

Part 2: The Manner of Emergence of the Shi'ah

Lesson 3: “Shi'ah” in the Lexicon and the Qur'an

The word “Shi'ah” in the lexicon is derived from the root-word شيع {shaya'a} which means escorting {mushayi'ah}, victory and bravery {shuja'ah}.¹ It is equally applied to the followers and supporters as it is usually applied to the followers and supporters of 'Ali ('a).² As Azhari has said, “Shi'ah refers to a group that loves the progeny {itrah} and descendants of the Prophet (S).”³

Ibn al-Khaldun says:

Be aware that ‘Shi'ah’ in the lexicon means ‘followers’ and ‘supporters’, and in the parlance of the past and present jurists {fiqh} and scholastic theologians {mutakallimun}, it is applied to the followers of 'Ali and his descendants.⁴

But Shahrastani limits the definitional scope of the word ‘Shi'ah’, saying:

‘Shi'ah’ is referring to those who follow 'Ali alone and believe in his Imamate {imamah} and caliphate {khilafah} to be based on revelation {nass}, and they say: ‘Imamate shall not bypass him except {that it is done} through injustice {zulm}’.⁵

There are also many cases in the Qur'an in which “Shi'ah” connotes “followers” and “supporters” such as:

﴿وَإِنَّ مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ﴾

“Indeed Abraham was among his followers {shi'ah}”⁶

and the verse,

﴿ فَاسْتَعَاثَهُ الَّذِي مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ عَلَى الَّذِي مِنْ عَدُوِّهِ ﴾

“The one who was from his (Moses’) followers {shi’ah} sought his help against him who was from his enemies.”⁷

The word “Shi’ah” has also been mentioned in the Prophetic traditions to mean “followers and friends of ‘Ali (‘a)”.⁸

“Shi’ah” in the Shi’ah references does not have more than one meaning and conception and that is belief in the succession of ‘Ali (‘a) and his eleven descendants in which no change has ever taken place since the demise of the Prophet (S) up to the minor occultation {ghaybah as-sughra}. Just as the Shi’ah of the second half of the third century *hijri* believed in all the twelve Imams (‘a), the pioneering Shi’ah among the Companions of the Prophet (S) also believed in this affair because they had been informed of the names of these Imams from the Prophetic traditions.⁹

Although many of the Shi’ah had no access to these traditions due to the atmosphere of strangulation maintained by the tyrant rulers, what was obligatory (for them) was to recognize the Imam of their respective times. As the Holy Prophet (S) said, “He who will die without recognizing the Imam of his time dies in a state of ignorance {jahiliyyah}.”¹⁰

As such, we can see that when Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) attained martyrdom, Zurarah who was an old man sent his son, ‘Ubayd, to inquire about the successor of Imam as-Sadiq (‘a). But before ‘Ubayd was able to return to Kufah, Zurarah, who was about to die, took hold of a copy of the Qur’an and said: “O God! Be my witness that I testify to the Imamate {imamah} of the one who has been designated in this Qur’an.”¹¹

Of course, with the passage of time, the meaning and concept of *Shi’ah* assumes an explicit form and its scope is determined. Thus, the infallible Imams (‘a) have regarded those who are identified with the false sects and faiths as outside Shi’ah circles, as Shaykh at-Tusi narrates from Hamran ibn A’in:

I asked Imam al-Baqir (‘a): “Am I really among your Shi’ah?” The Imam (‘a) replied: “Yes, you are among our Shi’ah in this world and in the hereafter, and the names of the Shi’ah and their fathers are written for us. Why, are there those who turn their back to us?” I replied: “May I be your ransom! Is it possible for somebody to be your Shi’ah and to have knowledge of your being in truth, and then to turn his back from you?” The Imam (‘a) said: “Yes, O Hamran! You will not perceive them.”

Hamzah az-Zayyat, who is one of the narrators of this *hadith*, thus says:

Concerning this *hadith* we made a discussion and we were not able to understand the purport of the

Imam (‘a). As such, I wrote a letter to Imam ar-Rida (‘a) and I asked him (‘a) (about this). The Imam (‘a) said: “Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) was referring to the Waqifiyyah (a deviant sect).”¹²

It is for this reason that in the parlance of the Shi‘ah *rijal* writers, the title *Shi‘ah* is only applied to the Shi‘ah believing in the twelve Imams (‘a) and in the language of the jurists {*fuqaha*}, they are sometimes described as “our companions” {*ashabuna*} or “our Imami companions” {*ashabuna al-imamiyyah*}.

And those who had inclined toward the deviant sects and drifted away from the course of Shi‘ism have described with such labels as Fathi, Waqifi, Nawusi, etc. and if ever the names of some of them are mentioned in the Shi‘ah books on *rijal*, the reason is that they had narrated these traditions prior to their deviation, just as the names of a number of Sunni narrators who have narrated from the infallible Imams (‘a) have been mentioned in these books.

The Sunni scholars and *rijal* writers, however, have used the word *Shi‘ah* in broader sense and they have applied it to all the sects that have separated from the body of Shi‘ism and even to the *ghulat* as well.

In addition, they also refer to those who love and admire the *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a) as “Shi‘ah”. This is while some of these people do not have any sort of belief in the infallibility {*‘ismah*} and Imamate {*imamah*} of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a), such as Sufyan ath-Thawri, a rector {*mufti*} in Iraq who issued edicts {*fatawa*} based on the *Ahl as-Sunnah*, but Ibn al-Qutaybah has enlisted him along with the Shi‘ah.¹³ Regarding ash-Shafi‘i, who is the founder of one of the four Sunni schools of thought {*madhahib*}, Ibn Nadim thus says:

كَانَ الشَّافِعِيُّ شَدِيدًا فِي التَّشْيِيعِ.

“Ash-Shafi‘i had extreme Shi‘ism {*tashayyu*}.”¹⁴

Of course, during the second and third centuries *hijri*, besides the Shi‘ah Imami, the Zaydis constituted the greatest number of Shi‘ah. They were “Shi‘ah” more in the political sense than in ideology because, in terms of jurisprudence {*fiqh*}, they were not followers of the Ja‘fari *fiqh*; rather they were followers of the Hanafi *fiqh*.¹⁵

From the viewpoint of the ideological principles also, as narrated by Shahrastani, “For sometime, Zayd was a student of Wasil ibn ‘Ata’, the founder of the Mu‘tazilah (Mu‘tazilite) *madhhab* and has learned from him the principles of the Mu‘tazilah *madhhab*.”

Therefore, the Zaydis are Mu‘tazilites in principles {*usul*}. It is for this reason that they used to regard as permissible {*jayiz*} the Imamate {*imamah*} of a deserving person {*mafdhul*} in the existence of the more deserving person {*afdhal*} and in that they do not disrespect the two sheikhs {*shaykhayn*} (Abubakr and ‘Umar).¹⁶ And in terms of beliefs, they are closer to the *Ahl as-Sunnah*, as Ibn al-Qutaybah thus says:

“Among the *rafidhi* (Shi‘ah) sects, the Zaydis have the least extremism {*ghulu*}.”¹⁷

It was for this reason that the uprising of Muhammad Nafs az-Zakiyyah—one of the Zaydi leaders—was praised by some jurists {*fuqaha*} of the Ahl as-Sunnah, and as narrated by Waqidi, Abubakr ibn Sirah,¹⁸ Ibn ‘Ajlān,¹⁹ and ‘Abd Allah ibn Ja‘far²⁰—who were among the great *hadith* scholars {*muhaddithun*} of the Medina school {*maktab*} and from whom Waqidi himself has narrated *hadith*—were involved in the uprising of Muhammad Nafs az-Zakiyyah. Also, Shahrastani says: “Abu Hanifah was among the followers of Muhammad Nafs az-Zakiyyah.”²¹

The Mu‘tazilites of Basrah also agreed with the uprising of Muhammad and based on Abu’l-Faraj al-Isfahani’s narration, “A group of the Mu‘tazilites in Basrah such as Wasil ibn ‘Ata’ and ‘Amru ibn ‘Ubayd have paid allegiance to him.”²²

As such, the Zaydis can be regarded as Shi‘ah only from the political viewpoint although they believe in the superiority of the descendants of Fatimah (‘a).

Lesson 3: Summary

Shi‘ah, according to the lexicon, refers to the followers and supporters of ‘Ali (‘a). In the Shi‘ah references, “Shi‘ah” does not have more than one meaning and that is belief in the succession of ‘Ali (‘a) and his eleven descendants.

The infallible Imams used to consider those who were identified with the deviant sects as outside the circle of Shi‘ism, but the Sunni scholars and *rijal* writers have used the word *Shi‘ah* in broader sense and they have applied it to all the sects that have separated from the body of Shi‘ism as well as to the admirers of the descendants of the Prophet (S). Of course, during the second and third centuries *hijri*, next to the Shi‘ah Imami, the Zaydis had been regarded by them to have constituted the greatest number of Shi‘ah.

Lesson 3: Questions

1. In the lexicon, what does the word “Shi‘ah” mean? Explain.
2. What is the meaning and connotation of the word “Shi‘ah” in the Shi‘ah references?
3. Were those who were identified with the deviant sects regarded as “Shi‘ah” by the infallible Imams (‘a)? Explain.
4. How the Sunni scholars have been defining the word “Shi‘ah”?
5. Which of the sects is more akin to the Shi‘ah in the political perspective? Why?

¹ For example, this poem:

والخزرجي قلبه مشيع ليس من الامر الجليل يفزع

Indeed, the Khazraji man has a brave heart and is not afraid of performing a great task.

Al-Khalil ibn Ahmad al-Farahidi, *Tartib Kitab al-‘Ayn* (Tehran: Instisharat-e Asweh, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 960.

[2.](#) Firuz-Abadi, *Qamus al-Lughah* (Lithography), p. 332.

[3.](#) Abu Faydh as-Sayyid Murtada al-Husayni al-Wasiti az-Zaydi al-Hanafi, *Taj al-‘Arus*, vol. 11, p. 257.

[4.](#) ‘Abd ar-Rahman ibn Muhammad ibn al-Khaldun, *Al-Muqaddimah* (Beirut: Dar Ihya’ at-Turath al-‘Arabi, 1408 AH), p. 196.

[5.](#) Shahristani, *Kitab al-Milal wa’n-Nihal* (Qum: Manshurat ash-Sharif ar-Radi, 1364 AHS), vol. 1, p. 131.

[6.](#) Surah as-Saffat 37:83.

[7.](#) Surah al-Qasas 28:15.

[8.](#) We shall quote these traditions in the next chapter.

[9.](#) Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, one of the Sunni scholars, mentions the hadith on the twelve Imams, and with respect to its authenticity, he claims to have consensus of opinion as it has been narrated through various chains. Then, he embarks on interpreting the hadith quoting contradictory statements from Ahl as-Sunnah scholars and ‘ulama’, ultimately failing to reach a decisive conclusion. For example, Qadhi ‘Iyad al-Yahsubi has said: “Perhaps, it means the twelve caliphs who were rulers during the glorified period of caliphate and grandeur of Islam, i.e. up to Walid ibn Yazid’s reign.” Others have said: “It refers to the twelve caliphs in truth who shall rule till the Day of Resurrection, some of whose reigns have already passed, such as the Righteous Caliphs {khulafa’ ar-rashidun}, Imam al-Hasan, Mu‘awiyah, ‘Abd Allah ibn Zubayr, ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, and Mahdi al-‘Abbas. Two more shall come, one of whom is the Awaited Mahdi {mahdi al-muntazar} from the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a).” Some ‘ulama’ have also interpreted the hadith on the twelve Imams to refer to the twelve Imams, in which after Mahdi (‘a), accordingly, six shall come from the descendants of Imam al-Hasan (‘a) while the other five shall come from the descendants of Imam al-Husayn (‘s). As-Sawa’iq al-Muhriqah, 2nd edition (Cairo: Maktabah al-Qahirah, 1385 AH), pp. 20–21.

[10.](#) Al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi*, 5th printing (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah, 1363 AH), vol. 1, p. 377.

[11.](#) Shaykh at-Tusi, *Ikhtiyar Ma‘rifah ar-Rijal* (Qum: Mu‘assasah Al al-Bayt Li Ahya’ at-Turath, 1404 AH), vol. 1, p. 371.

[12.](#) Ibid., vol. 2, p. 763.

[13.](#) Ibn al-Qutaybah, *Al-Ma‘arif*, 1st edition (Qum: Manshurat ash-Sharif ar-Radhi, 1410 AH), p. 624.

[14.](#) Ibn an-Nadim, *Al-Fihrist* (Beirut: Dar al-Ma‘rifah Li’l-Matbu‘at wa’n-Nashr, n.d.), p. 295.

[15.](#) Shahristani, *Al-Milal wa’n-Nihal* (Qum: Manshurat ash-Sharif ar-Radhi, 1364 AHS), vol. 1, p. 143.

[16.](#) Ibid., p. 138.

[17.](#) Ibn al-Qutaybah, *Al-Ma‘arif*, p. 623.

[18.](#) Abu’l-Faraj al-Isfahani, *Maqatil at-Talibiyyin*, 2nd edition (Qum: Manshurat ash-Sharif ar-Radhi, 1416 AH/1374 AHS), p. 251.

[19.](#) Ibid., p. 254.

[20.](#) Ibid., p. 256.

[21.](#) Shahristani, *Al-Milal wa’n-Nihal* (Qum: Manshurat ash-Sharif ar-Radhi, 1364 AHS), vol. 1, p. 140.

[22.](#) Abu’l-Faraj al-Isfahani, *Maqatil at-Talibiyyin*, p. 258.

Lesson 4: The Origin of Shi‘ism

Diverse views have been expressed with respect to the origin and beginning of Shi‘ism, but in general, these views can be divided into two:

1. The writers and researchers who believe Shi‘ism was created after the demise of the Prophet (S) and

who themselves can be subdivided into the following subgroups:

- a. Those who believe that Shi'ism has come into being during the day of Saqifah—that day when a group of prominent Companions explicitly said: “‘Ali is the most deserving one to the office of Imamate {*imamah*} and caliphate {*khilafah*}.” [1](#)
- b. Those who regard the emergence of the Shi'ah as being related to the latter part of Uthman's caliphate, connecting the spread of the views of 'Abd Allah ibn Saba' at this period with the beginning of Shi'ism. [2](#)
- c. Those who believe that the Shi'ah has come into being on the day of *Fitnah ad-Dar* (the day when the third caliph was murdered). Thereafter, accordingly, the followers of 'Ali ('a) who were the very Shi'ah who confronted the so-called “‘Uthmanis”, those who were avenging the murder of 'Uthman. As Ibn an-Nadim thus writes:

When Talhah and Zubayr opposed 'Ali and nothing could convince them but to take revenge for the murder of 'Uthman, while 'Ali also wanted to fight them so as to establish the truth, on that day those who followed him were called “Shi'ah” and he himself thus described them: “They are my Shi'ah”. [3](#)

Ibn 'Abd ar-Rabbih al-Andalusi also says: “The Shi'ah are those who regarded 'Ali as superior to 'Uthman.” [4](#)
- d. Those who believe that Shi'ism had come into existence from the coming into power, up to the martyrdom of 'Ali ('a). [5](#)
- e. Those who link the origin of Shi'ism with the event at Karbala' and the martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn ('a). [6](#)

2. The researchers who are of the opinion that Shi'ism can be traced back to the period of the Messenger of Allah ('a). Apart from all the Shi'ah '*ulama*', [7](#) some of the Sunni scholars also hold such a belief, just as Muhammad Kird-'Ali—one of the distinguished Sunni '*ulama*'—says: “A number of the Companions during the time of the Holy Prophet (S) were known as Shi'ah of 'Ali.” [8](#)

Keeping in view of the opinions presented so far, it can be said that the event of Saqifah, the latter part of the caliphate of 'Uthman, the Battle of Jamal (Camel), the rule of 'Ali ('a), and the events at Karbala' are phases of the events that have influenced the history of Shi'ism.

Although the existence of a person named 'Abd Allah ibn Saba' is doubtful, the formation of Shi'ism at these stages seems incorrect because studying the Prophetic traditions, we find that the term “Shi'ah”, has been applied by the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad al-Mustafa (S), to the sympathizers of 'Ali ('a) before all these events, as recorded in many *hadiths*, some of which we shall cite below.

All these *hadiths* are accepted by the Ahl as-Sunnah as authentic and have been recorded in their

hadith references. Take, for example, the *hadiths* which have been recorded by Suyuti—one of the Sunni exegetes {*mufasssirun*} of the Qur'an—from the Holy Prophet (S) on the commentary of the verse:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمْ خَيْرُ الْبَرِيَّةِ﴾

“Indeed those who have faith and do righteous deeds—it is they who are the best of creatures.”⁹

Among them is this *hadith* of the Prophet (S) when he said:

وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ إِنَّ هَذَا وَشِيعَتَهُ لَهُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

“By He in Whose hand my life is! Verily, this man (‘Ali) and his Shi‘ah shall secure deliverance on the Day of Resurrection.”¹⁰

The Holy Prophet (S) said to ‘Ali (‘a): “God has forgiven the sins of your Shi‘ah and the followers of your Shi‘ah.”¹¹

The Prophet (S) also said to ‘Ali (‘a): “You and your Shi‘ah will meet (on the Day of Resurrection) at the Pool {*hawdh*} of Kawthar while having drank from it and having bright faces, whereas your enemies will meet me while they are thirsty and enchained.”¹²

In a long *hadith* regarding the virtues of ‘Ali (‘a), the Holy Prophet (S) thus says to his daughter Fatimah (‘a): “O Fatimah! ‘Ali and his Shi‘ah are the saved ones of tomorrow.”¹³

Similarly, the Messenger of Allah (S) said: “O ‘Ali! Your sins as well as that of your progeny, your Shi‘ah and the followers of your Shi‘ah have been forgiven...”¹⁴

Again, the Messenger of Allah (S) said: “O ‘Ali! During the Day of Resurrection, I shall cling to God while you shall hold fast to me; your descendants shall hold fast to you; and the Shi‘ah of your descendants shall hold fast to them.”¹⁵

The Prophet (S) again said to ‘Ali (‘a): “In the hereafter, of all the people, you are the nearest one to me... and the Shi‘ah are on pulpits on light...”¹⁶

Ibn al-‘Abbas narrated that Jibra’il (Archangel Gabriel) (‘a) gave the news that ‘Ali (‘a) and the Shi‘ah shall be brought to Paradise along with Muhammad (S).¹⁷

Salman al-Farsi narrates that the Most Noble Messenger (S) said to ‘Ali (‘a):

O ‘Ali! Put a ring on your right hand so as to be with the nearest ones {*muqarrabin*}. ‘Ali (‘a) asked: “Who are the nearest ones?” He (S) replied: “Jibra’il and Mika’il.” ‘Ali (‘a) again asked: “Which kind of

ring shall I put on?” He (S) replied: “A ring whose stone is a red ‘*aqiq* because ‘*aqiq* is a testimony that one has acknowledged and accepted the divine servitude {‘*ubudiyyah*}, my prophethood {*nubuwwah*}, your guardianship {*wisayah*}, and your descendants’ Imamate {*imamah*}. Your followers are people of Paradise and the abode of your Shi‘ah is the Garden of Firdaws {*jannah al-firdaws*}.^{[18](#)}

The Most Noble Messenger (S) again said: “Eighty thousand from my *ummah* shall be admitted to Paradise without reckoning.” ‘Ali (‘a) asked: “Who are they?” He (S) replied: “They are your Shi‘ah and you are their Imam.”^{[19](#)}

Anas ibn Malik thus narrates from the Holy Prophet (S):

Jibra’il said to me: “God, the Exalted, loves ‘Ali to such a degree that is not expressed to any angel. Just as the *tasbihs* {glorifications to Allah} that are being uttered, God creates angels to seek forgiveness for the admirers and Shi‘ah of ‘Ali till the Day of Resurrection.”^{[20](#)}

Jabir ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Ansari narrates that the Prophet (S) said: “By God Who sent me in truth as the Prophet! The angels are regularly seeking forgiveness for ‘Ali and they pity him and his Shi‘ah as a father does (with respect to his child).”^{[21](#)}

‘Ali (‘a) himself narrates that the Prophet (S) said: “O ‘Ali! Give glad tidings to your Shi‘ah that I am {their} intercessor {*shafi*} on the Day of Resurrection—the day when neither wealth nor child is of any benefit except my intercession {*shafa‘ah*}. ”^{[22](#)}

The Holy Prophet (S) said to ‘Ali (‘a): “The first four persons to enter Paradise are I, you, Hasan, and Husayn; our descendants are behind us; our spouses are behind our descendants and our Shi‘ah are on our right and left sides.”^{[23](#)}

Finally, many of the Sunni *muhaddithun* and historians such as Ibn al-Jawzi, Baladhuri, Shaykh Sulayman al-Qanduzi al-Hanafi, Khwarazmi, and as-Suyuti have narrated that the Messenger of Allah (S) thus said while addressing ‘Ali (‘a): “Verily, this man (‘Ali) and his Shi‘ah shall secure deliverance on the Day of Resurrection.”^{[24](#)}

There are even recorded traditions from the Most Noble Messenger (S) about some of the Shi‘ah and what is interesting here is that these have been narrated by the opponents of the Shi‘ah! For example, there is a tradition about Hujr ibn ‘Adi al-Kindi which has been narrated by ‘A’ishah. When Mu‘awiyah performed *Hajj* after killing Hujr and his companions and came to Medina, ‘A’ishah said to him:

O Mu‘awiyah! Where was your forbearance at the time of killing Hujr and his companions? Be aware that I heard that the Messenger of Allah (S) said: “There is a group that shall be killed in a place called Marj ‘Adhra’ for which Allah and the inhabitants of heaven will be filled with wrath.”^{[25](#)}

Since these *hadiths* are undeniable and have been narrated by prominent Sunni *muhaddithun*, some Sunni writers have resorted to unjust interpretation of them. For instance, Ibn Abi’l-Hadid says:

What is meant by the Shi'ah in many *hadiths* who have been given the glad tidings of Paradise are those who believe in the superiority and preeminence of 'Ali ('a) over others. For this reason, our Mu'tazilite '*ulama*' have thus written in their books and treatises, "We are truly the Shi'ah" and this statement is nearer to reality and more akin to truth.[26](#)

Also, in the book, *As-Sawa'iq al-Mahriqah fi'r-Radd 'ala Ahl al-Bid'a waz-Zindiqah*, which is a book rejecting the Shi'ah creeds and beliefs, while quoting this *hadiths*, Haythami has said:

What is meant by the Shi'ah in these *hadiths* are the Shi'ah that no longer exist. It refers to progeny and followers of 'Ali who are neither afflicted with innovation {*bid'ah*} nor curse and abuse the Companions of the Prophet (S).[27](#)

In reply to him, the late Muzaffar says:

It is strange that Ibn Hajar imagined that what is meant here by the Shi'ah are the Ahl as-Sunnah! And I do not know if the reason behind this is the similarity of "Shi'ah" and "Sunni". Or, it is because these two sects are identical. Or, it is for the reason that the Ahl as-Sunnah follow and love the family of the Prophet (S) more than the Shi'ah do![28](#)

The late Kashif al-Ghita' also says: "By applying the term "Shi'ah" to the Shi'ah of 'Ali ('a), its purport can be understood because other than this group, there is no other Shi'ah."[29](#)

The existence of the term "Shi'ah" in the *hadiths* and sayings of the Prophet (S) is clear and indisputable, and with these (unjust) interpretations, they wanted to conceal the truth but in the end they have deceived nobody but themselves. This is particularly true in view of the fact that the connotations of "Shi'ah" has been clarified during the time of the Prophet (S) and a number of the Companions were known at the time as "Shi'ah of 'Ali".[30](#)

The Companions of the Prophet (S) also referred to 'Ali's ('a) followers as "Shi'ah". Hashim Marqal thus writes concerning a person named "Mahal ibn al-Khalifah at-Ta'i": "O Commander of the Faithful! He is among your Shi'ah."[31](#)

The Shi'ah themselves used to call one another as Shi'ah. As Shaykh al-Mufid narrates, some people came to 'Ali ('a) and said: "O Commander of the Faithful! We are among your Shi'ah." He ('a) in turn said: "The faces of my Shi'ah turn pale on account of night vigil and their eyes weak due to weeping..."[32](#)

In many instances, Hadrat[33](#) 'Ali ('a) himself, as in the abovementioned case, used to apply the word "Shi'ah" to his followers. For example, when he heard the news of martyrdom of some of his Shi'ah in Basrah at the hand of Talhah and Zubayr, he ('a) cursed the two and said: "O God! They have killed my Shi'ah. Kill them too."[34](#)

Even the opponents of 'Ali ('a) used to refer to his followers as "Shi'ah", just as what 'A'ishah, Talhah

and Zubayr said during their conversation about their route from Mecca to Iraq: “We shall go to Basrah and expel the governor {*amil*} of ‘Ali and kill his Shi‘ah.”^{[35](#)}

In any case, the truth of Shi‘ism, which is the same love and fellowship to ‘Ali (‘a) and to regard him as superior (to others), is related to the time of the Prophet (S). He (S) used to enjoin the people in his speeches to follow ‘Ali and his family as exemplified by the event in Ghadir Khumm. As Ibn Abi‘l-Hadid says: “This report {*akhbar*} has been narrated by *muhaddithun* none of whom has been accused of *rafdh* and Shi‘ism {*tashayyu*’} and they have not even believed in the superiority and preeminence of ‘Ali (‘a) over others.”^{[36](#)}

Now, we shall quote some of these *hadiths*. Buraydah Aslami says:

The Messenger of Allah (S) said: “God, the Exalted, has ordered me to love four persons and said to me that He also loves them.” They asked: “O Messenger of Allah! Tell their names.” He (S) said thrice: “‘Ali and then Abu Dharr, Miqdad and Salman.”^{[37](#)}

At-Tabari narrates that in the course of the Battle of Uhud, the Most Noble Messenger (S) said: “‘Ali is from me and I from him.”^{[38](#)}

It has thus been narrated on the authority of Umm Salmah: “When the Messenger of Allah (S) was angry, no one could dare to speak except ‘Ali.”^{[39](#)}

Sa‘d ibn Abi Waqas narrated that the Most Noble Messenger (S) said: “He who loves ‘Ali loves me and he who loves me loves God. Also, he who is hostile to ‘Ali is hostile to me, and he who is hostile to me is hostile to God.”^{[40](#)}

Ibn al-Jawzi narrated that the Holy Prophet of Islam (S) said: “O ‘Ali! You are the separator of heaven and hell. And you shall open the door of heaven and enter it without any reckoning.”^{[41](#)}

Khwarazmi narrated in *Al-Manaqib* on the authority of Ibn al-‘Abbas that the Holy Prophet (S) said:

When I was brought to the heavenly ascension {*mi‘raj*}, I saw that it is thus written on the gate of heaven:

لا إله إلا الله، محمد رسول الله، علي حبيب الله، الحسن والحسين صفوة الله، فاطمة أمة الله، علي مبغضهم لعنة الله.

La ilaha illallah, Muhammadan Rasulallah, ‘Aliyyun Habib Allah Al-Hasan wa’l-Husayn Sifwat Allah, Fatimah Ummat Allah, ‘ala mabghadhuhum la‘nat Allah.^{[42](#)}

Zubayr ibn Bakkar—who is among the grandchildren of Zubayr and known for deviation from the Commander of the Faithful (‘a)—has narrated that the Most Noble Messenger (S) said: “I enjoin anyone

who believe in God and confirm my apostleship {*risalah*} to love ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib and recognize his guardianship {*wilayah*}. He who loves him loves me and he who loves me loves God.”[43](#)

Ibn Abi’l-Hadid narrates on the authority of Zayd ibn al-Arqam that the Most Noble Messenger (S) said: “I shall guide you to something which if it would be known to you, you shall never go astray. Your guardian {*wali*} and Imam is ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib. Acknowledge him as Jibra’il thus informed me of it.”

After narrating this *hadith*, Ibn Abi’l-Hadid thus says:

If they would say, “This is an explicit proof for (Imam ‘Ali’s) Imamate {*imamah*},” how will then the Mu’tazilites solve this problem? In reply, we say: It is possible that the Prophet means that ‘Ali is their Imam in religious edicts {*fatawa*} and laws {*ahkam*} and not in caliphate {*khilafah*}.

Similarly, what we quoted in the explanation of the statements of the great and leading Mu’tazilite figures of Baghdad can be the answer, the gist of which is as follows: The Imamate and caliphate belonged to ‘Ali with the condition that he would show inclination to it and fight others for it. As he relinquished it to somebody and kept silent, we do accept the guardianship {*wilayah*} of the other person and believe in the legitimacy of his caliphate.

As the Commander of the Faithful did not raise any opposition against the three caliphs, did not unsheath his sword and call on the people against the three, it follows then that he has approved their caliphates. It is based on this that we do accept them and believe in their purity, goodness and righteousness. If he would have waged war against them and called on the people to fight them, we would then believe in their transgression, deviation and misguidance.[44](#)

Lesson 4: Summary

Some writers regard Shi‘ism to have emerged on the day of Saqifah while others regard the same to be on the latter part of ‘Uthman ibn al-Affan’s caliphate. The third group believe that Shi‘ism came into being after the murder of ‘Uthman while the fourth group say that it has come into existence after the martyrdom of ‘Ali (‘a). The fifth group is of the opinion that Shi‘ism originated after the event in Karbala’.

Apart from the Shi‘ah ‘*ulama*’ as a whole, some Sunni scholars such as Muhammad Kird-‘Ali maintain that the root of emergence of Shi‘ism is during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (S) and it was the Prophet (S) who first applied the term “Shi‘ah” to the comrades of ‘Ali (‘a).

A number of Companions of the Prophet (S) were also known during that time as “Shi‘ah of ‘Ali (‘a)”.

In addition to this, Shi‘ism is the same love and fellowship to ‘Ali (‘a) to which the Prophet (S) had enjoined his Companions on many occasions.

Lesson 4: Questions

1. How many views have been expressed regarding the emergence of Shi'ism? Explain.
2. Who was the first person to apply the name "Shi'ah" to the comrades of 'Ali (a)?
3. Write two *hadiths* from the Messenger of Allah (S) regarding the Shi'ah.
4. What has Ibn Abi'l-Hadid said regarding the *hadiths* pertaining to the Shi'ah?
5. What is Ibn Hajar al-Haythami's opinion with regard to the *hadiths* relating to the Shi'ah?
6. What is the truth of Shi'ism?
7. Write the opinion of Ibn Abi'l-Hadid concerning the *hadith* narrated by Zayd ibn al-Arqam.

1. Ya'qubi said: "A number of distinguished Companions refused to pay allegiance to Abubakr saying, "Ali is the most deserving one in the office of caliphate'." Tarikh al-Ya'qubi (Qum: Manshurat ash-Sharif ar-Radi, 1414 AH), vol. 2, p. 124.
2. Samirah Mukhtar al-Laythi, Jihad ash-Shi'ah (Beirut: Dar al-Jayl, 1396 AH), p. 25.
3. Ibn an-Nadim, Al-Fihrist (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, n.d.), p. 249.
4. Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rabbih al-Andalusi, Al-'Aqd al-Farid (Beirut: Dar Ihya' at-Turath al-'Arabi, 1409 AH), vol. 2, p. 230.
5. Abu Mansur 'Abd al-Qadir ibn Tahir ibn Muhammad al-Baghdadi, Al-Firaq bayn al-Firaq (Cairo: n.p., 1397 AH), p. 134.
6. Samirah Mukhtar al-Laythi, Jihad ash-Shi'ah, p. 35, quoting Bernard Lewis, Usul al-Isma'iliyyah {The Principles of Isma'iliyyah}, p. 84.
7. Ja'far Kashif al-Ghita', Difa' az Haqqaniyyat-e Shi'eh {In Defense of the Truthfulness of the Shi'ah}, trans. Ghulam-Hasan Muharrami, 1st edition (n.p.: Mu'minin, 1378 AHS), p. 48; Muhammad Husayn Zayn 'Amili, Ash-Shi'ah fi't-Tarikh, trans. Muhammad-Rida 'Ata'i, 2nd edition (Mashhad: Bunyad-e Pazhuhesh-ha-ye Islami-ye Astan-e Quds-e Radhawi, 1375 AHS), 34.
8. Muhammad Kird-'Ali, Khatat ash-Sham, 3rd edition (Damascus: Maktabah an-Nuri, 1403 AH/1983), vol. 6, p. 245.
9. Surah al-Bayyinah 98:7.
10. Jalal ad-Din as-Suyuti, Ad-Durr al-Manthur fi't-Tafsir bi'l-Ma'thur (Qum: Manshurat Maktabah Ayatullah al-'Uzma al-Mar'ashi an-Najafi, 1404 AH) vol. 6, p. 379.
11. Ibn Hajar al-Haythami al-Makki, Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, 2nd edition (Cairo: Maktabah al-Qahirah, 1385 AH), p. 232.
12. Ibid.; Nur ad-Din 'Ali ibn Abibakr al-Haythami, Majma' az-Zawa'id (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr Li't-Taba'ah wa'n-Nashr wa't-Tawzi', 1414 AH), vol. 9, p. 177.
13. Akhtab Khwarazm, Al-Manaqib (Najaf: Manshurat al-Matba'ah al-Haydariyyah, 1385 AH), p. 206.
14. Ibid., p. 209; Shaykh Sulayman al-Qanduzi al-Hanafi, Yanabi' al-Mawaddah, 1st edition (Beirut: Manshurat Mu'assasah al-A'lami Li'l-Matbu'at, 1418 AH), vol. 1, p. 302.
15. Akhtab Khwarazm, Al-Manaqib, p. 210.
16. Ibid., vol. 188, p. 158.
17. Ibid., chap. 19, hadith 329, p. 322.
18. Ibid., p. 234.
19. Ibid., p. 235.
20. Shaykh Sulayman al-Qanduzi al-Hanafi, Yanabi' al-Mawaddah, p. 301.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., p. 302.

- [23.](#) Nur ad-Din ‘Ali ibn Abibakr al-Haythami, Majma‘ az-Zawa‘id, p. 178.
- [24.](#) Ibn al-Jawzi, Tadhkirah al-Khawwas (Najaf: Manshurat al-Matba‘ah al-Haydariyyah, 1383 AH), p. 54; Ahmad ibn Yahya ibn Jabir Baladhuri, Insab al-Ashraf, researched by Muhammad Baqir Mahmudi (Beirut: Ma‘assasah al-A‘lami Li’l-Matbu‘at, 1349 AH), vol. 2, p. 182; Shaykh Sulayman al-Qanduzi al-Hanafi, Yanabi‘ al-Mawaddah, 1st edition (Beirut: Manshurat Mu‘assasah al-A‘lami Li’l-Matbu‘at, 1418 AH), vol. 1, p. 301; Akhtab Khwarazm, Al-Manaqib (Najaf: Manshurat al-Matba‘ah al-Haydariyyah, 1385 AH), p. 206; Jalal ad-Din as-Suyuti, Ad-Durr al-Manthur fi’t-Tafsir bi’l-Ma‘thur (Qum: Manshurat Maktabah Ayatullah al-Uzma al-Mar‘ashi an-Najafi, 1404 AH) vol. 6, p. 379.
- [25.](#) Ibn Wadhih, Tarikh al-Ya‘qubi (Qum: Manshurat ash-Sharif ar-Radi, 1414 AH), vol. 2, p. 231.
- [26.](#) Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah (Beirut: Dar Ihya’ at-Turath al-‘Arabi, n.d.), vol. 20, p. 226.
- [27.](#) Ahmad ibn Hajar Haythami al-Makki, As-Sawa‘iq al-Mahriqah fi’r-Radd ‘ala Ahl al-Bid‘a waz-Zindiqah (Cairo: Maktabah al-Qahirah, 1384 AH), p. 232.
- [28.](#) Muhammad Husayn Muzaffar, Tarikh ash-Shi‘ah (Qum: Manshurat Maktabah Basirati, n.d.), p. 5.
- [29.](#) Ja‘far Kashif al-Ghita’, Difa‘ az Haqqaniyyat-e Shi‘eh {In Defense of the Truthfulness of the Shi‘ah}, trans. Ghulam-Hasan Muharrami, 1st edition (n.p.: Mu‘minin, 1378 AHS), pp. 48–49.
- [30.](#) Sa’d ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Ash‘ari thus says in this regard: “The first sect is the Shi‘ah and it is the sect of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) which had been called the “Shi‘ah of ‘Ali” during the time of the Holy Prophet (S) and after the demise of the Prophet (S) they were known to have belief in his Imamate. Among them are Miqdad ibn Aswad al-Kindi, Salman al-Farsi, Abu Dharr, and ‘Ammar. They used to prefer obedience to him to any other thing and they used to follow him. There were also others whose inclination is harmonious with that of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib and they were the first group from this ummah to be called “Shi‘ah”; for, Shi‘ah as an appellation is an old one such as the Shi‘ah of Nuh (Noah), Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), ‘Isa (Jesus), and other prophets.” Al-Maqalat wa’l-Firaq, 2nd edition (Tehran: Markaz-e Intisharat-e ‘Ilmi va Farhangi, 1360 AHS), p. 3.
- [31.](#) Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn an-Nu‘man (Shaykh al-Mufid), Al-Jamal, 2nd edition (Qum: Maktab al-‘Ulum al-Islami (Central Publication), 1416 AH), p. 243.
- [32.](#) Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn an-Nu‘man (Shaykh al-Mufid), Al-Irshad, trans. Muhammad Baqir Sa‘idi Khurasani, 2nd edition (Tehran: Kitabfurushi-ye Islamiyyeh, 1376 AHS), p. 228.
- [33.](#) Hadrat: The Arabic word Hadrat is used as a respectful form of address. {Trans.}
- [34.](#) Shaykh al-Mufid, Al-Jamal, p. 285.
- [35.](#) Ibid., p. 235.
- [36.](#) Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah (Beirut: Dar Ihya’ at-Turath al-‘Arabi, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 349.
- [37.](#) Ibn Hajar al-Haythami al-Makki, Sawa‘iq al-Muhriqah, 2nd edition (Cairo: Maktabah al-Qahirah, 1385 AH), p. 122.
- [38.](#) Tarikh at-Tabari, 3rd edition (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1408 AH), vol. 2, p. 65.
- [39.](#) Ibn Hajar al-Haythami al-Makki, Sawa‘iq al-Muhriqah, p. 123.
- [40.](#) Ibid.
- [41.](#) Sabt ibn al-Jawzi, Tadhkirah al-Khawwas (Najaf: Manshurat al-Matba‘ah al-Haydariyyah, 1383 AH), p. 209.
- [42.](#) Akhtab Khwarazm, Al-Manaqib (Najaf: Manshurat al-Matba‘ah al-Haydariyyah, 1385 AH), p. 214.
- [43.](#) Zubayr ibn Bakkar, Al-Akhbar al-Muwaffaqiyyat, researched by Dr. Sami Makki al-Ani (Qum: Manshurat ash-Sharif ar-Radi, 1416 AH), p. 312.
- [44.](#) Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, 1st edition (Beirut: Dar Ihya’ at-Turath al-‘Arabi, 1378), vol. 3, p. 98.

Lesson 5: The Other Terms for the “Shi‘ah”

After the caliphate of the Commander of the Faithful ‘Ali (‘a) and with the spread of Shi‘ism, in addition to the name “Shi‘ah”, other appellations such as ‘Alawi, Imamah, Husayniyyah, ‘Ithna ‘Ashari, Khassah,

Ja'fari, Turabi, and Rafidhi were gradually applied to the friends of the family of the Prophet (S). Although the *Ahl al-Bayt's* ('a) adherents as a whole were called "Shi'ah" as usual, these appellations and titles were also applied to the Shi'ah on various occasions.

Sometimes, the enemies also used to give certain titles to the Shi'ah with the aim of belittling and degrading them. During the time of Mu'awiyah, for example, the Banu Umayyah and the people of Sham¹ used the epithet "Abu Turab" {literally, "Father of the Earth/Soil"} for 'Ali ('a) among all his epithets and sobriquets and they used to call his Shi'ah as "*Turabis*".

After the Battle of Siffin and the rule of 'Ali ('a), whenever Mu'awiyah wanted to dispatch 'Abd Allah ibn Hadhrami to Basrah, he would give instructions regarding the tribes but concerning the tribe of Rabi'ah, he said: "Leave alone the Rabi'ah as all of them are *turabis*."² According to Mas'udi, Abu Mikhnaf had a book entitled, *Akhbar at-Turabiyyin*, from which he has narrated the event of 'Ayn al-Warad.³

The enemies of the Shi'ah used to apply to them the label, "Rafidhi" and in most cases, whenever they liked to accuse somebody of abandoning religion, they would brand him a *rafidhi*, just as ash-Shafi'i says:

إن كان رفضاً حبّ آل محمد فليشهد الثقلان أنّي رافضی

*If loving the progeny {al} of Muhammad is rafdh, the two worlds (of mankind and jinn) shall therefore be the witness that I am indeed a rafidhi.*⁴

It has been recorded in history that after the uprising of Zayd ibn 'Ali, the Shi'ah were then called *Rafidhi*. Shahristani thus says:

When the Shi'ah of Kufah learned from Zayd ibn 'Ali that he does not declare disavowal against the two sheikhs {*shaykhayn*} (Abubakr and 'Umar) and regard as permissible the Imamate of a deserving one {*mafdhul*} in the existence of the most deserving one {*afdhal*}, they abandoned him. Therefore, they were then identified as *Rafidhi* because *rafdh* means "abandonment".⁵

Regarding the label, '*Alawi*', Sayyid Muhsin Amin says:

After the murder of 'Uthman and the confrontation between Mu'awiyah and 'Ali ('a), the supporters and followers of Mu'awiyah were called "Uthmanis" as they used to love 'Uthman and be inimical to 'Ali ('a). In addition to "Shi'ah", the followers of 'Ali ('a) were also called "Alawis", and this practice persisted till the end of the Umayyad rule. During the 'Abbasid period, the labels "Uthmani" and "Alawi" were abrogated and only "Shi'ah" and "Sunni" were used.⁶

"Imamis" was another term applied to the Shi'ah usually in contradistinction to the Zaydis. As Ibn al-Khaldun writes,

Some Shi'ah believe in explicit traditions substantiating the proposition that Imamate {*imamah*} is solely in the person of 'Ali and after it will also be transferred to his descendants. They are Imamiyyah with aversion toward the two sheikhs {*shaykha*} (Abubakr and 'Umar) for not considering 'Ali as superior and not paying allegiance to him. They do not accept the Imamate of Abubakr and 'Umar. Other Shi'ah believe that God did not appoint a specific person but described the characteristics of the Imam which conform to the personality of 'Ali and the people were at fault in not recognizing this. They do not abuse the two sheikhs and they are Zaydis.^{[7](#)}

Keeping in view of the surviving poems from the supporters and companions of Imam al-Husayn ('a), it can be discerned that after his martyrdom, his Shi'ah and supporters were also called "Husaynis". In many of their poems they introduced themselves as "Husaynis" or "of the religion of Husayn".^{[8](#)}

In this regard, Ibn 'Abd Rabbih thus says: "Among the *rafidhis* are the Husayniyyah and they are companions of Ibrahim al-Ashtar who used to roam around the alleys of Kufah shouting: "*Ya litharat al-Husayn!*" They were called Husayniyyah."^{[9](#)}

Meanwhile, the term "Qat'iyyah" {lit. "Decisiveness"} was applied to the Shi'ah after the martyrdom of Imam Musa al-Kazim ('a) in contradistinction to the Waqifiyyah.

That is to say that they were certain and decisive with respect to the martyrdom of Imam al-Kazim ('a) and believed in the Imamate of Imam ar-Rida ('a) and the Imams after him, whereas the Waqifiyyah were not convinced of the death of Imam al-Kazim ('a).^{[10](#)}

Nowadays, the label "Ja'fariyyah" is applied to the Shi'ah more on account of jurisprudence in contradistinction to the four Sunni schools of jurisprudence {*madhahib*}. The reason for this term is that the Shi'ah jurisprudence took form more through Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq ('a) compared to all the Imams ('a) and most traditions on our jurisprudence are narrated by him ('a).

Nonetheless, keeping in view a poem we have from Sayyid Humayri, it can be understood that only on account of jurisprudence during Imam as-Sadiq's ('a) period the term "Ja'fari" was applied to the Shi'ah, but this term has also been applied to them in terms of principles of religion {*usul*} in contradistinction to other sects. The poem of Humayri is as follows:

تجفرت باسم الله و الله أكبر

In the Name of Allah, I became a Ja'fari, and Allah is the great.^{[11](#)}

By becoming a Ja'fari, Sayyid Humayri is referring to the correct course of the Shi'ah Imamiyyah in contradistinction to the Kaysaniyyah.

The Status of ‘Ali (‘a) among the Companions {sahabah}

The Commander of the Faithful ‘Ali (‘a) occupied a special position among the Companions of the Prophet (S). Mas‘udi says:

In terms of all the virtues and merits that the Companions of the Prophet (S) possessed, such as precedence in Islam; *hijrah* {emigration}; helping the Prophet; kinship with him; contentment {*qina‘ah*}; sacrifice {*ithar*}; knowledge of the Book of Allah; *jihad*; piety {*wara‘*}; asceticism {*zuhd*}; judgment {*qadha*}; jurisprudence {*fiqh*}; etc., ‘Ali (‘a) had abundant share and perfect delight.

This is apart from the fact that some of the virtues are possessed by him alone such as brotherhood {*ukhuwwah*} of the Prophet and statements of the Prophet such as: “You are to me as Harun (Aaron) is to Musa (Moses),” “Of whomsoever I am master {*mawla*}, ‘Ali is also his master. O God! Befriend him who befriends him and be inimical to him who is inimical to him”; and also the supplication of the Prophet for him; when Anas brought a cooked bird to the Prophet (S), he said: “O God! Let the most beloved creature (after him) come in so as to partake with me.” Then, ‘Ali (‘a) came in and partook with the Prophet. This is while the other Companions did not possess those virtues. [12](#)

Among the Banu Hashim, ‘Ali (‘a) was also the nearest person to the Prophet (S). He grew up in the house of the Prophet (S) and under his training. [13](#) He (‘a) slept in the Prophet’s (S) bed during the night of *hijrah*, returned to their respective owners the possessions entrusted to the Prophet (S) and joined the Prophet (S) in Medina. [14](#)

The most important of all is ‘Ali’s (‘a) position in Islam. The Most Noble Messenger (S) determined this position at the very beginning of the Prophetic mission.

When the Prophet received instruction from God to invite his kith and kin, it was only ‘Ali in the assembly who was ready to assist and accompany the Holy Prophet (‘a). Then, in that very assembly, the Most Noble Messenger (S) announced before the elders among his relatives that ‘Ali is the executor of his will {*wasi*}, minister {*wazir*}, caliph {*khalif*}, and successor notwithstanding the fact that he was the youngest among those who were present. [15](#)

The Holy Prophet (S) informed his Companions on several occasions of the status and position of ‘Ali (‘a), admonishing them to recognize his position. The Holy Prophet (S) was watchful of his attitude toward ‘Ali (‘a) particularly after the spread of Islam when many individuals with diverse motives joined the ranks of Muslims. This is especially true with respect to the Quraysh whose envy toward the Banu Hashim had amplified by then. Ibn Shahr Ashub thus narrates on the authority of ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab:

I used to annoy ‘Ali, the Prophet (S) once came to me and said: “You are annoying me, O ‘Umar!” I said: “I seek refuge in God from annoying the Messenger of Allah!” He said: “You are annoying ‘Ali and he who annoys him annoys me”.

Mus‘ab ibn Sa‘d has narrated from his father, Sa‘d ibn Abi Waqqas, that: “I and another person were in the mosque and we were abusing ‘Ali. Infuriated, the Prophet came to us and said: ‘Why do you annoy me? He who annoys ‘Ali annoys me’.”¹⁶

Haythami has narrated:

Buraydah al-Aslami, who is one of those who had gone to Yemen under the commandship of ‘Ali, says: “I went back to Medina earlier than the army. The people asked me: ‘What news?’ I said: ‘There is news. God made the Muslims victorious.’ They asked: ‘Why did you come earlier (than the army contingent)?’ I said: “‘Ali has allocated a bondswoman from the *khums* for himself. I have come to inform the Prophet of it...”

When the Prophet was informed of it, he was annoyed and said: ‘Why are some people belittling ‘Ali? Anyone who finds fault with ‘Ali finds fault with me. Anyone who would separate from ‘Ali has separated from me. ‘Ali is from me and I from him. He has been created out of my essence and I from the essence of Ibrahim (Abraham) though I am superior to Ibrahim... O Buraydah! Don’t you know that ‘Ali deserves more than one bondswoman? He is your guardian {*wali*} after me.”¹⁷

Ibn Shahr Ashub also narrates a similar *hadith* from Sunni *muhaddithun* such as Tirmidhi, Abu Na‘im, al-Bukhari, and Musalli.¹⁸

As such, ‘Ali (‘a) had earned special respect among the Companions. Again, Ibn Shahr Ashub has thus narrated from Anas ibn Malik:

During the period of the Holy Prophet (S) whenever we wanted to know if a certain person is a bastard or not, we would know it from the spite of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib. After the Battle of Khaybar, every man would hug his child and go. If ever he would see ‘Ali along the way, he would point to ‘Ali with his hand to the child and ask him: “Do you like this man?” If the child would say, “Yes,” he would kiss his child and if the child would say, “No,” he would put the child on the ground and say, “Go to your mother!” ‘Ubadah ibn Samit also says: “We used to test our children with the love for ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib. If we found out that one of them does not like him, we would know that he will never be an upright person.”¹⁹

During the latter years of the Prophet’s (S) life, the issue of ‘Ali’s (‘a) position was more publicized so much so that the title *wasi* {executor of one’s will} became one of his widely known titles, which was accepted by both his friends and foes especially after the Holy Prophet (S) said to ‘Ali (‘a) before going to the Tabuk expedition:

أَنْتَ مِنِّي بِمَنْزِلَةِ هَارُونَ مِنْ مُوسَى إِلَّا أَنَّهُ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدِي

“You are to me as Harun (Aaron) is to Musa (Moses) with the only difference that there shall be no prophet after me.”²⁰

In the course of the Farewell Pilgrimage {*Hajj al-Wida*} in Mina and in ‘Arafah also, the Holy Prophet (S) informed the people in several speeches about twelve persons shall be his successors and all of whom are from Banu Hashim.²¹

Finally, on the return from Mecca in Ghadir Khumm, he (S) received instruction from God to announce the succession of ‘Ali (‘a) to all the Muslims. He ordered the Muslims to halt and mounting a pulpit made out of the camel saddles he delivered a long speech. He then said:

من كنت مولاه فهذا عليّ مولاه اللهمّ وال من والاه و عاد من عاداه وانصر من نصره واخذل من خذله

Of whosoever I am Master {*mawla*}, then ‘Ali is also his Master {*mawla*}. O Allah! Be Thou a Friend of him who is a friend of him (‘Ali), and be Thou an Enemy of him who is his enemy. Help him whoever helps him, and forsake him whoever forsakes him.

Then, he asked the people to pay allegiance to ‘Ali (‘a). ‘Allamah al-Amini has given a comprehensive explanation of this subject in the first volume of the book, *Al-Ghadir*.

In this manner, the Messenger of Allah (S) asserted his successor’s identity to the people. Thus, the public was of the opinion that after ‘Ali (‘a) would succeed (as the leader of Muslims) the Prophet (S) after his demise. In this regard, Zubayr ibn Bakkar says: “All the *Muhajirun*²² and the *Ansar*²³ had no doubt that ‘Ali will be the caliph and master of the affairs after the Messenger of Allah (S).”²⁴

This subject is so clear in the poems that have been recorded from the time of Saqifah and these poems bespeak of a smaller degree of distortion that has ever happened in poetry. ‘Utbah ibn Abi Lahab recited this poem after the event of Saqifah and Abubakr’s inauguration:

ما كنت أحسب أن الأمر منصرف عن هاشم ثمّ منها عن أبي حسن

أليس أوّل من صلّى لقبلكم و أعلم النّاس بالقرآن و السنن

و أقرب النّاس عهداً بالنبي و من جبرئيل عون له في الغسل و الكفن

ما فيه ما فيهم لايمترون به و ليس في القوم ما فيه من الحسن

ماذا الذي ردهم عنه فنعلمه ها أن ذاغبناً من أعظم الغبن

I was not imagining that the caliphate affair would be withdrawn from the Banu Hashim and much less to Abu'l-Hasan ('Ali).

Is he not the first person to pray facing your qiblah and of the people the most knowledgeable of the Qur'an and the Sunnah?

He is the last person to look at the face of the Prophet; Jibra'il (Archangel Gabriel) was his aid in bathing and enshrouding him (the Prophet).

They do not think about what he has and what they have; whereas within the community {qawm} there is nobody who possesses his points of goodness.

What is it that made them withdraw from him? Say that this loss of ours is the gravest of all losses!

After 'Utbah's recitation of this poem, 'Ali ('a) asked him not to recite it again and said: "For us the safety of religion is more important than anything else."²⁵

Ibn Abi 'Abrah Qurshi has also said:

شكراً لمن هو باثناء قيق ذهب اللجاج و بويع الصديق

كنّا نقول لها على و الرضا عمر و أولاهم بذاك عتيق

Thanks to Him Who is worthy to be praised! The dispute was no more and the allegiance was paid to Sadiq (Abubakr).

We were saying: "Ali is the owner of caliphate; we were also pleased with 'Umar; but the best of them in this case is the old {atiq} (Abubakr)!"²⁶

During the course of the dispute between the *Ansar* and Quraysh that had surfaced on the event of Saqifah, 'Amru ibn al-'As has spoken against the *Ansar*. In reply to him, Nu'man ibn al-'Ajlan—one of the poets of the *Ansar*—has recited a poem in which 'Ali's ('a) right has been emphasized:

فقل لقريش نحن أصحاب مكّة و يوم حنين و الفوارس في بدر

و قلتم حرام نصب سعد و نصبكمعتيق بن عثمان حلال أبابكر

و أهل أبوبكر لها خير قائم و أن علياً كان أخلق بالأمر

و كان هوانا في عليّ و أنهلأهل لها يا عمر و من حيث لاتدري

فذلك بعون الله يدعو إلى الهدو ينهى عن الفحشاء و البغي و النّكر

وصيّ النبي المصطفى و ابن عمه و قاتل فرسان الضلالة و الكفر

Say to the Quraysh: “We are the army of (the Conquest of) Mecca and the Battle of Hunayn, and the cavalry of Badr!”

You said that appointment of Sa’d to the caliphate is unlawful {haram}, but your appointment, ‘Atiq ibn ‘Uthman, of Abubakr is lawful {halal}.

{And you said:} Abubakr is the man of this task and can perform it well, but ‘Ali was the most deserving of people to the caliphate.

We were on ‘Ali’s side and he was the man for this job, but you do not understand, O ‘Amru! This man (‘Ali), by the help of Allah, calls (us) toward guidance, and forbids perversion, oppression and evil.

He is the executor of will {wasi} of al-Mustafa the Prophet, his cousin, and the killer of the champions of disbelief {kufr} and misguidance {dhalalah}.[27](#)

With the aim of thanking Fadhl ibn al-‘Abbas who, under ‘Ali’s (‘a) order, had defended the *Ansar*, Hassan ibn Thabit has recited this poem:

جزى الله عنا و الجزاء بكفّه أبا حسن عنا و من كان كابي حسن

سبقت قريشاً بالذي أنت أهل هفصدرك مشروح و قلبك ممتحن

حفظت رسول الله فينا و عهده إليك و من أولى به منك من و من

ألست أخاه في الهدى و وصيّهو أعلم منهم بالكتاب و بالسّنن

May God give good reward to Abu’l-Hasan for us as the reward is in his hand. Who, by the way, is like Abu’l-Hasan?

Concerning which you were a member, you were ahead of the Quraysh. Your breast is expansive and your heart tested (pure and sincere).

You preserved what the Messenger of Allah instructed regarding us. Except you, who could be foremost for him, and who could be?

Are you not his brother {akh} in guidance and the executor of his will {wasi}, and among them, the most knowledgeable of the Book and the Sunnah?[28](#)

Initially, Abu Sufyan opposed the institution of (Abubakr's) as caliphate and defended the Commander of the Faithful ('a). Apart from the speeches he delivered in this regard, he also composed the following poem:

بني هاشم لا تطمعوا الناس فيكم و لا سيما تيم بن مره أو عدي

فما الأمر إلا فيكم وإليكم و ليس لها إلا أبو حسن عليّ

O Bani Hashim! Do not allow others to get involve in your affair especially Taym ibn Murrah or 'Adi.[29](#)

The affair of caliphate belongs to you alone and it is only Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali who is its man.[30](#)

Finally, on that very day of Ghadir Khumm, the Prophet's poet, Hassan ibn Thabit, asked the Messenger of Allah's (S) permission to narrate the event of Ghadir in poetry, and thus recites:

يناديهم يوم الغدير نبيهم بخمّ واسمع بالرسول مناديا

وقد جاء جبرئيل عن أمر ربّه بانك معصوم فلاتك وانيا

و بلغهم ما أنزل الله ربهم إليك و لا تخش هناك الأعاديا

و قام به اذ ذاك رافع كفه بكف عليّ معلن الصوت عاليا

فقال فمن مولاكم و نبيكم؟ فقالوا و لم يبدأ هناك التّعاميا

إلهك مولانا و أنت نبينا و لم تلق منّا في الولاية عاصيا

فقال له: قم يا عليّ فإنني رضيتك من بعدي إماماً و هادياً

فمن كنت مولاه فهذا وليّ فكونوا له اتباع صدق موالياً

هناك دعا: أَللّهُمَّ والِ وَلِيَّهٖ وَكن لِلَّذِي عا دى عَلِيّاً معادياً

فيا ربّ انصر ناصريه لنصرهم إمام هدى كالبدري جلّو الدياجيا

Their Prophet calls on them on the day of Ghadir Khumm; now, listen to the call of the Prophet: Jibra'il brought a message from God that "You are under the protection of God; so, do not be dejected."

Convey what has been revealed by Allah, their Lord, and here do not be afraid of the enemies. He raises 'Ali along with him; while he raises the hand of 'Ali along with his hand, he announces in a loud voice.

Then he said to the people: "Who is your Master {mawla} and your guardian {wali}? Then, without showing inattention, they said:

"Your Lord is our Master {mawla} and you are our guardian {wali}, and no one among us today disobeys you."

Then he said: "Stand up O 'Ali! For, I am indeed well pleased that you are the Imam and guide after me."

{He then said:} "Therefore, of whomsoever I am master, 'Ali is his master also. May you be their true supporters!"

He then prayed, saying: "O Allah! Be Thou a Friend of those who are his {'Ali's} friends, and be Thou an Enemy of those who are his enemies.

*So, O Lord! Help his supporters as they help the Imam of guidance who is like the moon during a dark night"*³¹

As is evident from this poem, in transcribing the Prophet of Islam's (S) speeches about 'Ali ('a), Hassan has called him Imam, guardian {wali} and guide {hadi}, which clearly stipulates the leadership and headship of the *ummah*.

Yes, the masses of Muslims did not imagine that after the Holy Prophet's (S) demise, somebody would contest 'Ali ('a) on the issue of caliphate and succession to the Prophet (S). As Mu'awiyah has written in

reply to the letter of Muhammad ibn Abubakr,

We and your father during the period of the Messenger of Allah (S) used to consider obedience to the son of Abu Talib as expedient for us and his virtues were not concealed to us. After the demise of the Prophet (S), your father and ‘Umar were the first persons to trample upon his position and called on the people to pay allegiance to them.[32](#)

This is why those who were not around Medina during the last months of the Prophet’s (S) life and were uninformed of the conspiracies—such as Khalid ibn Sa‘id and Abu Sufyan—were vehemently agitated when they returned to Medina, after the demise of the Prophet (S), to see Abubakr sitting in the Prophet’s (S) lieu introducing himself as the Prophet’s (S) caliph.[33](#) Even Abu Sufyan—when he returned from a journey and saw the situation as such—came to ‘Abbas ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib and ‘Ali (‘a) and asked them to revolt in order to get their rights but they refused.[34](#) Of course, Abu Sufyan has no intention in these moves.

In conclusion, although most of the Prophet’s (S) Companions recognized the caliphate of Abubakr officially, they did not forget ‘Ali (‘a) as being the most deserving {*afdhal*}. Whenever he was in the mosque, no one except him would issue edict {*fatwa*} on religious issues as they used to regard him as “the leading judge of the *ummah*” {*aqdhi’l-ummah*} as stipulated by the Most Noble Messenger (S).[35](#)

‘Umar used to say: “May God forbid that day when a problem would arise and Abu’l-Hasan is not present.”[36](#) As he used to say to the Companions of the Prophet (S): “Whenever ‘Ali is in the mosque, no one except him has the right to issue any religious edict.”[37](#)

Although after the demise of the Prophet (S), ‘Ali (‘a) was not able to acquire political power, his virtues and distinctions were narrated by the same Companions of the Prophet (S). Ibn Haythami—who is one of the staunchest Sunni ‘*ulama*’—regarded the number of narrators of the *hadith* about Ghadir as 30 persons from among the Companions,[38](#) but Ibn Shahr Ashub has counted 80 narrators of the *hadith* on Ghadir from among the Companions.[39](#)

Meanwhile, the late ‘Allamah Amini has counted the following 110 narrators of the *hadith* on Ghadir from among the Companions:

Abu Hurayrah; Abu Layla al-Ansari; Abu Zaynab al-Ansari; Abu Fudhalah al-Ansari; Abu Qudamah al-Ansari; Abu ‘Umra ibn ‘Amru ibn Muhsin al-Ansari; Abu’l-Haytham ibn Tayyihan; Abu Rafi‘; Abu Dha’ib; Abubakr ibn Abi Quhafah; Usamah ibn Zayd; Uba ibn Ka‘b; As‘ad ibn Zurarah al-Ansari; Asma’ bint ‘Umays; Umm Salmah; Umm Hani; Abu Hamzah Anas ibn Malik al-Ansari; Bara’ ibn ‘Azib; Zubaydah Aslami; Abu Sa‘id Thabit ibn Wadi‘ah al-Ansari; Jabir ibn Sumayrah; Jabir ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Ansari; Jublah ibn ‘Amru al-Ansari; Jabir ibn Mut‘am al-Qurshi; Jarir ibn ‘Abd Allah Bajli; Abu Dharr Jundab ibn Junadah;

Abu Junaydah al-Ansari; Hubbah ibn Jawin ‘Arni; Habashi ibn Junadah as-Saluli; Habib ibn Badil ibn

Warqa' Khaza'i; Hudhayfah ibn Asid Ghaffari; Abu Ayyub Khalid ibn Zayd al-Ansari; Khalid ibn Walid al-Makhzumi; Khuzaymah ibn Thabit; Abu Sharih Khuwaylid ibn 'Amru Khaza'i; Rafa'ah ibn 'Abd al-Mundhir al-Ansari; Zubayr ibn 'Awwam; Zayd ibn al-Arqam; Zayd ibn Thabit; Zayd ibn Yazid al-Ansari; Zayd ibn 'Abd Allah al-Ansari; Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas; Sa'd ibn Junadah; Salmah ibn 'Amru ibn Aku'; Samrah ibn Jundab; Sahl ibn Hanif; Sahl ibn Sa'd al-Ansari; Sadi ibn 'Ajlan; Amirah al-Asadi; Talhah ibn 'Ubayd Allah;

'Amir ibn 'Amir; 'Amir ibn Layla; 'Amir ibn Layla al-Ghaffari; 'Amir ibn Wathilah; 'A'ishah bint Abibakr; 'Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib; 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn 'Abd Rabbih al-Ansari; 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn 'Awf al-Qurshi; 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Ya'mur ad-Dayla; 'Abd Allah ibn Abi 'Abd al-Athar al-Makhzumi; 'Abd Allah ibn Badil; 'Abd Allah ibn Bashir; 'Abd Allah ibn Thabit al-Ansari; 'Abd Allah ibn Ja'far al-Hashimi; 'Abd Allah ibn Huntab al-Qurshi; 'Abd Allah ibn Rabi'ah; 'Abd Allah ibn al-'Abbas; 'Abd Allah ibn Abi 'Awf; 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar; 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud; 'Abd Allah ibn Yamil; 'Uthman ibn 'Affan;

'Ubayd ibn 'Azib al-Ansari; Abu Tarif 'Adi ibn Hatam; 'Atiyyah ibn Basar; 'Uqbah ibn 'Amir; 'Ali ibn Abi Talib; 'Ammar ibn Yasir; 'Umarah al-Khazraji; 'Amru ibn al-'As; 'Amru ibn Murrah Jahni; Fatimah bint Rasul Allah (S); Fatimah bint Hamzah; 'Umar ibn Abi Salmah; 'Umrans ibn Hasin al-Khaza'i; 'Amru ibn Humq al-Khaza'i; 'Amru ibn Sharahil; Qays ibn Thabit al-Ansari;

Qays ibn Sa'd al-Ansari; Ka'b ibn 'Ujrah al-Ansari; Malik ibn Huwayrath al-Laythi; Miqdad ibn 'Amru; Najiyah ibn 'Amru; al-Khaza'i Abu Burzah Fadhlah ibn 'Utbah Aslami; Nu'man ibn 'Ajlan al-Ansari; Hashim Marqal; Wahshi ibn Harb; Wahhab ibn Hamzah; Abu Juhayfah; Wahhab ibn 'Abd Allah; and Yu'la ibn Murrah.[40](#)

Among the narrators of the *hadith* on Ghadir, individuals who had hostile relationship with 'Ali ('a)—such as Abubakr, 'Umar 'Uthman, Talhah, 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn 'Awf, Zayd ibn Thabit, Usamah ibn Zayd, Hassan ibn Thabit, Khalid ibn Walid, and 'A'ishah—can also be noticed. Even those Companions who sometimes disagreed with him defended him against his enemies.

For example, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas—who was among those who voted in favor of 'Uthman and against 'Ali ('a) at the 6-man council after the death of 'Umar, and did not extend cooperation with 'Ali ('a) during his caliphate and preferred neutrality—in his conversation with Mu'awiyah, thus said to Mu'awiyah:

“You fought and waged war with a person who was more deserving than you to the caliphate.”

Mu'awiyah asked: “Why?” He replied: “One reason is that the Messenger of Allah (S) said concerning: ‘Of whosoever I am Master {*mawla*}, then 'Ali is also his Master {*mawla*}. O Allah! Be Thou a Friend to him who is a friend of him ('Ali), and be Thou an Enemy to him who is his enemy,’ and other reasons are his virtues and merits.”[41](#)

Similarly, 'Abd Allah, the son of 'Amru ibn al-'As, along with his father was in the army of Mu'awiyah. When 'Ammar ibn Yasir was killed and his head was brought before Mu'awiyah, two persons were in dispute as each of them was claiming to have killed 'Ammar. 'Abd Allah said:

“It is better for one of you to relinquish his right to the other because I heard the Messenger of Allah (S) say: “Ammar shall be killed by a tyrant group’.” Mu‘awiyah was annoyed and said: “So, what is he doing here?!” ‘Abd Allah replied: “Since the Messenger of Allah (S) ordered me to obey my father, I am here with you, but I will not fight.”⁴²

The presence of ‘Ammar in the ranks of the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) whose killers had been described by the Messenger of Allah (S) as a tyrant group during that chaotic period was a clear testimony to the truthfulness of ‘Ali (‘a) so much so that even the son of ‘Amru ibn al-‘As admitted it.

Lesson 5: Summary

After the caliphate of the Commander of the Faithful ‘Ali (‘a), other names have also been given to the Shi‘ah. Contemptuous labels such as *Rafidhi* and *Turabi* were used by the enemies of the Shi‘ah with the aim of debasing them. Some other labels such as ‘Alawi, Imami, Husayniyyah, ‘Ithna ‘Ashari, Khassah, and Ja‘fari were applied to them as well.

‘Ali (‘a) had a distinguished position among the Companions of the Prophet (S) as well as being the nearest one to the Prophet (S) among the Banu Hashim. He grew up in the Prophet’s (S) house, and most important of all, the Most Noble Messenger (S) had appointed him as his minister {*wazir*} and successor {*khalifah*} and the masses of people were aware of it.

Lesson 5: Questions

1. Briefly list the terms used to refer to the Shi‘ah.
2. What labels did the enemies of the Shi‘ah address them with?
3. Why were the Shi‘ah called ‘Alawi or Ja‘fari?
4. What is the statement of Mas‘udi regarding ‘Ali’s (‘a) position?
5. How many narrators are there for the *hadith* on Ghadir from among the Companions of the Prophet (‘a)?
6. The poems that were recited on the event of Saqifah bespeak of which subject?
7. What was the position of the Companions of the Prophet (S) vis-à-vis abusing ‘Ali (‘a)?

¹ Sham or Shamat: up until five centuries ago, included Syria of today, Lebanon and parts of Jordan and Palestine. It was then the capital of the Umayyad caliphate. {Trans.}

² Ahmad ibn Yahya ibn Jabir Baladhuri, *Insab al-Ashraf*, researched by Muhammad Baqir Mahmudi (Beirut: Ma‘assasah al-A‘lami Li’l-Matbu‘at, 1394 AH), vol. 2, p. 423.

³ ‘Ali ibn Husayn ibn ‘Ali Mas‘udi, *Murawwij adh-Dhahab* (Beirut: Manshurat Mu‘assasah al-A‘lami Li’l-Matbu‘at, 1411 AH), vol. 3, p. 110.

4. Haythami al-Makki, *As-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah*, p. 123; Sayyid Muhsin Amin, *A'yan ash-Shi'ah* (Beirut: Dar at-Ta'aruf Li'l-Matbu'at, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 21.
 5. Shahrastani. *Kitab al-Milal wa'n-Nihal* (Qum: Manshurat ash-Sharif ar-Radi, 1364 AHS), vol. 1, p. 139.
 6. Sayyid Muhsin Amin, *A'yan ash-Shi'ah*, vol. 1, p. 19.
 7. 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Muhammad Ibn al-Khaldun, *Al-Muqaddimah* (Beirut: Dar Ihya' at-Turath al-'Arabi, 1408 AH), p. 197.
 8. Ibn Shahr Ashub Mazandarani. *Manaqib Al Abi Talib* (Qum: Mu'assasah Intisharat-e 'Allameh, n.d.), vol. 4, p. 102.
 9. Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, Ahmad ibn Muhammad. *Al-'Aqd al-Farid*. Beirut: Dar Ihya' at-Turath al-'Arabi, 1409 AH
 10. Shahrastani. *Kitab al-Milal wa'n-Nihal*, p. 150.
 11. 'Ali ibn Husayn ibn 'Ali Mas'udi, *Murawwij adh-Dhahab* (Beirut: Manshurat Mu'assasah al-A'jami Li'l-Matbu'at, 1411 AH), vol. 3, p. 92.
 12. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 446.
 13. 'Ali ibn al-Husayn Abu'l-Faraj al-Isfahani, *Maqatil at-Talibiyyin* (Qum: Manshurat ash-Sharif ar-Radi, 1416 AH), p. 41.
 14. 'Ali ibn Husayn ibn 'Ali Mas'udi, *Murawwij adh-Dhahab*, p. 294.
 15. Muhammad Hadi Yusufi Gharawi, *Mawsu'ah at-Tarikh Islami*, 1st edition (Qum: Majma' al-Fikr al-Islami, 1417 AH), vol. 1, p. 410.
 16. Ibn Shahr Ashub Mazandarani, *Manaqib Al Abi Talib*, vol. 3, p. 211. {Trans.}
 17. Hafiz Nur ad-Din 'Ali ibn Abibakr Haythami, *Majma' az-Zawa'id* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr Li't-Tiba'ah wa'n-Nashr wa't-Tawzi', 1414 AH), vol. 9, p. 173.
 18. Ibn Shahr Ashub, *Munaqib Al Abi Talib*, pp. 211-212.
 19. *Ibid.*, p. 207.
 20. *Tarikh at-Tabari*, vol. 2, pp. 62-63; *Tarikh al-Kamil*, vol. 2, pp. 40-41; *Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal*, vol. 1, p. 111; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah*, vol. 13, pp. 210-212.
 21. Sayyid Ja'far Murtada al-Amili, *Al-Ghadir wa'l-Mu'aridhun*, 3rd edition (Beirut: Dar as-Sirah, 1418 AH), pp. 62-66.
 22. Muhajrun (lit. "Emigrants"): The Meccan Muslims who accompanied the Prophet (S) in his hijrah {emigration} to Medina. {Trans.}
 23. Ansar (lit. "Helpers"): The Muslims of Medina who invited the Prophet (S) and Muslims of Mecca to migrate (hijrah) to Medina. {Trans.}
 24. Zubayr ibn Bakkar. *Al-Akhbar al-Muwaffaqiyyat* (Qum: Manshurat ash-Sharif ar-Radi, 1416 AH), p. 580.
 25. Zubayr ibn Bakkar. *Al-Akhbar al-Muwaffaqiyyat*, p. 581.
 26. *Ibid.*, p. 580.
 27. *Ibid.*, p. 592.
 28. Ahmad ibn Abi Ya'qub Ibn Wadhih, *Tarikh al-Ya'qubi*, 1st edition (Qum: Manshurat ash-Sharif ar-Radi, 1414 AH), vol. 2, p. 128.
 29. Taym is the tribe to which Abubakr belongs while 'Adi is the tribe of 'Umar.
 30. *Tarikh al-Ya'qubi*, vol. 2, p. 126.
 31. 'Abd al-Husayn Amini, *Al-Ghadir fi'l-Kitab wa's-Sunnah wa'l-Adab* (Tehran: Dar al-Kitab al-Islamiyyah, 1366 AHS), vol. 1, p. 11; vol. 2, p. 39.
- See also Khwarazmi al-Maliki, *Al-Manaqib*, p. 80; Sibt ibn Jawzi al-Hanafi, *Tadhkirah Khawas al-Ummah*, p. 20; Ganji Shafi'i, *Kifayah at-Talib*, p. 170; and others. {Trans.}
32. Ahmad ibn Yahya ibn Jabir Baladhuri, *Insab al-Ashraf* (Beirut: Ma'assasah al-A'jami Li'l-Matbu'at, 1394 AH), vol. 2, p. 396.
 33. *Tarikh al-Ya'qubi*, vol. 2, p. 126.
 34. 'Izz ad-Din Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali ibn Muhammad Abi'l-Kiram Ibn Athir, *Asad al-Ghabah fi Ma'rifah as-Sahabah* (Beirut: Dar Ihya' at-Turath al-'Arabi, n.d.), vol. 3, p. 12; *Tarikh al-Ya'qubi*, vol. 2, p. 126.
 35. Baladhuri, *Insab al-Ashraf*, vol. 2, p. 97.
 36. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* (Beirut: Dar Ihya' at-Turath al-'Arabi, 1378 AH), vol. 1, p. 18.
 37. *Ibid.*

- [38.](#) Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah (Cairo: Maktabah al-Qahirah, 1385 AH), p. 122.
- [39.](#) Manaqib Al Abi Talib (Qum: Mu'assaseh-ye Intisharat-e 'Allameh, n.d.), vol. 3, pp. 25–26.
- [40.](#) 'Abd al-Husayn Amini, Al-Ghadir fi'l-Kitab wa's-Sunnah wa'l-Adab, vol. 1, pp. 14–16.
- [41.](#) Baladhuri, Insab al-Ashraf, vol. 2, p. 109; Akhtab Khwarazm, Al-Manaqib (Najaf: Manshurat al-Matba'ah al-Haydariyyah, 1385 AH), pp. 59–60.
- [42.](#) Baladhuri, Insab al-Ashraf, vol. 2, p. 312–313.

Lesson 6: The Role of the Quraysh in the Event of Saqifah

In spite of the event in Ghadir Khumm and the efforts of the Prophet (S) for the succession of 'Ali ('a), the gathering in Saqifah took place. The command of God was not executed and the family of the Prophet (S) was confined at home. In this event, the role of the Quraysh must be pointed out. It is because the Quraysh were the people who wanted and succeeded in trampling upon the right of the Prophet's (S) progeny.

On many occasions, the Commander of the Faithful 'Ali ('a) emphasizes the acts of oppression and injustice of the Quraysh and their endeavors in gaining access to the caliphate.^{[1](#)} In one of his correspondence with Mu'awiyah, Imam al-Hasan ('a) also described in detail the role of the Quraysh in the Saqifah event, saying:

After the demise of the Prophet (S), the Quraysh considered themselves as the tribe and the most nearest to him, and with this proof, they sidetracked the other Arabs and took hold of the affair of caliphate. When we, the *Ahl al-Bayt* of Muhammad (S), advanced the proposition to them, they did not behave justly with us and they deprived us of our right.^{[2](#)}

Imam al-Baqir ('a) thus also says to one of his companions:

What should we say about the oppression and injustice of the Quraysh against us, and our Shi'ah and supporters? The Messenger of Allah (S) passed away while the people were asked, "Who are the most preeminent of people?" Yet, the Quraysh turned away from us to such an extent that they changed the course of caliphate. They utilized our argument against the *Ansar* and assumed the caliphate one after the other. When it was returned to us, they broke their oath of allegiance and waged war against us...^{[3](#)}

Yes, the Quraysh had behaved this way since long time ago, so much so that the people knew they would take possession of the caliphate. For this reason, the *Ansar* rushed to the Saqifah so as to prevent the Quraysh from obtaining power because they were a monopolistic people.

The Reasons behind the Quraysh's Enmity toward the Family of the Prophet (S)

Now, this question is posed: Why did the Quraysh have enmity toward the family of the Prophet (S)? Did they not owe their religion and the worldly life to this family? Was it not through the blessings of this family that they had attained salvation from perdition? In answering these questions, we shall indicate some points:

1. The Quraysh's Ambition for Leadership

During the period of *jahiliyyah* {pre-Islamic ignorance} the Quraysh had an excellent position among the Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula. In this regard, Abu'l-Faraj al-Isfahani says: "The Arab tribes used to consider the Quraysh as superior in everything except poetry."⁴ This status was attained through two means:

a. Economic Clout

From the time of Hashim, the great grandfather of the Prophet (S), Quraysh had already started trading with neighboring lands such as Yemen, Sham, Palestine, Iraq, and Abyssinia. The Quraysh nobles had amassed legendary wealth under the aegis of this trade.⁵ God, the Exalted, described this commerce as the source of the Quraysh's welfare and comfort, saying:

لِيَلَا فِ قُرَيْشٍ * إِيلَافِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ * فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ * الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَآمَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ

"{In gratitude} for solidarity among Quraysh, their solidarity during winter and summer journeys, let them worship the Lord of this House, who has fed them {and saved them} from hunger, and secured them from fear."⁶

b. Spiritual Position

Due to the existence of the *Ka'bah*, the pilgrimage site of the Arab tribes in their territory, the Quraysh occupied a special spiritual position among the Arabs. Especially after the event of the Companions of the Elephant and the defeat of Abrahah⁷ the honor of the Quraysh, the custodians of the *Ka'bah*, was further enhanced and this event turned to be in their favor.

They called themselves as *Al Allah* {Family of Allah}, *Jiran Allah* {Neighbors of Allah} and *Sakkan Haram Allah* {Residents of the House of Allah} and in doing so, they consolidated their religious position.⁸

As such, on account of sense of power, the Quraysh were inclined to exclusivity and they tried to prove their superiority. Since Mecca was a sort of capital for the Arabs, owing to the presence of the *Ka'bah*, and most of the denizens of the Arabian Peninsula used to come and go there, the Quraysh imposed their customs and traditions to those who came to Mecca.

One example regards the garment used when circumambulating the *Ka'bah* {*tawaf*}, which the pilgrims were required to purchase from them.⁹ Therefore, whenever they sensed, during the advent of the Most Noble Messenger (S), that teachings of Islam are not compatible with their sense of exclusivity and superiority, they refrained from accepting the teachings vehemently opposing these precepts with all their might and utilizing all their power to annihilate Islam.

But the will of God was something else, and in the end, He made His prophet (S) prevail over them. From the 8th year after *hijrah*, a number of the Quraysh nobles went to Medina and joined the ranks of Muslims, but they did not desist from their hostility.

For instance, Hakam ibn Abi'l-'As used to ridicule the Prophet (S) and on account of which the Messenger of Allah (S) exiled him to Ta'if.¹⁰ As the Quraysh were not able to confront the Prophet (S), they conceived a new plot and that was to confront his successor.

Time and again, 'Umar said to 'Abbas: "The Arabs did not want prophethood {*nubuwwah*} and caliphate {*khilafah*} to be confined to the Banu Hashim."¹¹

The Quraysh also said:

If anyone from the Banu Hashim took the reign of caliphate, caliphate will never slip out of this family and it will never be relinquished to us. But if a non-member of the Banu Hashim assumed it, it will move around us and be assigned to all of us.¹²

The people at that time were also aware of this mentality of the Quraysh. As narrated by Bara' ibn 'Azib, "I was sympathetic toward the Banu Hashim. When the Holy Prophet (S) passed away, I was afraid that the Quraysh was thinking of taking the caliphate out of the Banu Hashim and I was at a loss to understand."¹³

The Quraysh's approval of the caliphate of Abubakr and 'Umar was motivated by their own benefits. For, at the time of his death, Abubakr said a number of Quraysh who have come to his support: "I know that each of you imagines that the caliphate shall belong to him, but I chose the best among you."¹⁴

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid says: "Quraysh was displeased by the prolongation of the caliphate of 'Umar, and 'Umar was aware of this issue and he was not permitting them to go out of Medina."¹⁵

2. Tribal Rivalry and Envy

One of the dire spin-offs of the tribal structure was intense struggle among the tribes, and God, the

Exalted, points to this issue in some *surahs* of the Qur'an such as *Surah at-Takathur*¹⁶ and *Surah as-Saba'*.¹⁷

Since the period of *jahiliyyah*, there had been a power struggle between the Banu Hashim and the rest of Quraysh tribes. On the event of digging the Zamzam well by 'Abd al-Muttalib, the entire Quraysh tribes rallied together against the Banu Hashim and they were not ready to allow the honor of digging the Zamzam well to go to 'Abd al-Muttalib alone.¹⁸ Therefore, Abu Jahl used to say:

We used to compete with the Banu Hashim over the possession of nobility. They fed people; we fed them too. They gave riding animals to people; we also gave. They gave money; we also gave. It was to such an extent that we closely competed with each other, and we became like two racing horses. Then, they said: "There emerged from among us a prophet who receives revelation from heaven." Now, how could we compete with him? By God! We shall never believe in him or recognize him.¹⁹

Umayyah ibn Abi's-Salt, one of the nobles and great men of Ta'if and one of the *Hunafa*,²⁰ did not embrace Islam for the same reason. For many years, he had been waiting for the promised prophet to come. But he had been waiting as such so as to acquire this position himself. After becoming aware of the beginning of the Prophet's (S) mission, he refrained from following him identifying the reason for this as shame of the women of Thaqif, saying: "For a long time, I was telling them: 'I shall be the promised prophet.' Now, how could I bear for them to see me following a youngster of Banu 'Abd al-Manaf (referring to the Prophet (S))?"²¹

Yet, despite their will and envy, God lead His Prophet (S) to triumph crushing their pomp. After the 8th year *hijrah*, when most Quraysh nobles had emigrated to Medina, their irritation and envy toward the family of the Prophet (S) were mostly the result of instigation of these "new Muslims".

Ibn Sa'd has narrated thus:

One of the *Muhajirun* said many times to 'Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib: "Your father 'Abd al-Muttalib and Ghaytalah, Banu Sahm's female fortune-teller, were both in the fire. Finally, 'Abbas was infuriated and slapped him. As a result, his nose bled. That person came to the Prophet (S) and made a complaint against 'Abbas. The Messenger of Allah (S) asked his uncle 'Abbas to explain and 'Abbas complied. Thereafter, the Prophet (S) said to that man: "Why are you annoying 'Abbas?"²²

Due to his special position, 'Ali ('a) was the most envied by them. Imam al-Baqir ('a) says: "Whenever the Holy Prophet (S) mentioned the virtues of 'Ali ('a) or recited a verse of the Qur'an which was revealed concerning him, some of those who were in the assembly would stand up and leave."²³

As such, the Holy Prophet (S) has been reported many times to have said: "He who is envious of 'Ali is envious of me and he who is envious of me is an infidel {*kafir*}."²⁴

Even during the time of the Prophet (S), some would even express their envy and would actively annoy and disturb 'Ali ('a). Along this line, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas has thus narrated: "Another person and I were

in the mosque and we were abusing ‘Ali. While furious, the Prophet came to us and said: ‘Why do you annoy me? He who annoys ‘Ali annoys me’.”²⁵

3. The Quraysh’s Enmity toward ‘Ali (‘a)

Finally, the most important reason for depriving ‘Ali (‘a) was Quraysh’s opposition and enmity toward him as they had suffered heavy losses from him, for, in battles during the time of the Prophet (‘a), ‘Ali (‘a) had killed their unbelieving fathers, brothers and relatives. As Ya‘qubi writes concerning the events on the initial days of the caliphate of ‘Ali (‘a):

All the people paid allegiance to him except three persons from among the Quraysh: Marwan ibn al-Hakam, Sa‘id ibn al-‘As and Walid ibn ‘Uqbah. On their behalf, Walid said to Commander of the Faithful (‘a): “You have inflicted a blow to all of us. You slaughtered my father after (the Battle of) Badr. You killed the father of Sa‘id in the battle and as Marwan’s father returned to Medina,²⁶ you complained to ‘Uthman.”²⁷

Similarly, during ‘Ali’s (‘a) caliphate ‘Ubayd Allah ibn ‘Umar requested Imam al-Hasan (‘a) to visit him and he has appointment with him. When Imam al-Hasan (‘a) paid him a visit he said: “Your father has inflicted a blow to the first and last person of Quraysh and the people are hostile to him. Help me to depose of him and let you come in his stead.”²⁸

When Ibn al-‘Abbas was asked why the Quraysh are hostile to ‘Ali (‘a), he said: “It is because ‘Ali sent the first among them to the fire {of hell} (by killing them in battles while in a state of unbelief {*kufr*}) and put to shame the last among them.”²⁹

The rivals of ‘Ali (‘a) also kindled the fire of this displeasure of Quraysh toward him thus taking advantage of it. For instance, ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab said to Sa‘d ibn al-‘As: “You are staring at me in such a manner as if I killed your father, but I did not. It is ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib who has killed him!”³⁰

After receiving a fatal blow at Ibn al-Muljim’s hand, ‘Ali (‘a) himself pointed out the magnitude of Quraysh’s enmity toward him in a poetical line:

تكم قريش تمنای لتقتلني فلا وربك ما فازوا و ما ظفروا

“The Quraysh wished to kill me, but they did not succeed to do so.”³¹

Lesson 6: Summary

The role of the Quraysh in the event of Saqifah cannot be overlooked. It is because the Quraysh were the only people who could appropriate from themselves the right of the Prophet’s (S) progeny. On many occasions, the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) points to the wrongdoings he experienced from Quraysh.

Quraysh's enmity toward the family of the Prophet (S) was motivated by the following:

1. Quraysh's ambition for leadership which prompted them to refuse to accept his invitation as such an acceptance was inconsistent with their leadership.
2. The existence of rivalry between Banu Hashim and the rest of Quraysh tribes and the latter's envy toward the former.
3. Quraysh's enmity toward 'Ali ('a) for inflicting major blows to them.

Lesson 6: Questions

1. What was the role of the Quraysh in the event of Saqifah?
2. What were the reasons behind Quraysh's enmity toward the family of the Prophet (S)?
3. Explain the tribal rivalry and envy.
4. What was the nature of Quraysh's enmity toward 'Ali ('a)?

1. For instance, in Sermon 170 of Nahj al-Balaghah, Imam 'Ali ('a) says: "O my Allah! I seek Thy succor against the Quraysh and those who are assisting them, because they are denying me (the rights of) kinship, have lowered my high position, and are united in opposing me in the matter (of the caliphate) which is my right, and then they said, "Know that the rightful thing is that you have it and also that you may leave it." Nahj al-Balaghah (Faydh al-Islam), p. 555.

Similarly, in his reply to the letter of his brother 'Aqil, Imam 'Ali ('a) says: "Do not take to heart the behavior of Quraysh. To talk about their skepticism, their enmity of Islam, their revolt against the cause of Allah and their desire to bring harm to me are a waste of time. They now are as much bent upon doing me injustice and fighting against me, as they were unanimously against the Holy Prophet (S). May Allah punish them for their sins! They have not even paid any consideration to the relationship that existed between them and me. They have deprived me of the estate of my mother's son." Ibid., Letter 36, p. 974.

2. Abu'l-Faraj al-Isfahani, Maqatil at-Talibiyyin (Qum: Mansurat ash-Sharif ar-Radhi, 1416 AH), p. 65.

3. Kitab Salim ibn Qays al-'Amiri (Beirut: Mansurat Dar al-Funun, 1400 AH), p. 108; As-Sayyid 'Ali Khan ash-Shirazi, Ad-Darajat ar-Rafi'ah fi Tabaqat ash-Shi'ah (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Wafa', n.d.), p. 5.

4. 'Ali ibn al-Husayn Abu'l-Faraj al-Isfahani, Al-Aghani (Beirut: Dar Ihya' at-Turath al-'Arabi, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 74.

5. Mahdi Pishva'i, Tarikh-e Islam az Jahiliyyat ta Hajjah al-Wida' (1) (Arak: Islamic Azad University (Arak Branch), n.d.), pp. 50-51.

6. Surah al-Quraysh 106:1-4.

7. See Surah al-Fil 105 and its commentary. {Trans.}

8. Mahdi Pishva'i, Tarikh-e Islam az Jahiliyyat ta Hajjah al-Wida' (1), p. 52.

9. Muhammad Ibn Sa'd, At-Tabaqat al-Kubra (Beirut: Dar Sadir, 1405 AH) vol. 1, p. 72.

10. 'Izz ad-Din Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali ibn Muhammad Abi'l-Kiram Ibn Athir, Asad al-Ghabah fi Ma'rifah as-Sahabah (Beirut: Dar Ihya' at-Turath al-'Arabi, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 34.

11. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah (Beirut: Dar Ihya' at-Turath al-'Arabi, 1378 AH), vol. 1, p. 194.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 51.

14. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 310.

[15.](#) Ibid., vol. 2, p. 159.

[16.](#) Surah at-Takathur 102:1-2:

﴿ اَلْهٰكُمُ التَّكَاثُرُ * حَتّٰى زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ ﴾

“Rivalry {and vainglory} distracted you until you visited {even} the graves.”

[17.](#) Surah as-Saba’ 34:35-37:

﴿ وَقَالُوا نَحْنُ اَكْثَرُ اَمْوَالًا وَّاَوْلَادًا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذِّبِيْنَ * قُلْ اِنَّ رَّبِّيْ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ وَلَكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ * وَمَا اَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا اَوْلَادُكُمْ بِالَّتِيْ ۖ ﴿

“And they say, ‘We have greater wealth and more children, and we will not be punished!’ Say, ‘Indeed my Lord expands the provision for whomever He wishes and He tightens it, but most people do not know.’ It is not your wealth, nor your children, that will bring you close to Us in nearness, except those who have faith and act righteously.”

[18.](#) Ibn Hashim, As-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah (Beirut: Dar al-Ma’rifah, n.d.), vol. 1, pp. 143-144.

[19.](#) Ibid.

[20.](#) Hunafa (sing. Hanif): those Arabs during the period of pre-Islamic ignorance {jahiliyyah} who were not worshipping idols. {Trans.}

[21.](#) Abu Muhammad ‘Abd Allah ibn Muslim ibn al-Qutaybah, Al-Ma’arif, 1st edition (Qum: Manshurat ash-Sharif ar-Rida, 1415 AH), 60; Mahdi Pishva’i, Tarikh-e Islam az Jahiliyyat ta Hajjah al-Wida’ (Arak: Islamic Azad University (Arak Branch), n.d.), p. 88.

[22.](#) Muhammad Ibn Sa’d, At-Tabaqat al-Kubra, vol. 4, p. 24.

[23.](#) Ibn Shahr Ashub Mazandarani, Manaqib Al Abi Talib (Qum: Mu’assasah Intisharat-e ‘Allameh, n.d.), vol. 3, p. 214.

[24.](#) Ibid., pp. 213-214.

[25.](#) Ibid., p. 211.

[26.](#) Due to certain grave offenses, Marwan’s father, Hakam ibn al-‘As, was among the people of Banu Umayyah who were banished from Medina at the Prophet’s (S) orders. During the ‘Uthman’s caliphate, a relative of his, he was allowed to return to Medina and rally around him. For details, see inter alia Mustadrak al-Hakim, vol. 4, p. 481; Tafsir al-Qurtubi, vol. 16, p. 197; Tafsir al-Fa’iq Zamakhshari, vol. 2, p. 352; Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 4, p. 159; Tafsir al-Kabir, vol. 7, p. 491; Asad al-Ghabah of Ibn Athir, vol. 2, p. 34, An-Nihayah of Ibn Athir (Egypt), vol. 3, p. 23; Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 2, p. 55; Tafsir Nayshaburi on the marginal note of Tabari, vol. 26, p. 13, Sawa’iq al-Muhriqah, p. 108. {Trans.}

[27.](#) Ahmad ibn Abi Ya’qub ibn Wadhih, Tarikh al-Ya’qubi, 1st edition (Qum: Manshurat ash-Sharif ar-Radi, 1414 AH), vol. 2, p. 178.

[28.](#) Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 1, p. 498.

[29.](#) Ibn Shahr Ashub Mazandarani, Manaqib Al Abi Talib, vol. 3, p. 220.

[30.](#) Muhammad Ibn Sa’d, At-Tabaqat al-Kubra, vol. 5, p. 31.

[31.](#) Ibn Shahr Ashub Mazandarani, Manaqib Al Abi Talib, vol. 3, p. 312.

Lesson 7: The Silence of the Commander of the Faithful ‘Ali (‘a)

Now, let us examine why after the event of Saqifah and the commencement of Abubakr’s rule, ‘Ali (‘a) did not insist on claiming his indisputable right, and why after obtaining certainty on the ineffectiveness of some months of arguments and proofs, he did not resort to armed struggle.

In view of the fact that a number of the Prophet's (S) great Companions were his staunch supporters and that the common Muslims had also no opposition to him, it can be said in general that the Commander of the Faithful 'Ali ('a) took into account the interest of Islam and the Muslims and preferred to keep silent. As he ('a) says in his *Khutbah ash-Shaqshaqiyyah*,

فَسَدَلْتُ دُونَهَا ثَوْبًا، وَطَوَيْتُ عَنْهَا كَشْحًا، وَطَفَقْتُ أُرْتِي بَيْنَ أَنْ أَصُولَ بَدَ جَذَاءً، أَوْ أَصْبِرَ عَلَى طَخِيَةِ عَمِيَاءَ، يَهْرُمُ فِيهَا الْكَبِيرُ، وَيَشْيِبُ فِيهَا الصَّغِيرُ، وَيَكْدَحُ فِيهَا مُؤْمِنٌ حَتَّى يُلْقَى رَبَّهُ. فَرَأَيْتُ أَنَّ الصَّبْرَ عَلَى هَاتَا أَحْجَى، فَصَبَرْتُ. وَفِي الْعَيْنِ قَذَى، وَفِي الْحَلْقِ شَجَا، أَرَى تُرَائِي نَهْبًا

I put a curtain against the caliphate and kept myself detached from it. Then I began to think whether I should assault or endure calmly the blinding darkness of tribulations wherein the grown-up are made feeble and the young grow old and the true believer acts under strain till he meets Allah (on his death). I found that endurance thereon was wiser. So I adopted patience although there was pricking in the eye and suffocation (of mortification) in the throat. I watched the plundering of my inheritance...[1](#)

Of course, keeping 'Ali's ('a) speech in view, other secondary factors concerning his silence can be pointed out.

1. The Discord among Muslims

The Commander of the Faithful ('a) says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَّا قَبَضَ نَبِيَّهُ إِسْتَأْثَرَتْ عَلَيْنَا قُرَيْشٌ بِالْأَمْرِ وَدَفَعْتَنَا عَنْ حَقِّ نَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِهِ مِنَ النَّاسِ كَافَّةً فَرَأَيْتُ أَنَّ الصَّبْرَ عَلَى ذَلِكَ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ تَفْرِيقِ كَلِمَةِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَسَفْكِ دِمَائِهِمْ وَالنَّاسُ حَدِيثُو عَهْدٍ بِالْإِسْلَامِ وَالْدِّينِ يُمَخَضُ مَخَضَ الْوُطْبِ، يُفْسِدُهُ أَدْنَى وَهْنٍ وَيَعْكُسه أَقْلٌ خُلْفٍ

When God took the soul of His Prophet, the Quraysh self-centeredly considered themselves superior to us and deprived us—who were the most deserving for the leadership of the *ummah*—of our own rights. But I saw that patience and forbearance with respect to this affair is better than the dissension of Muslims and shedding of their blood. It is because the people then had newly embraced Islam and the religion was like a goatskin full of milk which has frothed and the least sluggishness and negligence would spoil it and the most trivial difference would turn it upside down.[2](#)

2. The Danger Posed by the Apostates {murtaddin}

After the demise of the Prophet (S), a large number of the Arab tribes that had accepted Islam during the last years of the Prophet's (S) life turned back from the religion and became apostate, and this danger always seriously threatened Medina. As such, in order not to weaken the government in Medina in front of them, 'Ali ('a) was forced to keep silent. 'Ali ('a) says:

فَوَاللَّهِ مَا كَانَ يُلْقَى فِي رُوعِي، وَلَا يَخْطُرُ بِيَالِي، أَنَّ الْعَرَبَ تُزْعِجُ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ عَنْ أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ، وَلَا أَنَّهُمْ مُنَحُوهُ عَنِّي مِنْ بَعْدِهِ فَمَا رَاعَنِي إِلَّا انْتِيَالُ النَّاسِ عَلَى فَلَانٍ يُبَايِعُونَهُ، فَأَمْسَكْتُ يَدِي حَتَّى رَأَيْتُ رَاجِعَةَ النَّاسِ قَدْ رَجَعَتْ عَنِ الْإِسْلَامِ، يَدْعُونَ إِلَى مَحْقِ دِينِ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فَخَشِيتُ إِنْ لَمْ أَنْصُرِ الْإِسْلَامَ وَ أَهْلَهُ أَنْ أَرَى فِيهِ ثُلْمًا أَوْ هَدْمًا، تَكُونُ الْمُصِيبَةُ بِهِ عَلَيَّ أَعْظَمَ مِنْ قُوْتِ وَلَايَتِكُمْ الَّتِي إِنَّمَا هِيَ مَتَاعُ أَيَّامٍ قَلِيلٍ، يَزُولُ مِنْهَا مَا كَانَ، كَمَا يَزُولُ السَّرَابُ، أَوْ كَمَا يَتَقَشَّعُ السَّحَابُ، فَتَهَضُّتُ فِي تِلْكَ الْأَحْدَاثِ حَتَّى انْزَاخَ الْبَاطِلُ وَزَهَقَ وَاطْمَأَنَّ الدِّينُ وَتَنَهَّنَه.

I swear by Allah that at that juncture it could not even be imagined that the Arabs would snatch the seat of the caliphate from the family and descendants of the Holy Prophet (S) and that they would be swearing the oath of allegiance for the caliphate to a different person. At every stage, I kept myself aloof from that struggle of supremacy and power-politics till I found the heretics had openly taken to heresy and schism and were trying to undermine and ruin the religion preached by our Holy Prophet (S).

I felt afraid that, even after seeing and recognizing the evil, if I did not stand up to help Islam and the Muslims it would be a worse calamity to me than my losing authority and power over you, which was only a transient and short-lived affair. Therefore, when I stood up amidst the sweeping surge of innovations and schism the dark clouds of heresy dispersed, falsehood and schism were crushed and the religion was saved.³

Imam al-Hasan (‘a) also writes in a letter to Mu‘awiyah: “Since we were afraid that the hypocrites and the other Arab parties could render a blow to Islam, we ignored our right.”⁴

Even a number of those in whose heart faith had not entered, as testified by the Qur’an, and had accepted Islam out of compulsion, as demanded by their inner hypocrisy, they did not accept the guardianship {*wilayah*} of the Commander of the Faithful (‘a). They even complained about this guardianship during the Prophet’s (S) lifetime. On the commentary of the Qur’anic verse, “*An asker asked for a punishment bound to befall,*”⁵ Tabarsi has thus narrated from Imam as-Sadiq (‘a):

After the event of Ghadir Khumm, a nomadic Arab by the name of Nu‘man ibn al-Harith al-Fihri came to the Prophet (S) and said: “You commanded us to testify that there is no deity but Allah and that you are the Messenger of Allah. You ordered us to perform *jihad*, fast, pray, and pay *zakah* and we obeyed. But you are not satisfied with all this and you raised your cousin by your hand and imposed him upon us as our master by saying “Ali is the master {*mawla*} of whom I am *mawla*.”

Is this imposition from Allah or from you?” The Messenger of Allah (S) said: “By Allah who is the only deity! This is from Allah, the Mighty and the Glorious.” On hearing this reply Nu‘man ibn al-Harith turned back and proceeded toward his she-camel saying: “O Allah! If what Muhammad said is correct then fling on us a stone from the sky and subject us to severe pain and torture.” He had not reached his she-camel when Allah flung at him a stone which struck him on his head, penetrated his body and left him dead. It was on this occasion that Allah, the Exalted, caused to descend this verse.⁶

In the event of Saqifah, these people were also siding with the Quraysh. As narrated by Abu Mikhnaf, a number of nomadic Arabs, who had to the vicinity of Medina for transactions and were present in Medina during the demise of the Prophet (S), had actual physical role in urging the people to pay allegiance to Abubakr.⁷

3. The Safety of the Progeny of the Prophet (S)

The original inheritors of the Prophet (S) and the upright adherents of the religion are the members of the Prophet's (S) family. They were the partner of the Qur'an, the second previous legacy of the Prophet (S) and the interpreters of the religious laws, and they showed to the people the pristine and genuine Islam after the Prophet's (S) demise. Their extinction would be an irreparable loss. The Commander of the Faithful said:

فَنَظَرْتُ فَإِذَا لَيْسَ لِي مُعِينٌ إِلَّا أَهْلُ بَيْتِي فَضَنَنْتُ بِهِمْ عَنِ الْمَوْتِ.

“Then, I looked and found that there is no supporter for me except my family {*ahla bayti*}, so I refrained from thrusting them unto death.”⁸

The Concrete Political Formation of the Shi'ah after the Event of Saqifah

Although 'Ali ('a) distanced himself from the political scene with the formation of Saqifah, the Shi'ah in the form of a particular group with a particular political orientation was formed after the event in Saqifah and were collectively or individually defending the truthfulness of 'Ali ('a).

They first gathered in Fatimah's ('a) house and refused to pay allegiance (to Abubakr) as they faced the onslaught of the Saqifah architects.⁹ But since 'Ali ('a) was not pleased to act violently against them for the sake of the preservation of Islam, he challenged them to a debate and argumentation. Bara' ibn 'Azib thus narrates:

I missed the cases regarding Saqifah. As I went to the Mosque of the Prophet (S) {*Masjid an-Nabi*}, I saw Miqdad, 'Ubadah ibn Samit, Salman al-Farsi, Abu Dharr, Hudhayfah, and Abu'l-Haytham ibn Tayyihm were talking about the event that took place after the demise of the Prophet (S). He went together to the house of Ubayy ibn Ka'b who said that his view is the same with whatever Hudhayfah would say.¹⁰

Finally, on that Friday, the Shi'ah of 'Ali ('a) went to the Prophet's (S) Mosque to debate with and condemn Abubakr. In this regard, Tabarsi thus narrates:

Aban ibn Taghlib asks Imam as-Sadiq ('a): “May I be your ransom! When Abubakr sat in the place of

the Messenger of Allah (S), was there anyone who protested?" The Imam (‘a) said: "Yes; there were twelve persons from among the *Muhajirun* and the *Ansar* such as Khalid ibn Sa‘id; Salman al-Farsi; Abu Dharr; Miqdad; ‘Ammar; Buraydah Aslami; Abu’l-Haytham ibn Tayyihan; Sahl ibn Hanif; ‘Uthman ibn Hanif; Khuzaymah ibn Thabit Dhu’sh-Shahadatayn; Ubayy ibn Ka‘b; and Abu Ayyub al-Ansari.

They gathered in a certain place and discussed together the event in Saqifah and were thinking of a solution. Some said: "We shall go to the mosque and let Abubakr come down from the pulpit. Some others did not agree with this idea, considering it unadvisable. They then came to ‘Ali (‘a) and said: "We will go and pull Abubakr down from the pulpit."

The Imam (‘a) said: "They are many. Once you go ahead with this and act violently, they will come and say: "You pay allegiance otherwise we shall kill you." Instead, you have to go to him and tell him what you have heard from the Messenger of Allah (S) and this is all of the proof. They came to the mosque and the first person among them who spoke was Khalid ibn Sa‘id al-Umawi, saying: "O Abubakr! You are aware that after the Battle of Banu Nadhir, the Holy Prophet (S) said: ‘You have to know and keep my will. After me, ‘Ali shall be my caliph and successor among you. My Lord has thus ordered me’." After him, Salman stood up and made his famous statement in Persian language: "*Kardid, nakardid.*"^{[11](#)}

After their argumentation, Abubakr descended from the pulpit, went to his house and did not go out for three days until such time that Khalid ibn Walid, Salim Mawla Abu Hudhayfah and Mu‘adh ibn Jabal along with many others went to Abubakr’s house and gave him will power. ‘Umar went along with this group to the mosque entrance and said: "O Shi‘ah and supporters of ‘Ali! Be aware that if you would utter these words again, I will behead you."^{[12](#)}

Similarly, a number of those Shi‘ah from among the Companions who, at the time of the Prophet’s (S) demise, were on a mission outside Medina, such as Khalid ibn Sa‘id and his two brothers, Aban and ‘Amru, protested against Abubakr after their return from their place of mission. As a sign of protest, all the three brothers did not continue their function which was collection of *zakah*, saying: "We shall not work for someone else after the Prophet (S)."^{[13](#)}

In addressing ‘Ali (‘a), Khalid ibn Sa‘id said: "Come forward so that I could pay my allegiance to you as you are the most deserving person in the position of Muhammad (S)."^{[14](#)}

Throughout the 25 years of the three caliphs’ rule, The Shi‘ah from among the Companions were always introducing ‘Ali (‘a) as the caliph and commander of the faithful in truth. ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ud used to say, "Based on the injunction of the Qur’an, there are four caliphs, viz. Adam (Adam), Dawud (David), Harun (Aaron), and ‘Ali."^{[15](#)}

Hudhayfah also used to say: "Anyone who wants to witness the Commander of the Faithful in truth shall meet ‘Ali."^{[16](#)}

Harith ibn Khazraj, the standard-bearer of the *Ansar* in the battles of the Prophet (S), used to narrate

that the Holy Prophet (S) said to ‘Ali (‘a): “The inhabitants of the heavens have called you ‘Commander of the Faithful’ {*Amir al-Mu’minin*}’.”^{[17](#)}

Ya‘qubi writes:

After the six-man council proposed by ‘Umar and the selection of ‘Uthman, some were showing inclination toward ‘Ali and speaking against ‘Uthman. A certain person thus narrates: “I entered the Mosque of the Prophet {*Masjid an-Nabi*}. I saw a man sitting on his two knees so impatiently as if he was shouldering the entire world, and while being taken by them, he was addressing the people: ‘How surprising the Quraysh are!

They took out the caliphate from the family of the Prophet while among this family was the first believer, cousin of the Messenger of Allah, the most learned and knowledgeable of people about the religion of God, and most insightful of people to the right course and the Straight Path {*Sirat al-Mustaqim*}. They took the caliphate from the Imam of guidance, the guided {*mahdi*}, pure {*tahir*} and chaste {*naqi*}, and their objective was not for the reformation of the *ummah* and religiosity. They rather preferred the world to the hereafter’.”

The narrator says: “I approached and asked him: ‘May Allah be merciful to you! Who are you? And who is the person you are talking about?’ He said: ‘I am Miqdad ibn ‘Amru and that person (I am referring to) is ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib.’ I said: ‘You stage an uprising and I will help you.’ Miqdad said: ‘My son, this work cannot be done by just one or two persons’.”^{[18](#)}

During the caliphate of ‘Uthman, Abu Dharr al-Ghaffari also used to stand by the door of the Mosque of the Prophet (S) and say:

Anyone who knows me has recognized me and anyone who does not know me should then know that I am Jundab ibn Junadah, Abu Dharr al-Ghaffari... Muhammad (S) is the inheritor of the knowledge of Adam (Adam) (‘a) and all virtues of the prophets (‘a), and ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) is the successor of Muhammad (S) and the inheritor of his knowledge.

O confounded and wandering *ummah* after the Prophet (S)! Be aware that if you would have made superior the person who had been made superior by God and have fixed the *wilayah* {guardianship} on the family of your Prophet, blessings from above and below will be bestowed on you and every matter you would want the information about which will be obtained from them from the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet. But now, you did something else, you would see the consequences of what you have done.^{[19](#)}

Yes, the group of the first Shi‘ah and its formation had been initiated by the great Companions of the Prophet (S), and through these same Shi‘ah from the Companions that Shi‘ism was transferred to the next generation of the *Tabi‘un* {Followers}. And it was the result of their efforts that at the end of the rule of ‘Uthman, from the political perspective, the ground for ‘Ali’s (‘a) caliphate was paved.

Lesson 7: Summary

1. Hadrat ‘Ali (‘a) overlooked his right and kept silent for the sake and interest of Islam. Keeping in view his statements in this regard, the following factors can be identified:

- a. The discord among Muslims;
- b. The danger posed by the apostates {*murtaddin*}; and
- c. The safety of the progeny of the Prophet (‘a).

2. After the event of Saqifah, Shi‘ah was formed as a special group with a particular political orientation, and they individually and collectively defended the truthfulness of ‘Ali (‘a).

They gathered in the house of Fatimah (‘a), interpolated Abubakr in the mosque, and for the period of 25 years, they used to persistently introduce ‘Ali (‘a) as the rightful caliph to the people.

Lesson 7: Questions

1. List the reasons for the silence of the Commander of the Faithful (‘a).

2. After the event of Saqifah, at what stage were the Shi‘ah in?

1. Najh al-Balaghah (Faydh al-Islam), Sermon 3 {Khutbah ash-Shaqshaqiyyah}.
2. Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 1, p. 308.
3. Najh al-Balaghah (Faydh al-Islam), Letter 62.
4. ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn Abu’l-Faraj al-Isfahani, Maqatil at-Talibiyyin (Qum: Mansurat ash-Sharif ar-Radi, 1416 AH), p. 65.
5. Surah al-Ma‘arij 70: 1.
6. Abi ‘Ali al-Fadhl ibn al-Hasan Tabarsi, Majma‘ al-Bayan, 2nd edition (Beirut: Dar al-Ma‘rifah Li’t-Tiba‘ah wa’n-Nashr, 1408 AH), vol. 10, p. 530.
7. Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn an-Nu‘man Mufid, Al-Jamal, 2nd edition (Qum: Maktab al-A‘lam al-Islami (Central Publication), 1416 AH), pp. 118–119.
8. Najh al-Balaghah (Faydh al-Islam), Sermon 26.
9. Ahmad ibn Abi Ya‘qub ibn Wadhih, Tarikh al-Ya‘qubi, 1st edition (Qum: Mansurat ash-Sharif ar-Radi, 1414 AH), vol. 2, p. 126.
10. Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 2, p. 51.
11. Kardid, nakardid: Literally, “You did; you didn’t.” That is, “You determined the caliphate but you did not do the right thing.”
12. Abi Mansur Ahmad ibn ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib Tabarsi, Al-Ihtijaj (Tehran: Intisharat-e Usweh, n.d.), vol. 1, pp. 186–200.
13. ‘Izz ad-Din Abu’l-Hasan ‘Ali ibn Muhammad Abi’l-Kiram Ibn Athir, Asad al-Ghabah fi Ma‘rifah as-Sahabah (Beirut: Dar Ihya’ at-Turath al-‘Arabi, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 83.
14. Ahmad ibn Abi Ya‘qub Ibn Wadhih, Tarikh al-Ya‘qubi, 1st edition (Beirut: Mansurat Mu’assasah al-A‘lami Li’l-Matbu‘at, 1413 AH), vol. 2, p. 11.
15. Regarding Adam (Adam) (‘a), God, the Exalted, says: “Indeed I am going to set a viceroy on earth” Surah al-Baqarah 2:30. Concerning Dawud (David) (‘a), God, the Exalted, states: “Indeed We have made you a vicegerent on the earth” Surah Sad 38:26. With regard to Harun (Aaron) (‘a), God, the Exalted, says through the tongue of Musa (Moses) (‘a): “Be

my successor among my people” Surah al-A’raf 7:142. As regards ‘Ali (‘a), God, the Exalted, says: “Allah has promised those of you who have faith and do righteous deeds that He will surely make them successors in the earth, just as He made those who were before them successors” Surah an-Nur 24:55. Ibn Shahr Ashub Mazandarani, *Manaqib Al Abi Talib* (Beirut: Dar al-Adhwa’, 1405 AH), vol. 3, pp. 77–78.

[16.](#) Ahmad ibn Yahya ibn Jabir Baladhuri, *Insab al-Ashraf* (Beirut: Ma’assasah al-A’lami Li’l-Matbu’at, 1394 AH), vol. 3, p. 115.

[17.](#) Ibn Shahr Ashub Mazandarani, *Manaqib Al Abi Talib* (Qum: Mu’assasah Intisharat-e ‘Allameh, n.d.), vol. 3, p. 54.

[18.](#) Ibn Wadhih, *Tarikh al-Ya’qubi*, vol. 2, p. 57.

[19.](#) *Ibid.*, p. 67.

Lesson 8: The Shi‘ah among the Companions {sahabah}

We said earlier that the first person to call the followers of ‘Ali (‘a) as “Shi‘ah” was the receiver of the divine revelation, Muhammad al-Mustafa (S). During the time of the Holy Prophet (S) a number of his Companions were known as “Shi‘ah of ‘Ali”. In *Khatat ash-Sham*, Muhammad Kird ‘Ali thus writes:

During the period of the Holy Prophet (S), a number of the great Companions was known for their fellowship and friendship with ‘Ali such as Salman al-Farsi who used to say: “We pledged allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (S) that we would be the well-wishers of Muslims and that we follow and befriend ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib”; and Abu Sa‘id al-Khudri who used to say: “We were ordered five things, of which the people acted upon the four but have abandoned one of them.”

He was asked: “What are the four?” He replied: “Prayer, *zakat*, fasting in the month of Ramadan, and *Hajj*” He was again asked: “What is the thing that the people abandoned?” He replied: “The *wilayah* {mastership} of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib.”

The person asked: “Is this also obligatory like the others?” {Among the Shi‘ah were} also Abu Dharr al-Ghiffari, ‘Ammar ibn Yasir, Khadiqah ibn Yaman, Khuzaymah ibn Thabit Dhu’sh-Shahadatayn, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, Khalid ibn Sa‘id, and Qays ibn Sa‘d. [1](#)

Regarding the pioneering Shi‘ah, Ibn Abi’l-Hadid also says, thus:

The talk on the superiority of ‘Ali is an old subject in which a great number of the Companions and Followers {*tabi’un*} believed. Among the Companions were ‘Ammar; Miqdad; Abu Dharr; Salman; Jabir; Ubayy ibn Ka‘b; Hudhayfah; Buraydah; Abu Ayyub; Sahl ibn Hunayf; ‘Uthman ibn Hunayf; Abu’l-Haytham ibn Tayyihan; Khuzaymah ibn Thabit; Abu’t-Tufayl ‘Amir ibn Wathilah; ‘Abbas ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib; and all members of the Banu Hashim and Banu Muttalib. At the beginning, Zubayr also believed in ‘Ali’s superiority. They were a few from among the Banu Umayyah such as Khalid ibn Sa‘id

and later on, ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz.[2](#)

In *Ad-Darajat ar-Rafi‘ah fi Tabaqat ash-Shi‘ah*, Sayyid ‘Ali Khan ash-Shirazi has allotted a certain part to the Shi‘ah among the Companions. He has first mentioned the members of the Banu Hashim and then the other Shi‘ah among the Companions. In the first section which is related to the Shi‘ah Companions among the members of the Banu Hashim, it is thus stated:

Abu Talib; ‘Abbas ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib; ‘Abd Allah ibn al-‘Abbas; Fadhl ibn al-‘Abbas; ‘Ubayd Allah ibn al-‘Abbas; Qithm ibn al-‘Abbas; ‘Abd ar-Rahman ibn al-‘Abbas; Tamam ibn al-‘Abbas; ‘Aqil ibn Abi Talib; Abu Sufyan ibn Harith ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib; Nawfal ibn Harith ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib; ‘Abd Allah ibn Zubayr ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib;

‘Abd Allah ibn Ja‘far; ‘Awn ibn Ja‘far; Muhammad ibn Ja‘far; Rabi‘ah ibn Harith ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib; Tufayl ibn Harith ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib; Mughayrah ibn Nawfal ibn Harith ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib; ‘Abbas ibn ‘Utbah ibn Abi Lahab; ‘Abd al-Muttalib ibn Rabi‘ah ibn Harith ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib; and Ja‘far ibn Abi Sufyan ibn Harith ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib.[3](#)

In the second section (the non-Banu Hashim Shi‘ah among the Companions), Sayyid ‘Ali Khan has thus recorded:

‘Amr ibn Abi Salmah; Salman al-Farsi; Miqdad ibn Aswad; Abu Dharr al-Ghiffari; ‘Ammar ibn Yasir; Hudhayfah ibn Yaman; Khuzaymah ibn Thabit; Abu Ayyub al-Ansari; Abu’l-Haytham Malik ibn Tayyihan; Ubayy ibn Ka‘b; Sa‘d ibn ‘Ubadah; Qays ibn Sa‘d; Sa‘d ibn Sa‘d ibn ‘Ubadah; Abu Qutadah al-Ansari; ‘Udayy ibn Hatam; ‘Ubadah ibn Samit; Bilal ibn Rubah; Abu’l-Humara’; Abu Rafi‘; Hashim ibn ‘Utbah ibn Abi Waqqas;

‘Uthman ibn Hunayf; Sahl ibn Hunayf; Hakim ibn Jablah al-‘Adwi; Khalid ibn Sa‘id ibn al-‘As; Walid ibn Jabir ibn Talim at-Ta‘i; Sa‘d ibn Malik ibn Sinan; Bara’ ibn Malik al-Ansari; Ibn Hasib Aslami; Ka‘b ibn ‘Amru al-Ansari; Rafa‘ah ibn Rafi‘ al-Ansari; Malik ibn Rabi‘ah Sa‘idi; ‘Uqbah ibn ‘Umar ibn Tha‘labah al-Ansari; Hind ibn Abi Halah at-Tamimi;

Ju‘dah ibn Hubayrah; Abu ‘Umrah al-Ansari; Mas‘ud ibn al-Aws; Nadhlah ibn ‘Ubayd; Abu Burzah Aslami; Mardas ibn Malik Aslami; Musur ibn Shidad Fahri; ‘Abd Allah ibn Budayl al-Khaza‘i; Hujr ibn ‘Adi al-Kindi; ‘Amru ibn al-Humq al-Khaza‘i; Usamah ibn Zayd; Abu Layla al-Ansari; Zayd ibn al-Arqam; and Bara ibn ‘Azib Awsi.[4](#)

The author of *Rijal al-Burqa* has also mentioned the Shi‘ah and supporters of ‘Ali (‘a) among the Companions of the Prophet (S) in a certain part of his book, thus:

Salman, Miqdad, Abu Dharr, and ‘Ammar, and after these four persons, Abu Layla, Shabir, Abu ‘Umrah al-Ansari, and Abu Sinan al-Ansari, and after these four persons, Jabir ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Ansari; Abu Sa‘id al-Ansari whose name is Sa‘d ibn Malik al-Khazraji; Abu Ayyub al-Ansari al-Khazraji; Ubayy ibn

Ka'b al-Ansari;

Abu Burzah Aslami al-Khaza'i whose name is Nadhlah ibn 'Ubayd Allah; Zayd ibn al-Arqam al-Ansari; Buraydah ibn Hasib Aslami; 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Qays whose epithet Safinah Rakib Asad; 'Abd Allah ibn Salam; 'Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib; 'Abd Allah ibn al-'Abbas; 'Abd Allah ibn Ja'far; Mughayrah ibn Nawfal ibn Harith ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib; Hudhayfah al-Yaman who is included among the *Ansar*; Usamah ibn Zayd; Anas ibn Malik; Abu'l-Humra'; Bara' ibn 'Azib al-Ansari; and 'Arafah Azdi.[5](#)

A number of the Shi'ah '*ulama*' and *rijali* scholars believes that the Shi'ah among the Companions were more than this number. For example, Shaykh al-Mufid regards all the Companions who have pledged allegiance to 'Ali ('a) in Medina especially those Companions who accompanied him in the battles as among the Shi'ah and those who believed in his Imamate {*imamah*}. In the Battle of Jamal (Camel), one thousand five hundred Companions were present.[6](#)

It is thus recorded in *Rijal Kashi*:

Among the pioneering Companions who traversed the path of truth and believed in the Imamate of the Commander of the Faithful 'Ali ('a) are the following: Abu'l-Haytham ibn Tayyihan; Abu Ayyub; Khuzaymah ibn Thabit; Jabir ibn 'Abd Allah; Zayd ibn al-Arqam; Abu Sa'id Sahl ibn Hunayf; Bara' ibn Malik; 'Uthman ibn Hunayf; 'Ubadah ibn Samit, and after them are Qays ibn Sa'd; 'Udayy ibn Hatam; 'Amru ibn Hamq; 'Umran ibn Hasin; Buraydah Aslami; and others who are described as "*basharun kathir*" {many people}.[7](#)

In the marginal note of *Rijal Kashi* on the definition and explanation of the term "*basarun kathir*", the late Mirdamad says: "It means many people from among the prominent Companions and leading Followers {*tabi'un*}." [8](#)

Sayyid Muhsin Amin has also said:

Be aware that many of the Companions believed in the Imamate of the Commander of the Faithful ('a) to count them is not possible for us to do and the narrators of traditions have consensus of opinion that most of the Companions accompanied and sided with the Commander of the Faithful ('a) in the battles.[9](#)

In one of his letters to Mu'awiyah, Muhammad ibn Abubakr identifies the presence of the Companions of the Prophet (S) at the side of 'Ali ('a) as one of the signs of his rightfulness.[10](#)

Muhammad ibn Abi Hudhayfah, a loyal supporter of 'Ali ('a) who was a maternal cousin of Mu'awiyah, and owing to his friendship with 'Ali ('a), languished in the prison cell of Mu'awiyah and finally died there, thus addressed Mu'awiyah in one of their conversation:

From the moment I have known you, whether during the pre-Islamic period of ignorance {*yawm al-jahiliyyah*} or during the advent of Islam, you have never changed and Islam has not been added to you. And one of the manifestations of this fact is that you are condemning me for loving 'Ali notwithstanding

the fact that all the ascetics and devoted worshippers of the *Muhajirun* and *Ansar* are in his company while in your company are perverts and hypocrites. [11](#)

Of course, not all of those who were enlisted in the army of the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) can be considered Shi‘ah. But since he (‘a) was the official caliph, they accompanied him (‘a). This statement can be said to be correct with respect to the other people, for the Companions who accompanied him (‘a) were always assisting the Imam (‘a) in proving his rightfulness. As Salim ibn al-Qays has narrated,

The Commander of the Faithful mounted the pulpit in Siffin and everyone including the *Muhajirun* and *Ansar* enlisted in the army gathered around the pulpit. The Imam praised and glorified Allah and then said: “O people! My virtues and merits are more than that which can be counted. It is enough to say that when the Messenger of Allah (S) was asked about the verse, “*And the Foremost Ones are the foremost ones: they are the ones brought near {to Allah}*,” [12](#) he (S) said: ‘God has revealed this verse about the prophets and their successors {*awsiya*}’.

I am superior to all prophets and messengers and my successor {*wasi*} ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib is the foremost among the successors’.” At that moment, seventy persons from among the Companions who participated in the Battle of Badr, most of whom were from the *Ansar*, stood up and testified that they have heard the same thing from the Messenger of Allah (S). [13](#)

Lesson 8: Summary

The pioneering Shi‘ah were prominent Companions of the Prophet (S). Muhammad Kird-‘Ali in *Khatat ash-Sham* has recorded that a number of the Companions were known as the “Shi‘ah of ‘Ali” during the lifetime of the Prophet (S).

Sayyid ‘Ali Khan ash-Shirazi in *Ad-Darajat ar-Rafi‘ah fi Tabaqat ash-Shi‘ah* has examined the Shi‘ah among the Companions in two sections: the Shi‘ah Companions from among the Banu Hashim, and the Shi‘ah Companions who were not members of the Banu Hashim.

The writer of *Rijal al-Burqa* has also allotted a certain part of his book to the supporters of ‘Ali (‘a) from among the Companions of the Prophet (S).

In *Al-Jamal*, Shaykh al-Mufid regards all the Companions who accompanied and sided with ‘Ali (‘a) in the battles as Shi‘ah.

In *Rijal Kashi*, after enumerating the Shi‘ah from among the Companions, Shaykh at-Tusi thus says: “A large number believed in the Imamate of ‘Ali (‘a).”

The supporters of the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) also used to point out to Mu‘awiyah the presence of the Companions of the Prophet (‘a) on the side of ‘Ali (‘a) as one of the indications of his righteousness.

Lesson 8: Questions

1. Explain something about the Shi'ah among the Companions.
2. How many of the Companions were present on the side of 'Ali ('a) at the Battle of Jamal (Camel)?

1. Muhammad Kird 'Ali, Khatat ash-Sham, 3rd edition (Damascus: Maktabah an-Nuri, 1403 AH/1983), vol. 6, p. 245.
2. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah (Beirut: Dar Ihya' at-Turath al-'Arabi, 1378 AH), vol. 2, pp. 221-222.
3. Sayyid 'Ali Khan ash-Shirazi, Ad-Darajat ar-Rafi'ah fi Tabaqat ash-Shi'ah (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Wafa', n.d.), pp. 41-197.
4. Ibid., pp. 197-455.
5. Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khalid Burqa, Rijal al-Burqa (n.p.: Mu'assasah al-Qayyum, n.d.), pp. 31-39.
6. Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn an-Nu'man Shaykh al-Mufid, Al-Jamal, 2nd edition (Qum: Maktab al-A'lam al-Islami (Publication Center), 1416 AH), pp. 109-110.
7. Abi Ja'far Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn 'Ali Shaykh at-Tusi, Ikhtiyar Ma'rifah ar-Rijal (Rijal Kashi) (Qum: Mu'assasah Al al-Bayt at-Turath, 1404 AH), vol. 1, pp. 181-188.
8. Ibid., p. 188.
9. Sayyid Muhsin Amin, A'yan ash-Shi'ah (Beirut: Dar at-Ta'aruf Li'l-Matbu'at, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 24.
10. Ahmad ibn Yahya ibn Jabir Baladhuri, Insab al-Ashraf (Beirut: Manshurat Mu'assasah al-A'lam Li'l-Matbu'at, 1394 AH), vol. 2, p. 395.
11. Shaykh at-Tusi, Ikhtiyar Ma'rifah ar-Rijal (Rijal Kashi), p. 278.
12. Surah al-Waqi'ah 56:10-11.
13. Salim ibn Qays al-'Amiri (Beirut: Manshur Dar al-Funun Li't-Taba'ah wa'n-Nashr wa't-Tawzi', 1400 AH), p. 186; Abi Mansur Ahmad ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Talib at-Tabarsi (Al-Ihtijaj. Tehran: Intisharat-e Usweh, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 472.

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