any new government to try to liberate these people from foreign domination and unite them with the rest of the Arabs regardless of any religious principles.

But there was no one to fulfill this duty or exercise these rights.

The Almighty wanted to deliver the Arabs and other nations and liberate them from their social political and religious anarchies. He sent Muhammad to lead mankind to the right road and wanted the Arab nation to be the starting point. Probably the Arabs were the most needy for such a guidance and should they be guided by a heavenly leader they would be well qualified to carry His message to other nations.

The Messenger tried to deliver His message and to establish a state. The forces of anarchy from pagans and non-pagans tried with all their means to prevent him from fulfilling his mission waging against him a relentless war.

It was impossible for him to fulfill his mission without accepting their challenge and meeting them at the battle field and defeating them completely.

It was the right as well as the duty of the Holy Prophet to defeat the adversary forces in order to establish a new state from a new and ideal kind.

The Islamic State which he was trying to establish was not a subduing force which ruled people against their own will and imposed itself above them. The Messenger wanted to found a state and a government in which the ruler and the ruled are equal and brothers to each other.

A strong individual or group in this state would not be respected for strength nor would the weak be deprived of his right because of his weakness. The government the Prophet wanted to establish was projected to direct mankind to the Creator of the Universe and make the nations as well as the individuals realize that He is their True Ruler.

Thus they would obey His command and obtain the projected worldly and spiritual happiness in His obedience. The Projected government would develop as a spontaneous outcome of their adherence to a set of principles which elevated people to make them live spiritually above their own human level.

Thesis Versus Antithesis

The anarchic and evil forces of Mecca and other Arab communities did not only deny Muhammad the right to establish a state and a government but also tried to prevent him and his followers from exercising their religious devotion. They denied him and his followers the right to live as long as they believed in

One God.

These forces drove Muhammad and his followers out of their homes and properties. They wanted to shed his blood and the blood of his followers. Had these forces done nothing other than preventing him from establishing a state he would have had the right to combat them and defeat them for the continuation of their power meant the continuation of injustice towards the weak and the absence of security in society; above all that the Almighty would not be worshiped and His Oneness would not be acknowledged.

The adverse elements were the opposite barriers the removal of which was a necessary requirement for establishing the projected state. It was impossible to bring such a state into existence without destroying its opposite.

Thus the Heavenly state was destined to be born on the battlefield when the founder of the state and his followers were accepting the challenges of the evil forces one after another. Had these forces been able to prevail on the battlefield the Islamic state could not have been born or continued to exist.

Quality Versus Quantity

Muslims at the beginning of the Hijrah were a very small minority compared to the rest of the Arab forces which stood against them. They were overwhelmingly outnumbered and poorly equipped.

For the Faith of Islam to triumph and establish a state it had to have one of the two following methods:

1. A Divine intervention through which the evil forces would be miraculously destroyed. God is able to do that and nothing is beyond His power. Whenever He wants to do anything He only says: "Be and it is." However it is evident that this was not to happen.

The Almighty runs the events of the world through the natural courses. He tests the believers and they do not pass the test unless they try to fulfill what He commands them to do offering in His way what they possess of resourcefulness and power.

2. The other way by which the small Islamic minority could obtain victory was to have a superior quality which enabled it to prevail against opponents with quantitative superiority. This is what took place.

The Unique Hero

Here we find 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib next to the Messenger.

He proved to be a unique hero and a giant; mankind had never witnessed his equal in the history of "Jihad." The reader may remember that the Messenger of God gathered his close relatives after the commencement of his Prophethood seeking from among them a minister to assist him in his difficult

mission.

None of the Hashimites other than 'Ali responded to his call. "Prophet of God " he said "I shall be your minister." The Prophet upon hearing this told the Hashimites: "This ('Ali) is my brother executor and successor."

This event took place ten years before the Hijrah when 'Ali was thirteen years old. During the ten years which followed the event 'Ali's manhood reached its unequalled strength. This became crystal clear at the night of Hijrah when he lay on the bed of the Messenger giving the highest example in the history of Islamic redemption.

This manhood was destined to be transformed into a unique heroism when the Messenger and his followers accepted the challenge of their enemies and went on defending their sacred freedom trying to bring about the birth of the Islamic State which was conceived to carry the torch of guidance for mankind.

No one other than the Messenger expected the word "Wazeeruk" (your minister) which 'Ali uttered at the historical conference to be so full of its meaning and flowing with so much of heroism. The Messenger was the only one who expected from 'Ali all his future record.

The Messenger was the architect and the founder of the Islamic State. His minister 'Ali was the eliminator of the obstructive forces which stood in the way of its establishment for he was the hero and the bearer of the banner of the Messenger in every decisive battle. [1](#)

The Messenger made him the commander-in-chief of every expedition he attended. He never placed him under any command other than his. Whenever he carried the banner of the Messenger he came back with an impressive victory and history. His leadership was unique in style. He was not a commander who was defended by his soldiers.

He was rather the leader who stood in the front line literally leading his soldiers. On more than one occasion his soldiers took refuge in him and he was their protector at more than one battle. On occasions the bulk of the companions ran away leaving the Messenger alone and 'Ali stood along with him compensating him through his heroic performance for what the Prophet missed of their defensive actions.

'Ali attended eighteen battles with the Messenger. In addition he led numerous expeditions. It suffices to mention briefly his indispensable contributions in four decisive battles: Badr Uhud the Moat and Kheibar. These four battles were truly the battles of destiny for Islam and Muslims. The future of Islam was dependent upon their outcomes.

[1.](#) Ibn Sa'd in his Al-Tabaqat Part 3 p. 25.

Al-Hakim also reported that in his Al-Mustadrak Part 3 p. 111.

8. At Badr

The Battle of Badr was the most important among the Islamic Battles of Destiny. For the first time the followers of the new faith were put into a serious test. Had victory been the lot of the pagan army while the Islamic forces were still at the beginning of their developments the faith of Islam could have come to an end.

No one was as aware of the importance of the outcome of the Battle as the Holy Prophet. We might read the depth of his anxiety in his prayer before the beginning of the Battle when he stood up supplicating his Lord: "God this is Quraish. It has come with all its arrogance and boastfulness trying to discredit Thy Apostle. God I ask Thee to humiliate them tomorrow. God if this Muslim band will perish today Thou shall not be worshiped!"¹

At this battle in which the pagan army consisted of 950 fighters and the Muslims did not exceed 314 (including the Messenger) the Islamic defense was a combination of three elements resembling three defensive lines:

1. The personality of the Messenger his leadership and his unequalled firmness. He was to the Muslims the final refuge at Badr and at every battle he attended.
2. The Hashimites (the clan of the Prophet) led by 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib who entered this Battle relatively obscure and came out of it with unequalled military fame.

His military performances became the popular subject of the Arab caravans' conversations throughout the Arabic Peninsula.

3. The hundreds of companions of the Messenger whose hearts were filled with faith and readiness for sacrifice. Many of them viewed martyrdom to be a gain equal to life and victory. These good companions were the army of Islam its first line of defense and the thick wall behind which the Messenger used to stand. They were defenders and they were attackers.

As to the clan of the Messenger they were the ones whom he used to call before any one else to offer the heavy sacrifice. They used to stand in the first line of defense opening for the army the way through their thrusts in the lines of the enemies. When the general offensives began and every companion present participated the clan of the Messenger were the most damaging to the enemies. They were so at Badr and at the following battles.

The battle began when Utbah Ibn Rabi-ah his son Al-Walid and his brother Sheibah (all from Umayyad) stood in front of their pagan army and asked the Prophet to send to them their equals for a duel. Hundreds of companions were around him and many of them were expecting to be called upon by the

Prophet but he chose to start with his own family.

The load was heavy and the heavy load could be carried only by the people to whom it belonged. He called upon 'Ali Al-Hamzah and Obeidah Ibn Al-Harith (all from the clan of the Prophet) to face the three warriors.

'Ali destroyed Al-Walid and Al-Hamzah killed Utbah; then they both assisted Obeidah against his opponent Sheibah. Sheibah died immediately and Obeidah was the first martyr at this battle. He died after he lost his leg.

When the general offensive began hundreds of companions participated in the battle. They offered sacrifices and pleased their Lord. But the members of the House of the Messenger distinguished themselves. 'Ali's endeavor was unique at this battle.

When Hanthala Ibn Abu Sufyan faced him 'Ali liquified his eyes with one blow from his sword. He annihilated Al-Aws Ibn Sa-eed and met Tuaima Ibn Uday and transfixed him with his spear saying: "You shall not dispute with us in God after today."

The Messenger took a handful of gravel when the battle was extremely heated. He threw it at the faces of the pagans saying: "May your faces be disfigured. God terrify their hearts and invalidate their feet." The pagans ran away turning their faces to no one. The Muslims went on killing them and taking prisoners.

Seventy pagans met their death and the Muslims took from them seventy prisoners. History preserved in its records only fifty of the names out of the seventy pagan losses. Twenty² or twenty-two³ of them died at 'Ali's hands.

This battle laid the foundation of the Islamic State and made out of the Muslims a force to be reckoned with by the dwellers of the Arabic Peninsula.

However we should not overlook the fact that it took three hundred and twelve companions to achieve sixty percent of the outcome of the battle while 'Ali alone achieved at least forty percent of it. It is not an exaggeration to say that his endeavor was a very substantial factor in bringing the battle to its victorious conclusion. Should we subtract his forty percent the outcome of the battle might have changed. On the other hand if we subtract any other single companion in that battle the outcome of the battle would not have changed.

¹. Ibn Hisham Biography of the Prophet Part 2 p. 621.

². Ibn Hisham Biography of the Prophet pp. 708-713.

³. Al-Waqidi Al-Maghazi (Oxford printing) Part 1 p. 152.

9. At Uhud

The Qureshites came out from the Battle of Badr with an astonishing result which they did not expect. They were confident of their capability to annihilate the Muslims easily. For the Qureshites were more numerous and with a bigger reserve and more logistics.

Yet they suddenly found themselves losing seventy of their warriors and leaders along with seventy captives in a one-day battle. And above all the resounding defeat which they received was at the hand of a group whom they used to belittle. The Qureshites were unwilling to admit a final defeat.

They lost a battle but they believed that they would never lose the war. All they needed was to mobilize forces to which the Muslims would not be able to stand. The burning hatred in the hearts of Qureshites and their desire to wash away the shame of the defeat at Badr and their eagerness to avenge their lost leaders added to their physical superiority a tremendous psychological strength.

The Qureshites mobilized for the battle of avenge three thousand fighters compared to nine hundred and fifty fighters at the Battle of Badr. This army was financed and its logistics were secured through the gross income of the commercial caravan which was allotted to the battle of avenge.

Thus the community of Quraish one year after the Battle of Badr marched towards Medina to annihilate the Muslims their religion and their Prophet. The Meccan army arrived at the area of Uhud which is five miles away from Medina. There the expected battle took place.

The Holy Prophet went on deploying his forces placing them in strategic positions. He placed fifty marksmen at the slope of the Mount of Uhud directing them to protect the back of the Muslims against the pagan cavalry (which was led by Khalid Ibn Al-Walid). He commanded them not to leave their position whether the Muslims defeated the pagans or the pagans defeated the Muslims.

The Elements of the Islamic Defense

In this second battle of destiny for the Muslims the Islamic defense consisted of the same three important elements which played their roles at the Battle of Badr:

1. The ideal leadership of the Messenger and his firmness.
2. The members of the House of the Holy Prophet and their heroism.
3. An Islamic army consisting of seven hundred companions the hearts of many of them were filled with faith and readiness for sacrifice.

The start of the Battle of Uhud followed the method of the beginning of the Battle of Badr. Talhah Ibn

Abu Talhah (from Banu Abdul-Dar clan) the bearer of the banner of the pagans challenged the Muslims saying:

"Are there any duelers?" The respondent to his call was the same respondent of the Battle of Badr. 'Ali came to him and when they faced each other between the two hosts 'Ali swiftly dealt him a blow by his sword through which his head was split. The Holy Prophet was pleased.

He exclaimed: "Allahu Akbar" (God Is Great) and so did the Muslims for the biggest hero of the pagan army had died.

Abu Saad Ibn Abu Talhah (brother of Talhah) carried the banner and challenged the Muslims saying: "Companions of Muhammad you allege that your dead go to Paradise and our dead go to Hell. By 'Al-Lat' you lie. If you were so confident some of you could have faced me. Let one of you come to fight me."¹

'Ali came to him and Abu Saad was not luckier than his brother Talhah. The men of Abdul-Dar continued replacing the bearers of their banner with their men and the

Muslims continued annihilating them. 'Ali destroyed Artat Ibn Sharhabeel Shureih Ibn Qaridh and their servant Sawab.

Historians reported that Al-Hamzah killed Uthman Ibn Abu Talhah. Assim Ibn Thabit shot by his arrows Musafi and Al-Harith two sons of Talhah Al-Zubayr killed their brother Kilab and Talhah Ibn Ubaydullah killed their other brother Al-Jallas.

'Ali and the Banner Bearers

However Ibn Al-Athir reported that 'Ali alone destroyed all the standard bearers at the Battle of Uhud and said that Abu Rafi reported that.² And so did Al-Tabari.

The death of the bearers of the banner heightened the morale of the Muslims and shook the hearts of the pagans.

Following the death of the banner bearers the Muslims undertook a general offensive led by 'Ali Al-Hamzah Abu Dujanh and others. The Islamic offensive terrified the pagan army but the Muslims lost during this operation a giant hero Al-Hamzah Lion of God and uncle of the Messenger of God. Wahshi an Abyssinian transfixed him with his dart while he was fighting.

However the pagans were forced to flee and leave their camps. The Muslims entered the pagan camps and went on collecting what they found of equipment and material without meeting any resistance from the pagans.

Defeat After Victory

This scene watered the mouths of the fifty marksmen whom the Prophet placed at the slope of the Mount of Uhud to protect the back of the Muslims against the pagan cavalry. The majority of these marksmen left their place and joined the collectors of the spoils. They did not heed the word of their leader Abdullah Ibn Jubeir who reminded them of the instructions of the Messenger which made it mandatory for them not to leave their place. Not more than ten of them heeded his words. Noticing the small number of the marksmen Khalid Ibn Al-Walid and his horsemen killed them then started a general offensive.

The fleeing pagans beheld their horsemen fighting and attacking. They came back to the battle while the Muslims were preoccupied collecting the spoils.

The Muslims were astonished and confused. They started to fight but they did not know whom they were fighting.

Many Muslims were killed by the Muslims themselves then they fled turning their backs and refusing to look behind while the Messenger was calling upon them to come back to the battle. The Holy Qur'an informs us of the situation of the Muslims in this terrifying hour:

"God certainly made good His promise unto you when you routed them by His leave until the moment when your courage failed you and ye disobeyed after He had showed that for which ye long. Among you are some that hanker after this world and some that desire the Hereafter. Then did he divert you from your foes in order to test you. But He forgave you: For God is full of grace to those who believe. Behold ye were climbing up (the high ground) without casting a side glance at anyone and the Apostle was calling you back. There did God give you one distress after another by way of requital to teach you not to grieve for what ye miss or for (the ill) that had befallen you. For God is well aware of all that ye do." The Holy Quran Chapter 3 verses 151-152.

Who Remained with the Prophet?

The companions fled away being concerned with their own safety. History recorded seven exceptional Meccans ('Ali Abu Bakr Abdul-Rahman Ibn Ouf Saad Ibn Abu Waqass Talhah Ibn Obeidah Al-Zubayr Ibn Al-Awam Abu Obeidah Ibn Al-Jarrah); And Seven exceptional Medinites (Al-Hubab Ibn Al-Munthir Abu Dujanah Sahl Ibn Hunayf Assim Ibn Thabit Saad Ibn Mu-ath As-ad Ibn Hudheir or Saad Ibn Abadah and Muhammad Ibn Muslimah).

These men according to some historians remained with the Prophet when the other companions deserted him.³ From what we read in Al-Mustadrak by Al-Hakim we understand that 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib was the only defender who stayed with the Prophet for the duration of the battle. The other companions who were mentioned to be among those who remained with the Prophet were actually the first ones to

come back to the Messenger of God after they left him. Al-Hakim recorded that Ibn Abbas said:

"Ali has four distinctions no one shares with him: He was the first male who prayed with the Messenger of God. He was the bearer of his banner in every battle and he was the one who stayed with him at the Battle on the day of Al-Mihras (the Battle of Uhud where there is gathered water called Al-Mihras) and he is the one who washed his blessed body and laid him in his tomb."⁴

Al-Hakim reported also that Saad Ibn Abu Waqass said: When people left the Messenger on the day of Uhud I went aside and said to myself I shall defend myself. Then Al-Miqdad told him: "Saad this is the Messenger."⁵

Al-Hakim reported also that Al-Zubayr said about the Battle of Uhud "And they exposed our back to the horsemen so we were attacked from behind and a man shouted: Muhammad has been killed. We retreated and the enemies pursued us."⁶

He also reported that Abu Bakr said: When people left the Messenger of God on the day of Uhud I was the first one to come back to the Messenger of God... then he mentioned in the hadith that Abu Obeidah Ibn Al-Jarrah followed him."⁷

The Prophet Participated

The Messenger stayed at the battlefield with full determination and firmness after the pagans came up to him. He himself fought vigorously. Saad Ibn Abu Waqaas reported that he witnessed a man whose face was covered and he did not know who he was. The pagans came towards him and Saad thought that they were going to overpower him.

But that man took a handful of gravel and threw it at their faces and they retreated... Finally Saad discovered that that man was the Prophet.⁸ He used his bow and expended all his arrow until his bow could not be used any longer.

When the Prophet was exposed to the enemies by the retreat of his army Obay Ibn Khalaf tried to attack him.

Some of his companions tried to bar Obay from reaching the Prophet but the Prophet prevented them from doing that. He faced Obay with a blow which did not seem to be effective. But Obay said: "By God Muhammad has killed me...." He told me in Mecca: "I shall kill you. By God if he spits on me he kills me." Obay died in "Saraf" while returning to Mecca.

'Ali's Endeavor

Al-Tabari reported that Abu Rafi said: The Messenger of God witnessed a group of pagans coming to him. He said to 'Ali: Charge them. 'Ali charged them and forced them to retreat and killed Amr Ibn

Abdullah Al-Jumahi. The Prophet beheld another group coming and told 'Ali to charge them and he did. He scattered them and killed Sheibah Ibn Malik one of the children of Amir Ibn Lu-ay.

Amazed by 'Ali's sacrifice Gabriel said: "Messenger of God what a redeemer 'Ali is!" The Prophet replied: "He is from me and I am from him." Gabriel said: "And I am from both of you."⁹ They heard at that time a voice saying:

"There is no youth (full of manhood) but 'Ali and no sword comparable to Zulfiqar ('Ali's sword)

A regiment arrived from Kinanah in which four of the children of Sufyan Ibn Oweif were present: Khalid Abu Al-Sha-atha Abu Al-Hamra and Ghurab. The Messenger of God said to 'Ali: "Take care of this regiment." 'Ali charged the regiment and it was about fifty horsemen. He fought them while he was on foot until he scattered them.

They gathered again and he charged them again. This was repeated several times until he killed the four children of Sufyan and added to them six more.... ¹⁰ Ibn Hisham reported that the Messenger fell into one of the pits which were excavated and covered up by Abu Amir who expected the Muslims to fall in them. The knee of the Messenger was cut. 'Ali held the hand of the Messenger and pulled him up and Talhah Ibn Ubaydullah helped him until the Prophet stood up.¹¹

Muslim in his "Sahih" (Authentic) reported that Sahl Ibn Saad said the following: "The face of the Messenger was cut and one of his teeth was broken and the protective dress of his head was broken. Fatima daughter of the Messenger was washing the blood and 'Ali was pouring water he brought by his shield from Al-Mihras. Beholding that the water increased the flow of blood she burned a mat put some of its ashes on the wound and the blood stopped."¹²

The Conclusion

It would not be difficult for the reader to infer the following:

1. The Battle of Uhud was one of the battles on which the future of Islam depended.
2. The death of the bearers of the banners of the pagan army at the beginning of the battle had its important effect in raising the morale of the Muslims and breaking the morale of the pagans who were four times more numerous than the Muslims. The bearers of the banners in the eyes of the warriors in those days were the leaders of the army. Their death had a great effect on the morale of the army.

History recorded that Abu Sufyan said to Banu Abdul-Dar: "O Banu Abdul-Dar we recognize that you have more right than any other Meccan clan to carry the banner (because the Meccan tradition gives the clan of Abdul-Dar the right to carry the banner at war). We were defeated in Badr because of the banner. Hold your banner firmly and protect it or hand it to us." This infuriated the clan of Abdul-Dar. As they refused to surrender their right of carrying the banner

Abu Sufyan said: "Let another banner be added to it." They said: "Yes but the additional banner will be carried also by a man from Banu Abdul-Dar and nothing other than this will be accepted."

The Meccan pagans witnessed at the beginning of the battle their banner fallen ten times and their hearts fell with the banner ten times. They found to their astonishment that they are facing a tremendous power. 'Ali was the one who destroyed the banner bearers or most of them.

This signalled the defeat of the Meccan army in the first round.

3. When the Muslims were defeated in the second round no one remained with the Prophet except 'Ali and thirteen others of the companions of the Messenger. These thirteen were the first to come back to the Messenger after their flight. It is clear that 'Ali's defense in that decisive hour was much more valuable than the defense of the thirteen companions put together.

The Messenger of God became the target of the pagan's attacks. Whenever a regiment aimed at the Prophet 'Ali charged the regiment and forced it to retreat.

Thus we would not be erroneous if we say that 'Ali in this decisive battle had the exclusive honor of being the main defender of the Messenger and his Message against the forces which no one other than 'Ali could face successfully. The Battle of Badr laid the foundation of the Islamic state but the Battle of Uhud was about to destroy the foundation had not a small number of heroes headed by 'Ali been present.

The pagans found that the Battle of Uhud ended in their favor. They defeated the army of the Prophet and the Muslims lost seventy companions among them the giant hero: Al-Hamzah uncle of the Messenger and Lion of God. But the pagan victory was not decisive.

Their target was Muhammad and Muhammad was still alive. He was the biggest danger to them. Therefore it was necessary for them to have another decisive battle in which they would realize the goal that they could not realize at the Battle of Uhud.

The Battle of Uhud took place during the third year after the Hijrah. Two years later the third decisive battle in which the pagans gathered their biggest task force took place.

[1.](#) Dr. M. Haykal Life of Muhammad p. 289.

[2.](#) Ibn Al-Athir. Al-Kamil. Part 3 p. 107.

[3.](#) Al-Waqidi Al-Maghazi (conveyed by Ibn Abu Al-Hadid in his Commentary on Nahjul-Balaghah Vol. 3 p. 388)

[4.](#) Al-Hakim in his Al-Mustadrak, Part 3, p. 111.

[5.](#) Al-Hakim recorded it in Al-Mustadrak, Part 3, pp. 26-28.

[6.](#) Al-Hakim Al-Mustadrak, Part 3, pp.27-28.

[7.](#) Al-Hakim Al-Mustadrak Part 3 p.78.

[8.](#) This is reported also by Ibn Hisham in his Biography of the Prophet Part 2 p.78.

[9.](#) Sayed Muhsin Al-Ameen in his Aayan Al-Shi-ah Part 2 p. 195. Al-Fairoozbadi recorded this in his book: Fada-il Al-Khamsah Part 2 p.317 (conveying from Al-Tabari). And Ibn Al-Athir in his History Al-Kamil Part 2 p. 107 reported similar to

this.

[10.](#) Ibn Abu Al-Hadid in his Commentary on Nahjul-Balaghah Vol. A p.372.

[11.](#) Ibn Hisham Biography of the Prophet Part 2 p.80.

[12.](#) Muslim in his Sahih Part 12 p. 148.

10. The Moat

The Qureshite community had one important dream: The destruction of Muhammad and his religion. Pagan tribes outside Mecca were sharing with them the same dream. Like the Meccans these tribes considered Muhammad a serious menace to their religion.

This belief brought these tribes and the Muslims into military confrontations in which the Muslims had the upper hand. These tribes therefore were like the Meccan community full of resentment and rancour towards Muhammad and his religion.

Non-Pagan Tribes

There were clashes between the Muslims and some of the people of scripture who were neighboring Medina caused by their breaching of covenants with the Holy Prophet. Tribes from among them such as Banu Al-NAthir and others were exiled by the Prophet.

A delegation from these people went to Mecca and other Arab communities during the fifth year after the Hijrah propogating war against the Prophet and attempting to mobilize the Arab forces for the proposed war.

They did not need much effort to persuade the Meccans to a military undertaking against the Prophet. Their response to the invitation was prompt and without hesitation they mobilized four thousand fighters. This army was supplemented with six thousands from Ghatafan Saleem and other tribes. Thus ten thousands strong marched towards Medina.

The Holy Prophet received the news of the imminent invasion a few days before their arrival at Medina. He consulted his companions and Salman Al-Farisi (the Persian) advised the Prophet to dig a moat around Medina to prevent the invaders from entering it. The Messenger commanded the Muslims (who were about three thousands) to implement the plan. The moat was dug within six days.

Witnessing the moat the invaders were surprised and realized that it had become difficult for them to enter Medina. Thus they found it necessary to besiege Medina instead of invading it directly. Banu Quraidhah a community from the followers of the Scripture joined the pagan army after its arrival.

This community had a covenant of peace with the Prophet. Their treacherous action was a frightening

surprise to the Muslims. By breaching the covenant this community gave the pagan army additional forces and equipment. It became the duty of the Muslims to add to their defensive lines another line.

The Muslims in Horror

There were many hypocrites among the Muslims who circulated frightening rumors which added to the fear of the Muslims. The Holy Qur'an tells us of the psychological crisis with which the Muslims lived during that period:

"Behold! They came upon you from above you and from below you and when the eyes grew wild and the hearts gaped up to the throats and ye imagined various (vain) thoughts about God! In that situation the believers were tried: They were shaken with a mighty shock. And behold! The hypocrites and those in whose hearts there is a disease (even) say: God and His Apostle promised us nothing but delusion! Behold! A party among them said: O people of Yathrib (Medina) you cannot stand (the attack) therefore turn back! And a band of them ask for leave of the Prophet saying: Truly our houses are bare and exposed though they were not exposed; they intended nothing but to flee." The Holy Quran Chapter 33 verses 10-13.

The pagan army on the contrary was enjoying an extremely high morale. Victory to them was certain. Medina was under their siege and its inhabitants did not possess the courage to come out of it. Their confidence in victory and morale went higher when Banu Quraidhah joined them.

This made them change their strategy from the siege of Medina to a direct invasion.

Amr's Venture

Amr Ibn Abd Wodd accompanied by Dhirar Ibn Al-Khattab Akramah Ibn Abu Jahl and others sought and found a narrow place in the moat. Their horses leaped above the moat to the other side. Had this adventure succeeded many pagan fighters were expected to follow them and make it feasible for the whole army to pass through that narrow place for they could have spanned the two sides of the ditch by filling that narrow gap with soil.

The Muslims were in a state of shock and horror before the passage of these pagan soldiers to their side. The new danger which was presented by their passage made the morale of the Muslims much lower than before.

Men of Strong Faith

Though the hearts of most of the Muslims were filled with fear some of them were unshaken by the new danger.

It rather made their faith stronger in God His Messenger and the promised victory. These individuals were ready to sacrifice themselves and one of them certainly was determined to try to confine the danger then to remove it. The Holy Qur'an tells us of the morale of these believers.

"When the believers saw the confederate forces they said: This is what God and His Apostle had promised us. And God and His Apostle told us what is true. And it only added to their faith and their zeal in obedience.

"Among the believers are men who have been true to their covenant with God: Of them some have completed their vow (to the extreme) and some (still) wait; but they have never changed (their determination) in the least." The Holy Qur'an. Chapter 33 verse 23.

The Holy Qur'an does not inform us of the number of those believers whose faith was increased by the increase of the danger. These believers may have been scores or just a few. However faith sometimes remains only as a state of mind without being transformed into action. Some of the faith is active flowing with vitality and moving the faithful to face the danger and to rise to its level and above its level.

The number of these distinguished believers remained unknown.

‘Ali's Response

However history informed us of one of them because of his outstanding achievements at this battle in confining and removing the danger which shook the very foundation of the Islamic state. That man was no other than ‘Ali Ibn Abu Talib.

Amr Ibn Wodd who crossed the moat was well known among the Arabs. He attended the battle boastfully making his place known to people. His very passage from one side to the other side of the moat accompanied only by a small number of fighters indicates that the man was extremely courageous. He was the only one from among the ten thousand fighters who tried to invade the Muslims directly and challenge them totally while he was with them on one side.

The passage of Amr and his companions presented to the Muslims a new and serious danger and a frightening surprise which they never expected. The door was about to be opened widely and hundreds and thousands were expected to follow. The surprise however did not frighten or astonish ‘Ali.

History informs us of ‘Ali's present-mindedness and fast response for he immediately moved to confine the danger then to remove it. Leading a small number of believers he went immediately to the point where the Islamic defense line was broken by the passage of Amr. He had his companions stand there preventing others from attempting to follow Amr.¹ And after he confined the new danger he managed to remove it completely.

While mounting his horse Amr went around the area of Sal'a facing the Muslims and challenging them:

"Is there any dueler?" He repeated this call but there was no response on the part of the companions.

This compelled 'Ali to leave his place where he was deterring the pagan forces from following Amr by crossing the Moat. Responding to Amr's challenge he left that place temporarily to be defended by the few who were with him. He neared Amr and asked him to face him in a duel.

Amr arrogantly replied: "Why son of my brother (Amr was a friend of Abu Talib father of 'Ali)? By God I would not like to kill you." 'Ali replied: "But by God I would love to kill you." A short but extremely violent duel between the two heroes took place. 'Ali killed Amr immediately and Amr's companions ran away trying to re-cross the moat from the Islamic side to the pagan side.

'Ali exclaimed: "Allahu Akbar" (God is Great) and so did the Muslims. The death of Amr was the end of the new danger. Those who were with him ran away trying to save their skin; but most of them were killed before they could cross to the other side.

'Ali made a great contribution in the defense of Islam at this battle during which the danger against the new Faith reached its peak.

At this battle the Muslims faced a greater danger than ever before. The elements of the Islamic defense were the same three elements which played their roles during the two battles of Badr and Uhud: The firmness of the Messenger and his ideal leadership: the heroism of 'Ali; and the determination of the Islamic army.

A fourth element was added at this battle: The role of Salman Al-Farisi (the Persian) who counseled the Prophet to dig the moat around Medina.

The role of the Islamic army during the Battle of Uhud was smaller than its role during the Battle of Badr. And it was less important at the Battle of the Moat than it was at the Battle of Uhud for the Muslims during the Battle of the Moat did not even dare face the enemy. They only dug the moat around the city before the arrival of the pagan army then stood behind the moat until the end of the battle.

The roles of the first two defensive elements were similar to their roles at Badr and Uhud and probably bigger. The firmness of the Messenger his leadership his war strategy and his speed in digging the moat were most essential in making the Muslims pass the crisis safely. 'Ali's role at this battle was outstanding in the history of the Islamic defense.

The magnitude of 'Ali's contribution

It would not be logical to say that the Muslims were unable collectively to kill Amr who could not by himself prevail against thousands of Muslims. But this was not the case. Amr was calling for a duel. A duel could only be between two persons. It was considered to be shameful for two men or more to have a duel with one man. Amr challenged all the Muslims to send one of them to have a duel with him. None

of them was willing to face him except 'Ali.

Nor would it be logical to say that Amr was the entire power of the pagan forces and that his death was a defeat for the whole confederate army. But it would be logical to affirm two important matters:

1. 'Ali's initiative to block the passage point and prevent others from following Amr had stopped the danger and confined it. Had the passage point remained open a great number of the pagan soldiers would have followed Amr and their passage could have resulted in establishing a bridge between the two sides of the moat. Such a bridge would enable the whole army to cross.

One hour of negligence could have led to a decisive defeat of the Islamic army. This did not happen because 'Ali was fast in his response to the new danger present minded calm and collective and ready to deal with the serious crisis.

2. The death of Amr proved to the pagan army that they were unable to pass the moat again and that what Amr could not accomplish could not be accomplished by others.

By this the pagan army had to face one of two alternatives: Withdrawal or continuation of the siege until the Muslims surrender or were forced to cross the moat and fight the pagans. The continuity of the siege of Medina was beyond the ability of the pagan army. It did not have the food supplies for ten thousand fighters and their horses and camels which could enable them to continue the siege for several months or weeks.

In addition a hurricane-like wind went on causing the pagan army many damages and making its life miserable. The hurricane was preceded by an argument between the pagans and their Jewish allies which made their co-operation in the battle highly difficult.

Thus there was only one alternative for the pagan army to take after the failure of Amr and his death: The withdrawal and that is what they did.

We ought not to forget an important matter! The death of Amr and most of his companions raised the morale of the Muslims. Their hope in continuity of life and in victory was revived. All this was a result of 'Ali's endeavor and by this we can understand the meaning of the declaration of the Prophet. "The duel of 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib against Amr Ibn Abd Wodd at the Battle of the Moat outweighs the good deeds of my whole nation until the Day of Judgement."2

The Confederate Army withdrew and the Muslims passed the crisis safely. They regained their confidence concerning the future because of failure of the Confederate forces after their biggest mobilization. The Messenger said after their withdrawal: "After today we shall invade them and they will not invade us."3

1. Ibn Hisham Biography of the Prophet Part 2 p. 224.

2. Al-Mustadrak, Part 3, p. 32.

11. At Kheibar

Many non-pagan Arab tribes of the inhabitants of Hijaz refused to join the Faith of Islam. The faith itself prevented the Muslims from imposing it on the tribes because they were from the people of the scripture.

At the dawn of the Islamic State in the beginning of the Hijrah the Messenger signed a document by which he regulated the relationship between these tribes (around and in Medina) and the Muslims giving them rights equal to those of the Muslims. In that document the Holy Prophet wrote the following: "Whoever joins the signatories of this scripture would be entitled to our help and would not be subject to any injustice nor should the Muslims cooperate against them.

The children of Ouf are a community of believers. The people of the scripture are allowed to follow their religion as much as the Muslims are allowed to follow theirs and so are their allies except the one who commits injustice or sin, for he does not harm but himself. The people of the scripture from Banu-Al-Harith and Banu Al-Shateebah have rights equal to that of Banu Ouf.

"The people of the scripture shall spend on themselves and the Muslims shall spend on themselves. They shall help each other against anyone that wages war against the people of this document. The signatories of the document are entitled to mutual advice sincerity and assistance rather than fighting each other..."¹

This document is truly the first of its kind in the history of religious freedom and a cornerstone in declaring the human rights which mankind strove for centuries to acquire.

I do not think any religious minority ever acquired such a security or rights under any government before the recent centuries.

This religious minority was expected to appreciate this generous attitude toward its faith. They should have taken such an attitude towards a religion that respects the message in which they believe and considers it heavenly with undiminished values. For the faith of Islam supports the messages of Jesus and Moses and completes them.

This religious minority had forecast to its pagan neighbors an anticipated Prophet who is mentioned in its book.

They used to threaten their pagan neighbors with the nearness of his advent and promise themselves to be of his followers. When the anticipated Prophet appeared and God showed them in him what they

expected they took a hostile attitude towards him and rewarded his tolerance with breaching all covenants they signed with him.

This religious minority evidently was expecting the new Prophet to share with them their hostile attitude towards the Messiah and his followers. When they found the Holy Qur'an spoke of the holiness of Jesus his truthfulness and the purity of his mother they turned against the Messenger.

Probably they did not like something else in Islam. This faith prohibits usury and stands against exploitation and monopoly of the market. This frightened them because it was their way to charge high interests on their loans to their neighbors.

The anarchy which was prevalent in the Arabic Peninsula was a fertile land for them. They were able to move between the tribes seeding and growing hostilities between them. Establishing a strong government with definite rules and regulations would deprive them of benefits they were enjoying.

This religious minority chose to join the pagan camp in order to keep the Arab nation in a state of ignorance poverty and injustice where people lacked security of life honor and property.

Like pagans this minority did not like to see the Arab nation exercising its right of establishing a government unifying the Arab communities and directing them along with other nations to the Creator of the Universe.

This religious minority represented to the new Muslim State a menace equal to that of the pagan tribes. The reader may remember that a delegation from this religious minority was able to mobilize at the Battle of the Moat ten thousand fighters from Mecca and other communities through their war propaganda.

You may remember also that Banu Quraidhah (from this minority) broke their covenant with the Holy Prophet. They joined his enemies when they witnessed the pagan army having the upper hand at that battle maximizing the biggest crisis he ever faced.

The Messenger punished Banu Quraidhah severely after the withdrawal of the Confederate Army from around Medina. He made them pay dearly from their blood and wealth for their flagrant crimes.

However the bulk of this minority was settling in Kheibar and its numerous fortresses which were about eighty miles from Medina. This community represented a danger to the safety of the Islamic State and the time came to subdue these Kheiberites after the Messenger made his temporary truce with the pagan Meccans at Al-Hudeibayah.

The Prophet Besieged Kheibar

When the Messenger came back from Al-Hudeibayah he stayed in Medina only fifteen days. Turning his

attention to this minority he marched towards Kheibar accompanied by only the sixteen hundred volunteers who attended Al- Hudeibyah. After traveling three days he and his army camped around fortresses of Kheibar at night.

Leaving to their farms in the morning the Kheiberites were shocked to see the Muslim army. They recoiled back exclaiming: "Muhammad and the army." It is worthy to note that this war was not religious. It did not aim at forcing the people of Kheibar to adopt the Islamic Faith. The Holy Prophet never forced any of the followers of the scripture to change his religion.

We have already mentioned that the document which was written by the Prophet during the first year of the Hijrah had secured to the religious minority inside and around Medina their religious freedom along with their civil rights if they abode by the contents of the document. Unfortunately they did not live up to the letter or spirit of that document.

They rather became a menace to the safety of the State and freedom of the Muslims. Thus the Messenger was duty-bound to try to subdue them.

The reader may remember that the elements of the Islamic defense in the previous three battles were three:

1. The ideal leadership of the Holy Prophet with all it possessed of unequalled firmness and wisdom along with his personality whose holiness commanded the obedience of every volunteer.
2. The heroic actions of the members of the House of the Prophet and.
3. The hundreds of sincere believers whose number was continuously on the increase.

You may remember that the Messenger lost a member of his clan Obeidah Ibn Al-Harith at the Battle of Badr then he lost his uncle Al-Hamzah at the Battle of Uhud. It is reported that the Messenger at the Battle of the Moat prayed to God to preserve 'Ali for him after He took from him Obeidah at Badr and Al-Hamzah at Uhud.

'Ali attended the previous three battles and was the hero of every one of them. He was the first and the foremost among the fighters in both defensive and offensive actions.

His actions in each of the three battles were essential factors in directing the course of the battle bringing the battle to a good end and extinguishing its flame.

'Ali however was not able to be the first in leading the battle of Kheibar. For a health reason he was absent at the beginning of the battle and his absence caused a noticeable vacuum. The Messenger laid siege around Kheibar and the siege continued for weeks without bringing any result.

Skirmishes between the two sides took place one day after another. The Muslims did not have the upper

hand in those skirmishes.

The Muslims' supplies were dwindling rapidly. Because of this the Muslims tried at the Battle of Kheibar to cook the meat of donkeys but the Messenger prevented them from eating the meat.

The Messenger gave the banner to Abu Bakr. He led the army towards the fortress of Na-im. The Kheibarites came out and fought the Muslims and the Muslims could not prevail against them and were forced to retreat. The Messenger on the following day gave the banner to 'Umar and he was not luckier than Abu Bakr.

Indispensable Man

The Messenger found himself facing a very serious problem. The siege had already continued more than it should. The food supplies dwindled and became scarce.

The Islamic army so far was unable to subdue any of the fortresses. Should the Prophet continue his siege without result or should he lift the siege against the fortresses and go back to Medina? This would be a monumental failure.

If the reader were unable to evaluate the magnitude of 'Ali's endeavor in the previous battles the Battle of Kheibar proves beyond a shadow of doubt that 'Ali's presence was indispensable in bringing the decisive battles to their favorable conclusions.

'Ali Is the Solution

The Holy Prophet was saddened to see that his general offensive in two consecutive days had failed. He decided therefore to bring a drastic solution to the problem and 'Ali's leadership was the only solution. The two sheikhs Al-Bukhari and Muslim inform us in their two Sahihs (Authentics) of what took place. They recorded that Sahl Ibn Saad (a prominent companion) said:

"The Messenger of God said at Kheibar: I shall give this banner to a man through whom God will bring the victory. He loves God and His Messenger and God and His Messenger love him."

The companions spent the night asking each other: 'Who is the man whom the Holy Prophet meant?' They came in the morning to the Messenger and every one of them was hoping that he would be the man of the banner.

"Where is 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib?" the Prophet asked. "He is suffering from inflammation of his eyes" they said. The Prophet sent for him. When 'Ali was brought to the Prophet he treated 'Ali's eyes with his blessed saliva and prayed for him. 'Ali's eyes were cured instantly as if they did not have any inflammation.

The Prophet gave 'Ali the banner and 'Ali asked: "Messenger of God shall I fight them until they become Muslims like us?" The Messenger said: "Go on until you reach their dwelling. Invite them to Islam and inform them of their duty towards God and Islam. By God if He leads one man through you to the right road it would be better for you than to own a precious wealth."²

The Unique Leadership

'Ali went on carrying the banner and contrary to the conventional way he literally led the army. Salamah Ibn Al-Akwa said: "By God 'Ali went out with the banner running and panting. We went following him until he planted the banner into a pile of stones near the fortress." A man from the fortress went up and asked 'Ali: Who are You? And he replied: I am 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib. The man said: By what was revealed to Moses you have the upper hand (the name 'Ali means high). As the Holy Prophet forecast the Almighty granted 'Ali the victory. He conquered the enemy before he returned to the Prophet."³

Salama also said: "Marhab (the outstanding warrior of the Kheiberites) came out boasting and challenging. 'Ali dealt him a blow with his sword splitting his head and victory was accomplished."⁴

Abu Rafi a companion of the Prophet said: "We went with 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib when the Messenger of God sent him with his banner. When he came near the fortress the dwellers of the fortress came out and he fought them. A man from them hit 'Ali and made him lose his shield. 'Ali took a door at the fortress and shielded himself with it. He kept it in his hand until the battle ended. I found myself with seven men trying to move that door but we could not."⁵

The retreating enemies took refuge in their fortress after a costly battle which did not last long after Marhab's death. They tried to defend themselves by entering into the fortress and locking its door after they lost the battle of confrontation. But this did not avail them. 'Ali opened the gate and entered the fortress and his soldiers followed him.

How did he open the huge door? Did he or anyone of his soldiers climb above the wall and open the door from inside? Neither the historians nor the recorders of hadiths reported that the Muslims entered the fortress by climbing.

Had 'Ali through an unusual power dislocated the door as some of the hadiths reported? This is possible and very likely. For another miracle was performed by the Messenger of God on that day in curing the two eyes of 'Ali through the Messenger's blessed saliva. Dislocation of the door probably was an additional miracle which took place on that day. Probably the door which Abu Rafi informed us that 'Ali used as a shield was the same door of the fortress.

As 'Ali entered the fortress he brought the defensive capability of the people of the fortress to an end. They could not win a second battle of confrontation after they

lost the first one. The fortress fell at the hands of the Muslims before the rear of the army joined its front.

Other fortresses followed the fortress of Na-im. They fell one after another until the area of Kheibar completely surrendered to the Muslim State.

Conclusion

The reader may easily come to the following conclusion:

1. The Battle of Kheibar was one of the important battles of destiny for the Muslims. It was preceded by two battles in which the Muslims were not in the best conditions. The Muslims were defeated at the Battle of Uhud and ran away from the battlefield except a few of them.

This was followed by the Battle of the Moat in which the Muslims were on the defensive. They were frightened and terrified except those whom the Almighty fortified. Their hearts went up to their throats. The battle ended and the Muslims did not dare face their enemies or cross from their side to the side of the enemies. They remained behind their Moat.

The Muslims at the Battle of Kheibar outnumbered their enemies. Should they fail to subdue them their failure was expected to show their weakness and entice many hostile tribes to attack the Muslims and the Kheiberites will be the nucleus of the future invading forces.

In addition the Muslims themselves because of their failure in Kheibar will lose their self-confidence and see that their victory against their numerous enemies is a remote possibility. On the other hand if the Muslims obtain victory against the Kheiberites the opposite will be the result.

Victory heightens their morale eliminates a dangerous enemy and makes the rest of the Arab tribes respect the Muslims and hesitate to attack them.

2. The Messenger was unhappy with the sequence of events of the battle. The siege around the fortresses continued for a long time. The food supplies dwindled. If the siege continued and the Muslims could not prevail against the enemies the Muslims would be forced to withdraw and lift the siege. This would be a disastrous failure. The Muslims upon the order of the Prophet therefore conducted two general offensives in two consecutive days under the leadership of Abu Bakr then 'Umar.

As the Muslims were unable to conquer any of the fortresses in the two offensives the Messenger realized that the Muslims were facing an unusual dilemma. He wanted a drastic solution for that problem.

3. Because 'Ali's leadership in the view of the Messenger was the only solution the Messenger had to perform a miracle in order to enable 'Ali to fulfill his mission. 'Ali was suffering from inflammation of his eyes and he would not be able to fulfill his difficult task unless his eyes were cured.

Had there been any other person capable of fulfilling the mission the Prophet would not have

commissioned 'Ali with it. 'Ali was excused from the duty of Jihad because of his unusual condition but the situation was so grave and there was no one other than 'Ali capable of facing the danger and prevailing against it.

Two Miracles

4. The cure of 'Ali's eyes by the saliva of the Messenger was one of two miracles. The second miracle was the prophecy of the Messenger: He informed the Muslims that the one who would lead the army on the third day would be able with the help of God to conquer the fortresses. The Prophet as a human could not predict that God would open the fortresses at the hands of 'Ali. It was possible for 'Ali to be killed or seriously wounded and that would prevent him from continuing his campaign.

The Messenger did not utter his words in reliance on himself. He uttered them only in reliance on God's revelation. Only God knew what would happen to 'Ali and that he would come back after God opened the fortress at his hands.

The whole army failed and was unable to conquer the fortress when 'Ali was absent. The presence of 'Ali alone was the key to victory. This would substantiate clearly that 'Ali was the main contributor after the Prophet in founding the Muslim State for he was the implementer of the Prophet's strategy and the eliminator of his adversaries.

To the truth of this statement 'Umar the Second Caliph attested when he said to the man who accused 'Ali of being conceited: "A man such as 'Ali has the right to be proud. By God the pillar of Islam could not be erected without 'Ali's sword. He is the highest magistrate of this nation its earliest Muslim and its most honorable."

The natural ministry

The Almighty strengthened His Messenger by his cousin 'Ali who pledged to him ten years prior to the Hijrah to be his Minister in his great mission. Had 'Ali not pledged to the Prophet at the clan's conference to be his "Wazeer" (minister) he would not have acted differently from what he did. The attachment of 'Ali to the Messenger was natural requiring no pledge or pact.

He did not pledge to the Prophet his ministry and full assistance in order to gain the important ranks which the Messenger promised him. He gave his word because he believed that his assistance to the Messenger was the mission for which he was created. The love of God and His Messenger filled his heart and therefore he gave all his existence for their pleasure.

A Divine Choice

When the Messenger conferred on 'Ali the ranks of brother executor and successor he was speaking by

the order of God and God chooses for these ranks only the one who merits them.

The Holy Prophet on the other hand did not bestow upon 'Ali all these honors because of his promised assistance but because 'Ali was meritorious.

Had the mission of the Messenger been in no need of

'Ali's endeavor and sacrifice the Messenger would not have chosen a brother or an executor or a caliph other than

him for 'Ali was the most resemblant to the Messenger in ethics righteousness and knowledge. He was the first Muslim and most obedient to God and His Messenger and therefore he was beloved by God and His Messenger. No shining evidence beyond the declaration of the Holy Prophet at Kheibar is needed: "I shall give the banner to a man through whom God will bring victory. He loves God and His Messenger and God and His Messenger love him." Al-Tirmidhi in his Sunan (one of the Six Authentics)⁶ and Al-Hakim in his Al-Mustadrak⁷ reported that the Prophet was presented with a grilled bird. He prayed and in his prayer he said: "God send me your most beloved from among your creatures to eat with me this bird." 'Ali alone came and ate with him.

Because 'Ali was the only qualified person to be the brother the executor and successor of the Holy Prophet the Prophet bestowed the three honors upon him before the beginning of his monumental sacrifices. This proves that he was the choice of the Prophet for the above honors regardless of the need of the message for his sacrifice.

When the Messenger conferred these ranks on 'Ali the witnesses of the event did not exceed thirty or forty men.

All of them were from the clan of the Prophet. It was only a matter of course for him to declare to the rest of the Muslims what he declared to the members of his clan when the opportunity presented itself. The Messenger chose to do that gradually. He started by announcing his brotherhood to 'Ali at the beginning of the Hijrah.

¹. Ibn Hisham Biography of Prophet Part 1 p. 503.

². Sahih Al-Bukhari Part 5 p. 171 and Muslim in his Sahih Part 15 pp. 178-179.

³. Ibn Hisham Biography of the Prophet Part 2 p. 335..

⁴. Al-Hakim Al-Mustadrak Part 3 pp.28-29.

⁵. Ibn Hisham Biography of the Prophet Part 2 p.335.

⁶. Al-Tirmidhi in his Sunan Part 5 p.300 (hadith No.3805)

⁷. Al-Hakim Al-Mustadrak Part 3 pp. 130-131.

12. Announced Brotherhood

The nucleus of the Islamic State started at the beginning of the Hijrah. The birth of this state was a unique prototype in the history of man. We do not know before Islam any state that was established on a brotherhood springing from the belief in the oneness of God and His universal justice which denies all clannish national and racial discrimination.

As a matter of fact it is difficult to find in history a clear example other than the early Islamic State in which a government was established as a spontaneous outcome of people's sharing spiritual and worldly ideals.

However this general brotherhood may remain an abstract idea if no tangible example of it is realized. The Messenger wanted to give the Muslims a tangible example through small brotherhoods a special relation between two Muslims in which each one becomes to the other a brother in God and treats the other as he treats his brother who was born from his parents.

The Holy Prophet issued and announced individual brotherhoods during the first year after the Hijrah but one was established ten years before the Hijrah. This was the one which he initiated between himself and 'Ali at the conference which took place at the Prophet's house in Mecca.

It is recorded in Al-Seerat Al-Halabeyah that the Prophet issued a brotherhood between Abu Bakr and 'Umar; between Abu Bakr and Kharijah Ibn Zayd; between 'Umar and Atban Ibn Malik; between Abu Ruwaim Al-Khath-ami and Bilal; between Oseid Ibn Hudheir and Zayd Ibn Haritha; between Abu Obeidah and Saad Ibn Maath; between Abdul-Rahman Ibn Ouf and Saad Ibn Al-Rabi.

Then he held the hand of 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib saying: This is my brother. Thus the Messenger of God and 'Ali became brothers. [1](#)

Ibn Hisham in his "Seerah" (Biography of the Prophet) reported the following: "The Prophet after the Hijrah said to the Muslims: Be brothers in God. Every two should be brothers.

Then he held 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib's hand and said: This is my brother. Thus the Messenger of God the leader of the Messengers the Imam of the righteous the one who has no equal among the servants of God (he) and 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib became brothers. Al-Hamzah Lion of God and of His Messenger and Zayd Ibn Haritha became brothers and Abu Bakr and Kharijah Ibn Zuhair became brothers. 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab and Atban Ibn Malik became brothers.... [2](#)

This type of brotherhood may serve at least one of the two following purposes:

1. It substitutes the blood relationship with a spiritual relationship. When two persons are from two clans tribes or communities their brotherhood in principles and beliefs take the place of brotherhood by birth.

This makes the two brothers in religion ready to co-operate in promotion of their religion. Both brothers become immune to hostility if some misunderstanding takes place between one of the two brothers and the relatives of the other.

The brotherhood between two persons from two tribes or clans makes each one of them a friend to the members of the clan or tribe of the other. Each one of the two brothers loves the other and each has relatives with whom he reciprocates love.

These relatives through this brotherhood become indirectly tied to the spiritual brother of their relative. Thus the religious brotherhood becomes an extension of the blood relationship and the blood relationship becomes an extension of the religious brotherhood.

2. When it is by the Prophet's selection this kind of brotherhood is an evidence of a mutual spiritual resemblance between the two brothers. The Prophet knew about his companions more than they knew about themselves.

Two companions may not be aware of their spiritual resemblance as much as he is. Thus when he makes two of them brothers their brotherhood should enhance their cooperation and develop in proportion to their sincerity towards their religion.

The Significance Of The Brotherhood

Looking at the brotherhood between the Messenger and 'Ali before and after the Hijrah we find that their brotherhood does not serve the first purpose namely: Creation of a close relationship between two persons from two clans tribes or communities. The Messenger and 'Ali were not from two cities or tribes or clans. They were first cousins.

The Messenger did not "brother" anyone before or after the Hijrah except 'Ali. From this we can infer that the purpose of the brotherhood between the Messenger and 'Ali was to announce their mutual spiritual resemblance.

The brotherhood between the Messenger and 'Ali is a well known fact in the history of Islam. It was reported through many channels. This brotherhood was meaningful and highly important in the eyes of the Messenger.

Al-Hakim in his Al-Mustadrak reported in two ways that the Messenger of God said to 'Ali: "You are my brother in this world and in the Hereafter." [3](#)

The Messenger came out while his face was glittering.

Abdul-Rahman Ibn Ouf asked him: What is the good news? The Messenger said: "A good tidings came to me from my Lord concerning my brother and cousin and my daughter. That God had married 'Ali to

Fatimah."[4](#)

Again he said to ‘Ali:

"You are my brother my companion and my associate in Paradise."[5](#)

He said to him on another occasion: "As to you ‘Ali you are my brother and the father of my children. You are from me and to me."[6](#) At another time the Messenger told ‘Ali: "You are my brother and my minister you pay my debt and fulfill my promise...."[7](#)

When Fatimah was moved to the house of her husband ‘Ali the Messenger said to Om Aiman: "Call for me my brother." She said (jokingly): "He is your brother and you marry him your daughter?" He said: "Yes Om Aiman. She called ‘Ali for him and he came...."[8](#)

When the Messenger was on his deathbed he said: "Call for me my brother. They called ‘Ali and he came.

He said: "Come close to me " and ‘Ali did. The Prophet reclined on ‘Ali and kept speaking to him until his holy soul departed his body."[9](#)

These hadiths are only a few out of many others about the brotherhood of ‘Ali to the Messenger. They clearly indicate that the Messenger chose him as a brother because he was next to him in purity and character. ‘Ali should have been an unexpected choice. He was thirty years younger than the Prophet. Obviously he chose him because he was the only one who deserved this unique honor.

The Son-In-Law Of The Prophet

The Prophet bestowed a unique honor upon ‘Ali by choosing ‘Ali to be his son-in-law. He married him to his daughter Fatima Al-Zahra (the Lady of light) for whom her father testified that she is the leader of the women of Paradise or the leader of the women of the believers.[10](#) He also said: "Fatima is a portion of me whoever exasperates her exasperates me."[11](#)

Ayeshah wife of the Prophet also said about Fatima: "I have never seen a more resemblant to the Prophet in manner of speaking than Fatima daughter of the Messenger of God. Whenever she came to him he used to welcome her stand for her kiss her take her hand and seat her in his place."[12](#)

Ayeshah said also about Fatima: "I never witnessed a person truer than Fatimah after her father."[13](#)

Outstanding companions wooed the hand of Fatima but the Prophet rejected them saying: "I am waiting for a Directive concerning her." (He meant that he was waiting for an order from God.) When ‘Ali wooed her hand the Prophet welcomed him and ‘Ali married her in the first year after the Hijrah. She was moved to him in the following year after the Battle of Badr.

This marriage was destined to be unique in its consequences. Of its fruits were the two gems of this nation: Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein about whom the Holy Prophet said: "An Angel came from Heaven to give me the good tidings:

That Fatima is the leader of the women of Paradise and that Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein are the leaders of the youth of Paradise."[14](#)

By their birth the most honorable family was formed.

For this family the Messenger ordered the Muslims to pray whenever they pray for him. This is the family whose members the Muslims are urged to follow.

[The Divinely Commended Family](#)

In all of what the Holy Prophet spoke about 'Ali and the members of his family he was speaking with a Divine authority and in reliance on the order of God and His revelation.

The Almighty revealed eighteen consecutive verses about the sacrifices of this family its love of God and the place of its members in Paradise.

Al-Wahidi in his book Al-Baseet; Imam Razi in his extensive commentary on the Holy Qur'an; Al-Zamakh-Shari in his Kashaf and Nizamul-Deen Al-Nisayburi in his commentary "Gara-Ibul Qur'an"[15](#) and Al-Shiblenji in his book Noorul-Abssan[16](#) recorded that Ibn Abba said that: Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein became ill. 'Ali and Fatima vowed to God the fast of three days of thanks if their two sons would be cured. The two sons also followed them in their vows and so did their maid Fiddah. The two children were cured and the family fasted three consecutive days.

There was no food for the family in the three days except small amounts of barley bread. When the time of breaking the fast came (in the evening) a needy person came to their door seeking food. The family gave him all they had. On the following evening an orphan came asking for food and the family did what it had done the first night.

On the third evening a captive came asking for food. The family did what it had done the first two days. About this event the Almighty revealed the chapter of "Time" or "Man" in which we find the following verses:

"The righteous shall drink of a cup whereof the mixture is Kafur a spring wherefrom the servants of God drink making it gush for them abundantly. They fulfill the vow and fear a day where the evil is wide-spreading. And feed with food for the needy wretch the orphan and the captive for love of God. (saying): We feed you for the sake of God only: We look for no reward nor thanks from you: we fear from our Lord a day of frowning and of fate. Therefore God has ward-ed off from them the evil of that day and has made them find brightness and joy. And has awarded them for all that they endured a Paradise and a silk attire...." The Qur'an Chapter 76

verses 5–12.

It is worthy to note that no hadith ever mentioned that the members of this family said aloud to those whom they gave their food: "We feed you for the sake of God looking for no reward nor thanks from you." These words were in their hearts not on their tongues but God stated openly in His Book what they kept secretly in their hearts.

A Unique Testimony

The Holy Qur'an does not contain any testimony of this kind pertaining to any other Muslim family. This is because no other family offered what this family offered of sacrifices.

We know of no other family that was so unselfish that all its members gave to others for the love of God their necessary food for three consecutive days.

This family however was expected to surpass all other families in sacrifices. For 'Ali was the brother of the Messenger: his wife was the daughter of the Messenger; and their two children by the testimony of the verse of "Mubahalah" are called sons of the Messenger.

The members of this family were the ones whom the Messenger brought with him when the Almighty God commanded him to invite the Christian delegation of Najran for "Mubahalah" (prayer by two opposite parties asking God to punish their wrong side).

Presenting them on that occasion was a shining evidence that they were the highest among the Muslims in righteousness and presenting 'Ali particularly showed that the relation between the Messenger and 'Ali had passed the boundary of brotherhood and reached the degree of unity.

- [1.](#) 'Ali Ibn Burhanudeen Al-Halabi Biography of the Prophet Part 2 p.97.
- [2.](#) Ibn Hisham Part 1 p.505.
- [3.](#) Al-Hakim in his Al-Mustadrak Part 3 p. 14 Sharaful-Deen Al-Murajaat p. 130.
- [4.](#) Ibn Hajar Assawa-iq Al-Muhriqah p. 403 (conveyed by Sharaful Deen Al-Murajaat p. 130.
- [5.](#) Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi Kanzul-Ummal hadith No. 6105.
- [6.](#) Al-Hakim in his Al-Mustadrak Part 3 p. 217.
- [7.](#) Al-Tabarani in his Big Majmaa of hadith (conveyed by Al- Muttaqi Al-Hindi in his Muntakhab (Selected) of Kanzul-Ummal published on the margins of Imam Ahmad's Musnad Part 5 p. 32.
- [8.](#) Al-Hakim in his Al-Mustadrak Part 3 p. 159.
- [9.](#) Ibn Sa'd Al-Tabaqat Part 2 p. 263.
- [10.](#) Al-Bukhari reported it through his channel to 'Aisha in his Sahih in the section of the Beginning of the Creation in the chapter of the Evidences of the Prophethood Part 5 p. 25.
- [11.](#) Al-Bukhari in his Sahih Chapter of Virtues of the Relatives of the Messenger and Virtues of Fatimah.
- [12.](#) Al-Hakim in his Al-Mustadrak Part 3 p. 154.
- [13.](#) Al-Hakim Al-Mustadrak Part 3 p. 160.
- [14.](#) Al-Tirmidhi in his Sunan (of the 6 Authentics) Part 2 p. 306.
- [15.](#) Nizamuddeen Al-Nisaboori in his Gharai-Ibul-Qur'an printed on the Margin of Al-Tabari's Commentaries on the Qur'an Part 29 pp. 112–113.

13. 'Ali's Place from the Prophet in the Qur'an

During the ninth year after the Hijrah a Christian delegation from Nijran Yemen came to Medina to inquire about Islam and debate with the Prophet about religion.

There was a dialogue between the Messenger and the delegation in which the Messenger stated the positive position of Islam towards the teachings of the Messiah. The delegation chose to stay on their negative position towards Islam. A revelation came to the Prophet commanding him to invite the delegation to a prayer to be offered by both sides asking the Almighty to bring down His punishment on the wrong side of the two parties.

From the Holy Qur'an:

"And whoso disputes with thee concerning him (Jesus) after the knowledge which has come unto thee say (unto them): Come! We will summon our sons and your sons and our women and your women and ourselves and yourselves. Then we will pray humbly (to our Lord) invoking the curse from God upon those who lie." The Holy Quran Chapter 3 verse 62.

The Messenger in compliance with the revealed command invited the Christian delegation for the prayer. Al-Nisayburi in his commentary on the Holy Qur'an entitled: "Ghara-ib Bul-Qur'an and Aja-Ibul-Furqan " recorded the following:

"The Messenger told the Christian delegation: God has commanded me to call upon you to share with me a prayer for punishment. They said "Abu Al-Qasim" (the Prophet's code name) we shall think of the matter then we will come to you."

They had a conference headed by their counselor Al-Aquib. When they asked him his advice he said: "By God you have known that Muhammad is a Messenger of God. He told you the exact truth about your man the Messiah. By God whenever people challenge a prophet and share with him a prayer for punishment their grown-ups will not last and their small ones will not grow. It will be your annihilation if you accept his challenge. If you insist on keeping your religion make peace between you and the man and go back to your country.

"When the Christian delegation came back to the Messenger they found him on his way to the proposed prayer wearing a garment made of black hair carrying Al-Hussein on his arm and leading Al-Hassan by his hand with Fatima walking behind him and 'Ali walking behind her.

The Prophet said to the four members of his family: "When I pray say: 'Amen.'" Looking at the Prophet and his family the priest of the delegation said to his group: "Christians I see faces whose prayer will be answered even for removal of a mountain.

Accept not their challenge. If you do you will perish and the Christians will not live on this earth." The delegation heeded the warning of their priest and said to the Prophet: "Abu Al-Qasim." we have decided not to make prayer of "Mubahalah" with you.[1](#)

Al-Tabari in his commentary on the Holy Qur'an reported many hadiths through various channels that the Messenger accompanied 'Ali Fatima Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein in the event of "Mubahalah"[2](#)

Muslim in his Sahih recorded that Saad Ibn Abu Waqass reported that after the revelation of the following verse: "And whoso disputes with thee concerning him (Jesus) after the knowledge which had come to thee say (unto them): Come! We will summon our sons and your sons and our women and your women and ourselves and yourselves...." The Messenger of God invited 'Ali Fatima Hassan and Hussein then he said: "God these are the members of my family."[3](#)

Why was all included?

The Almighty commanded His Messenger to say to the delegation of Najran: "Come! We will summon our sons and your sons our women and your women; and ourselves and yourselves...." In compliance with this command the Prophet brought with him Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein because they were the sons of his daughter Fatima and for this they are his sons. He brought Fatima with him because she represents the women from the members of his House.

But why did he bring with him 'Ali who was neither from the sons nor from the women? 'Ali has no place in the verse unless he is included in the word "ourselves." Bringing 'Ali with him indicates that the Messenger of God considered 'Ali an extension of his personality. By considering him so he elevated him above all the Muslims.

The Messenger said on many occasions: "Ali is from me and I am from him."

Hubshi Ibn Janadah reported that he heard the Messenger of God saying: "Ali is from me and I am from him and no one represents me but 'Ali."[4](#)

A dialogue between the Imam 'Ali Al-Ridha and Al-Ma-Moon (a prominent Abbaside caliph) went as follows: Al-Ma-Moon: "What is the evidence on the caliphate of your grandfather ('Ali)?"

The Imam Al-Ridha: The evidence is the word of God "and ourselves and yourselves." The Imam meant that by bringing the Imam with him in the event of "Mubahalah" the Messenger made him an extension of himself; and whoever is an extension of the personality of the Messenger would be the Imam of the Muslims.

Al-Ma-Moon: This would be true if there is not "our women and your women."

Al-Ma-Moon meant that it is possible that there were among the Muslims other men who were like 'Ali in being an extension of the personality of the Holy Prophet but he did not want to bring all of them. He chose to bring one of them 'Ali as a representative of his equals.

The evidence of this is the word "Our women " since this word includes all women who are related to the Holy Prophet by birth or marriage. But the Messenger brought only one of them Fatima who is related to him by birth as a representative of the women who are related to him.

The Imam Al-Ridah: This would be true if there were not the words: "And our sons and your sons." He meant that Fatima was brought as the unequaled woman rather than a representative of her equals in the family of the Prophet. Had other women been equal to Fatima the Holy Prophet would have brought them with her.

For he brought Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein together because they were equal to each other and did not bring one of them as a representative of his sons. Therefore presenting 'Ali on this occasion is an evidence that 'Ali is the only one whom the Prophet considered to be an extension of his personality.

It is reported that Amr Ibn Al-Aws asked the Prophet: "Who is the most beloved to you from men?" The Messenger said: Abu Bakr. Then he asked him: "Who is next?"

And the Messenger said: 'Umar. Ibn Al-Aws said: "Then where is the place of 'Ali?" The Prophet turned his face to the people around him saying: "This man is asking about the self."[5](#)

I have mentioned in the last chapter that the Messenger's declaration after the Hijrah was not a fulfillment of a promise he made to 'Ali before the Hijrah for he fulfilled his promise to 'Ali by "brothering" him on the day of the conference which took place at his house. Furthermore he did not promise 'Ali with such a declaration to be made in the future.

The Holy Prophet announced that to the Muslims voluntarily because 'Ali deserved the unique honor and because its announcement might prepare the Muslims psychologically for the leadership of 'Ali in the future. He wanted to show the nation the guiding Minaret which the nation would need after the Prophet.

As the Messenger announced to the Muslims the unique honor which he bestowed upon 'Ali by "brothering" him he was expected to announce publicly the other two high honors which he conferred on him: of being his executor and successor.

For what the nation needed more than anything else was the good leadership to which it might resort after the Messenger. Such a leadership is what could secure the continuity of the Islamic Message in its purity.

It could also secure the nation against deviation from the right road in its long future.

The Messenger chose to announce this leadership during the tenth year after the Hijrah when he was performing his valedictory pilgrimage. He declared to the thousands of pilgrims that 'Ali had the right to administer the affairs of the Muslims as much as the Prophet had. This meant that the Prophet had declared that 'Ali was to be his successor.

It also implied executorship for whomever the Prophet appointed to administer the affairs of the Muslims would be his executor also.

- [1.](#) You find it in Al-Nisaboori's Commentaries on the Qur'an printed on the margin of Al-Tabari's Commentaries Part 2 pp. 192-193.
- [2.](#) Al-Tabari in his Commentaries on the Qur'an Part 2 pp. 192- 193.
- [3.](#) Muslim in his Sahih Part 15 p. 176.
- [4.](#) Ibn Majah in his Sahih (hadith No. 143)
- [5.](#) Almuttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanzul-Ummal, Part 15 (virtues of 'Ali), p. 125 (hadith No. 361)

14. The Mawla of the Muslims

The tenth year after the Hijrah was full of important events. Two of those events were outstanding and pointed to the Messenger's belief in the nearness of his death and that he was about to be summoned by God and that he would respond.

The Messenger announced to the inhabitants of the Arabic Peninsula that he would perform the duty of pilgrimage. He urged them to accompany him during the days of his journey to learn from him the manner of its performance; and being concerned with the future of the Muslims he wanted to recommend to them what a Prophet recommends to his followers to do in the future for he thought that they would not see him in a future year.

Tens of thousands of pilgrims hastened to join the Holy Prophet. He went on leading them in their "Ihram" circumnavigating the Kaaba praying walking between Safa and Marwa; and at the sojourn at Arafat and at the time of their sacrifices.

They followed him and did what he ordered them to do. He addressed them while they were on Arafat and his Message was most impressive. He announced to them at the beginning of his sermon the nearness of his death when he said after he prayed to the Almighty: "O people listen to my words for I do not know if I will meet you after my present year at this place at any time....".

Then he spoke to them about the sanctity of the human blood and Muslim's properties saying:

"O people certainly your lives and properties are as sacred to you as your present day and your present month until you meet your Lord. And you shall meet your Lord and He will ask you about your deeds and

I have delivered the Message."¹

The Holy Messenger went on urging people to discharge their trusts and declaring that every usury is prohibited. Islam prohibits retaliation for blood that was shed during the pre-Islamic days. He also reaffirmed the right of women and re-emphasized Islamic brotherhood.

The main concern of the Messenger was the future of his nation. As he was fully aware of the crises which the nation would go through he was expected not to leave the nation without a minaret of guidance through which people could pass the future crises safely. The Prophet therefore declared to the Muslims what he considered to be a security against deviation from the right road if they chose to have that security.

Al-Tirmidhi in his Sahih reported through his channel to Jabir Ibn Abdullah Al-Ansari that he said: "I have seen the Messenger of God in his pilgrimage on the day of Arafat while he was riding his female camel (Al-Quswa) delivering a sermon and I heard him saying: O people I have left among you that which if you uphold you will never go astray: The Book of God and the members of my House."²

By these words the Messenger announced to his nation that he left for it what would be a security against deviation from the right road if the nation would take what he left for it. That security is composed of two harmonious elements:

One of them is the revelation of God which is recorded in the Holy Qur'an and the second is the members of the House of the Prophet who have the knowledge of the interpretation of the Holy Qur'an and the teaching of the Holy Prophet.

It is worthy to note that masses of the Muslims do not know these reported words of the Holy Prophet yet these words were reported by about twenty companions. What the Muslim masses know is what Ibn Hisham recorded in his Biography of the Prophet that the Prophet said in his sermon on Arafat:

"I have left among you what if you fortify yourselves with you will never go astray: The Book of God a clear order and teaching of His Messenger." Furthermore these Muslims think that there is a contradiction between the first and the second hadiths.

It should be known that the reporters of what Ibn Hisham recorded are not known. Their names are not recorded in the hadith; therefore it should not be considered authentic. It should be noted also that Al-Bukhari and Muslim did not record in their report of the sermon of the Prophet on the day of Arafat the word "Sunnat Nabyeh" (the teaching of His Prophet). The two sheikhs mentioned only the Book of God.³

Furthermore the Book of God is well known to the Muslims and it was recorded during the days of the Messenger. The "Sunnah" (teachings of the Prophet) on the other hand was not recorded during the days of the Prophet and what was written of the hadiths decades after him is not completely a place of agreement among the Muslims.

There are many contradictory hadiths contained in the books which we call Sahihs. It is recorded for example in some of the Sahihs that Abdul-Rahman Ibn Abu Omeirah reported that the Prophet prayed for Muawiya saying: "God make him well-guided and make him lead people to the right road." It is also reported in a Sahih that the Messenger said to Ammar Ibn Yasir: "Ammar be cheerful the aggressor party will kill you."

Yet the party that killed Ammar was the party of Muawiya. When Muawiya is the head of the aggressors he would not be well-guided nor could people be led through him to the right road.

A hadith commending a man such as Muawiya cannot be a security against deviation. It would be rather a cause of confusion. A man that waged against 'Ali the Imam of the truth and the brother of the Prophet a war in which tens of thousands of Muslims were killed cannot be a guide to the right road.

To make what Ibn Hisham reported logically acceptable we have to understand from the word "Sunnah" the statement of the Prophet and his actions which are known to have come from him. These represent a security against deviation if we follow them.

But that which is known of his statements and actions are very little because most of the hadiths were not reported by numerous reporters in every link of its chain of narration; they were rather reported by one or two or a few reporters. Many of these hadiths contradict each other. Therefore we cannot acquire certainty through those hadiths about what the Messenger said or did.

There is only one logical way through which we can be certain of Sunnah of the Prophet: The Prophet himself could inform us of a reliable source through which we know exactly what he said and did.

The first hadith which was reported by more than twenty companions informs us of that reliable source namely: the members of the House of the Prophet who knew the interpretation of the Book of God and the instructions of the Messenger completely. By this the hadiths of Al-Termathy and Ibn Hisham would be agreeing with each other and explaining one another.

'Ali possessed the knowledge of the Qur'an and the words and the deeds of the Prophet and their interpretations. The Muslims could have avoided deviations if they were to follow his interpretation and assist him in communicating his knowledge to the nation.

However the other outstanding event which took place during the last year of the life of the Messenger has made this matter crystal clear. The event was fully expressive concerning the elements of security against deviation.

That outstanding event was the Messenger's Declaration at Ghadir Khum. While he was coming back from the valedictory pilgrimage to Medina he stopped at that place to tell the thousands of pilgrims who were accompanying him that 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib is the "Mawla" (guardian) of every believer.

Al-Hakim through his channel to Abu-Tufail reported that Zayd Ibn Arqam said: "When the Messenger of

God was coming from the Valedictory pilgrimage he stopped at Ghadir Khum. He ordered the pilgrims to sweep what was under the trees at that place.

Then he said: 'I am about to be summoned by God and I shall respond. I am leaving among you the two valuables. One of the two is bigger than the other: The Book of God and my Itrah (members of my house). Beware how you shall treat them after me for they shall not part with each other until they join me on the Day of Judgement.' Then he said: "Certainly God is my "Mawla" (Guardian) and I am Mawla of every believer. Whoever I am his Mawla this 'Ali is his Mawla. God love whoever loves him and be hostile to whoever is hostile to him." [4](#)

From this we understand that the Messenger wanted to declare to the Muslims at that stand three important matters which are related to each other:

1. He was expecting to depart from this world soon. Therefore he spoke to them as if he had been summoned by his Lord.
2. As he was about to meet his Lord he viewed it mandatory to have for his followers a means of guidance which would illuminate for them the road after the Heavenly revelation ceased by his absence. Therefore he declared to them that he was leaving to them the Book of God and his "Itrah" (the members of his House); and that if they follow the Book and the "Itrah " they guarantee for themselves the continuation on the clear road in their near and remote future.
3. The members of the House of the Holy Prophet were to lead the nation only because they were unequalled in their knowledge of interpretation of the Book and the instructions of the Messenger and their adherence to both of them. The Messenger wanted to declare to the nation that the man who had all qualifications for that leadership from among his close relatives was 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib.

Therefore he put him in his own place and made him his own replacement. God is the Guardian of the Messenger and the Messenger is the guardian of the believers. He has the right to administer the affairs of the believers more than the believers have to administer their own affairs and 'Ali is the one who has a right equal to that of the Prophet in leading the Muslims and administering their affairs.

The Messenger was fully aware that people differ in memorizing what they hear and in understanding what they memorizing. Therefore he was expected to record in a special document what he verbally declared at Ghadir Khum leaving no excuse for anyone to argue in the future about the contents of the Declaration. But he did not do that.

History does not inform us of any document dictated by the Messenger and sealed by his blessed seal declaring that he had chosen 'Ali or any other person for the leadership of the nation after him. What is the reason for the absence of such a document? We shall find the answer in the following pages.

[1.](#) Ibn Hisham Biography of the Prophet Part 2 p. 6.

[2.](#) Al-Tirmidhi in his Sahih Part 5 p. 328 Al-Tirmidhi said also that Abu Dharr Abu-Sa-eed (Al-Khidri) Zeid Ibn Arqam and

Hutheifa Ibn Oseid reported what agrees with this.

[3.](#) Al-Bukhari Sahih Al-Bukhari Part 5 p. 224. Muslim in his Sahih Part 8 (Book of Pilgrimage) p. 184 reported the hadith without mentioning the "Sunnah" (The Teaching of the Prophet)

[4.](#) Al-Hakim Al-Mustadrak Part 3 p. 109.

15. Unfulfilled Will of the Prophet

The Prophet did not leave a written will though the Holy Qur'an commands every Muslim to make a will:

"It is prescribed when death approaches any of you if he leaves any valuables that he makes a bequest to parents and closest kins in the legitimate way. This is a duty of every righteous; if anyone changes the bequest after hearing it the guilt shall be on those who make the change. For God hears and knows (all things)." The Holy Qur'an Chapter 2 verses 180–181.

Although the verse speaks of the imperativeness of willing without specifying a method the Prophet commanded the Muslims to make their wills in writing. Muslim in his Sahih recorded the following: "Abu Salim reported that the Messenger said: 'A person who has something which he may will has no right to stay three nights without his written will.'"

Abdullah Ibn 'Umar reported that the Prophet said: "A person that has something to will has no right to stay two nights without his written will." Muslim reported also that Abdullah Ibn 'Umar said: "Since I heard this from the Messenger of God. I never stayed one night without my written will."[1](#)

The Prophet had the right to delay his will for days months and years because he exceptionally was on an appointment with his Lord. It is highly probable that he was Heavenly informed that he would not die until the religion of Islam was completed. However during the tenth year after the Hijrah at the completion of his Valedictory Pilgrimage the following verse was revealed:

"Today I have completed your religion for you and perfected my favor upon you and chosen Islam as a religion for you." The Holy Qur'an Chapter 5 verse 4.

By this revelation the Prophet felt the nearness of his death and that it was about time to make his will.

Thus on his way back to Medina from his pilgrimage he stopped at Ghadir Khum to make an important declaration in which he said: "I am only a mortal human. The Messenger of my Lord is about to come to me and I shall respond (to His invitation by departing from this world)." Then he declared that 'Ali like the Prophet has more right to the believers than the believers have to themselves and that 'Ali is the Guardian of every believer (See Chapter 14)

A Written Will Is Necessary In Important Matters Although a verbal will is valuable a written will is

indispensable particularly in an important matter such as appointing a successor to lead a nation. A verbal statement can be forgotten increased decreased or inaccurately conveyed. But a written will sealed by the Prophet is difficult to change. The Prophet therefore was expected to make such a will but he did not.

It is said that he verbally told the Muslims to follow the Book of God and the precepts of His Prophet and this was a sufficient will. I disagree for the following reason:

A will by the Prophet is expected to give the Muslims some fresh instructions dealing with the future of the nation after his death. Adherence to the teaching of the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet is not of this kind because its imperativeness is self-evident to the Muslims and because obedience to God and His Messenger is repeatedly recorded in the Holy Qur'an:

"O you who believe obey God and obey the Messenger..." The Holy Quran Chapter 4 verse 59.

"Take whatever the Messenger brought to you. And avoid whatever he prohibited for you..." The Holy Quran Chapter 59 verse 7.

An unwritten statement by the Prophet cannot be as effective as a Divine word repeatedly recorded in the Book of God. Therefore such a statement dealing with such a self-evident subject cannot be the expected will of the Prophet.

The Prophet is expected more than anyone in the nation to comply with the command of God as stated in His Book and to do what he himself ordered his followers to do. If Ibn 'Umar or any other Muslim has to write a will because he has a little wealth to will and a small family to take care of the Prophet had the final Heavenly message to secure and a whole nation to protect and direct.

Expected Crises Required Written Will The faith of Islam was still a new plantation the roots of which were not yet deepened in the soil of the Arab Society and the dangers against the faith were numerous. We all know that a civil war took place after the death of the Prophet because of the apostasy of the majority of the inhabitants of Arabia.

The Prophet was fully aware of those dangers. Al-Hakim in his Sahih Al-Mustadrak reported that Abu Muwaihibah a companion of the Messenger said:

"The Messenger of God has told me: 'I have been ordered (by God) to pray for the people of Al-Baqee (a cemetery of Medina) for forgiveness.' 'Come with me.' I went with him. When he stood in the midst of the graves he said: 'Peace be upon you people of cemeteries. Congratulations to you for what you are in. You do not know what God has saved you from. The faithtesting trials are coming as pieces of a dark night one follows another...."[2](#)

Abu Bakr Left a Written Will We cannot conceive that the Prophet was less concerned with the future of the nation than his companion Abu Bakr who did not depart from this world before he appointed his

successor ('Umar). He did that in spite of the fact that the nation by the time of his death had passed the crisis of the civil war and reached an internal peace. He did that because he knew that leaving the Muslims without appointing a leader would be a negligence of their interest and a peril to their future.

A Dialogue Between 'Umar and His Son It is worthy to note the wisdom of Abdullah Ibn 'Umar in his dialogue with his father as the latter was dying: Abdullah: "You should appoint a successor." 'Umar: "Whom should I appoint?" Abdullah: "You try your best. You are not their Lord."

Suppose you temporarily recall the caretaker of a land of yours. Would you not like him to have a successor during his absence until he goes back to the land?" 'Umar: "Yes."

Abdullah: "Suppose you recall the shepherd of your sheep. Would you not like him to have a successor until he goes back to the sheep?"³

Although 'Umar refused to appoint a successor he did the equivalent. He chose six companions of the Prophet. He gave them the right to choose a caliph from among themselves. He ordered them to follow their majority if there were a majority. He ordered them to follow the party of Abdul-Rahman Ibn Ouf when the six were equally divided.

Thus he did not leave the Muslim nation without a directive. He defined a method by which a caliph would be selected.

The Prophet Regularly Left Successors In His Absence And the most amazing thing in this matter is that the Prophet used to appoint a successor whenever he left Medina for a few days or weeks: When he left for Badr he appointed Abu Lubabah.

When he left for Doumat Al-Jendal he appointed Ibn Arfatah.

When he left for Banu Quraidhah he appointed Ibn Om Maktoom. He appointed him also when he left for Thee Qirad.

When he left for Banul-Mustalaq he appointed Abu Dharr.

When he left for Kheibar he appointed Numailah.

When he left for Omrat Al-Qadha he appointed Ibn Al-Adhbat.

When he left for Mecca he appointed Abu Raham.

When he left for Tabuk he appointed 'Ali.

When he left for the Valedictory Pilgrimage he appointed Abu Dujanah.⁴

Thus he constantly appointed successors whenever he planned to leave Medina. Yet when he left his

nation forever he did not leave a document of succession!!!.

The Prophet Was Prevented From Writing A Will

The absence of a written will by the Prophet is astonishing indeed. There must have been an unusual cause that prevented the Prophet from writing a will! However when we review the records of the events of the final days of the Prophet we find that the Messenger wanted to write a will but he could not make it.

Al-Bukhari recorded in his Sahih that Ibn Abbas reported: "When the ailment of the Prophet became serious he said: 'Bring me a writing sheet I will write to you a directive after which you will not go astray.' 'Umar said: 'The Messenger is overwhelmed by his ailment (does not know what he is saying). We have the Book of God. It is sufficient to us."

They (those who were present) disputed with each other vehemently. He (the Messenger) said: 'Go away and no dispute should take place in my presence.' Ibn Abbas went out saying: 'The tragedy the whole tragedy is what barred the Messenger of God from writing his document.'⁵

Muslim in his Sahih recorded that Sa-eed Ibn Jubeir reported that Ibn Abbas said: "The day of Thursday and what a day of Thursday." Then he wept until he moistened the ground with his tears. I said: 'Ibn Abbas what is the day of Thursday?'

He said: "The Messenger became seriously ill and said: 'Bring me a writing sheet to write to you a directive so you will not go astray after me.' They disputed and disputes should not take place in the presence of the Prophet. And they said: "What happened to him? Did he hallucinate? Ask him." He said: 'Go away what I am in is better (than what you think of). I enjoin on you to do three things: Drive the pagans out of the Arabian Peninsula give the delegations (of various tribes who will visit Medina) as much as I used to give them.' Sa-eed said: "He (Ibn Abbas) kept silent on the third one or he said it and I forgot it."⁶

Obeidullah Ibn Abdullah Ibn Utabah said that Ibn Abbas reported: "When the Messenger of God was about to die 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab was among the men were present at his bedside. The Messenger said: 'Bring me a writing sheet. I will write to you a directive after which you will not go astray.'

'Umar said: 'The Messenger of God was overwhelmed by ailment. You have the Holy Qur'an. The Book of God is sufficient for us.' Those who were present disagreed with each other and disputed.

Some of them said: 'Bring the Messenger what he needs. He will write to you a directive after which you will not go astray.' Some of them said what 'Umar said. When they shouted excessively and disputed in the presence of the Messenger he said: 'Go away.' Ibn Abbas used to say: 'The tragedy the whole tragedy was their argument and dispute which barred the Messenger of God from writing to them that directive.'⁷

Ibn Saad in his Al-Tabaqat recorded that Jabir Ibn Abdullah Al-Ansari reported: "When the Messenger was in his sickness by which he died he called for a sheet to write on it to his nation a directive (after which) they will not go astray nor will they be misled. There was at the house arguments and excessive talk. 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab spoke and the Prophet refused it."[8](#)

It is also recorded in Al-Tabaqat that 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab reported: "We were with the Prophet and there was a screen between us and the women. The Messenger of God said:

'Bring me seven skins filled with water (to pour them on his body in order to cool his fever) and bring me a sheet and an inkwell. I will Write to you a directive after which you will not go astray.' The women said: 'Bring the Messenger what he needs.'

'Umar said: "I said to them: Be silent. You are his female companions. If he becomes ill you squeeze your eyes; if he is cured you hug his neck.' The Messenger of God said: They are better than you."[9](#)

It is also recorded in Al-Tabaqat that Zeinab the wife of the Messenger said to them: "Do you not hear the Prophet trying to write a directive for you?" They argued and the Prophet said: "Go away."[10](#)

This Unusual Event Raises Many Questions

1. Why did 'Umar oppose the Messenger and lead the opposition against writing his will?
2. What was the Prophet trying to write in his will?
3. Why did the Prophet not write his will in spite of 'Umar's opposition?
4. How can his directive become a security to the nation against straying? Some scholars say that 'Umar opposed the Prophet's will out of compassion. The Prophet was dying and he was extremely tired. Writing a directive at such a time increases his tiredness. 'Umar did not want the Prophet to over-burden himself at such a time.

It is evident that this explanation is erroneous. When was it permissible for a Muslim to prevent another Muslim commoner or great from writing his will while he is about to die? Writing a will is one of the religious duties which every Muslim is supposed to fulfill before he (she) dies.

You have already read that Abdullah Ibn 'Umar reported that the Messenger said: "A person that has something to will has no right to stay two nights unless his will is written."

The duty of every Muslim especially a prominent one such as 'Umar is to assist his Muslim brother in fulfilling his religious duty rather than to prevent him from achieving it. 'Umar and all those who were present at that hour had a manifold duty towards the attempted will of the Messenger.

The Messenger was not only a Muslim he is the Prophet of the Muslims and the founder of the faith. It

was the duty of 'Umar to offer him all assistance to fulfill his duty.

It was also the duty of 'Umar to assist the Prophet in writing his will because the Messenger stated that his will represents a security to the nation against straying. The Messenger was always truthful.

When his will represented such a security it would be the most imperative duty of 'Umar as an outstanding Muslim and sincere towards the nation to welcome what the Messenger wanted. With his great position in Islam 'Umar is expected to be the happiest one to obtain such a securing directive which was necessary for the future of the Muslims.

What could be more important to the nation while the Messenger was about to leave it and the revelation of God was about to cease than to obtain a directive which would illuminate the road of the nation and secure its long future?

Furthermore the duty of all companions who were present on that occasion was to obey the command of the Messenger. He ordered them to bring him a sheet to write his will. The order of the Messenger must be and should have been obeyed.

It is erroneous to say that 'Umar opposed his Prophet out of compassion and that he did not want him to increase his tiredness by dictating a directive. Indeed his opposition caused the Prophet a much bigger pain.

The Messenger was in his last days on this earth. When the Messenger was in the days of his strength and activity he used to command the Muslims and they used to rush to fulfill his desire even at the expense of their wealth and blood. Now in his final days in this world he asked them the cheapest thing (just a writing sheet and an inkwell) and his order was not obeyed.

The Prophet no doubt was greatly disturbed and deeply saddened by their attitude. Nothing would indicate his displeasure than his saying to them: "Go away" and his answer to 'Umar: "They (the women) are better than you." Had they brought the Messenger what he wanted they would have lightened his pain. Nothing at that time could be more pleasing to the Prophet than the fulfillment of his religious duty by securing his nation against straying.

Abu Bakr wrote his will in which he appointed 'Umar his successor. He did that while in his death agony fainting while dictating to Uthman the contents of the will. 'Umar did not blame Uthman for assisting the Caliph in his will.

And how cruel would it have been to prevent Abu Bakr at such a time from writing his will.... 'Umar himself was stabbed and fatally wounded. He did not prevent himself from willing to the Muslims what he wanted in spite of his severe pains loss of blood and fainting time after time.

While in that saddening condition he ordered six companions of the Prophet to select from among themselves a caliph to follow the majority if there were a majority and to side with Abdul-Rahman Ibn

Ouf when the six are equally divided.

The Muslims obeyed his order and fulfilled his will in details though his will did not represent a security for the nation against straying. It rather led them to choose a good-hearted and weak-willed Caliph whose weakness led to his murder and his murder brought to Muslims incalculable tragedies. It is very hard indeed to believe that 'Umar opposed the Prophet's proposed will out of concern for his health.

There is another possible explanation: It could be that 'Umar knew what would be the content of the proposed will as he admitted later on and thought that it would not be in the best interest of the nation. Thus we may find the answer when we attempt to answer the second question.

What did the Prophet Want to Write?

It is not logical to think that the Messenger was trying at that difficult hour to write a book containing his teachings and the details of the Islamic laws. Nor was he trying to write to the Muslims the outlines of the Islamic teaching.

For the Messenger was well aware of his extremely short time on this earth.

Furthermore should the Messenger have written the outlines of the Islamic teachings at that moment he would not have secured the Muslims against straying. The outlines of the Islamic teachings are contained in the Book of God and in spite of this the Muslims are still in disagreement arguing about the details of those general outlines. And because of this many of them went astray.

The Messenger of God lived 23 years after the commencement of his Prophethood. He never wrote his teachings nor the outlines of the Islamic teachings nor did he order any Muslim to do that. Yet he was at the peak of his health and activity and the years were the years of teaching and delivery of revelation. For some wisdom he chose not to do that. It is inconceivable that he was attempting at that difficult and short time to do what he did not do during 23 years of his Prophethood.

Nor was the Prophet trying to command the Muslims to follow the Book of God and his own instructions. The Holy Qur'an as I have advanced does command the Muslims to obey God and His Messenger. Yet that does not secure the nation against straying. People are still in disagreement on the interpretation of the Holy Qur'an and the authenticity of hundreds of hadiths.

Again how could the teachings of the Prophet secure the nation against that when they are not recorded by him and according to the opinion of great many Muslims he did not appoint any authority to inform the Muslims of the details of his teachings.

The purpose of the Prophet's attempted directive could not be the two items which Sa-eed Ibn Jubier remembered from Ibn Abbas' words namely: Driving the pagans out of the Arabian Peninsula and giving the delegations amounts similar to what he used to give.

Both items do not secure the nation against straying. The purpose of the attempted directive could be the item about which Ibn Abbas kept silent or was forgotten by Sa-eed.

The Prophet Wanted to Name a Successor

It is logical to think that the Messenger wanted to appoint a leader whom he considered most knowledgeable in the Islamic teaching the sincerest to God and His religion and who would be an extension of the Prophet's personality.

That leader would be the highest authority for the nation and through his leadership the nation would walk on the clear road.

Evidently the intended leader was not 'Umar or Abu Bakr. Had he been one of them 'Umar would have been the happiest to see the Prophet's directive written. For we find 'Umar after the death of the Prophet trying to justify the leadership of Abu Bakr by his being the companion of the Prophet at the Cave during the Hijrah or by his leading the congregational prayer at the time of the ailment of the Prophet.

Had the Prophet appointed Abu Bakr through his proposed directive 'Umar would not have needed such a justification. Nor would he have needed to argue with the natives of Medina for the merit of Abu Bakr.

The words of the Messenger on the day of Ghadir Khum when he declared 'Ali to be the Mawla (Guardian) of the Muslims were still fresh in 'Umar's memory. When the Messenger spoke while on his deathbed of a written directive after which the Muslims will not go astray 'Umar immediately remembered the Declaration of Ghadir Khum and many other statements.

The words are almost the same words contained in his statements about his "Itrah" (members of his House) in general and 'Ali in particular. The Messenger of God said and Zayd Ibn Arqam reported:

"I have left for you that which if you hold fast you shall never go astray after me. The Book of God a rope extended between Heaven and earth and my "Itrah." Both the Book and the Itrah will not part with each other until they join me on the Day of Judgement Beware how you treat them after me."[11](#)

The Imam 'Ali reported that the Prophet declared on the day of Ghadir Khum: "Whoever God and His Messenger are his "Mawla " This ('Ali) is his Mawla. I have left for you what if you hold fast you will never go astray. The Book of God is His rope being held by His hand and your hands and the members of my House."[12](#)

Zayd Ibn Thabit reported that the Messenger of God said: "I am leaving in you two caliphs. The Book of God and my Itrah. Beware how you treat them after me. They will not part with each other until they join me on the Day of Judgement."[13](#)

Al-Tirmidhi in his Sahih reported through his channel to Jabir Ibn Abdullah Al-Ansari that he said: "I

have seen the Messenger of God in his pilgrimage on the day of Arafat while he was riding his female camel (Al-Quswa) delivering a sermon and I heard him saying: 'O people I have left among you that which if you uphold you will never go astray: The Book of God and the members of my house.' [14](#)

These statements and many other similar statements were still ringing in 'Umar's ears. When the Prophet spoke of a directive after which they will not go astray 'Umar by his intelligence immediately understood his intention: The Prophet is trying to record 'Ali's name in his directive. He immediately started his opposition.

Why Was 'Umar Opposed to the Will 'Umar during the days of his reign gave the answer in a reported dialogue between him and Ibn Abbas:

'Umar: "How did you leave your cousin behind you?"

Ibn Abbas: "I left him playing with youths of his age (thinking that 'Umar meant Abdullah Ibn Jaafar)."

'Umar: "I did not mean that. I meant your great man ('Ali) member of the House of the Prophet." Ibn Abbas: "I left him drawing water from a well through a bucket for palm trees... while reciting the Holy Qur'an."

'Umar: "The sacrifice of camels shall be your atonement if you conceal it from me. Is he still holding in his heart something concerning the caliphate?" Ibn Abbas: "Yes."

'Umar: "Does he allege that the Messenger of God appointed him?"

Ibn Abbas: "Yes and I add to this that I asked my father about his ('Ali's) claim (of his appointment by the Messenger as his successor) and my father said 'Ali told the truth."

'Umar: "There were high words from the Messenger (about 'Ali) which do not constitute a clear evidence nor remove an excuse. For some time he was testing his strength to see if he would be able to appoint him."

He wanted during his ailment to name him and I prevented him from it out of concern with (the future of) Islam. By the Lord of the Kaaba Quraish will not unite behind him and had he become a caliph the Arabs throughout the country would have revolted against him." [15](#)

'Umar was concerned with the future of Islam. His sincerity is not questioned but why would 'Ali's leadership be disadvantageous to Islam if the Arabs revolted against him? The Arabs revolted against Abu Bakr. Thousands and thousands deserted the faith during his reign. Yet 'Umar did not think that he was wrong in supporting the leadership of Abu Bakr.

Again how did he know that the Arabs would revolt against 'Ali? Was it not probable that 'Ali would be the most acceptable to them because of his close relationship to the Prophet and his unequalled fame as

a hero his righteousness and his knowledge in Islam? Then how did he expect all the Arabs to revolt against 'Ali?

The Medinites were from the Arabs and they were the main portion of the Islamic force in that period and they were totally sympathetic with 'Ali. As a matter of fact they were about to shift to him even after the election of Abu Bakr.

Even when 'Ali belatedly came to power the Medinites were solidly behind him. The rest of the Arabs in all the Islamic provinces with the exception of Syria willingly gave him the pledge of fealty. It is true that a portion of the people of Basrah Iraq revolted against him and that the Syrians refused to pledge their fealty to him. But this happened only through incitements by leaders from Quraish.

The millions throughout the Muslim state accepted his leadership at a time when most of the Muslims had already forgotten his high distinctions. Had he been given the leadership at the time of the death of the Prophet and upon a written will by the Prophet the Arabs no doubt would have been more responsive to his leadership. 'Umar said that Quraish will never unite behind 'Ali.

This might be true. However we should not forget that Quraish united against the Prophet and fought him for twenty-one years. Should the Prophethood of Muhammad have been cancelled because of Quraish's opposition? Knowing Quraish's dark past 'Umar should not have taken its opposition to a direction as a mark of unsoundness. He should have rather viewed it as evidence of the soundness of that direction.

Again who were the powerful leaders of Quraish at the time of the death of the Prophet? Abu Sufyan and the rest of the Pre-Islamic leaders were already conquered and lost their influence. The influential leaders at that time were

'Ali Al-Abbas Abu Bakr 'Umar Abu Obeidah Uthman Abdul-Rahman Ibn Ouf Talhah Al-Zubayr and the rest of righteous companions from Mecca. These leaders were expected to obey the Prophet's direction and to sway the rest of the Meccans to do so.

Furthermore history testifies that Abu Sufyan with all his grudges against 'Ali (who killed his two sons Hantalah Al-Walid and three of his close relatives in the Islamic defense) was willing to support 'Ali rather than Abu Bakr.

Whether Quraish was willing or unwilling to support 'Ali 'Umar should have remembered that the Prophet had much more knowledge about the Meccans and the rest of the Arabs than he had. The Prophet and not 'Umar was fought by them and he knew about them and all companions more than they knew about themselves. 'Umar should have also remembered that the Prophet was concerned with the future of Islam much more than he was.

With all his concern with the future of Islam and his awareness of the Arab psychology the Prophet

wanted to record 'Ali's name in his will. The leadership of 'Ali must have been the answer to the Muslims' problems.

How could he defy the Prophet?

Of course we are confronted with the big question: suppose that 'Umar was certain of the soundness of his opinion. How did he allow himself to oppose the Prophet in spite of what is known about him of being righteous and obedient to God and His Messenger?

To answer this question we ought to know that the companions used to disagree with the Prophet occasionally in matters that belonged to worldly affairs. They used to allow themselves to do so because they believed that Islam granted them the right to disagree with him in such matters.

They wrongly believed also that the leadership of the Muslims was one of their worldly affairs. 'Umar himself disagreed with the Prophet more than once.

The Disagreement with the Prophet at Al-Hudeibayah It is a well-known fact in history that 'Umar disagreed with the Prophet about the terms on which the Prophet agreed concerning the truce between the Muslims and the pagans of Mecca on the day of Al-Hudeibayah.

It was one of the terms that any Muslim from Mecca who came to the Prophet without the permission of the Meccans had to be returned to the Meccans. But if a Muslim chose to leave the Muslims and rejoin the Meccan camp the Meccans do not have to return him to the Muslims. This appeared to 'Umar and many other companions to be unfair to the Muslims.

The Messenger however knew better. A person that leaves Islam to a pagan camp will not benefit the Muslims if he is returned to them by force and Islam does not need such a person.

Ibn Hisham reported in his Biography of the Prophet the following: "When agreement was reached and nothing was left except writing the pact 'Umar jumped... then he came to the Prophet and said: 'Messenger of God are you not the Messenger of God?' The Prophet: "Yes I am."

'Umar: "Are we not the Muslims?"

The Prophet: "Yes you are."

'Umar: "Are they (the Meccans) not the pagans?"

The Prophet: "Yes they are."

'Umar: "Why should we accept this humiliation to our religion?"

The Prophet: "I am a servant of God and His Messenger. I shall not disobey Him and He will not forsake

me."[16](#)

‘Umar used to say after that: "I am still paying charity fasting praying and freeing slaves as an atonement for what I did."

Disagreed With the Prophet On Osamah

There was another occasion in which prominent companions disagreed with the Prophet.

Shortly before his death the Prophet appointed Osamah Ibn Zayd Ibn Harithah commander of the Muslim army which he ordered to leave for Jordan and Palestine. Abu Bakr ‘Umar Abu Obeidah and the rest of the Prominent companions except ‘Ali were in that army.

Many of the companions criticized his appointment thinking that he was too young to lead them. When this was brought to the Prophet's attention he came to the Mosque while he was sick.

He went to the pulpit and said in his address: "O people execute the expedition of Osamah. If you are criticizing his appointment you have criticized the appointment of his father before him. He is qualified for leadership and his father was qualified."[17](#)

They dragged their feet until the Messenger of God came out again while he was seriously sick and holding his head. He said: "O people execute the mission of Osamah.

Execute the mission of Osamah." But the companions did not move. Osamah and the rest of the people stayed near Medina waiting for what God would do to His Messenger.[18](#)

After the death of the Prophet many of his companions attempted to dismiss Osamah though the Messenger appointed him and by his own blessed hand he delivered the banner to him. ‘Umar came speaking for the companions from Medina requesting Abu Bakr to dismiss Osamah and replace him. Abu Bakr jumped and pulled ‘Umar's beard saying:

"May your mother be bereaved by your death and may I lose you son of Al-Khattab. The Messenger of God appointed him and you ask me to dismiss him!"[19](#)

The companions from Quraish thought that if the Prophet names ‘Ali in his will the leadership would stay in his House and would not be accessible to others from the rest of Quraish. Should ‘Ali be the successor Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein sons of ‘Ali and the leaders of the youth of Paradise by the testimony of the Prophet would be his successors. There would be no chance for Meccan or non-Meccan companions regardless of their high positions to reach the leadership of the Muslims.

The companions were human beings like the rest of the people. They had their ambitions and love of fame and they did not want to see the door of leadership slammed entirely in their faces. They wanted that door to stay open.

So it would be easy for them to reach the leadership. The rest of the clans of Mecca will support them rather than 'Ali.

Those clans of Mecca were ready to accept any non-Hashimite companion rather than 'Ali. They had the unholy grudge against him and they used to envy him for his brilliant record of endeavor for Islam his knowledge in religion his relationship to the Prophet and his heroism.

Should the first successor of the Prophet be a companion other than a "Hashimite" (member of the clan of the Prophet) the rest of the Meccan clans could attain the leadership because the non-Hashimite clans are equal. None of them is inferior or superior to others. Tyme (the clan of Abu Bakr) is not better than Uday (the clan of 'Umar) and Uday is not better than Umayyad or Zuhrah or any other Meccan clan.

Ibn Al-Athir recorded a dialogue between 'Umar and Ibn Abbas which indicates that 'Umar and the rest of the Qureshites were of this idea:

'Umar: "Ibn Abbas do you know what prevented your people (Quraish) from giving you (the Hashimites) the leadership after Muhammad?"

Ibn Abbas: "If I do not know the Commander of the Believers ('Umar) can inform me."

'Umar: "They disliked letting you have both the Prophethood and the caliphate lest you dominate your people. Quraish (the Meccan community) had chosen for itself. It did the right thing and succeeded."

Ibn Abbas: "If the Commander of the Believers permits me to speak and holds away his anger I will speak."

'Umar: "Speak."

Ibn Abbas: "You said that Quraish has chosen for itself and did the right thing and succeeded. Should Quraish have chosen for itself what God had chosen for it the right would have been on its side without being refused or envied.

As to the statement that they disliked to let us have the Prophethood and the caliphate certainly God has described some people with such an attitude and said: 'That is because they disliked what God has revealed so he nullified their deeds.'"

'Umar: "Ibn Abbas by God I heard things about you which I did not like to believe lest I lose your respect." Ibn Abbas: "Commander of the Believers what are the things you heard about me? if they are true they should not make you lose my respect; if they are false a person like me should be able to clear himself of falsehood."

'Umar: "I heard that you say: 'They (the community of Mecca) diverted it (the caliphate) from us out of jealousy aggression and injustice.'"

Ibn Abbas: "Commander of the Believers as to the injustice it has become obvious to the ignorant and the wise; as to the jealousy Adam was envied and we are his envied children."

‘Umar: "It is too far. Children of Hashim by God your hearts refuse to harbor but a permanent jealousy."

Ibn Abbas: "Commander of the Believers be not hasty. Do not describe this way the hearts of people whom God made spotless and purified them of jealousy and bad faith. The heart of the Messenger of God is from the hearts of the children of Hashim."

‘Umar: "Ibn Abbas be away from me." Ibn Abbas: "I will." (Ibn Abbas said): "When I was attempting to stand up he (‘Umar) felt embarrassed and said: 'Ibn Abbas stay where you are. By God I am observing your right and loving what pleases you.'"

Ibn Abbas: "Commander of the Believers I am entitled to a right which is due from you and from every Muslim."

Whoever observes it avails himself and whoever does not is the loser." [20](#)

‘Umar and other companions thought that since the Meccan clans do not support ‘Ali out of jealousy and grudge it would be more advisable to have a leader other than him though the Messenger chose ‘Ali.

Quraish is the community which fought Islam and the Prophethood for twenty-one years then embraced Islam reluctantly after a crushing defeat. The same community had become the decider of the future of the Muslim nation.

The Meccan community's support became a decisive factor that tipped the scale in favor of any contender for the Islamic leadership. This is astonishing. But this was the logic of the events.

Why did the Prophet not insist on Writing his Directive?

This brings us to the third question: Why did the Messenger not write his directive in spite of ‘Umar's opposition?

The answer is obvious: The purpose of the intended directive is to secure the nation against straying. This can be realized only if the writer of the directive were conscious alert knowing what he said and meaning what he said.

But the method of the opposition was clearly casting the doubt on the consciousness of the Messenger and the soundness of his mind at that hour. They said: "The Messenger is being overwhelmed by his ailment " or "What happened to him?" or "Did he hallucinate? Ask him."

All these words portrayed the Messenger as unconscious of what he was saying or at least seeding the doubt in the minds of others about the consciousness of the Prophet and the soundness of his thinking.

Other companions at that meeting shared 'Umar's opposition.

When soundness of the words of the Prophet are doubted the directive is rendered ineffective. If such a doubt could be expressed while he was alive it would be much easier to express after his death. By this the intended directive had lost its significance and would not serve its purpose.

Sa-eed Ibn Jubier said that Ibn Abbas reported: "When the ailment of the Prophet grew he said: 'Bring me an ink-well and a sheet. I will write to you a directive after which you will never go astray.' Some of those who were present with him said 'The Prophet is hallucinating.' Then the Prophet was asked if he still wants to write a directive. He said: 'After what?' (What is its benefit after what has been said?)²¹

And finally we come to the fourth and final question of the subject:

How could the directive of the messenger be a security to the nation against straying?

No one has the right to claim that he knows what the Prophet knew about the method by which he can secure his nation against straying. However what appears clearly is the following:

Security Against Sectarianism

1. Had the Messenger named a person specifically in a written document while his consciousness and soundness of thinking were not doubted he would have avoided the nation a serious division. Had he named 'Ali or Abu Bakr or any other one in such a directive the Muslims would have surrendered to his leadership and the division of the Muslims into Sunni and Shi'a would not have taken place.

This division was born out of the dispute about who was the legitimate successor of the Prophet: Is he Abu Bakr or 'Ali? Should the Messenger have named either of the two men or another one such a division could not have arisen.

The Prophet made many verbal statements about 'Ali but a written statement is much more effective. A verbal statement as we advanced can be denied added to curtailed or forgotten. A recorded statement is much more difficult to be tampered with.

Abu Bakr named 'Umar in writing. And all the followers of Abu Bakr followed his directive. A directive by the Prophet could have been much more effective and more adhered to by the Muslims than that of Abu Bakr.

Naming a successor by such a directive could have prevented the birth of "Kharijis" (seceders) doctrine which repudiates 'Ali and Uthman and calls for a Muslim state without a government. The war of Siffin which produced this doctrine could not have happened.

The civil war of Siffin between the Imam 'Ali and Muawiya and prior to that the war of Basrah Iraq between the Imam on one side and Ayeshah Talhah and Al-Zubayr on the other side were the result of the murder of Uthman the Third Caliph.

Should 'Ali have been named a caliph in a written directive Uthman would have died before coming to power because 'Ali outlived him. Had 'Ali become the caliph upon a written directive from the Prophet Muawiya could not have come to power nor could his transgressor son Yazeed have been able to massacre the children of the Messenger at Karbala. Nor could the war between the son of Al-Zubayr and the Umayyads and many other tragedies and wars have happened.

All these events were the result of the absence of a Prophet's written directive. Had such a directive been in existence the history of Islam would have changed and we would be reading an Islamic history dissimilar to what we read today.

I would like to rush to say that I do not consider the Second Caliph ('Umar) by his opposition to the proposed directive responsible for the division between the Muslims and all what followed. 'Umar was a human being unable to foresee the future of the Muslim nation.

All what 'Umar was thinking of is that the leadership of the Muslims after the death of the Messenger is one of the worldly affairs which the Meccan companions have the right to decide in it according to what their interest dictated to them.

He did not want the Prophet to write a final word in this matter in order to keep the door open for the companions. Should the Messenger have written his directive his word becomes final. The Holy Qur'an declares:

"And it is not permissible to a believing man or a believing woman when God and His Messenger have decided an affair (for them) that they should (after that) claim any say in their affairs: And whoever is rebellious to God and His Messenger he verily goes astray in error manifest." The Holy Quran Chapter 33 Verse 36.

(It is worthy to note that when a Divine decision is stated verbally it would be as final as a written one. Otherwise all the Prophet's decisions and statements would not be binding because they were not written during his time.)

The only one who was able to foresee the future and not through his own power but through the revelation was the Prophet himself. He had seen by the light of God the future of his nation and that if it would remain without a written directive the faith-testing trials will close on it as pieces of a dark night (and this is what his companion Abu Muwaihibah reported). Thus he wanted to spare the nation those foreseen trials which would destroy its unity.

And for this he said: "Bring me an inkwell and a sheet to write to you a directive after which you will not

go astray."

Security Against School Division

A written directive by the Prophet in which he names his successor would not only be a security to the nation against sectarian divisions but also against the multiplicity of the Islamic School of Law.

The Prophet declared that the Qur'an and his "Itrah" (members of his House) are the security against straying and that the Holy Qur'an and the "Itrah" will not part with each other until the Day of Judgement.

Were 'Ali (the head of the members of the House of the Prophet) the highest Muslim authority after the Prophet he would have been that security. He was undisputedly the most knowledgeable in the Holy Qur'an and the teaching of the Prophet. The first two Caliphs (Abu Bakr and 'Umar) with all their profound knowledge in Islam used to resort to him in what they did not know.

'Umar repeatedly said: "Had not the counsel of 'Ali been available 'Umar would have perished (religiously)." And he said: "May God not keep me to a problem for which Abu Hassan ('Ali) is not available." Ibn Saad reported that 'Ali said: "By God there isn't a revealed verse which I do not know about what and where and about whom it was revealed. My Lord has granted me a comprehending mind and a fluent and inquiring tongue."[22](#)

'Ali was asked why was he among the companions of the Prophet the biggest reporter of his statements? He replied: "He used to inform me when I asked him and to initiate (his teaching) when I was silent."[23](#)

Sa-eed Ibn Al-Musavab said: "No one other than 'Ali ever said: 'Ask me before you miss me.'" [24](#) 'Ali is the one about whom the Messenger of God said: "I am the city of knowledge and 'Ali is its gate. Whoever wants to enter the city should come through the gate."[25](#)

Omm Salemah (wife of the Prophet) reported that she heard the Prophet saying: "'Ali is with the Qur'an and the Qur'an is with 'Ali.

They will not part with each other until the Day of Judgement."[26](#)

Had 'Ali been the immediate successor of the Prophet through his written directive the instructions of the Prophet would have been known and the Muslims would have agreed upon them in the various branches of the Islamic laws.

Thus the Prophet wanted to use 'Ali as the uniting force for all Muslims in all generations and this could have prevented them from going astray.

[1](#). These three hadiths are recorded by Muslim in his Sahih Part 11 (The Book of Will) pp. 74–75. The second of them is also recorded by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih Part 4 p. 3.

- [2.](#) Al-Hakim in his Al-Mustadrak Part 3 pp. 5–6. Ibn Hisham also reported this hadith in his Biography of the Prophet Part 2 p. 642. Ibn Sa'd also reported in his Al-Tabaqat Part 2 p. 204.
- [3.](#) Ibn Sa'd Al-Tabaqat Part 3 p. 343. Muslim in his Sahih also reported what is similar to this Part 12 p. 206.
- [4.](#) Ibn Hisham Biography of the Prophet.
- [5.](#) Al-Bukhari Sahih Al-Bukhari Part 1 p. 39.
- [6.](#) Muslim in his Sahih Part 11 (at the end of the Book of Will) p. 89. Ibn Sa'd also recorded it in his Al-Tabaqat Part 2 p. 242 And so did Imam Ahmad in his Musnad Part 1 p. 222.
- [7.](#) Muslim in his Sahih Part 11 p. 95. Similar to this is recorded by Ibn Sa'd in his Al-Tabaqat Part 2 p. 244. Imam Ohmad also recorded it in his Musnad Part 1 p. 336.
- [8.](#) Ibn Sa'd recorded it in his Al-Tabaqat Part 2 p. 242. Similar report by Jabir is recorded in the same Part 2 p. 244. In this report Jabir said: "They excessively talked at the presence of the Prophet until he refused it."
- [9.](#) Ibn Sa'd Al-Tabaqat Part 2 pp. 243–244.
- [10.](#) Ibn Sa'd Al-Tabaqat Part 2 p.244.
- [11.](#) Al-Tirmidhi Part 5 p.328.
- [12.](#) Recorded by Ibn Rahawaih Ibn Jareer Ibn Abu Assim and Al- Mahamili in his Amali (Kansul-Ummal Part 15 hadith 356)
- [13.](#) Imam Ahmad in his Musnad Part 5 p. 181.
- [14.](#) Al-Tirmidhi in his Sunan Part 5 p.328. Al-Tirmidhi said also that Abu Dharr Abu Sa-eed (Al-Khidri) Zeid Ibn Arqam and Hutheifa Ibn Oseid reported what agrees with this.
- [15.](#) Ibn Abu Al-Hadid in his Commentaries on Nahjul-Balaghah Vol.3 p.278. And Ahmad Ibn Tahir in his History of Baghdad (Sharaful-Ddeen Al-Murajaat)
- [16.](#) Ibn Hisham Biography of the Prophet Part 2 pp. 216–217 Similar to this is recorded by Muslim in Sahih Muslim.
- [17.](#) Ibn Sa'd Al-Tabaqat Part 2 p. 249.
- [18.](#) Ibid p. 249.
- [19.](#) Al-Halabi in his Biography of the Prophet Part 3 p. 336 and Addahlani in his Biography of the Prophet and Ibn Jareer in his history book where he recorded the event of the year 12 after the Hijrah (Al-Murajaat by Sayed Sharaful-deen p. 225)
- [20.](#) Ibn Al-Athir Al-Kamil Part 3 p. 31.
- [21.](#) Ibn Sa'd Al-Tabaqat Part 2 p. 242.
- [22.](#) Muttaqi Hindi in his Kanzul-Ummal Part 15 p. 113.
- [23.](#) Ibid p. 113.
- [24.](#) Ibid p. 113.
- [25.](#) Al-Hakim Al-Mustadrak Part 3 p. 124.
- [26.](#) Al-Hakim Al-Mustadrak Part 3 p. 127.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/brother-prophet-muhammad-imam-ali-shaykh-muhammad-jawad-chirri/part-1-imam-during-era-prophethood#comment-0>