

Part B: Persecution of the Shia by the Umayyads

The fact that the details about the persecution against the Shia was compiled in seven volumes each of over 200 pages, under the title '*Masa'ibush Shia*'¹ goes to show the enormity of the matter. The writer/compiler was Moulana Sadat Husayn Khan Sahib. The book was published by Sarfaraz Press, Luknow in 1347 AH. The book was reprinted in three volumes in May 2001. I have mostly followed the contents of the earlier edition of '*Masa'ibush Shia*'. Instead of detailing each individual persecution that would only add to the volume of this book, for brevity's sake I have given short sketches of the persecution against the Shia during various regimes.

Be it the Umayyads or the Abbasids or any other regime for that matter, it is a historical fact that the Shia of the *Ahlul Bayt* alone were persecuted, tortured, banished, and killed, beginning from the moment of the Prophet's death to the present day. In this enlightened twenty-first century, in Iraq and elsewhere, misguided persons kill hundreds of Shia with remote controlled bombs. The scenes of youngsters slitting the throats or beheading those, whom they consider as their opponents, are a slur on the religion whose founder is known as 'Universal Mercy'. The book '*Masa'ibush Shia*' tells the story of the persecution against the Shia throughout centuries.

The period of persecution of the Shia can conveniently be divided into the following periods

- [a] Immediately after the demise of the Prophet (S) between 11 and 30 AH
- [b] The period after the martyrdom of Imam Ali in the year 35 until 60 AH when Mu'awiya died
- [c] The period between 61 to 132 AH when Abdullah ibn az-Zubair and the Umayyads ruled as the caliphs
- [d] The period between 133 to 334 AH when the Abbasids ruled as the caliphs
- [e] The period when a multitude of caliphs came to rule the Muslim world
- [f] During the Mongolian period and the recent times

Persecution of the Shia by Mu'awiya from 11 to 30 AH

(1) Sa'd bin Ubadah

Sa'd bin Ubadah was a close companion of Imam Ali (a.s.). When the Prophet (a.s.) settled the marriage of his daughter Fatima (S), Sa'd was in charge of arranging the event and he did his job excellently. According to Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, Sa'd was an erudite scholar, an excellent swimmer, and noted archer of his time. Sa'd had inherited a few forts which were well-known for generosity and hospitality.

In the Prophet's army, there used to be two standards; Sa'd was the bearer of the Ansar's standard, while Imam Ali (a.s.) was the bearer of the Muhajirin's standard.

Sa'd was a loyal companion of the Prophet (S). He was a well-educated person and often officiated as the Prophet's scribe in writing down the Qur'anic revelations, writing letters, drafting deeds...etc. His tribe was well known for its generosity and hospitality. Sa'd was among the people of Medina who were, by reason of their learning of ancient scriptures, aware that a Prophet would soon appear in the Arabia. When they heard about the Prophet (a.s.) and the religion he preached and the torture which he and his followers were subjected to, Sa'd along with some other learned persons from Medina came to the Prophet (S) and invited him to migrate to Medina. In every skirmish, battle, or other confrontation with the opponents of Islam, Sa'd participated and fought valiantly.

When Umar, Abu Bakr, and Abu Ubaidah ibn al-Jarrah went to the *Saqifa* to stake the claim for the *Caliphate*, Sa'd bin Ubadah challenged them saying that among the tribe of Quraish, if the people of Quraish were to have precedence, Imam Ali (a.s.) was the nominated by the Prophet (S) as his successor and that he was the most fit person to the post. On hearing this, Umar was so infuriated that he shouted, "Kill Sa'd." However, Sa'd's tribesmen rescued him. Sa'd never recognized Abu Bakr or Umar as the *Caliphs*. He never mingled with them nor did he offer prayers behind them at any time. He was steadfast in his refusal to acknowledge Abu Bakr and later Umar as the *Caliph*. Umar asked Khalid bin al-Walid who secretly killed Sa'd bin Ubadah. Though Sa'd was not the first in point of time to be martyred because of his love for Imam Ali (a.s.), he was the first one to openly oppose at the *Saqifa* the men who claimed the *Caliphate*.

Immediately after the death of the Prophet (S), the affair at the *Saqifa* created a rift among Muslims. The Ansar had heard the Prophet (S) nominating Imam Ali (a.s.) as his successor. They were aware of the virtue, caliber, and wisdom of Imam Ali (a.s.) and hence were ready to accept him as the successor to the Prophet (S). However, during the last days of the Prophet (S), the Ansar found that every order of the Prophet (S) was disobeyed and the parchment and pen he requested to write down his will was denied. Umar was at the head of this group (who opposed and disobeyed the Prophet). The Ansar realized that there was a concerted effort to prevent Imam Ali (a.s.) from succeeding the Prophet (S). They determined that if anyone other than Imam Ali (a.s.) was to become the *Caliph*, the Ansar had in

Sa'd bin Ubadah a better claim than the stranger incumbent to the post.

When Umar wanted Khalid bin al-Walid to be penalized for having killed Malik bin Nuwayra, a pious Muslim, and on the same night committing adultery with his widow, for the sake of pleasing the *Caliph* Abu Bakr, Khalid replied, “*I killed Malik bin Nuwayra to please Abu Bakr just as I had killed Sa'd bin Ubadah to please you.*” After this retort, Umar stopped accusing Khalid of murdering Malik bin Nuwayra.[2](#)

(2) Malik bin Nuwayra

Umar, who was well known for his booming voice and ill temper, went around Medina brandishing his unsheathed sword and threatening dire consequences if the caliphate of Abu Bakr was not accepted. In Medina, many companions and learned Muslims preferred to express their disagreement by staying away from open acceptance of Abu Bakr as the *Caliph*. They were immediately branded as friends of Ali and therefore, by implication, enemies of the caliph. Ali himself was made a target, dragged from his house and the house itself was threatened to be set on fire for refusing to acknowledge Abu Bakr as the caliph.

The well known and true companions of the Prophet (S) such as Salman, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, Huthaifa bin al-Yeman, Malik al-Ashtar, al-Miqdad, Maytham at-Tammar, Muhammad bin Abu Bakr (the son of the caliph), Malik bin Nuwayra, Muhammad bin Abi Huthaifa, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, Sa'sa'a bin Souhan, Qambar, Kumail ibn Ziyad, Sulaym bin Qays, and an endless list of the Prophet's companions and Imam Ali's companions were not only deprived of their pensions but also banished from Medina to flimsy lands.

In remoter parts of the Islamic state, people were only aware that during his last pilgrimage, the Prophet (S) had nominated Imam Ali (a.s.) as his successor and demanded that the Muslim Umma should obey him alone. At any rate, they were not aware of any parallel nomination of anyone else by the Prophet (S). This was all the more evident from the fact that Abu Bakr, Umar, and their group claimed that the Prophet (S) had not nominated any successor and that Abu Bakr was unanimously elected at the Saqifa. This was contrary to what the Muslims had witnessed during the lifetime of the Prophet (S) who had repeatedly, from the first day of Youm ad-Dar till the incident of his demanding 'ink and parchment' to write down his will, nominated Imam Ali (a.s.) as his successor. Malik bin Nuwayra, a respected companion of the Prophet (S), went to Medina and found Abu Bakr sitting on the Prophet's pulpit. Malik asked Abu Bakr who made him sit there when Imam Ali (a.s.) who was nominated by the Prophet (S) was the rightful person to occupy the seat. Abu Bakr replied that he was elected at the Saqifa. Malik returned back refusing to pay allegiance to Abu Bakr. Therefore, when Muslims found that instead of Imam Ali (a.s.) Abu Bakr had become the Caliph, they refused to acknowledge the new incumbent or to submit to his authority. Above all, Malik bin Nuwayra told his tribesmen to keep the Zakat and Khums and to refuse paying them to the agents of Abu Bakr.

Abu Bakr became angry and ordered Khalid bin al-Walid to kill Malik bin Nuwayra for disobeying the

Caliph's authority. When Malik heard this, he said, *"I do not dare disobey the Caliph, but I will not bow down to Abu Bakr who is a usurper of the Caliphate. The rightful Caliph is Ali who was nominated by the Prophet (S)."* After a short fight, Khalid bin al-Walid killed Malik bin Nuwayra and his three hundred men. He confiscated all their properties and arrested their women. On the same night, he committed adultery with Malik's widow who was renowned for her beauty. These illegal acts created a stir among several persons, like Abu Qattara, in Khalid's army. They complained to Abu Bakr. The women prisoners complained that they were unjustly imprisoned to which Abu Bakr replied, *"Your men refused to pay the tax to me."* The women replied, *"If our men refused to pay the tax, you have slain them. Why do you hold us prisoners, where we have not committed any crime?"* Hearing this, Abu Bakr ordered them to be released. When Umar heard about the murder of Malik bin Nuwayra and his companions and the committing of adultery by Khalid, he suggested that Khalid should be executed for killing a pious Muslim, and that Khalid should also be stoned for committing adultery with Malik's widow. Abu Bakr refused saying that he pardoned Khalid for his misinterpretation and that he would pay blood money to Malik's heirs and ask Khalid to forthwith divorce Malik's widow. This decision speaks volumes about the *Caliph's* acumen. Firstly, the *Caliph* is not the authority to pardon sins. Secondly, blood money could be paid only when heirs of the killed person agree to receive it, but if they demand *Qisas* (retaliation), Khalid had to be executed. Thirdly, since Khalid had committed adultery and no marriage was possible between him and Malik's widow, the question of Khalid to divorce her does not arise at all. At any rate, what all transpired was only because of the love that Malik bin Nuwayra had toward Imam Ali (a.s.).³

(3) The Tribes of Kinda and Hadhramaut

Immediately after his ascension to the *Caliphate*, Abu Bakr was faced with opposition from the tribes in the surrounding districts. The Kinda and Hadhramaut tribes asserted, *"As long as the messenger of Allah was alive, we were obliged to him. After the Prophet's demise, we would have obeyed if someone from his progeny [Ahlul Bayt] had ascended the Caliphate. What right has the son of Abu Quhafa (Abu Bakr) over us or over the Caliphate?"*

The *Caliph's* agent Ziyad bin Labid was afraid that soon the entire Arab society would rise against the *Caliph*. He approached the Bani Zohd, a sub tribe of Kinda, and complained about the attitude of the Kinda Tribe. Bani Zohd replied, *"Why do you insist upon demanding obedience to one whom the Prophet (S) has never appointed as his successor?"* Ziyad replied, *"It is true that the Prophet (S) did not command anyone to obey Abu Bakr, but Muslims have appointed him by mutual consent."* The Bani Zohd replied, *"Since, as you claim, they exercised their option, then why did they [the Muslims] not exercise their option in favour of the Ahlul Bayt? We know that the Prophet (S) did not die before nominating his successor. Therefore, keep away from us and do not indulge in creating mischief. We are not obliged to your Caliph nor would we abide by his orders."*

On seeing the belligerent mood of the tribesmen, Ziyad took to his heels. He returned with reinforcement and in the fight that took place in the town of Bureim, 209 Shia under al-Ash'ath bin Qais were martyred.

Ziyad lost the fight and once again sought the safety of the Fort in Bureim. Ziyad sought the help of Muhajir ibn Abi Umayya who collected a large army and went to the aid of Ziyad. Al-Ash'ath also collected a huge army. Ziyad was afraid of the army of al-Ash'ath and he wrote to Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr in turn wrote to al-Ash'ath advising him to surrender. The letter enraged al-Ash'ath and one of his companions struck the hand of the courier. Al-Ash'ath was left with only two thousand men. Hundreds of deserted him and joined Ziyad's army.

However, al-Ash'ath defeated Ziyad's men. Those, who escaped, sought shelter in the Fort at Bureim. Once again, Ziyad wrote to Abu Bakr who called a meeting in which Abu Ayyub al-Ansari said, "*The people of Kinda are valiant warriors. Once all of them join hands, it will be impossible to defeat them. The best course now is to forget collecting taxes. Later, they may themselves regret and submit to you.*" To this, Abu Bakr replied, "*O Abu Ayyub, I have sworn not to let go even a six-month-old lamb and I will fight until the end in the matter of collecting taxes.*"⁴

Abu Bakr sent a contingent under Akrima to assist Ziyad. The combined forces of Akrima and Ziyad ibn Labeed surrounded the army of al-Ash'ath and prevented food and water to reach them. Deprived of any strength to fight, al-Ash'ath sought an amnesty from Ziyad. Ziyad imprisoned all the men of al-Ash'ath and one after another, he beheaded them. He sent al-Ash'ath to Abu Bakr.

Al-Ash'ath surrendered before the *Caliph* who immediately bestowed costly gifts upon him (al-Ash'ath) and got him married to his sister Umm Farwa through whom al-Ash'ath got three sons Muhammad, Ismael, and Ishaq and a daughter called Ja'dah.

The treason of al-Ash'ath passed on to his children. His son Muhammad was a soldier of Umar ibn Sa'd and fought against Imam Husayn (a.s.) at Karbala. His two brothers Ismael and Ishaq joined the army of Abdul Melik ibn Marwan. Ja'dah poisoned Imam Hasan (a.s.).

Due to the betrayal by al-Ash'ath, noble men of the tribes of Kinda and Hadhramaut, such as Suraqa bin al-Harith, Abdullah bin Arfajah, Adiy bin Owf, and the tribes of Bani Hajjar, Bani Himyar, Banu Kinda, numbering to about eight thousand were slaughtered merely because they wanted anyone from the Prophet's progeny to be the *Caliph* instead of Abu Bakr whom they considered an incompetent usurper of the *Caliphate*.

Al-Ash'ath and his ilk were similar to Talha and az-Zobair who recanted from the faith and were expelled as *Kharjites*. Thousands of learned scholars and companions of the Prophet (S) and of Imam Ali (a.s.) were killed in the battles of al-Jamal, Siffin, and an-Nahrawan.

(4) Abu Sa'eed Khalid bin Sa'eed bin al-Aas bin Umayya

When Abu Bakr claimed to have been elected as the *Caliph*, a group of twelve well-known companions of the Prophet (S) ; six from the Muhajirin and six from the Ansar, decided to confront Abu Bakr. The six Muhajirin were Khalid bin Sa'eed, Salman al-Farsi (the Persian), Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, al-Miqdad ibn al-

Aswad, Ammar ibn Yasir, and Buraidah al-Aslami. The six men of the Ansar were Abul Hasim ibn Yethan, Sahl and Uthman bin Huneif, Ubay bin Ka'b, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, and Khuzaima bin Thabith. They decided to sit near the pulpit on a Friday when Abu Bakr would ascend the pulpit to deliver his sermon as the *Caliph*.

When confronted as to how he could become the Caliph when the Prophet (a.s.) did not nominate him and when Imam Ali (a.s.), whom the Prophet (S) had nominated, was present, Abu Bakr was unable to give any reply. He merely said, "*Leave me alone. I have somehow become the Caliph but I am not the best among you.*" After this for three days, Abu Bakr locked himself in his house. On the fourth day led by Umar, Khalid bin al-Walid with one thousand men, Salim, a slave of Huthaifa with one thousand men, Ma'ath bin Jabal with one thousand men went around the streets of Medina with drawn swords.

Heading the contingent, Umar proclaimed, "O companions of Ali, I dare you to repeat what you told the caliph a few days ago and I will have each one of you beheaded." To this, Sa'eed replied, "O son of ad-Dhahhak..., do you mean to threaten me with the power of the sword? Though we are few in number, we are not afraid of your threats. Were we not bound by the orders of the Imam, this very moment we would have put you and your cronies to our swords."

Salman al-Farsi then got up and addressed Umar saying, "I have heard the messenger of Allah saying that one day when my brother (Imam Ali) would be sitting in the mosque along with his companions, he will be harassed by a group of persons who are destined to be the dogs of Hell. They would wish to kill him and his companions. Surely you are the Dogs of Hell." Khalid bin Sa'eed was killed in the year 13 or 14 AH.[5](#)

(5) Ubay bin Ka'b bin Qais al-Khazraji al-Ansari

Ubay was one of the best reciters of the Qur'an. The Prophet (S) used to say that it was a pleasure to hear Ubay reciting the Qur'an. Abul Fida Ismael bin Ali in his book[6](#) gives the names of persons, apart from the Banu Hashim, who refused to pay allegiance to Abu Bakr; az-Zobair bin al-Awwam, Utbah bin Abi Lahab, Khalid bin Sa'eed bin al-Aas, al-Miqdad bin Amr, Salman al-Farsi, Abu Dharr, Ammar bin Yasir, al-Bara' bin Aazib, and Ubay bin Ka'b bin Qais.

Similarly, in the initial stages, Abu Sufyan and the Umayyads refused to acknowledge Abu Bakr as the Caliph. Ubay was one among the twelve persons who surrounded Abu Bakr on a Friday and questioned him about his eligibility to occupy the seat of Caliphate when Imam Ali (a.s.), the one nominated by the Prophet (S) was present.

During the reign of Umar, there was a great influx of people into Islam, mostly due to the conquests of foreign territories. Umar wanted to expand the Prophet's mosque and he offered to acquire the houses of the Prophet's wives and other relatives.

Umar came to al-Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib, the paternal uncle of the Prophet (S) and said, "Abbas, it

has become necessary to expand the Prophet's mosque in order to accommodate the large population of Muslims in Medina. I have already acquired all the houses except yours, surrounding the Mosque. You may ask for whatever price you want. I will pay the same from the public treasury."

Al-Abbas refused the offer. Umar said, "I give you three options to choose any one of them that you like; either you take whatever price you want from the public treasury, or you choose any alternative place in and around Medina so that I may get a house constructed for you, or you give your house as donation for the use of Muslims so that your house may be demolished and a larger mosque to be built."

Al-Abbas refused to accept any of the three options. Then Umar suggested that the matter might be settled by arbitration, and he asked al-Abbas to name anyone as the arbitrator. Al-Abbas nominated Ubay bin Ka'b as the arbitrator.

Al-Abbas and Umar came to Ubay to arbitrate on the dispute. After hearing both sides, Ubay said, "I have heard the Prophet (S) saying that when God asked (Prophet) David to build the 'House of God', David prepared a plan for the construction of Baitul Maqdis (Jerusalem). The square shape of the plan was marred by the house of a person from the Israelites. David offered to buy the house but its owner refused to sell it. David thought that if somehow he could acquire the house, he could make a perfect square shape for the planned building. Then, God revealed to David: 'I only want a house to be constructed so that people may enter it and glorify me. I never like people to glorify me in a place usurped by force. Therefore, you shall not have the honour of building a house for me.' On hearing this, David asked, 'O Lord, will anyone from my progeny build a house for You?' God replied, 'Yes, your progeny will build a house for me'."

Umar was enraged to hear this. He dragged Ubay by the collar into the Prophet's mosque and asked those assembled there whether anyone had heard from the Prophet (S) what Ubay had related. Abu Dharr, who was there, stated on oath that he had heard a tradition similar to the one narrated by Ubay. Hearing this, Umar let Ubay go with great consternation.⁷

Umar bore grudge against Ubay. One day, Ubay was passing through the market followed by his disciples. Umar took the opportunity to whip Ubay saying that to be surrounded by followers was an act of pomp and pride.⁸ Ubay was tortured on one pretext or the other, often on the ground of 'narrating traditions' that was strictly prohibited by the Caliphs. The real reason for the torture was that Ubay was a devout follower of Imam Ali (a.s.).

(6) Bilal bin Rabah al-Habashi

Bilal was the famous Caller of Azan and a great favorite of the Prophet (S). Bilal was an Abyssinian slave who was purchased and set at liberty by the Prophet's uncle al-Abbas.⁹ He had a slight lisp of the tongue and could not pronounce 'sh' which he pronounced as 's'. Because of this lisp, once Umar stopped Bilal from calling out the Azan. Umar himself called out the Azan. The Prophet (S) came out and

asked, “Why is not the Azan called out today?” Umar said, “I had just called out the Azan.” The Prophet (S) asked why Umar called the Azan instead of Bilal, and Umar said that Bilal did not have the correct diction. The Prophet (S) said that it was Bilal’s heart that was to be seen and not his diction. He called Bilal and asked him to call the public for prayers through the Azan.

Bilal was one of the very first converts to Islam. Being a poor slave, he was subjected to severe torture by the infidels of Mecca. Bilal was one among those who refused to acknowledge Abu Bakr as the Caliph. Umar, referring to a mistaken belief that Bilal was purchased and emancipated by Abu Bakr, told him (Bilal), “Is this how you repay your emancipator?” Bilal replied, “If Abu Bakr had released me from slavery for the love of God then let me be myself, for Abu Bakr has no right over me. If Abu Bakr had retained his lordship over me, then, as a slave, I am prepared to render personal service. But at no cost will I pay allegiance to one whom the messenger of Allah did not nominate as the Caliph.”¹⁰

After the Prophet’s demise, Bilal faced hardships in Medina and he wanted to migrate to Syria. Abu Bakr insisted that he should stay in Medina but he said, “If I was made a free man for the love of God, then none has the right to force me against my wish. But, if I am still your bondsman, then imprison me for disobedience.” Abu Bakr relented and Bilal went to Damascus where he died in the year 20 AH.¹¹

(7) Al-Hurmuzan

Al-Hurmuzan was a prince of Ahwaz. He was an early convert to Islam and had settled down in Medina. He was a pious Muslim and had participated valiantly in several wars with the Prophet (S). He was a noted companion of the Prophet (S) and of Imam Ali (a.s.). He was a great scholar in the Qur’an and Hadith. He was respected by the Muslims for his knowledge, honesty, and piety.

Ubeidullah ibn Umar ibn al-Khattab had once seen Feiroz Abu Lu’lu’, a Persian slave, carrying a double-edged knife that was commonly used in Persia. When Feiroz stabbed and killed Umar with such a weapon, Ubeidullah killed him immediately. Suspecting a Persian conspiracy, Ubeidullah also killed al-Hurmuzan and Jufaynah. When protests were raised that Ubeidullah had killed two innocent Muslims, merely on suspicion, without any cause and without any inquiry, Uthman admitted that the offense had been committed by Ubeidullah, but offered to pay the blood money for al-Hurmuzan from the public treasury. Al-Hurmuzan had no relatives living and so the blood money remained in the public treasury. In this incident, Uthman had no right to accept blood money for murder. It was the exclusive right of the heirs of al-Hurmuzan. Since there were no heirs to accept the blood money, Ubeidullah ibn Umar ought to have been subjected to the normal penal laws, instead of being favoured because that he was the son of the preceding Caliph. The matter of blood money was only a show put up before the public view, since no money was paid to anyone. Al-Hurmuzan was killed only because he was a supporter of the *Ahlul Bayt*.

(8) Abu Dharr Jundab bin Junadah al-Ghifari

He was the fourth or fifth person to embrace Islam. After conversion, he went back to his tribe and preached Islam. He returned to Medina after the Battle of al-Khandaq. He was a constant companion of the Prophet (S), participating in all the battles and skirmishes. The Prophet (S) said that there was none more truthful than Abu Dharr was. ¹² He was a great admirer of Imam Ali (a.s.).

After the Prophet's death when many people deserted Imam Ali, Abu Dharr was among the constant companions and supporters of Imam Ali (a.s.) and was among the twelve people who surrounded and questioned Abu Bakr about his competence to become the Caliph. Abu Dharr was very outspoken and often openly questioned the authority of Abu Bakr while arguing that the Prophet (a.s.) had nominated Imam Ali (a.s.) as his successor. For his opposition, Abu Dharr was harassed. Umar had forbidden Abu Dharr and some others from going beyond the city of Medina, for fear of his relating traditions of the Prophet (S). Uthman banished Abu Dharr to Syria. There, he found the extravagance and un-Islamic conducts of Mu'awiya irritating him. He openly criticized Mu'awiya. Mu'awiya wrote to Uthman complaining about the open criticism of Abu Dharr. Abu Dharr criticized Uthman for showing favouritism to the Umayyads and filling up all the government jobs with men from the Umayyads. Uthman banished Abu Dharr to ar-Rabathah a forsaken place in the desert. Imam Ali, his sons Hasan, and Husayn defied the ban imposed by the Caliph and with other friends, they went along with Abu Dharr until the border of Medina and bade him good-bye. There, alone and without any help, Abu Dharr and his wife lived for some time. When Abu Dharr died in the year 32 AH, his widow was worried how he could be buried. At last, a caravan suddenly appeared headed by Abdullah ibn Mas'ud and several companions of the Prophet (S) who performed the last rites and buried Abu Dharr in ar-Rabathah. According to other traditions, Imam Ali (a.s.) with his two sons was also present and he led the prayers and performed the last rites for Abu Dharr. Throughout his life, Abu Dharr was tortured, mentally and physically, for his affection for the Ahlul Bayt and for narrating traditions openly and boldly despite the prohibition of the Caliphs.

(9) Al-Miqdad bin Amr

In a quarrel with Shimr bin Hajjar al-Kindi, al-Miqdad struck him on the leg with his sword, and he sought asylum with al-Aswad bin Yaghooth az-Zohri in Mecca. Therefore, he came to be known as al-Miqdad bin al-Aswad. Al-Miqdad was one of the earliest converts to Islam. He migrated twice; one to Abyssinia in the early days of Islam, and the second when the Prophet (S) ordered Muslims to migrate to Medina. He participated in all the battles and skirmishes with the Prophet (S). After the demise of the Prophet (S), al-Miqdad was one of the twelve persons who surrounded Abu Bakr and questioned him about his competency to become the Caliph. He was deprived of the state pension and was subjected to financial difficulties. He was subjected to immense mental torture for his love of the Ahlul Bayt. He died in the year 33 AH.

(10) Salman al-Farsi

Nobody knew the exact age of Salman. Some said that he was over a century and a half of old. He had been a disciple under several Christian saints, who told him about the awaited Paraclete. When the Prophet (S) proclaimed Islam, Salman was one of the first to become Muslim. The Prophet (a.s.) treated him as a member of his family (Ahlul Bayt). Ibnul Arabi has discussed this tradition in detail in his book 'al-Futuhāt' and established that Salman was also immaculate and therefore was counted among the Ahlul Bayt. ¹³ According to Allama Noori, Salman was in fact the last of the vicegerents of Jesus (a.s.). ¹⁴ Salman was one of those persons who openly opposed Abu Bakr as the Caliph. The others who joined Salman were Miqdad, Abu Dharr, Buraida al-Aslami, Khalid bin Sa'eed, Ammar bin Yasir from the Muhajirin, and al-Haitham, Uthman bin Hunaif, Sahl bin Hunaif, Khuzaima bin Thabit, Ubay bin Ka'b and Abu Ayyub al-Ansari from the Ansar. For not paying allegiance to Abu Bakr, Salman was so much beaten that his neck became crooked. Salman died in the year 36 AH.

(11) The Martyrs in the Battle of al-Jamal

The cunning Mu'awiya made use of the murder of Uthman into a political weapon to oppose Imam Ali (a.s.). He enlisted the help of Talha and az-Zobair and convinced Aa'isha to join him in the battle of al-Jamal against Imam Ali (a.s.). The circumstances that led to Uthman's murder were as the following: Muslims, particularly of Syria, Egypt, and Iraq were vexed with the tyranny and misrule of Mu'awiya. In Medina, Muslims found that Uthman had filled the entire government with his kin and clansmen who were inefficient, impious, and avaricious. The well known case of al-Walid bin Uqba, who fully drunk led the Morning Prayer and instead of the mandatory two rak'as, he performed four rak'as, and turning to the congregation, he said, "If you like, I would add more." Muslims gave a memorandum to Uthman complaining that he had deviated from the Prophet's Sunna and the precedents set up by his predecessor Caliphs, listing out the following complaints:

- [i] Uthman had gifted the Khums of Africa to his uncle Marwan. Khums was the exclusive right of the Ahlul Bayt and could not be gifted to anyone else.
- [ii] From the Khums gifted by Uthman, Marwan illegally purchased prime properties and constructed several mansions in Thee Khashab.
- [iii] Uthman himself constructed seven huge mansions in Medina, out of which one was given to his wife Na'ila and another to Aa'isha bint Abu Bakr and the rest were given to his daughters.
- [iii] He appointed inefficient and impious men from his kin and clansmen in important government posts.
- [iv] When al-Walid bin Uqba led the prayers while he was drunken, and the matter was brought to his notice, Uthman refused to take action against him.
- [v] He neither appointed nor consulted many prominent companions of the Prophet (S).

[vi] He had forcibly acquired several prime properties in and around Medina.

[vii] He issued grants of cash and property to persons who had not even seen the Prophet (S) nor had they possess any special qualification to deserve the grants.

[viii] He introduced whipping instead of expelling.

[ix] Ammar, who presented the memorandum, was severely beaten by Uthman, Marwan, and their men that he was about to die. The rest of the incidents leading to Uthman's murder have already been set out in an earlier chapter.

[x] At-Tabari reports that around Aa'isha's camel, ten thousand men were killed, a half of the number were companions of Imam Ali (a.s.) and the other half were partisans of Aa'isha. [15](#)

[xi] According to Shahr Ashub, there were twenty thousand men in Imam Ali's army, out of whom eighty were companions who had fought in the battle of Badr, fifteen hundred companions of the Prophet (S), and two hundred and fifty were participants in the Homage of the Tree (Bay'at ash-Shajara) [16.17](#) The total number of martyrs on Imam Ali's side was one thousand and seventy. Notable martyrs among the companions of Imam Ali (a.s.) were Zaid bin Souhan, Hind al-Jamali, Abu Abdullah al-Abdi, Abdullah bin Ruqayya, Thumama, Hind ibn Amr, Ghaniyya bin Haytham, and Makhdooj. [18](#)

It is related through al-Hasan al-Basri that Aa'isha wrote to Zaid bin Souhan asking him to stay at home and not to join Imam Ali's army. Zaid replied, "You are doing what is forbidden for you by leaving your home and entering the battlefield. Curiously, you are forbidding me to do what my religion commands me to do, that is to take arms against traitors." [19](#)

[\(12\) Uthman bin Hunaif al-Ansari](#)

He was a companion of the Prophet (S). He was one among those who had at first accepted Abu Bakr as the Caliph, but later he was convinced that Imam Ali (a.s.) was the designated successor of the Prophet (S). He fought in the battle of al-Jamal as Imam Ali's agent. When he was able to subdue the enemy, compromise was suggested by Aa'isha. Uthman bin Hunaif said that there could be no compromise as long as Aa'isha associated herself with Talha and az-Zobair. The talks were inconclusive and the parties retired for the night. During the night, Talha and az-Zobair killed the guard of the mosque and several companions of Uthman bin Hunaif who was captured and brought before Aa'isha by Labban. She ordered the man to kill Uthman, but an old woman said that it was unjust to kill Uthman bin Hunaif as he was a companion of the Prophet (S). On hearing this, Aa'isha sent for the man and told him that Uthman should be imprisoned instead of being killed. Labban was anxious to kill Uthman bin Hunaif. He said that had he known the purpose of his being recalled, he would not have returned. Mujashe' bin Mas'ud suggested that Uthman bin Hunaif should be severely beaten and his beard, mustache, and eyebrows be plucked. The suggestion was carried out. Seventy of Uthman bin Hunaif's kin fought and were martyred in the battle of al-Jamal.

(13) The Martyrs in the Battle of an-Nahrawan

In the battle of an-Nahrawani, Imam Ali (a.s.) fought against the Kharijites. Only nine men from the Kharijites remained alive and from Imam Ali's army only nine were killed, among whom were Ru'bah al-Bajali, Rifa'a ibn Wa'il, al-Fayyadh ibn Khaleeli al-Azdi, Kaysum ibn Salama, Habib ibn Aasim al-Azdi.

(14) The Martyrs in the Battle of Siffin

Among the notable companions martyred at the battle of Siffin, which was between the army of Mo'awiyai and the army of Imam Ali (a.s.), were Owais al-Qarani, Huthaifa ibn al-Yaman al-Ansari, Abul Haytham, Malik ibn at-Tayyihan al-Ansari, Khuzaima ibn Thabit Thush Shahdatain, Abdullah bin Badeel al-Khuza'iy, Aqeel bin Malik, Abdullah bin Khabbab bin al-Aratt, al-Harith bin Murra, Buraid al-Aslami and his two sons.

(15) Ammar bin Yasir

Ammar was from the first Muslims and was a very close companion to the Prophet (S). The Prophet (S) foretold that Ammar would be killed by the Aggressive Party. This tradition was widely known throughout the Muslim world. After the Prophet (S), Ammar never acknowledged Abu Bakr, Umar or Uthman as Caliphs. Ammar was one among the twelve persons who protested against Abu Bakr on his becoming the Caliph. In fact, he presented the memorandum complaining against the bad rule of Mu'awiya, Marwan, and Uthman himself. Uthman not only whipped Ammar but also wanted to banish him out of Median. When the clan of the Bani Makhzoom collectively opposed the proposal to banish Ammar out of Medina, Uthman relented and withdrew his order.

When Imam Ali (a.s.) was elected as the Caliph by public demand, Ammar joined Imam Ali's army. He fought valiantly in the Battle of al-Jamal.

In the battle of Siffin when Amr bin al-Aas learnt that Ammar was in Imam Ali's army, he remembered the tradition that the Aggressive Party would kill Ammar. Amr bin al-Aas started having doubts about the righteousness of his cause. He sent Thul Kila' al-Himyari to find out if Ammar was among Imam Ali's warriors. Thul Kila' sent for Abu Noah al-Himyari and enquired whether Ammar was on Imam Ali's side. Abu Noah confirmed the fact and asked why the inquiry was being made. Thul Kila' replied that Amr bin al-Aas recollected the tradition that the killers of Ammar would be aggressors and that Ammar would always be with the truth and that Ammar would have a special place in the Paradise and his killers would be in the Hell.

When Ammar was killed by Mu'awiya's men, there was a commotion that great injustice was done in killing Ammar. Mu'awiya, who was famous for his cunning, said, "We did not kill Ammar. Those, who brought Ammar into the battlefield exposing him to the dangers of the battle, are the real killers of Ammar." Hearing this, Imam Ali (a.s.) said, "Does Mu'awiya suggest that the messenger of Allah was

the killer of Hamza?"[20](#)

(16) Hashim bin Utba bin Abi Waqqas az-Zohri

Hashim was the nephew of the famous companion Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas. Hashim embraced Islam on the day of conquest of Mecca. He was a devout follower of Imam Ali (a.s.). Hashim fought valiantly in the Battle of Siffin. During the battle, a Syrian young man started abusing Imam Ali (a.s.). Hashim asked him why he was doing so. The young man replied, "I have been told that the people of Iraq and their leader never perform prayers and that they have killed the Caliph (Uthman)." Hashim said, "Uthman was killed by the companions of the Prophet (S) and our leader Ali had nothing to do with the murder of Uthman. Our leader is the first to accept Islam, the first to pray behind the messenger of Allah. He recites the Qur'an and spends the night in prayer. O Syrian, do not be carried away by the false propaganda of the hypocrites. Save yourself even now." The Syrian young man was impressed by the speech of Hashim and he left the battlefield. When Hashim was martyred, his son Utba took up his standard and was martyred after a valiant fight. [21](#)

(17) Owais al-Qurani

The Prophet (S) had foretold, "Though Owais may not meet me, he will become a Muslim and will fight with my guardian Ali and will be martyred in (the battle of) Siffin. Anyone who meets Owais is to convey my salutations to him." When Umar met Owais during the Hajj, he requested him to pray for him. Owais replied, "Everyday I pray for every believer. If you are a true believer you will be benefited by my prayers."[22](#)

Owais joined Imam Ali's army, fought in the battle of Siffin, and was martyred.

(18) Huthaifa bin al-Yaman's sons Sagwan and Sa'eed

Huthaifa was a well-known companion. The Prophet (a.s.) had informed him of the names of the hypocrites who had plotted to kill him (the Prophet) on his return from the skirmish of Tabuk. Due to the desire of Huthaifa, his two sons fought for Imam Ali (a.s.) and were martyred in Siffin.

(19) Malik bin al-Harith al-Ashtari

Malik was a close companion of Imam Ali (a.s.). He fought in many battles alongside Imam Ali (a.s.). When Mu'awiya started harassing Muhammad bin Abu Bakr who was the governor of Egypt, Imam Ali (a.s.) recalled Malik from Azerbaijan. Mu'awiya learnt about this move and was scared of Malik. He employed a man at a place called al-Qalzam to insert poison to Malik, mixed with honey. On hearing this, Imam Ali (a.s.) said, "Malik was to me as I was to the Prophet (S)."

(20) Kinana bin Bishr

He was a devout follower of Imam Ali (a.s.). When Mu'awiya made a revolt in Egypt, Imam Ali (a.s.) advised Muhammad bin Abu Bakr to seek the assistance of Kinana. When Kinana was martyred in the battle, many people deserted Muhammad bin Abu Bakr.

(21) Muhammad bin Abu Bakr

He was the son of the first Caliph Abu Bakr and the real brother of Aa'isha. He was opposed to the Caliphate of his father. He was a devout follower of Imam Ali (a.s.). In the year 38 AH, Mu'awiya surrounded and killed him while thirsty and his body was burnt.

(22) A'yan bin Dhubay'ah

Imam Ali (a.s.) sent him to help Muhammad bin Abu Bakr in Egypt. However, before he could reach Egypt, he was assassinated on the way by Mu'awiya's men.

(23) Muhammad bin Abi Huthaifa

He was an uncle of Mu'awiya, but he was a devout follower of Imam Ali (a.s.). When Umar bin al-Aas conquered Egypt, he arrested Muhammad and sent him to Mu'awiya. Muhammad was jailed, but soon escaped. He hid himself in a cave in Hawareen, but was soon discovered and slain by Mu'awiya's man Ubeidullah bin Umar bin Dhallam.

(24) Maytham at-Tammar

Maytham was a companion whose martyrdom was foretold by Imam Ali (a.s.). Maytham was shown the tree where his corpse would be hung. He used to water that tree every day. Imam Ali had said that Maytham would be asked to abuse Imam Ali (a.s.) and on his refusal, his tongue would be pulled out and cut by Mu'awiya. When Ubeidullah was appointed as the governor of Kufa, he chased the companions and partisans of Imam Ali (a.s.). He asked each one of them to abuse Imam Ali (a.s.) publicly from on the pulpit. People like Hujr bin Adiy and several others refused to comply and were thrown down from the parapet of the palace and their bodies were dragged in the streets of Kufa. Maytham also refused to comply with Ubeidullah's order saying that his Imam, Ali (a.s.) had already informed him that Ubeidullah would pull out his tongue before crucifying. Ubeidullah said he would disprove Imam Ali's words. He ordered that one hand and one leg of Maytham to be cut and he be thrown in the street. When this was done, Maytham started praising Imam Ali (a.s.) and cursing Mu'awiya, Yazid, and Ubeidullah ibn Ziyad. Unable to stop Maytham, Ubeidullah ordered Maytham's tongue to be pulled out and his body hung in the tree.

Persecution by Mu'awiya between 30–60 AH

Mu'awiya appointed Bisr bin Artat to seek out and kill Imam Ali's partisans. Bisr played havoc in Mecca, Medina, Yemen, and other towns. It is reported that he had killed more than 30,000 Shia.²³ When he could not locate Ubeidullah ibn Abbas, he killed his little children in front of their mother.²⁴

When Abu Sufyan saw that Abu Bakr had been installed as the Caliph, he went to Imam Ali (a.s.) and said, "You have been deprived of your right by those who do not deserve the post of caliph. If only you assent, I will fill Medina with cavalry and soldiers to unseat the usurpers of the seat of caliphate."

Imam Ali (a.s.] was fully aware that Abu Sufyan, who fought the Prophet (S) all his life, was a hypocrite and that all he wanted was dissension and discord in Islam. Imam Ali (a.s.) refused to be dragged into the trap. Rebuked and rebutted by Imam Ali (a.s.), Abu Sufyan planned to join the opponents of Ali.

Umar, who received the news of what transpired between Abu Sufyan and Ali, realized that if left to himself, Abu Sufyan would cause great mischief. Umar thought it best to purchase Abu Sufyan's loyalty rather than to face his mischief. Umar sent for Abu Sufyan and told him that he and Abu Bakr had decided to appoint his (Abu Sufyan) son Yazid as the governor of Syria. Abu Sufyan was immensely pleased. In the year 11 AH, Yazid bin Abu Sufyan became the governor of Syria. Very soon, he died and in his place, the caliph appointed Mu'awiya as the governor of Syria and Iraq. Though, on becoming the second caliph, Umar removed several governors on various charges, Mu'awiya was not disturbed from his post in spite that his misrule was the cause of the uprising and the ultimate assassination of Uthman.²⁵

In his letter to Muhammad bin Abu Bakr, Mu'awiya wrote, "Even during the lifetime of the messenger of Allah, we (the Umayyads) were together with your father in contesting against Ali's right (of leadership). We were certainly aware of his superiority and supremacy over all others. But, when God chose to take away the messenger of Allah from this world, it was your father and his friend Umar who were the foremost in snatching the caliphate from Ali by opposing him at all costs. In this, both of them (Abu Bakr and Umar) were in perfect consonance with each other."²⁶

Mu'awiya's rule of Syria, Egypt, and Palestine actually commenced from the year 11 AH, and lasted for fifty years, when he died in 60 AH. Thus, the areas under his domain were far away from Mecca and Medina, the centers of Islam, and the population there believed only what was taught to them by Mu'awiya's henchmen. The public had no idea who were the relatives of the Prophet (S) or who were his companions. Mu'awiya made the people there believe that he alone was the heir of the Prophet (S), that Ali was a dacoit, and Husayn a reactionary opposed to Islam. People were made to believe that anybody who praised Ali must himself be a dacoit or at least of low morality, and that anybody who praised Husayn in fact sowed the seeds of sedition. Fifty years were more than enough to achieve this goal.

From the year 11 to 35 AH, Mu'awiya apprehended no danger from the ruling caliph. He had Syria, Iraq,

and Egypt under his control. These areas were far away from Medina, the then capital of Islam. Except for the essentials, the public had no idea about the thought and philosophy of Islam. In fact, Mu'awiya wanted the people to be ignorant of Islam so that nobody might point out that Mu'awiya himself was acting against Islam in his daily life. In order to win over the public, he allowed them to lead a life without any reference to the prohibitions and recommendations made in Islam.

The public found that their rulers provided them jobs and food. Beyond that, they had no need or desire to consider any aspect of Islam or its true proponents. As a result, al-Hajjaj bin Yousuf asked people from on the pulpit, "*Who provides you food and jobs?*" People replied, "*The Caliph.*" He then asked, "*Who is better, the Prophet or the Caliph?*"[27](#)

The foundation for the thought that the *Caliph*, in the least, was next only to God was strongly and truly laid by Mu'awiya. Because of this, in the year 96 AH When al-Waleed bin Abdul Melik bin Marwan became the king, he contended that the caliph was superior to past Prophets.

Ibnul Athir records that in 98 AH, al-Waleed bin Abdul Malik asked while giving a sermon in Mecca, "Who is more important for you; the Caliph or Abraham the Prophet? How I wish you realized the superiority of your caliph who provided sweet drinking water for you whereas Abraham the Prophet only provided brackish water (Zamzam). By God, al-Waleed is dearer in the eyes of God than any Prophet."[28](#) Al-Waleed was referring to the well he had dug up in Mecca, which provided sweet water for some time, but later it dried up.

Initially, Mu'awiya was engaged in consolidating his own position by lavishly bribing amenable persons and killing or at least confiscating the properties of those who were even suspected to sympathise with Ali. But, from 11 to 30 AH, we do not find any interference by Mu'awiya with the Caliph. When Uthman was killed, Mu'awiya apprehended a contender and feared that he might lose power, and therefore, he took these steps:[29](#)

[i] He sent his army commander Bisr bin Artat who killed 30,000 Shia and slaughtered two young sons of Abdullah Ibn Abbas in their mother's lap.

[ii] He sent Sufyan bin Ouf whose contingent of six thousand strong men created terror by looting and destructing the houses of the Shia in al-Mada'in.

[iii] He sent Abdullah bin Sa'dah al-Fazari with a contingent to loot and harass the people who sympathized with Imam Ali (a.s.).

[iv] He sent ad-Dhahhak bin Qais with 30000 men to loot, terrorize, and kill Ali's adherents in Waqisa, Thalabiya, and Qatqat.

[v] He sent an-No'man bin Basheer to eliminate Ali's adherents in Ayn at-Tamr.

[vi] He removed the names of the Shia from the citizenship registers.[30](#)

[vi] He stopped the state pensions to any one suspected to be a Shia.

[vii] He ordered that the testimony of anyone suspected to be a Shia should not be admitted in evidence.

In his rule of about half a century, Mu'awiya laid a solid foundation for the extreme hatred toward Imam Ali (a.s.) and anybody even remotely linked or sympathetic to him. In the course of time, the Shia along with their Imams inherited the legacy of blind persecution by their opponents. The Abbasids gained power on the basis of a popular and widespread perception that the Umayyads were usurpers of Power and that the Caliphate rightly belonged to Ali and his offspring. After gaining power, the Abbasids became much crueler out of the unfounded fear that if not persecuted, the Imams would wrest the power from them.

Sa'eed Akbarabadi, a Sunni historian, writes, "Every act forbidden and disapproved by Islam was done to build up and stabilise the government. There is an Arabic proverb that the Umayyads were 'the First Diggers of buried bodies' and the Abbasids were 'the Second Diggers of buried bodies'." Then, the writer's personal preference comes to the fore and he makes his choice by adding, "Perhaps the first group of gravediggers were less cursed."

The writer gives the reason for the downfall of the Umayyads as follows, "The fall of the Umayyads was largely due to their excessiveness, repression, and tyranny and also due to their nomination of successors within the life period of the working caliph. The Abbasids also committed the same blunders and they never cared to change their attitude and conduct."³¹ The writer forgets that the precedent of nominating the successor was set by Abu Bakr when he nominated Umar as his successor, and the example was scrupulously followed by Mu'awiya and his successors. Elsewhere Sa'eed Akbarabadi gives the following reasons for the development of apostatic trends in Islam: "The apostatic trends that developed among Muslims were largely due to the following two factors; the false and morbid system of government founded by the Umayyads, and the patronage and propagation of rational branches of knowledge and dogmatic theology by the Abbasids ³²"

We may recall here what we noted in earlier pages that firstly, the Umayyads were invested with the governorship of Syria and Iraq by the first two caliphs, and that the third caliph only expanded the hold of the Umayyads by filling up every position of power with his relatives or tribesman; secondly, when the first three caliphs prohibited the narration of *Hadith*, they had to perforce open the doors for *Ijtihad*.³³ When the unwanted effects of *Ijtihad* were noticed, the doors of *Ijtihad* were suddenly and unceremoniously closed down, but only after when Islam came to be divided into four sects. The 'unwanted effects' that the writer bemoans are but the fruits of the seeds sown immediately after the death of the Prophet (S).

To be fair to the writer, who describes in detail the atrocities committed by the Abbasids, we quote this passage: "*Besides the Umayyads, people who were suspected of supporting the progeny of Ali were also similarly maltreated.*"³⁴

As non-Muslim governments came to power, there was a slackening in the torture and the killing of the Shia. Among the Indian Rulers, except the two kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda, all were *Sunnis*. Where the Shia ruled, there was communal harmony, but in places like Luknow, Benaras...etc., with the connivance of the rulers, the Shia were singled out for persecution. With the passage of time, the Shia have slowly forgiven and forgotten the persecution and torture they suffered for centuries.

I remember as a youth that during the 60's in Madras, we dreaded to wear our '*Alfi*' (a black scarf traditionally worn by the Shia during the first ten days of Muharram) while passing a road called the *Jane Jehan Khan Road*. If anyone was found wearing the *Alfi*, he was derided, spat upon, and abused by the inhabitants of that road who were staunch *Sunnis*. We had to perform our Majlises (ritual meetings) quietly within specific localities thickly populated by Shia.

During the procession on the seventh of Muharram, on Triplicane High Road, disturbance was sought to be created by throwing silver and gold coins on the breast-beating processionists. Fortunately, advance information was passed on by some well-wisher and the elders of the community decided that from the junction at Pycrofts Road and Triplicane High Road, to the junction at Chowk (a square Bazaar) and Triplicane High Road, there would not be any breast-beating and that the processionists would only recite "*Nadi Aliyyan Aliyyan Ya Ali*" and that nobody would stoop to pick up anything, even if it be silver or gold coin which might be thrown on the processionists from the surrounding buildings. People who planned the conspiracy are dead, the throwing of the coins has stopped, but processions commemorating Imam Husayn's martyrdom continue until now.

To perpetuate the memories of the great sacrifice at Karbala, the Shia contributed their own blood. Be it Umayyad, Abbasid, or any other, the successive regimes spared no effort to erase the graves and memories of the sacrifice made by Imam Husayn (a.s.) and his companions. The rulers imposed severe penalties by way of taxes for visiting the tombs of the martyrs at Karbala. The Shia never hesitated to pay the huge levies to visit Imam Husayn's shrine at Karbala. Leaving the old and the sick, the Abbasids killed the young Shia, so that the Shia population might dwindle.

Quite often, they ordered the tombs of the martyrs at Karbala to be destroyed and erased completely. Ibnul Athir, in his *al-Kamil*, relates that in the year 236 AH, the Abbasid caliph *al-Mutawakkil* ordered the tomb of Imam Husayn (a.s.) and the surrounding houses to be demolished without leaving any trace.[35](#)

Allama al-Majlisi quotes that Ibn Babwayh narrates through reliable authorities from Abdullah Neishapuri that he had some dealing with Hameed bin Atiyya at-Toosi, and he went to meet him in his house. It was the month of Ramadan, but Atiyya had his food. When questioned why he did not observe the fasting, Atiyya said, "I beheaded sixty young men from the progeny of Ali and Fatima. The last of them was an old man. He cursed me for killing the innocent progeny of Ali and Fatima and that I would certainly be punished in the Hell. What use would prayer and fasting make to me with the murderer of the innocent progeny of Ali and Fatima? It is because of that that I neither pray nor fast."

Mu'awiya appointed the following governors who were notorious for committing cruelty and torture:

[1] al-Mugheera bin Shu'ba [2] Ziyad bin Sumayya (bin Abeeh) [3] Samura bin Jundab [4] Amr bin al-Aas [5] Muslim bin Uqba [6] Ubaidullah bin Ziyad who was the commander in chief of the army that fought against Imam Husayn and [7] Hussayn bin Numair who guarded the banks of the Euphrates and prevented Imam Husayn (a.s.) from getting any water...etc.[36](#)

The following persons were friends of Imam Ali. They were killed when they refused to curse the Imam in Mu'awiya's presence:

[1] Hujr bin Adiy [2] Muhammad bin abi Huthaifa [3] Shaddad bin Aws [4] Sa'sa'a bin Souhan al-Abdi [5] Abdullah bin Hashim bin Utba bin Abi Waqqas [6] Jameel bin Ka'b ath-Tha'labi [7] Jariya bin Qudama at-Tamimi [8] Shareek bin Shaddad al-Hadhrami [9] Saifi bin Faseel ash-Shaibani [10] Qabeesa bin Dhubay'ah al-Absi [11] Kiram bin Habban al-Anzi [12] Muhriz bin Shihab at-Tamimi [13] Abdurrahman bin Hassan al-Anzi [14] Amr bin al-Humq al-Khuza'iy [15] Juwairiya ibn Musshir al-Abdi... etc.[37](#)

Sumara bin Jundab killed eight thousand innocent persons.[38](#)

Ziyad bin Sumayya (bin Abeeh) was a bastard appointed by Mu'awiya as governor of Basra. Ziyad knew every Shia and every one from Imam Ali's progeny in Basra. He killed over a hundred thousand of them.[39](#)

Al-Mughira bin Shu'ba cunningly told Shareek bin al-A'war al-Harithi to collect people in order to fight against the Kharijites. Shareek collected about three thousand Shia from the tribe of Rabi'a. When they gathered outside Basra, al-Mughira surrounded and killed them all.

Ibn Ziyad, as the governor of Basra first and later as the governor of Basra and Kufa, killed hundreds of thousands of Shia from the two cities

Between 61 to 64 AH under Yazid bin Mu'awiya

1. The following persons were sent as ambassadors by Imam Husayn (a.s.) or were his friends who were killed by Yazid's men:

[1] Sulayman bin Zareen [2] Abdullah bin Yaqtur al-Himyari [3] Qais bin Musahhir as-Saidawi [4] Muhammad bin Kathir and his son [5] Muslim ibn Aqeel [6] Hani ibn Urwa al-Muradi [7] Ammar al-Azdi [8] Abdul A'la bin Yazid al-Kalbi

2. The slaughter of over one hundred and fifty noble men at Karbala along with the friends and relatives of Imam Husayn (a.s.) which is the theme of this book.

3. The following were killed after Ashura: [1] Rashid al-Hijri [2] Abdullah bin al-Harith bin Noufal [3]

Maytham at-Tammar [4] Khalid bin Mas'ud [5] Muhammad bin Aktham [6] Kamil [7] Amr bin Abdullah al-Hamadani [8] Sawwar bin al-Mun'im bin al-Habis al-Hamadani Nahmi [9] al-Mowaqe' bin Thumama al-Asadi as-Saidawi [10] Wahab bin Abdullah [40](#)

4. In the incident of al-Harra, the army of Yazid desecrated the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. They wantonly killed hundreds of thousands of Muslims. They raped the women in the two cities. They used the mosque of the Prophet and the Kaaba as stables. They burned the covering of the Kaaba.

The Shia Martyred between 64 & 73 AH under Abdullah ibn az-Zubair's rule

We had noticed earlier that when he saw Abdullah ibn az-Zubair in Mecca, Abdullah ibn Abbas said that he (ibn az-Zubair) was only waiting for his opportunity to become the Caliph. This proved correct. The holy cities of Mecca and Medina, Iraq, Persia, and the rest of the Muslim world, [except Syria, Palestine, and Egypt] were under Ibn az-Zubair until 73 AH when he was killed. Abdullah ibn az-Zubair was a mean-minded who felt pleasure in creating chaos. He hated Imam Ali (a.s.) and his progeny. When Yazid demanded his allegiance, ibn az-Zubair took asylum in the Kaaba. He pretended to be pious while always coveting worldly gain. On the death of Yazid and in the prevailing confusion, Abdullah ibn az-Zubair declared his caliphate and occupied the Arabia and a part of Iraq and Iran. He could not wrest Syria, Palestine, and Egypt where Ubaidullah ibn Ziyad set up Abdul Melik bin Marwan as the caliph.

Ibn az-Zubair subjected the Shia living in Mecca and Medina to immense torture and he exiled them out of the two holy cities. Abul Qasim Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya was the third son of Imam Ali and step-brother of Imam Husayn. Ibn az-Zubair arrested and kept him in a dark dungeon for a long time. Muhammad bin al-Hanafiyya had a son called Hasan. Hasan was also subjected to torture in prison only because he was the grandson of Imam Ali.

Abu Ishaq al-Mukhtar bin Abu Ubaida ath-Thaqafi was born in the year of the Prophet's migration to Medina. He was two years senior to Imam Husayn, but he considered Imam Husayn to be his master. He openly proclaimed his love for the progeny of Imam Ali. Mu'awiya had imprisoned him in Kufa long before the battle of Karabala. It was only after the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a.s.) when the general public broke into to open the locks of the dungeon that al-Mukhtar could come out. Learning about the cruel manner of the martyrdom which Imam Husayn was subjected to, al-Mukhtar swore that he would catch everyone of the stone-hearted miscreants and kill them. Initially, he joined the forces of Ibn az-Zubair and fought against Hussayn bin Numair. When he learnt that the people of Kufa were like a herd of sheep that had lost their shepherd, he went to Kufa and collected people who wished to seek revenge for Imam Husayn's blood. Among them was Ibrahim bin Malik al-Ashthar. Ultimately, both al-Mukhtar and Ibrahim were killed.[41](#)

It is reported by al-Khawarezmi that the day after al-Mukhtar was killed, seven thousand Shia were

surrounded and mercilessly killed by Mus'ab bin Abdullah ibn az-Zubair. This incident so much influenced Abdullah ibn Umar, the son of the second caliph, that once when Mus'ab met him and introduced himself, Abdullah ibn Umar said, "*Yes, I know that you are Mus'ab who had killed seven thousand Muslims without any guilt. You may live as long as you wish.*"[42](#)

Persecution between 64 to 85 AH, by Marwan and his son Abdul Melik

After the death of Yazid, there was much confusion. Marwan, who was banished by the Prophet (S) and then allowed to come back by the first caliph, now assumed power. His reign was in dispute and even the Sunnis do not recognise him as a caliph. Within a year, he passed away. He had nominated his son Abdul Melik as his successor in the rule. Thus, the long cherished dream of Abu Sufyan was reralised and for nearly a century, the Umayyads tossed around the ball of caliphate among themselves.

Marwan could control only Syria and Palestine at first. After the martyrdom of Muhammad bin Abu Bakr, Egypt also came under his rule. The notorious Ubaidullah ibn Ziyad was his commander in chief, and persons like Umar bin Sa'd, Hussayn bin Numair, Shimr bin Thil Joushan, and other such cruel and tyrannous persons were heading the divisions of the army and cavalry. However, Marwan lived hardly for a year after coming into power.

The rule of Abdul Melik bin Marwan lasted for twenty-one years that were full of oppression and persecution. Any person, who was even suspected to be a sympathiser with the *Ahlul Bayt*, was imprisoned, banished, or killed for no other fault.

Mu'awiya, in his time, imprisoned several noble and innocent men. Sulayman bin Surad al-Khuza'iy, al-Musayyab bin Naqaba al-Fazari, Abdullah bin Sa'd bin Nafi' al-Azdi, Abdullah bin Wal at-Taimi, Rifa'ah bin Shaddad al-Bajali, Abdullah bin Sa'd bin Nufeil, Muttaqi bin Muhrisa, Sa'eed bin Huthaifa, Katheer bin Amr al-Muzani, Sa'eed bin Sa'eed al-Hanafi, Abdullah bin Handhala at-Ta'iy, Abul Huwayrith al-Abdi, and their group of 4500 men known as the Tawwabin (repentants), several of whom were companions of the Prophet (S) and of Imam Ali (a.s.) and were noble men in their tribes, were imprisoned by Mu'awiya on account of their love to Imam Ali.

Therefore, they could not participate in the battle of Karabala. When Yazid died, pandemonium broke out and the public looted the treasury, broke open the lock of the prisons and released all prisoners. Under Sulayman bin Surd al-Khuza'iy, the Tawwabin wanted to seek revenge for Imam Husayn's blood. Ubaidullah ibn Ziyad sent an army of twelve thousand men under the command of Hussayn bin Numair. Ubaidullah himself headed and army of thirty thousand men.

Most of the Tawwabin, numbering over five thousand, were killed by Ibn Ziyad and Hussayn bin Numair's men. A few Tawwabin escaped and went back to their native places.

Ubaidullah ibn Ziyad and Hussayn bin Numair were killed near Mosul by the men of Ibrahim bin Malik al-Ashtar and al-Mukhtar. Abdul Melik bin Marwan appointed al-Hajjaj ibn Yousuf ath-Thaqafi as the governor of Iraq, al-Muhallab bin Abi Sufrah as the governor of Persia, Hisham bin Isma'eel and his son over Egypt, Musa bin Nuseir as the governor of Yemen, al-Hajjaj's brother Muhammad bin Yousuf as the governor of Algeria. All these persons were vicious, cruel, and barbaric murderers.[43](#)

We may gauge the character of al-Hajjaj bin Yousuf from the incident when he climbed the pulpit and asked the congregation, "Who gives you the daily bread; the Caliph or the messenger of Allah?"[44](#)

Al-Hajjaj had the greatest contempt towards the Prophet (S) as well as towards the people of Medina and Mecca in general. He used to boast, "*Had I not been restrained, due to political necessity, by the caliph Abdul Melik bin Marwan, I would have killed the people of Mecca and Medina and put their corpses in sacs of donkey skin, for these people bear a grudge against the caliph and are jealous of his affluence.*"

In the year 72 AH, Abdul Melik sent al-Hajjaj bin Yousuf with an army of two thousand Syrians to subdue Abdullah bin az-Zubair whose son Mus'ab had been already killed. Instead of Medina, al-Hajjaj went to Iraq and sent men from there to Arafa in the Arabia. Abdullah ibn az-Zubair also was collecting and sending men who fought and were defeated by the army of al-Hajjaj. Since Abdullah ibn az-Zubair had established himself in the Kaaba, al-Hajjaj wrote to Abdul Melik seeking permission to enter the Kaaba. Abdul Melik gave permission and sent a contingent of five thousand soldiers headed by Tariq bin Amr to assist al-Hajjaj.[45](#) Abdullah ibn az-Zubair was killed in Mecca in the last days of the year 71 AH.

Al-Hajjaj killed Hamadan a bondsman and caller of Azan of Imam Ali.[46](#) He also slaughtered Qambar another bondsman of Imam Ali,[47](#) and beheaded Kumail ibn Ziyad, Imam Ali's close companion.[48](#) He also killed Umair [or Umar] bin ad-Dhabbi an old man of 90 years.[49](#)

Al-Hajjaj inflicted four hundred whiplashes on Utba bin Sa'd for refusing to curse Imam Ali (a.s.).[50](#)

During his governorship of eleven years under the rule of Abdul Melik bin Marwan and nine years under the rule of al-Waleed bin Abdul Melik, al-Hajjaj killed 1,20,000 Shia in Kufa and Basra for the only reason that they were sympathisers with Imam Ali.[51](#) When al-Hajjaj died thirty thousand men and twenty thousand women, who had been imprisoned by him, were released

Abu Sadiq Sulaym bin Qais al-Hilali was a companion of the Prophet (S), and of five Imams; namely, Imam Ali, Imam Hasan, Imam Husayn, Imam Zainul Aabidin, and Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (peace be on them). When al-Hajjaj became the governor of Iraq, he ordered Sulaym to be arrested. Sulaym hid himself in various countries, and he suffered immensely and died in exile. His book under the title 'Kitab Sulaym Bin Qays' is translated into English. It throws new light on the incidents that occurred in the year 11 AH, and thereafter.

Sa'eed bin al-Musayyab was a well-known successor of the Prophet's companion (Tabi'een) and a

companion of Imam Ali. Abdul Melik bin Marwan wanted to get married to Sa'eed's beautiful daughter, but Sa'eed married her to a poor young man. In his anger, Abdul Melik ordered Sa'eed to be whipped thirty times for refusing to accept him as the caliph. The old man died in the year 94 AH.⁵²

Sa'eed ibn Jubeir was a companion of Imam Ali (a.s.). He was caught by al-Hajjaj and slaughtered in the year 94 AH. Sa'eed cursed al-Hajjaj, and within a few months, al-Hajjaj died.

Al-Waleed bin Abdul Melik poisoned Imam Zainul Aabidin (a.s.) on 25th Muharram, 95 AH.

Sulayman bin Abdul Melik succeeded al-Waleed in the rule. He released three hundred thousand prisoners (men and women) who had been jailed by al-Hajjaj.⁵³ The release was not due to any mercy or pity, but because it cost the exchequer too much. Sulayman poisoned Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ali bin Abi Talib.

Hisham bin Abdul Melik succeeded his brother Sulayman in the rule and died in 125 AH. He poisoned Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) and Abul Hasan Zaid bin Ali. He demolished the house and cut off the tongue of al-Kumait al-Asadi, a poet who wrote in favour of the *Ahlul Bayt*.

Haleef al-Qur'an Abul Husayn Zaid bin Ali Bin al-Husayn bin Ali bin Abi Talib was killed along with his three hundred and thirteen followers by an army of Yousuf bin Umar by the orders of Hisham bin Abdul Melik. He then hung the corpse of Zaid on the main entrance to Kufa. The corpse remained hung for five years. A pleasant smell emanated from the corpse. This happened in the year 121 AH. In the same way, Muhammad bin Ali al-Kufi was slaughtered the next year.

When al-Waleed bin Yazid bin Abdul Melik became the king, he sought to arrest Yahya bin Zaid, who resisted against ten thousand warriors just with the help of seventy followers. Zaid and his followers were martyred. Zaid's head was severed and sent to al-Waleed bin Yazid, and his body was hung on the gateway of Jurjan for one year. Khushkhash al-Azdi, who escaped death in the battle, was taken to Nasiruddin Sayyar. Al-Azdi's hands and feet were first severed, and then he was martyred.

¹. Calamities of the Shia.

². Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 1 p. 80.

³. For a detailed study see Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 1 p. 54 – 82 [2001 Edition] quoting several sources.

⁴. Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 1 p. 92 [2001 Edition].

⁵. Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 1 p. 109– 115 [2001 Edition].

⁶. Ibid., p. 127– 128 [2001 Edition], quoting al-Mukhtasar fi Akhbaril Bashar.

⁷. Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 1 p. 129– 132 [2001 Edition].

⁸. Ibid., p. 133.

⁹. Ibid., p. 136.

¹⁰. Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 1 p. 138 [2001 Edition].

¹¹. Ibid., p. 139.

¹². Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 1 p. 145 [2001 Edition], quoting al-Isabah, vol. 4 p. 94.

¹³. Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 1 p. 180 [2001 Edition].

¹⁴. Ibid., p. 142.

- [15.](#) Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 1 p. 202–203 [2001 Edition] quoting Tarikh of at–Tabari, vol. 5 p. 222.
- [16.](#) The homage that had taken place under the tree.
- [17.](#) Ibid., p. 203 quoting Manqib of Shahr Ashub.
- [18.](#) Ibid., p. 204 quoting at–Tabari, vol. 5 p. 224.
- [19.](#) Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 1 p. 205–206 [2001 Edition] quoting Sharh Nahjol Balaghah of Ibn Abil Hadid, vol. 2, p.81.
- [20.](#) Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 1 p. 222 [2001 Edition].
- [21.](#) Ibid., p. 225–226.
- [22.](#) Ibid., p. 235.
- [23.](#) Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 1 p. 247 [2001 Edition] quoting Sharh Nahjol Balagha of Ibn Abil Hadid, vol. 1 p. 121.
- [24.](#) Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 1 p. 245 [2001 Edition] quoting al–Isti'ab and al–Isaba.
- [25.](#) Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 2 p. 13, First Edition, Publisher Idara–e–Nasirul Uloom, Luknow, UP.
- [26.](#) Ibid., p. 3–4 quoting Ibn Abil Hadid's Sharh Nahjul Balagha, vol. 1 p. 284.
- [27.](#) Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 4 p. 54 quoting al–Mas'udi's Murooj ath–thahab, vol. 2, p. 164.
- [28.](#) Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 4 p. 174–175.
- [29.](#) Ibid., vol. 2 p. 14.
- [30.](#) Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 2 p. 120.
- [31.](#) The Rise and Fall of Muslims, p. 82, Adam Publishers [2005].
- [32.](#) Ibid, p. 94.
- [33.](#) To form one's own judgment on questions concerning the Sharia.
- [34.](#) The Rise and Fall of Muslims, p. 80.
- [35.](#) Nafasul Mahmoom,] p. 280, Pub Ja'fari Propagation Center, Mumbai [2006].
- [36.](#) Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 2 p. 144 quoting an–Nasa'ihul Kafia, p.64.
- [37.](#) Ibid., p. 155–161.
- [38.](#) Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 2 p. 166 quoting an–Nasa'ihul Kafia, p. 52.
- [39.](#) Ibid., p. 169 quoting Sharh Nahjul Balagha.
- [40.](#) For details see vol. 3 of Masa'ibush Shia [1966 Edition].
- [41.](#) For a detailed account, see Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 3 p. 215–227 [1966].
- [42.](#) Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 3 p. 226, quoting at–Tabari's Tarikh, vol. 8 p. 159.
- [43.](#) Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 4 p.50 quoting Allama Kamaluddin ad–Dimiyari's Hayatul Haiwan, vol. 1p. 55.
- [44.](#) Ibid., p.54.
- [45.](#) Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 4 p.59 quoting at–Tabari's Tarikhul Umam wal Muluk, vol. 1 p. 175, 360 Al–Bidaya, and al–Balathuri's Ansabul Ashraf.
- [46.](#) Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 4 p.150 quoting Manaqib of ibn Shahr Ashub, vol. 3 p. 162.
- [47.](#) Ibid., p.157, quoting Biharul Anwar, vol. 9 p. 714.
- [48.](#) Ibid., p.161 quoting al–Bidaya wal Nihaya, vol. 9 p. 47.
- [49.](#) Ibid., p.164.
- [50.](#) Ibid., p.186.
- [51.](#) Ibid., p.93 quoting Muruj ath–Thahab of al–Mas'udi, vol. 3 p.175 and Mukhtasar Tarikh of Ibn Asakir, vol. 4 p.70.
- [52.](#) Masa'ibush Shia, vol. 4 p.181.
- [53.](#) Ibid., p.190 quoting Manaqib of ibn Shahr Ashub, vol. 2 p. 107, Hayatul Haiwan vol. 1 p. 55.

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