

## Part 1: The Matter of Will

There are two points of views among Muslims regarding the Caliphate; one group says that it is religious as well as a worldly matter.

Caliphate is related to religion in a way that a Caliph is expected to follow religious commandments in all matters. A Caliph should be immune from mistakes and have a complete knowledge of religion.

Caliphate is related to the world in a way that a Caliph is also a human being and Allah does not send revelation upon him. He has to follow the commandments of religion much in the same way as other followers do.

Further, a Caliph is chosen by Allah and it is announced to public by the prophet. A Caliph is responsible for safeguarding religion after the prophet. Teaching religious commandments in all walks of life is also the responsibility of a Caliph after the prophet. According to this point of view, the rank of Caliphate is after prophethood and Caliphate should also be as pure as prophethood.

Followers of this view believe that Allah ordered His Prophet (S) to appoint his successor and the Prophet appointed Imam 'Ali (a) as a Caliph. However after the Prophet passed away, some people kept 'Ali (a) away from his right and founded their own Caliphate. Still Imam 'Ali (a) remained rightful and he was the first successor of the Prophet. He was kept away from performing his duties as expected for a long period of time but it was not his fault. It was the fault of those who tried to bring about changes in religion.

This Group presents the following points to prove that Caliphate and Imamate is a religious matter:

The Prophet preached religious as well as worldly matters and it was necessary for him to appoint a leader for Muslims after him so that the Ummah does not get involved in differences after him. Also such a person is required for leadership of Ummah who is perfect and has complete knowledge of all religious and worldly matters and he should also have the best character. Islam is not just for Quraish or Arabs, it is for the benefit of entire humanity, hence it is necessary to appoint a person who is capable in all aspects.

1. Leaving the matter of Caliphate to the choice of the Ummah is not acceptable. It is not possible to leave such an important matter at the mercy of people because it can lead to many complications. Even if Caliphate is left to the choice of people, do all Muslims have right to it or only some specified individuals?
2. If it is the right of only some specified individuals, what is the reason for it? What is so special about this group?
3. Is the right of selecting the Caliph with only with Abu Bakr, Umar and Abu Ubaidah and other Helpers (*Ansar*) who were present at Saqifah?
4. Can the Caliphate of Saqifah be proved correct in spite of opposition from great Companions like Imam 'Ali (a) and other members of Bani Hashim; Saad ibn Ubadah and his sons, Salman Farsi, Abu Zar Ghiffari, Miqdad ibn Aswad, Ammar ibn Yasir, Zubair ibn Awwam, Khalid ibn Saeed and Huzairah ibn Yamani and Buraira?
5. Is it correct to consider the Caliphate legal in spite of opposition of so many great personalities?
6. If the right of selecting a Caliph is given to Muslims, would they select the best personality in spite of having tribal conflicts between them?
7. The Prophet knew about conflicts between different tribes. Did he leave the matter of Caliphate to the people to increase conflicts?
8. If this right is given to people, would the selection be through written or oral votes?
9. If it is necessary to have written votes, how many such people were present who were completely illiterate? Then how could this method be implemented?
10. Would it be necessary to install polling booths in every city and town? Or some other method will be adopted?
11. Will the candidates be allowed to canvass for themselves?
12. How will this election be implemented?
13. How much time is needed to conduct this election?
14. Who will have the charge of religious matters between the time when the prophet passes away and the election of a Caliph?

The answers to above questions are absolutely necessary.

## Proofs of 'Ali's Caliphate

The Group of Muslims, which believes that Caliphate and Imamate is from Allah, has a strong and clear proof regarding it. They say that the Prophet intended to perform Hajj in 10th A.H. and announced it in entire Arabia. Muslims from all the parts of the peninsula gathered for this Hajj, which was also called the Farewell Hajj.

The Prophet was returning to Medina after performing all the rituals of Hajj when he reached a place called Ghadeer Khumm near Johfa; which is at the crossroads to Egypt and Iraq.

Almighty Allah revealed the following verse on the Prophet at this place:

« يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ »

***O Apostle! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message, and Allah will protect you from the people; surely Allah will not guide the unbelieving people. (5:67)***

After the revelation of this verse, the Prophet ordered a pulpit to be built using camels saddles and gathered all the people. When people gathered, he delivered a sermon; then he raised the hand of Imam 'Ali (a) and announced: "Allah is my master and I am the master of all believers. 'Ali is the master of those for whom I am the master."<sup>1</sup>

Immediately after this, Almighty Allah announced the completion of religion in the verse:

« الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا »

***This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favor on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion. (5:3)***

When this verse was revealed, the Prophet thanked God and said: "Glory be to Allah for perfection of religion, completion of bounties and Wilayat (mastership) of 'Ali."

It must be mentioned that Shias celebrate Eid Ghadeer in the remembrance of this incident. Maqrizi has explained this celebration in the following words:

"We should know that there was no such Eid as Eid Ghadeer during the early days of Islam. Also we do not have its mention from the chaste people's words. This Eid was first celebrated in the year 352 Hijra during the time of Muizzud Daula 'Ali ibn Babawahy in Iraq, which is based on the tradition narrated by

Baraa ibn Aazib quoted by Imam Ahmad in his *Musnad*: We were traveling with the Prophet, when we reached the place of Ghadeer Khumm and an announcement for congregational prayers was made. The place between two trees was swept and the Prophet offered Zuhr (noon) prayers and delivered a sermon. He addressed the people and said: “Don’t you know that I have more right on believers than they have on their own self?”

Then he raised Imam ‘Ali’s hand and announced: “‘Ali is the master of whomsoever I am the master. O Allah! Love one who loves ‘Ali and hate those who hate ‘Ali.” After this Umar came to Imam ‘Ali (a) and said: “O son of Abu Talib! Congratulations! You have become the master of all believing men and women.”

The place of Ghadeer Khumm is three miles from Johfa and there is a spring of water over there; there are many trees covering this place.

Shias celebrate Eid on 18th Zilhajj in the memory of this incident, offering prayers all night and praying a two rakat prayer of thanksgiving in the forenoon. They put on new clothes, free slaves, distribute alms as much as possible, slaughter animals and express happiness. When Shias started celebrating this Eid, Ahl al-Sunnah also started celebrating an Eid exactly eight days after that and said that the Prophet and Abu Bakr had entered the cave on this day.”[2](#)

## Majority’s Point of View Regarding Caliphate

According to the point of view of the second group of Muslims, although religious knowledge is essential for Caliphate, it is a worldly matter from beginning to end. Therefore the Prophet did not issue Express Text (*Nass*) regarding Caliphate as it is not one of the necessities of faith.

Hence we see that some Muslims gathered in Saqifah Bani Saada[3](#) to elect a Caliph immediately after the Prophet passed away. They handed over this honored position to Abu Bakr, who in turn passed it to Umar; who constituted a committee after him, which elected Uthman as Caliph. Imam ‘Ali (a) was elected by people after the death of Uthman. These four personalities are called the Rightly-guided Caliphs (*Khulafa Rashideen*).

The order of their religious merit is also same. This group says that religious commandments were completed before the Prophet passed away. The complete guidance regarding all worldly matters was delivered. Hence there was no need of a Caliph to be appointed by Allah. Ustad Abdul Fattah Abdul Maqsood supports this view in his book, *Al-Imam ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (a)*:

“Islamic Caliphate is related to worldly matters. It is a political issue much like the governmental issues prevalent today. Caliphate is based on choice and it has nothing to do with Express Text (*Nass*) because the Prophet did not clearly appoint anyone as his Caliph in the last moments of his life.”

However, it is true that the Prophet had pointed it out many times, but Companions were unaware of its

explanation. Also there are a few traditions, in which Caliphate is discussed clearly. For example, ‘tradition of Ghadeer’ and ‘tradition of the Shoe-mender’ can be presented as those with a clear mention of Caliphate.<sup>4</sup>

## **Mutazalite Viewpoint Regarding Caliphate**

Apart from the above viewpoints, there exists one more, which is similar to the above two.

These people agree with Ahl al-Sunnah viewpoint that Caliphate is a worldly matter and the Prophet did not clearly appoint any Caliph after him. However, they believe that Imam ‘Ali (a) is more rightful for Caliphate than Abu Bakr because the former is the best in the entire Ummah in all aspects.

I mention a tradition of *Sharh Nahjul Balagha* by Ibn Abi Al-Hadid, which supports the above viewpoint:

“All our seniors agree that the Caliphate of Abu Bakr was correct and rightful and it was not based on any Express Text (*Nass*). His Caliphate was based on consensus and other such methods, which are opined differently by our leaders.

Chiefs like Abu Uthman and Amr ibn Ubaid say that Abu Bakr has more excellence than Imam ‘Ali (a). The order of excellence of the Rightly-guided Caliphs is same as that of their order of Caliphate. The seniors of Baghdad, be they leaders or commons, opine: Imam ‘Ali (a) was more virtuous than Abu Bakr. Scholars of Basra like Abu ‘Ali Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab al-Jabal, Shaykh Abu Abdullah al-Husain ibn ‘Ali al-Baseei and Chief Qazi Abdul Jabbar ibn Ahmad and Abu Muhammad Hasan ibn Mutawayyah also support this viewpoint.

Also Abu Huzaifah, Asl ibn Ataa and Abil Hudail Muhammad ibn Hudail al-Allaaf opine that we must keep quiet in the matter of excellence of Imam ‘Ali (a) and Abu Bakr. However it is a fact that ‘Ali (a) was more virtuous than Uthman.

I personally support the viewpoint of seniors of Baghdad and consider Imam ‘Ali (a) better than all other Muslims.”

This great personality of Motazela sect writes in another place in *Sharh Nahjul Balagha* that the Motazela sect has arrived at the following conclusion after a lot of debate regarding the matter of excellence:

“Imam ‘Ali (a) was the most virtuous person in entire Muslim Ummah. People kept him away from Caliphate due to certain reasons. No texts existed regarding Caliphate of Imam ‘Ali (a). Those texts, which were present, had a lot of similarity in their meanings. Imam ‘Ali (a) initially opposed the Caliphate of Abu Bakr but accepted it later on.

If ‘Ali (a) had continued opposition we would have considered Abu Bakr’s Caliphate invalid for we believe

that Imam 'Ali (a) is the rightful owner of Caliphate. It was rightful for him to become a Caliph or hand it over to someone else. Over here, we can see that he had accepted the Caliphate of others. Therefore we also follow him by accepting those persons as Caliphs. We accept whatever Imam 'Ali (a) had accepted.”[5](#)

We can explain the view of this group by saying that they consider Imam 'Ali (a) more virtuous than Abu Bakr and consider the former as more rightful to Caliphate than anyone else. However, they believe that there was no Express Text (*Nass*) regarding this. Considering this, Imam 'Ali (a) was a Caliph as per legal ruling. However, as Abu Bakr was appointed a Caliph due to odd conditions, Imam 'Ali (a) did not oppose it much. Hence the Caliphate of Abu Bakr is also correct.

The issue of Caliphate is a cause of differences in every age and all other differences stem from this issue alone. This issue is controversial from the time the Prophet passed away till now. Every sect has tried to prove its own view regarding Caliphate and to refute the stand of others.

It is very difficult for a student of History to accept each of the three viewpoints as correct because if we accept one of them, others will be proved wrong.

If someone rejects Express Text (*Nass*) and the Prophet's will, he believes that the Prophet was not at all worried about the future of Muslim Ummah. He was least bothered about the division of Ummah into numerous sects and had no problem about the Ummah falling prey to worse conditions.

Historical facts prove this viewpoint useless and invalid. Consider the example of tradition of Pen and Paper (*Qirtaas*), which is discussed in length in the earlier pages, however I would like to present it over here also.

## **Tradition of Pen and Paper (Qirtaas)**

Ibn Athir writes in his *Kaamil Fit Tarikh*, Vol. 2 Pg. 217:

When the illness and pain of the Prophet increased, he said, “Bring me paper and pen to enable me to write something for you such that you will never go astray.” Upon this, people started to fight amongst themselves, which is not acceptable in the Prophet's presence. People repeatedly said that the Prophet was talking rubbish. The Prophet said, “My pain is not as severe as what you people are calling me to.” The Prophet mentioned three things in his will:

1. Banish polytheists from Arabian Peninsula.
2. The practice of sending delegations should be continued in the same way as I used to do.

...and the third thing is concealed on purpose by saying that the narrator has forgotten it.

Bukhari has narrated this tradition in the following words: When the illness and pain of the Prophet

increased he said, “Bring me paper and pen so that I write something for you such that you will never go astray.” Upon this, people started to fight amongst themselves, which is not acceptable in the Prophet’s presence. People repeatedly said that the Prophet was talking rubbish. The Prophet said, “My pain is not as severe as what you people are calling me to.” The Prophet mentioned three things in his will:

1. Banish polytheist from Arabian Peninsula.
2. The practice of sending delegations should be continued in the same way as I used to do.

The narrator stopped here or said that he has forgotten the third point.

Bukhari has also narrated this tradition from another chain as follows:

Ibn Abbas narrates that the Prophet was in his last moments and many people had gathered in his house at that time. The Prophet said, “I want to write a will for you so that you will never go astray after me.”

Some people said, “The Prophet is affected by pain. We have the Quran with us; the Book of Allah is sufficient for us.” People gathered in the house started opposing one another on this point. When the noise increased, the Prophet ordered the people to leave him alone.

This tradition is narrated by Ibn Saad in *Tabaqaat-e-Kubra* Vol. 4, Pg. 60 and 61 as follows:

When the Prophet was in his last moments, a lot of people including Umar had gathered at his place. The Prophet said: Bring me paper and pen to enable me to write a will for you so that you don’t go astray after me. Umar said: The Prophet is affected by pain and we have the Quran with us. The Book of Allah is sufficient for us. Those present at the scene started opposing one another and when the noise increased, the Prophet ordered the people: Get up and leave the place.

After reading this tradition, you can decide for yourself whether the reply of Umar was appropriate as far as the Prophet’s personality is concerned. Do the etiquettes of companionship permit such replies? Does the religion of Islam allow someone to disgrace the Prophet’s words by calling them rubbish?

Put the words of Umar aside and refer to this verse of holy Quran:

«وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ. إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ»

***Nor does he speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed. (53:3-4)***

What is the legal value of Umar’s words in view of this verse? I would like to leave the judgment to readers who like justice. It is strange that the Companions also posed a number of questions to the Prophet, which had very little importance as compared to the issue of Caliphate. Ibn Khaldun writes in

his *Tarikh*: The Companions asked the Prophet who would give him the funeral bath. The Companions also asked what his shroud should be of. The Prophet replied that he should be shrouded in his own clothes or in a cloth from Egypt or Yemen. The Companions asked who would lower him in the grave and the Prophet replied that it should be someone from his family.

In this tradition, we see that Companions go on asking the Prophet about his shroud, burial and grave. Didn't they ask him who his successor will be? Didn't the Prophet himself tell the Companions about his successor?

Ibn Khaldun writes on the same page: After this the Prophet said, "Bring me paper and pen to enable me to write something for you such that you will never go astray after me. The people started quarrelling on this. Some said that the Prophet was talking rubbish. The Prophet said: "My pain is better than what you are calling me to?"<sup>6</sup>

Dear readers!

You decide, why the Prophet wasn't allowed to write the will. Why was this opposition made? What was the need of this mayhem? Was it because he was going to make a will regarding the Caliphate of a person about whom he had spoken a number of times during his lifetime? So that no one has a doubt in his mind regarding his Caliphate.

Umar was well aware of this fact. He could guess the Prophet's intention and hence he opposed him. It is quite strange that narrators say that the Prophet willed regarding three things. They have even described two of them and Abu Bakr had even acted on them. However, the third point was forgotten by the narrator or he had not narrated it on purpose.

The Prophet wanted to write down this third point, and that is why the people tried to misbehave with the Prophet calling his words 'rubbish'. It is strange that three things were actually included in the will out of which, two were mentioned by the Prophet in his senses while he was blamed of talking rubbish at the third point.

## [What did the Prophet Want to Write?](#)

Now the question arises as to what the Prophet wanted to write in his last moments? The answer is given by Umar in his own words. Ahmad ibn Abi Tahir has narrated it in his *Tarikh Baghdad* through his chain of narrators. Ibn Abil Hadid has also mentioned it in *Sharh Nahjul Balagha* Vol. 3, Pg. 97. This tradition can be summarized as follows: Abdullah Ibn Abbas was walking along with Umar. Umar said, "O Ibn Abbas! If you hide this fact, it would be obligatory for you to sacrifice a camel...Does 'Ali have desire for Caliphate even now?"

Ibn Abbas replied in affirmative. Umar said, "Does 'Ali think that the Prophet had willed regarding his Caliphate?"

Ibn Abbas again replied in affirmative. Umar said, “The Prophet had pointed it out in his life a number of times but he didn’t make it clear. The Prophet desired to write it down in the last moments of his life and was fully prepared to mention ‘Ali’s name. I stopped him from doing so keeping the benefit of Islam and Muslims in mind. The Prophet too understood from my resistance that I have understood his intentions and hence he dropped the idea.”

If this tradition is correct, it means that Umar was more concerned for the benefit of Islam than the Prophet. If this is the case, Allah should have made Umar the prophet instead of Prophet Muhammad.

If we ignore the worldly aspect of Caliphate to make the discussion simpler, disregard the historical facts presented by the first group and accept only those historical facts that are present in books of the second group, then only we will be able to derive a better solution.

It is worth asking here why couldn’t Imam ‘Ali (a) attain the Caliphate after the Prophet passed away?

Before replying to this question from books of Ahl al-Sunnah, I would like to state that these answers will be brief because most historical facts regarding this incident have been distorted and every possible change was made during the time of Umayyads and Abbasids.

We can clearly see how the progeny of Abu Talib was made the target of oppression. The regimes of that time had extreme hatred for Ahl al-Bayt. Scholars and tradition narrators of that time earned a large amount of wealth through fabrication of traditions disparaging the Household of the Prophet. They made enmity of Muhammad’s Progeny as means of gaining proximity to the rulers. Excellences of Muhammad’s progeny, which could not be hidden, were associated with others.

In spite of all this, it is a miracle of truthfulness of Muhammad’s progeny that their excellences are still present in the books today along with the account of oppression they had to face.

In this book, as much as possible, I would only quote from established books of History.

## **Fabrication of Traditions During Muawiyah’s Reign**

Consider the following incident as regards oppression on the Progeny of Muhammad and especially on Imam ‘Ali (a):

Abul Hasan ‘Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Saif al-Madaini writes in his book *Al-Ahadith*: After signing the treaty with Imam Hasan (a), Muawiyah wrote to his governors: “I don’t take guarantee of a person who narrates any tradition regarding the excellence of Abu Turab and his Ahl al-Bayt.”

People started cursing Imam ‘Ali (a) from every pulpit after this letter. They used to hate him and narrate immoral things regarding him and his family.

After this, Muawiyah wrote to his governors: “No one should accept the testimony of ‘Ali and his

followers.”

Further he wrote to his governors: “Love all those who love Uthman and narrate his excellences. Honor such people and if someone narrates a tradition praising Uthman, send that tradition to me along with full name of the narrator.”

The Governors obeyed Muawiyah’s orders word by word and rewarded those who narrated excellences of Uthman. As a result the virtues of Uthman grew in large number.

Now Muawiyah sensed danger and wrote to his governors: “Traditions regarding the virtues of Uthman have increased much. When you read this letter, order the people to produce traditions regarding the other two caliphs also. Always remember that if you find a tradition about the excellence of Abu Turab, a similar tradition must be coined regarding the Companions.” Muawiyah’s letters were read out in public. After this, traditions regarding the Companions and first two caliphs were produced rapidly. These traditions had nothing to do with truth and reality. Jurists, judges and rulers of that time propagated these traditions everywhere.

Now let us look at the above mentioned question: Why couldn’t Imam ‘Ali (a) attain Caliphate?

While replying to this question, we must keep in mind the character of Imam ‘Ali (a) and his sacrifices during the Prophet’s lifetime including his peace treaties and battles. We will be able to solve this complexity if we understand the reasoning behind his peace treaties and battles during the Prophet’s time.

Let us divide the question into two parts in order to answer it effectively:

1. Did Imam ‘Ali (a) deserve Caliphate?
2. If yes, why was he kept away from it?

We will have to study the life history of Imam ‘Ali (a) to answer the first question and also have to remember the sacrifices of his parents.

## **Abu Talib’s Services to Islam**

Even a common student of Islamic history is aware of how well Abu Talib carried out the job of safeguarding Allah’s Messenger. We can compile an entire book if we try to explain the sacrifices of Abu Talib.

I present here a few examples of Abu Talib’s sacrifice from *Sirat Ibn Hisham*:

When the Prophet started preaching religion, he invited the people of Mecca to divine unity and criticized their hand-made idols. Quraish were enraged at this but when they saw Abu Talib guarding the Prophet,

they sent to him a delegation comprising of Quraishite chiefs; Rabia ibn Abdus Shams's son Utbah, Shaybah and Abu Sufyan were in the forefront of this delegation.

When this delegation came to Abu Talib it said: "Your nephew is talking ill about our gods and religion. Please stop him or you step aside and we shall deal with him."

Abu Talib calmed the people down and sent them away. A few days later, the people of Quraish came to Abu Talib again. This time also, Abu Talib sent them back. When people were convinced that Abu Talib will not hand Muhammad over to them, they took along a handsome youth called Ammara ibn Walid to him. They said to Abu Talib: "You may keep Ammara ibn Walid in exchange of your nephew."

Abu Talib refused saying: "What a bad option you have proposed! Should I raise your child and hand over mine to you so that you may kill him?"

Ibn Saad writes in *Tabaqaat-e-Kubra*: When Abdul Muttalib passed away, Abu Talib adopted the Prophet for whom he had unparalleled love, to an extent that he did not love his own children so much. He used to make the Prophet sleep beside him and take him along wherever he went. He loved the Prophet more than anything else.<sup>7</sup>

## Canyon of Abu Talib

Ibn Athir has mentioned this incident of sacrifice in *Al-Kamil fit Tarikh*, Vol. 2, Pg. 59-62:

When Quraish realized that Islam is progressing day by day and their courier returned unsuccessfully from the court of King Negus, they called a meeting of tribal chiefs who came to a conclusion that they shall boycott Bani Hashim and won't have any relations with them.

They wrote down this decision on a scroll and hung it in holy Kaaba. Abu Talib took Bani Hashim and Bani Abdul Muttalib to a valley, which is also known as Sheb-e-Abi Talib (Abi Talib's canyon). They spent around three years in this place, after which the Almighty Allah revealed to the Prophet that the writing of that scroll is eaten up by termites; only the name of Allah remains. The Prophet informed Abu Talib of this fact who never doubted anything told by the Prophet. Abu Talib immediately came to the sanctuary and announced to Quraish: "Your promise is eaten up by termites; only the name of Allah remains..." Then he recited the following lines:

"Take a lesson from this scroll. When a stranger gives some news, we are surprised. Allah has wiped out all the writings of their denial and disobedience. They were challenging a rightful person with their unjust reasoning. Whatever they said was destroyed. Whoever concocts a lie will surely be falsified."

No polytheist dared to hurt the Prophet as long as Abu Talib was alive, but when he passed away, the approach of polytheists became clear and they hurt him to their hearts' content. The Prophet mentions this fact in the following words: "Quraish could not hurt me as long as Abu Talib was alive."<sup>8</sup>

Let us conclude the discussion on sacrifices of Abu Talib with the words of Ibn Khaldun, the historian:

The Prophet was eight years old when his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib passed away. Abdul Muttalib entrusted to his son, Abu Talib, the custody of young Muhammad. He raised the Prophet very well, watching out all his activities carefully. He had seen the childhood and youth of the Prophet in a better way. He used to see that the Prophet kept away from all practices prevalent during the period of ignorance. Three years before migration, Abu Talib and Lady Khadija passed away. The Prophet was aggrieved deeply because of the passing away of a caring uncle and a loyal wife. The Quraish who had controlled themselves out of fear of Abu Talib, started troubling the Prophet and used to throw dirt on his place of offering prayers.[9](#)

This is a brief account of sacrifices of the respected father of Imam ‘Ali (a). Due to space considerations in this book, it is not possible to explain the sacrifices of the respected mother of Imam ‘Ali (a) for the Prophet of Islam. It would be enough to say regarding her excellence that when she passed away, the Prophet brought his own shirt for shrouding her, got down inside her grave to level the earth with his own hands and himself laid down in the grave for a while before burying her.[10](#)

Imam ‘Ali (a) was raised under the care of Abu Talib, who was a great lover of the Prophet; and Lady Fatima bint Asad, who made so many sacrifices for the Prophet. Later on he remained under the care of the Prophet and Lady Khadija.

## [Ali's Services to Islam](#)

This was the account of the family of Imam ‘Ali (a). Now let us have a look at the character of Imam ‘Ali (a) and the services he offered for the Prophet of Islam and Islam itself.

As far as mutual relation between Imam ‘Ali (a) and Islam is concerned, I would like to support the words of an Egyptian scholar, Aqqad as follows:

“Ali was a pure Muslim because of his ideal character and the new religion did not find anyone’s religion as true and deep as that of ‘Ali.”[11](#)

Dr. Taha Husayn writes in his book, *Al-Fitnatul Kubra* Uthman ibn Affan, Pg. 101:

“Imam ‘Ali (a) was still a child when the Prophet announced his prophethood. The former immediately accepted Islam. After the declaration, he was raised up under the care of the Prophet and Lady Khadija. He never worshipped idols in his entire lifetime.”

The clear difference between senior companions and Imam ‘Ali (a) is that the latter was raised up under the shade of revelations. This honor is not shared with any one else.

This was the reason why Imam ‘Ali (a) emerged as a unique personality in all aspects.

The following examples must be remembered to understand the personality of Imam ‘Ali (a). Take a look at the incident of the night before migration of the Prophet, to study the sacrifices made by Imam ‘Ali (a).

## **1. Eve of Migration (Hijrah)**

Ibn Hisham narrates that when Quraish saw that Islam was progressing by the day and spreading to other cities also, especially Yathrib; and they also came to know that many followers of Prophet have migrated to Yathrib, they rightly predicted that even the Prophet would leave Mecca and move to Yathrib anytime. They summoned their chiefs to discuss this problem.

The chiefs of Meccan polytheists included Utbah, Shaybah and Abu Sufyan. During the discussion, it was suggested that the Prophet should be arrested or banished but both these options were rejected by the majority.

They came to a final conclusion that a person from each Meccan tribe should come forward and put an end to the life of the Prophet on a particular night. The involvement of numerous tribes in this act will benefit in such a way that the progeny of Abde Manaf will not be able to take revenge from so many tribes. Their hold will be tightened in this way. When the Prophet sensed the presence of people from different tribes near his house, he asked Imam ‘Ali (a) to sleep on this bed and cover himself with a cloak. [12](#)

The death of Abu Talib’s son was nearly certain. When the Prophet said that his life is in danger and asked Imam ‘Ali (a) to sleep in his bed, the latter boldly asked: “Will your life be saved, if I sleep here?”

The Prophet replied in the affirmative and then told Imam ‘Ali (a) to return all possessions of the people of Mecca held by the Prophet as trusts.

Imam ‘Ali (a) stayed in Mecca for three days after the Prophet’s migration. He returned all the belongings of the disbelievers of Mecca. After completing this job, he started for Medina on foot. His feet had swollen up due to such a long walk. [13](#)

## **2. Brotherhood**

After migration, the Prophet made every Emigrant (*Muhajir*) a brother of respective Helper (*Ansar*).

Tears flowed from the eyes of Imam ‘Ali (a) as he saw this scene. The Prophet asked the reason for this. Imam ‘Ali (a) said: “You have made all of your Companions brothers of each other but did not make me anyone’s brother.” The Prophet said: “You are *my* brother in this world and the hereafter.” [14](#)

## **3. ‘Ali and the Battle of Uhad**

When Muslims suffered a setback in the Battle of Uhad and the Companions climbed the mountain, Imam ‘Ali (a) continued to fight with utmost selflessness and stood like a mountain in front of the

enemies. The fight of the son of Abu Talib encompassed the entire battlefield. This was the time when a voice from heaven called out: “If there is any sword, it is Zulfiqar. If there is any brave youth, it is ‘Ali.”

When he returned home after protecting Islam and the Prophet of Islam, he handed over the sword to his wife, Lady Fatima Zahra and recited the following lines:

“O Fatima! Take this sword. This sword is worth praising. I do not fear or tremble in the battlefield. I swear by my life that I have done Jihad for the love of the Prophet and obedience of Almighty Allah.”<sup>15</sup>

#### **4. Ali and the Preaching of Surah Baraat**

Muhammad ibn Husain narrates from Ahmad ibn Mufaddal from Asbaat that Saadi said: “When the initial verses of Surah Baraat were revealed, the Prophet made Abu Bakr the leader of Hajj and handed over those verses to him and asked him to read them aloud in public.

Abu Bakr took the verses and moved on, but when he reached near the trees of a place called Zil Halifa, Imam ‘Ali (a) came from behind mounted on the Prophet’s camel and took the verses away from him.

Abu Bakr returned to the Prophet and said: ‘O Messenger of Allah! May my parents be sacrificed on you, was any verse revealed regarding me?’ The Prophet said, ‘No, my message can be delivered either by me or ‘Ali only.’”<sup>16</sup>

#### **5. ‘Ali Goes to Yemen to Propagate Islam**

The Prophet sent Khalid ibn Walid to Yemen to preach Islam but no one accepted it on his invitation. Then the Prophet appointed Imam ‘Ali (a) to propagate Islam in Yemen and ordered him to sent Khalid and his companions back to Medina.

Imam ‘Ali (a) sent back Khalid and his companions immediately on reaching the place; then he read aloud the letter of the Prophet before the people of Yemen. As a result of his preaching, the tribe of Hamadan accepted Islam in a single day.<sup>17</sup>

#### **6. Haroon of Muhammad**

Imam ‘Ali (a) participated in all battles except the Battle of Tabuk as the Prophet had appointed him as his deputy in Medina on this occasion.

Imam Muslim ibn Hajjaj has narrated this incident in the following words: “Saad ibn Abi Waqqas narrates that the Prophet told Imam ‘Ali (a), ‘You are to me as Aaron was to Moses. The only difference is that there would be no prophet after me.’”

Saad ibn Abi Waqqas narrates that the Prophet asked Imam ‘Ali (a) to stay in Medina at the time of the Battle of Tabuk. Imam ‘Ali (a) said, “You are leaving me behind with women and children?”

The Prophet said, “Aren’t you pleased that you are to me as Aaron was to Moses except that there would be no prophet after me?”

## 7. Conqueror of Khaiber

When the Companions failed to conquer Khaiber and fled from the enemy, the Prophet announced: “Tomorrow I shall hand over the flag to a person who is a real man. He loves Allah and His Messenger and they too love him. Allah will make us capture Khaiber at his hands.”

Umar says that it was the only occasion when he wished for leadership. He spent the entire night praying that the banner of Islam comes to him but the Prophet called Imam ‘Ali (a) in the morning and handed the banner to him. [18](#)

Apart from these facts, the following issues must be kept in mind to prove the Caliphate of Imam ‘Ali (a) immediately after the Prophet:

A. Imam ‘Ali (a) had good understanding of the essence of the religion of Islam and he encompassed all aspects of faith. Often Imam ‘Ali (a) used to sit and talk with the Prophet in private and people were completely unaware of these discussions. He used to benefit as much as he could from the Holy Prophet (S) regarding the meaning and interpretation of Quran.

If Imam ‘Ali (a) did not question first, the Prophet used to commence the discussion. People other than Imam ‘Ali (a) were divided into a few types:

1. Some were such that they used to hesitate in posing questions to the Prophet and they used to pray for some ignorant one to come forward and ask the Prophet so that they can hear something.
2. Some people were extremely foolish who had nothing to do with reality.
3. Some people were away from knowledge because of their excessive involvement in worship or in worldly matters.
4. Some people had hatred of Islam hidden in their hearts and used to consider religious knowledge as waste of time. [19](#)

B. The Prophet used to send Imam ‘Ali (a) to different places in order to appoint him as his successor and to develop self-confidence and he always returned successful.

Whenever the Prophet sent out an expedition he used to make ‘Ali the leader, if the latter was included in it.

Imam ‘Ali (a) never went out on an expedition under anyone’s leadership.

The worst scenario of history is that Abu Bakr, during his reign trained Umar in intellectual and practical

aspects and the person he himself had taught was appointed as his successor and people also accepted his Caliphate. However when the Prophet appointed a person as his successor, whom he had taught all his life, nobody accepted it!

C. Usamah's Army: The Prophet wanted to pave way for the Caliphate of Imam 'Ali (a) before he passed away. He wanted to send all those people out of Medina who could have opposed it. So let us have a look at the incident of Usamah's army as narrated by Ibn Saad:

Four nights before the end of the month of Safar, it was Monday of 11 A.H. when the Prophet ordered an attack on Rome.

He called Usamah ibn Zaid in the morning and told him: "You take the army with you to the place where your father was martyred. Crush that area with the hooves of your horses. Attack the people of Abna in the morning and take care that they remain unaware of your arrival. If Allah gives you success, do not stay there for long. Take your guides and spies and come back."

The Prophet's illness increased on Wednesday and he readied a banner with his own hands on Thursday and said: "Usamah, march forward, taking the name of Allah; do Jihad and fight with the deniers of divine unity."

The Prophet handed that banner to Buraidah ibn Haseen Salmi. Usamah's army gathered at a place called Jarf. The chiefs of Emigrants and Helpers were also present in that army. Abu Bakr, Umar and Abu Ubaidah ibn Jarrah were enlisted first in that army. They objected to Usamah's leadership and said that a young boy has been made the leader of Emigrants.

The Prophet was much annoyed when he learnt of people's objection. He came out of his house with a cloth tied around his forehead, climbed the pulpit and said:

"O people! How can you object to Usamah's leadership? Remember, this habit of objecting is not new for you. Earlier also you had objected to the leadership Usamah's father.

By Allah! He was worthy of that leadership. After him his son is also worthy of being a leader. Usamah and his father are among those people I love most. Both father and son are good. I advise you to be good to them. They are among the best ones."

Then the Prophet left the place and returned to his house. This sermon was delivered by the Prophet on Saturday, 10th Rabiul Awwal.

After this, the Prophet's illness increased and he used to repeatedly ask Usamah's army to leave for the expedition.

The Prophet's pain intensified on Sunday. When Usamah came to take leave of him, his illness had become so serious that Usamah could not talk to him much. The Prophet raised his hands for prayer

and then rested them on Usamah's head.

Usamah understood that the Prophet was praying for him. Then Usamah came to his army and ordered them to march forward taking the name of Allah. The army had hardly moved when the Prophet passed away.<sup>20</sup>

The words of Ibn Saad can be summarized as follows:

1. The Prophet readied an army to fight against Syria and Rome before he passed away.
2. Usamah, who was a young boy, was made the commander of that army.
3. People who had brought faith in the beginning of Islam, especially Abu Bakr, Umar and Abu Ubaidah ibn Jarrah were enlisted in the army.
4. When the expedition was delayed, in spite of his sickness, the Prophet came out of his house with a cloth tied around his forehead and went to the mosque.
5. He expressed his annoyance over those who had objected to Usamah's leadership and also remarked that it was an old habit of theirs. Earlier, they had objected to the leadership of Usamah's father, Zaid. However, Zaid was worthy of leadership. Similarly Usamah is worthy of leadership in spite of their criticism.
6. The army did not obey the Prophet's command in spite of repeated orders to move. They halted at a place called Jarf.
7. Why was the Prophet eager to send the army on expedition in the last days of his life?
8. What was the purpose of sending Abu Bakr, Umar and the chiefs of Emigrants under the leadership of a young boy?
9. Why did people delay the expedition in spite of repeated orders?

Was it because the Prophet wanted to eliminate every possible hindrance before he passed by and pave the way for the Caliphate of Imam 'Ali (a) in Medina?

Was there some link between dispatching Usamah's army and asking for pen and paper?

Only if Usamah hadn't delayed the expedition due to opposition from Abu Bakr and Umar and moved ahead with the army, the history of Islam would have been written in a different way. The Muslim community would not have faced such disgrace today.

<sup>1</sup>. Refer Tradition of Wilayat in Abaqaat al-Anwar for detailed discussion.

<sup>2</sup>. Al-Mawaiz wal-Etebar

<sup>3</sup>. Saqifa is a place where certain people gathered to plan evil activities and talk nonsense. Ghiyathul Lughat

- [4.](#) Refer the famous book, Al-Ghadeer by Allamah Amini. There are 11 volumes of this book.
- [5.](#) Sharh Nahjul Balagha, Ibn Abil Hadid Mutazali 72/2 first edition, Egypt
- [6.](#) Tarikh Ibn Khaldun, Vol. 2, Pg. 297
- [7.](#) Tabaqaat-e-Kubra Vol. 1, Pg. 101
- [8.](#) Al-Kamil fit Tarikh, Vol. 2, Pg. 59-62
- [9.](#) Tarikh Ibn Khaldun, Vol. 2, Pg. 171
- [10.](#) Tarikh Ibn Khaldun, Vol. 2, Pg. 179-180
- [11.](#) Abqariyat al-Imam, al-Ustad Aqqad, Pg. 13
- [12.](#) Sirah Ibn Hisham, Vol. 2, Pg. 95
- [13.](#) Tarikh Ibn Khaldun, Vol. 2, Pg. 187, Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fit Tarikh, Vol. 2, Pg. 75
- [14.](#) Sirah Ibn Hisham, Vol. 2, Pg. 95-97-111
- [15.](#) Tarikh Tabari, Vol. 3, Pg. 154, Murujuz Zahab, Masoodi Vol. 2, Pg. 284
- [16.](#) Tarikh Tabari, Vol. 3, Pg. 154
- [17.](#) Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fit Tarikh, Vol. 2, Pg. 35
- [18.](#) Sahih Muslim, Vol. 2, Pg. 324
- [19.](#) Ibn Abil Hadid, Sharh Nahjul Balagha, Vol. 3, Pg. 17
- [20.](#) Tabaqaat Ibn Saad, Vol. 4, Pg. 3-4

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