

## Preface to the First Edition

All praise belongs to Allah, the Sublime, the Merciful, Who provides guidance through His Chosen Ones (a.s.), who are Immaculate<sup>1</sup> and therefore Infallible. As the Vicegerents of Allah on earth, they wished, said or did only that which Allah pleased,<sup>2</sup> and in turn in His Majesty, Allah declared their words, deeds and wishes to be His Will.

When the question of succession to the Holy Prophet (S) arose, the Divine Will was forsaken, as if Allah and His Prophet (S) had left the matter of guidance in the hands of those who were themselves in need of guidance.

The word *Khalifa* (caliph) was sought to be interpreted in several ways only to accommodate those who occupied that seat. At-Tabari, ibn Khaldun and a majority of the *Sunni Ulama* interpreted the word '*Khalifa*' as 'one who came after' or 'those who succeeded one another after the predecessor's death'. In this sense, the Qur'anic verse<sup>3</sup> was sought to be explained by saying that Adam was the *Khalifa* [successor] of his predecessors, the Jinn or the Angels.<sup>4</sup> The implication of such an interpretation is that, to be the immediate successor, the *Khalifa* need not be of the same kind or class as his predecessor, the Holy Prophet (S). In other words, the *Khalifa* need not be Immaculate and Infallible and can be anyone from the *Umma* (nation). To bolster this argument, the famous *Hadith* that states: "There shall be no prophet after me", is pressed into service.

The above line of thought led Abu Bakr to declare, immediately on his ascension to the *Caliphate*, in his opening speech from on the pulpit, "*O People, I may fall into grievous error or I may not make any mistake. If you see me deviating from the right path, prevail upon me to return to it. The Holy Prophet (S) was infallible, but I am not. There is a Satan riding over me, ever drawing me towards error.*"<sup>5</sup>

One of the earliest arguments put forth was that one could only be a vicegerent of an absentee and not of one who is present. The question of vicegerancy or succession, it was said, arises only after the demise of the predecessor. In this sense of the matter, it is argued, there can be no Vicegerancy of God who is Omnipresent. Subscribing to the above view, Abu Bakr declared that he was not the divinely appointed *Khalifa*. Instead, he claimed to be the *Khalifa* of the Prophet (S).<sup>6</sup> But, the absurdity of the matter becomes evident when we consider on the same analogy Umar to be the *Caliph* of Abu Bakr,

Uthman the *Caliph* of Umar and so on and so forth. The absurdity becomes patent when we notice that the institution of *Khilafah* ordained by God in the Empyrean was abolished by Mustafa Kamal Pasha of Turkey, in the year 1924!

A distinction is made between spiritual leadership (*Imamate*) and temporal leadership (*Khilafah*). The qualifications required to be an *Imam* are exempted for the *Caliph*. Thus, we find that the History of Islam is full of *Caliphs* who practiced what was prohibited and they prohibited what was permitted, for they considered themselves lawmakers. It is a common premise between the Shia and the Sunni that even the Prophet (S) himself did not have the power to legislate or amend the *Shariah*.<sup>7</sup>

After the Prophet (S), from Abu Bakr, the first *caliph*, to the last one – Mustafa Kamal Pasha, none, barring the single instance of Imam Ali (a.s.), claimed both Spiritual and temporal leadership together in one person. All the Sunni and Shia Ulema are in perfect agreement that Imam Ali (a.s.) was one among the five people declared Immaculate in the Qur'an.<sup>8</sup>

The dispute was and is always between the Divinely appointed Vicegerents such as Abraham, Moses...etc. , and the self-proclaimed despots like Nimrod, Pharaoh...etc. There abound in the Qur'an efforts of the Prophets, Apostles and Saints to invite men to worship only One Unique God. In the Qur'an abound also the persecution of the Divinely appointed ones by tyrannical despots. These are not fables but part of history. The Holy Prophet (S) had forewarned his *Umma* that, on account of their faith and adherence to Islam, Muslims will be persecuted and slain. To such of those who are slain in the cause of Allah, the special title of *Shahid* [martyr] is given and they are promised everlasting life and abundant rewards. The tyrant is assured the maximum eternal chastisement.

Of late, a queer tendency has developed among Muslims, to forsake history altogether and invent justification for the tyrannical rule of a majority of the *Caliphs*, particularly the *Umayyads*, by saying that the atrocities they committed were invented by later historians under the rule of the Abbasid *Caliphs*.

A modern day writer Dr. Ghulam Nabi, at page 59 of his book "Khilafah in theory and Practice"<sup>9</sup> writes: "Historical reports are generally anti-*Umayyad* because they were narrated, collected, and preserved during the Abbasid *Khilafah* by prejudiced reporters. Naturally, there are so many charges against them. Some prominent (charges) are that they made the *Khilafah* hereditary within the *Umayyad* family; that they were oppressors; that they attacked the holy cities of Mecca and Medina; that they prevented non-Muslims to accept Islam by charging the *Jizya* [Taxes] to them; that they ruled by force and tyranny and that they usurped public treasury converting it into a private property."<sup>10</sup> He continues, "On the basis of these charges leveled against the *Umayyads*, a distinction between *al-Khilafah ar-Rashida* (the rightly-guided caliphate) <sup>11</sup> and *al-Khilafah al-Umawiyyah* (the Umayyad caliphate), is vehemently made so much so that many scholars are not ready to call the *Umayyad* rulers as *Khulafa* (caliphs) and their rule as the *Khilafah*. They call them rulers [*Muluk*; kings] and their system of governance as the monarchy [*Mulukiyah*].<sup>12</sup> A pertinent question arises here whether the charges of these scholars or the populist theories about the *Umayyad* rule are correct leading to the main question

with regard to the Islamic *Khilafah*. [13](#)

If Mr. Ghulam Nabi is to be taken to be correct in his elucidation, then most of the *Sunni* Islamic literature will become suspect and unreliable. This raises another pertinent question as to why it should not similarly be assumed that the historical reports were indeed narrated, collected, and preserved by prejudiced reporters during the *Umayyad khilafah*. In effect, these assumptions will discredit all the reports collected during the *Umayyad* as well as the *Abbasid* periods. Once this happens, no record of the Prophet's time, the *Sunna* would be available to the *Sunnis*, while the only Islamic literature to survive would be *Shiite* literature which traces its authority from the Immaculate and Infallible Masumin (a.s.), to the Prophet (S).

The present day tendency of people like Mr. Ghulam Nabi is probably due to the fact that, from times past, the *Shias* often relied on *Sunni* Islamic literature to support the *Shiite Creed*. Now these *Sunni* sources are sought to be wiped out by editing or at least rendering their suspect, only to withdraw the support they brazenly provided to *Shiite* theology. In this process, they attempt to conceal the atrocities committed by Yazid and accuse Imam Husayn (a.s.) of brewing a revolt.

Mr. Ghulam Nabi writes, "*Changes and charges apart, basic objective of the Umayyads was to maintain the unity of the Islamic Ummah and Muslim State. They were living in a time when uprising and insurrection started to shake off the unity of the Muslim world to eradicate or to expunge the civil wars the Umayyads maintained their rule within their own family by making their sons and brothers as their heir apparent.*" [14](#)

By saying this, Mr. Ghulam Nabi attempts to maintain the proposition that the *Caliph*, be he virtuous or vicious, once seated in power by whatever means, should be obeyed implicitly. [15](#) Anyone opposing such a *Caliph* should be considered to have bred discord in Islam and therefore liable to be eliminated for the sake and unity of Islam. If this position is correct, then in the entire history of Islam Mu'awiya was the first person to take up arms against a rightly guided and duly elected *Caliph*. Instead of condemning, Mr. Ghulam Nabi, justifies family rule and atrocities initiated by Mu'awiya and perpetuated by his *Umayyad* successor. Mu'awiya was the first to divide Islam in the first instance to grab power, by opposing the person in authority. Yet, Mr. Ghulam Nabi attributes an honest intention to the *Umayyads* of trying to maintain unity in Islam.

The writer appears to be willfully ignorant of historical occasions when objections were taken by such highly respected person of the day, such as Aa'isha, Abdullah ibn Umar, Abdullah ibn Abbas, Abdullah ibn az-Zubair and a host of others when Mu'awiya sought to nominate his son Yazid, sowing the seed for family rule over Muslims.

For the *Shias* their faith is simple. They rely only on the designated twelve *Khulafa* who are attested by the Qur'an as being Immaculate. Imam Husayn (a.s.) is the third of the twelve Immaculate and infallible Imams. His martyrdom was not a secret affair. It was witnessed by thousands of people of all faiths.

Once again, the *Umayyads* are spreading their net. The result is that Muslims are sought to be lured into the Satanic trap of accusing Imam Husayn (a.s.) of attempting to revolt and justifying his massacre as a necessity to protect Islam.

Much is sought to be made out of the silence of the *Ahlul Bayt* (a.s.) and other nobles of *Mecca* and *Medina* during the black days of the *Harra* incident. The insinuation is that the *Ahlul Bayt* (a.s.) acquiesced in or at least did not object either the *Harra* incident or the perpetrator of the incident. [16](#)

The argument is silly because in the present day context, future historians would be justified in writing that all the Muslim countries approved the activities of Israel against its Muslim neighbors. In a fallacious conclusion, such thinking would lend credence to assume that God, by his silence, approves the acts of every tyrant and therefore the tyrant would not be punished. The oppressed were advised to bear the atrocities with patience. Such fatalism was imbibed into the Muslim mind only to absolve the rulers of the time from the atrocities they perpetrated. This again undermines the very concept of Divine Justice and the reward or punishment so repeatedly promised in the Qur'an.

We should understand, in the correct perspective, without prejudice and with reliance upon historical facts, the circumstances in and the cause for which Imam Husayn (a.s.) sacrificed his life along with his infant son and other martyrs. There can be no justification to kill the infant with arrows. There cannot be argument as to why the infant's body was exhumed, its head severed and mounted on a lance to be paraded from Karbala to Damascus. We should also realize that the cruelty with which the noble ladies and children from the *Ahlul Bayt* (a.s.) were treated after *Ashura*, had great silencing effect on the Muslims. Every despot rules by the extent of the cruelty he and his cronies practice and the terror they generate. Yazid heads the list of all tyrants and despots. To justify him is to abet him.

It is high time that we refresh our memories with the Facts and Philosophy behind the battle at Karbala, in which Imam Husayn (a.s.) was forced to fight against a huge army with the support of only a handful of his relatives and followers. The infant *Ali al-Asghar's* martyrdom is an eloquent proof of the barbarity and injustice of the enemy, which people are now trying to render suspect as a prelude to obliterating history.

My ancestors bore the brunt of Aurangzeb's tyranny at Bijapur, when they were impaled in walls merely because they adored the Masumin (a.s.). They had to resort to dissimulation [*Taqia*]. Only since 1958, my family declared its *Shiite* origin and practice. Even in these enlightened times in several countries like Iraq, the murder of *Shias* is considered a religious duty. The *Shias* do not seek retribution. They only protest against the mutilation or suppression of truth.

I was fortunate to have the guidance of my brother Sayyid Muhammad Musavi, retired Professor of English. Any amount of thanks will not relieve me of my obligation to him. I am obliged and thankful to Sayyid Zameer Ahmed Abedi alias Husayn, Editor / Proprietor of *Alawiyat*, [an excellent monthly magazine] for his assistance in taking out references and for his valuable suggestions in improving the

form and substance of this humble effort.

**A.K. Ahmed**

**August 2006**

**1st Sha'ban, 1427 AH**

- [1.](#) Qur'an, 33:33.
- [2.](#) Qur'an, 76:30, 81:29.
- [3.](#) Qur'an, 2:30.
- [4.](#) Dr. Ghulam Nabi, 'Khilafah – In Theory and Practice', p.21 quoting at-Tabari's Jami'ul Bayan, vol. 1 p. 449–451.
- [5.](#) At-Tabaris' Tarikh, vol. 2 p .460, Ibn Hisham's Seerah, vol. 4 P. 34, Ibn Kathir's al-Bidaya, vol. 6 p. 303, Ibn al-Athir's al-Kamil, vol 2, page 129.
- [6.](#) Musnad of Ahmed bin Hanbal, vol 1 p.10, Muqaddimah of Ibn Khaldun, Tr. Rosenthal, vol. 1 p.388–89.
- [7.](#) Qur'an, 10:15.
- [8.](#) See commentaries of the Shia as well as the Sunni on the verse 33 of Sura 33 al-Ahzaab.
- [9.](#) Adam Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi. [2005].
- [10.](#) Mawdudi, Khilafato Mulukiat, Delhi, 1974, pp. 145–175.
- [11.](#) The first four caliphs after the Prophet (S).
- [12.](#) Mawdudi, Khilafato Mulukiat, Delhi, 1974.
- [13.](#) 'Khilafa in theory and Practice' by Ghulam Nabi, page 59, Adam Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi [2005].
- [14.](#) Ibid., p.65–6.
- [15.](#) Ibid., p. 112, quoting Muhammad Fu'ad Abdul Baqi, p.79.
- [16.](#) Dr. Ghulam Nabi's Khilafa in Theory & Practice, p.69, quoting Ibn Kathir, vol. 8, p.232–233.

---

**Source URL:**

<https://www.al-islam.org/hidden-truth-about-karbala-ak-ahmed-bsc-bl/preface-first-edition#comment>