

The Great Trial

No writer, whatever skilled he is in describing the minutes of history and in analyzing the events, can describe accurately and deeply the disasters and seditions that attacked the Muslim nation after the departure of the Prophet (S) as the Qur'an had described in this verse,

“And Muhammad is no more than a messenger; the messengers have already passed away before him, if then he dies or is killed will you turn back upon your heels? And whoever turns back upon his heels he will by no means do harm to Allah in the least and Allah will reward the grateful.” 3: 144

Since the very moment when the Prophet (S) died, and he was still not buried yet, serious disagreements took place between Muslims that resulted from the different trends of the parties that had been founded before the death of the Prophet (S). The following are those parties:

1. The Alawids

They were the family of the Prophet (S) under the command of Imam Ali (a.s.) the chief of the pure progeny, the gate of the Prophet's town of knowledge, and the father of his two grandsons. He was Ameerul Mo'minin for whom the Prophet (S) had taken homage on the Day of Ghadeer Khum to be the caliph after him. The best of the Prophet's companions like Ammar bin Yassir, Abu Tharr, Salman al-Farisi and many other trustworthy, religious people followed Imam Ali (a.s.).

2. The Party of Quraysh

It included famous companions like Abu Bakr, Umar, Abu Ubaydah bin al-Jarrah and Khalid bin al-Waleed. This party represented the opinions of the people of Quraysh in Mecca. Some ones from the Ansar such as Basheer bin Sa'd bin Tha'labah al-Khazraji and others joined this party. They saw that the caliphate was their right because the Prophet (S) was from them (from the tribe of Quraysh). These people did not attend the funerals of the Prophet (S) and participated neither in the prayer for him nor in his burial because they were busy in the conference of as-Saqeefa. [1](#)

3. The Party of the Ansar

The Ansar² were the pillar of the armed forces in Islam which was built on their jihad and sacrifices. They were from two wings; al-Awss and al-Khazraj.

There were enmities, spites and bloodsheds between these two tribes before the immigration of the Prophet (S) to them. The last war between them was the war of Bughath six years before the Prophet's immigration to them. When the Prophet (S) immigrated to them, he tried his best to spread love and peace between them, but nevertheless, spites were hidden in their inners and they appeared barefacedly on the day of Saqeefa. Khudhayr bin Usayd, the chief of the Awss was full of grudge against Sa'd bin Ubadah when the Ansar nominated him for the caliphate. He said to his people, "If you give it (the caliphate) to Sa'd one time, the preference shall be for them by it forever and they will not give you a share in it at all. Get up and pay homage to Abu Bakr..."³

Anyhow, these parties were effective after the death of the Prophet (S). We shall talk about the events that led to the great trial that brought Muslims every evil throughout their history.

The Conference of Al-Saqeefa

In the history of Islam, there was no event more dangerous and harmful to Islam and Muslims than the conference of al-Saqeefa. It was the cornerstone of the deterioration of the nation and the disasters and calamities that Muslims suffered and are still suffering. Political fancies and the fanatic spirit of party-ness were widespread where personal interests were preferred to the interests of the nation.

The conference of al-Saqeefa was the beginning to the disasters that afflicted the nation. The caliphate was turned away from its legal, deserving, well-qualified people to the Umayyads who were enemies to Islam. And from among the painful events that resulted from the meeting of al-Saqeefa was the disaster of Kerbala where the pure progeny of the Prophet (S) had been killed in an unbearable, savage way.

The Ansar held their conference in the Saqeefa (shed) of bani Sa'idah immediately after the death of the Prophet (S). They did not even wait until the Prophet (S) would be put into his last abode. As we think, the reasons behind that were the following:

First, they saw the political activity of the Muhajireen⁴ to turn the caliphate away from the Prophet's family. The Muhajireen refused to join the army of Usama because they knew the purpose of the Prophet (S) by marching this army. It was to make Medina empty of the companions after the Prophet's death so that Imam Ali (a.s.) would assume the caliphate easily and without troubles. Therefore, they refused to join Usama whom the Prophet (S) had appointed a leader over an army to march towards Sham. Umar said to Usama, 'Do the messenger of Allah die while you are the emir over me?!'

The Muhajireen denied the homage that the Prophet (S) had taken for Imam Ali (a.s.) in Ghadeer Khum to be the caliph after him. They said, 'Muhammad thought that this matter (the caliphate) had already

been fulfilled for his cousin. How far! It shall not be fulfilled.’⁵

They revealed that in their meetings and so their news reached the Ansar. They also denied that prophethood and the caliphate would gather in one family. When the Prophet (S) died, Umar announced before people, ‘Prophethood and the caliphate should not gather in one house (family).’

They denied the gathering of prophethood and the caliphate in one house which was the center of the revelation, wisdom and faith. And it was so as they wanted. The caliphate was extorted from the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and turned to be in the hands of the opponents of Islam; the Umayyads and the Abbasids who ruled unlike what Allah willed, and whose palaces were stages for debauchery, drinking, singing, dancing and all sins, whereas the Ahlul-Bayt (a.s.), who were the compare of the Qur'an, were treated cruelly and their heads were raised on the tips of spears, and their women became captives taken from one country to another. It was this that Quraysh wanted in order to take revenge on the Prophet (S) through his progeny.

Second, the Ansar were certain that if the Muhajireen seized power, they would subjugate and oppress the Ansar as revenge. Al-Hubab bin al-Munthir, who was one of the chiefs of the Ansar, declared that by saying, ‘...but we fear that those, whom we had killed their sons, fathers and brothers, may assume it (the caliphate).’⁶

Actually, the prediction of al-Hubab came true. As soon as the short rule of the four caliphs came to an end, the caliphate was seized by the Umayyads who exaggerated in subjugating and oppressing the Ansar and depriving them of everything to leave them in poverty and wretchedness. Mo'awiya was excessive in revenging on them, and when his son Yazid assumed the caliphate, he spared no effort to offend them. He violated their properties, bloods, and honors in the battle of al-Harrah that history has seldom seen a terrible, cruel event like it.

The Speech of Sa'd

When the Ansar met in the Saqeefa, Sa'd bin Ubadah the chief of (the tribe of) al-Khazraj opened the conference by making this speech:

“O people of the Ansar, you have had a favor in religion and a merit in Islam that no one of the Arabs has had. Muhammad (blessings of Allah be on him and on his progeny) stayed among his people more than ten years inviting them to worship the Beneficent One and reject idols but just a few people believed in him. They could not defend him or strengthen his religion or ward off a wrong. But when Allah wanted to favor you, He sent honor to you, endowed you with blessing, and conferred on you the faith in Him and in His messenger, defending him (the Prophet) and his companions, supporting him and his religion, and fighting against his enemies. You were the most striving against his enemies until the Arabs submitted to the command of Allah willingly and unwillingly, and the far gave in subserviently to His messenger by your swords. Allah made him (the Prophet) die while he was pleasant with you and

delighted for you...you should cling to this matter (the caliphate) because it is yours and not theirs...' [7](#)

This speech shows the great struggle and jihad of the Ansar in supporting Islam and defending it against its enemies. They were the skeleton of the Islamic army by which Allah had endowed Muslims with victory, and so they were worthier of the Prophet's succession than others.

This speech also dispraised the people of Quraysh for fighting Islam and trying to put out its light until the Prophet (S) was obliged to emigrate to Medina. The Islamic state that the Prophet (S) had established was built by the Ansar's hands, efforts and jihad, and therefore they were worthier of the Prophet (S) and his position.

Sa'd was blamed that he totally ignored the disaster that afflicted Muslims by the great loss of the Prophet (S). He paid no attention to that whereas he would better comfort the Ansar and the rest of Muslims for this calamity, and before all he had to console the Prophet's family who too painfully suffered this great loss.

Sa'd was also blamed for that he ignored, concerning the matter of the caliphate, the pure progeny who were the match of the Qur'an as the Prophet (S) often declared. Sa'd did not refer to the Prophet's guardian, the gate of the town of his knowledge, and the father of his two grandsons, Ameerul Mo'minin Imam Ali (a.s.) who was the best of all Muslims after the Prophet (S) at all. And since the conference of Saqeefa, the Prophet's progeny began suffering all kinds of misfortunes and calamities.

Sa'd was too wrong and to a very far extent in his ignoring of the right of Imam Ali (a.s.) that we could not find any excuse for that. Therefore, he received the reward to his bad deed that as soon as Abu Bakr assumed the rule, he began chasing and imposing severe watch on him until he was obliged to emigrate from Medina to Sham. Nevertheless, Khalid bin al-Waleed, with one of his companions, followed after, lay in wait for, stabbed him with daggers to death, and threw his body into a well. Then they claimed that the jinn had killed him. It is too odd that politicians at those ages made use of the jinn to achieve their political purposes, and unfortunately the naïve and simple people believed what those men claimed that the jinn did.

While the Ansar were in the saqeefa discussing the matter of the caliphate and the nomination of Sa'd as the caliph, Uwaym bin Sa'idah al-Awsi and Ma'n bin Adiy left the saqeefa without being noticed by anyone. They both were from the followers of Abu Bakr and from his party, and they were spiteful against Sa'd. They went and told Abu Bakr and Umar about what was happening in the saqeefa. Abu Bakr and Umar accompanied by Abu Ubayda bin al-Jarrah, Salim the adherent of Abu Huthayfah, and a group from the Muhajireen hurried to the conference and surprised the Ansar in their Saqeefa. The Ansar were astonished, and Sa'd changed color for he feared that he and his party the Ansar would lose the matter (the caliphate) because he knew the weakness and the disunity of the Ansar. And really it was so. All the plans of Sa'd collapsed and his hopes came to nothing.

The Speech of Abu Bakr

After the Muhajireen had broken into the conference of the Ansar, Umar wanted to open the talks with them but Abu Bakr asked him not to do because he knew Umar's severity that would not fit in such a situation that was full of different fancies. Leniency and smooth talks had to be used in order to win the situation; therefore, Abu Bakr addressed the Ansar smilingly saying,

“We the Muhajireen, are the first in being Muslims, the highest in lineages... and the nearest to the messenger of Allah (S), and you are our brethren in Islam and our participants in religion. You have supported and comforted us, may Allah reward you with good. We are the emirs and you are the viziers. The Arabs do not submit except to his folk of Quraysh, so do not envy your brothers of the Muhajireen what Allah has preferred them with. I have accepted to you (as caliph) one of these two men (meaning Umar bin al-Khattab and Abu Ubaydah).”⁸

This man also did not care for the disaster that afflicted the Muslim nation by the death of the great Prophet. It would be better for him to console the Muslims and the family of the Prophet (S) on this great loss, but rather he ignored it totally as Sa'd had ignored it in his speech. And they would better have delayed the conference until after the burial of the Prophet (S), and then the conference should have been held publicly so that all classes of the nation would participate to choose the caliph in general, democratic elections. Nothing of that happened, and instead, Abu Bakr, in his speech, asked the Ansar to give up the caliphate and deliver it to the Muhajireen because they were the nearest to the Prophet (S) as he claimed.

Anyhow, when Abu Bakr became the caliph, he did not fulfill his promise to the Ansar to make them viziers in his government. Rather, they were exiled from all positions and posts of the rule.

Abu Bakr also ignored the right of the Prophet's progeny who were the match of the Holy Qur'an and who were like the Ark of Noah that whoever embarked on it would be saved, and whoever lagged behind it would be drowned as the Prophet (S) had said about them. The Muhajireen and the Ansar would better have deferred a little in determining the matter of the caliphate until they would take the opinions of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) in consideration to give the caliphate a legal nature and not to be described as a “slip” as Umar had described it when he said, ‘The homage of Abu Bakr was a slip that Allah has protected Muslims from its evil.’

Sayyid Sharafuddeen al-Musawi al-Aamili says, “If it has been supposed that there was no clear tradition showing that the caliphate was to be for one of the Prophet's family and if it has been supposed that no one of them had good ancestry, rank, morals, knowledge, favors, jihad, faith, sincerity, or excellent virtue, but they were just like the rest of the Prophet's companions, then was there any legal, rational, or traditional excuse that prevented the companions from putting off their homage until the funerals of the Prophet (s) would finish??? Even if they would have ordered the army to control the situation temporarily until the matter of the caliphate would be settled???”

Would it be not better for them to be somehow kind to the Prophet's family, who were distressed with the great loss, if they had waited a little? The Prophet's family was his deposit and his leftover among the Muslims. Allah has said:

“Certainly a Messenger has come to you from among yourselves; grievous to him is your falling into distress, excessively solicitous respecting you; to the believers (he is) compassionate.”

9: 128

Had this Prophet, who became so grievous when his umma fell in distress, who strove for its prosperity and who was so kind to his people, not had a right on them that his family would not be constrained or surprised with what it had faced while the wound was not yet healed and the Prophet (s) was not yet buried?!"[9](#)

There is something very important in the speech of Abu Bakr. He claimed that the Muhajireen had the right in the caliphate because they were the nearest in kinship to the Prophet (S) and he ignored the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) who were the real kin of the Prophet (S) and who were from his blood and flesh. How this saying of Imam Ali was, "They argued on the tree and lost the fruit!"

Imam Ali addressed Abu Bakr by saying,

"If you had the rule over them by the Shura,[10](#) how was that while the consultants were absent? And if you by kinship argued with their opponent, then, other than you is worthier of the Prophet and nearer."

In one of his other speeches, Imam Ali (a.s.) said, "By Allah, I am his brother (the Prophet's brother), guardian, cousin and the heir of his knowledge, and so who is worthier of him than me?"

The clear fact is that the Muhajireen and the Ansar knew Imam Ali (a.s.) well and were certain about his right in the caliphate, but the political greed and the desire for authority made them ignore that.

The Homage to Abu Bakr

Abu Bakr won the situation by praising the Ansar and using tender words with them. Besides, he made them desire for the participation in the rule. He claimed that he would entrust the vizierate to them, and by that he removed from their minds the thought that the Muhajireen would domineer the matter of the rule. He made them understand that he had preferred the Muhajireen to them because the Arabs did not submit except to them. In this way, he convinced them and made some of them follow him.

After Abu Bakr had finished his speech, Umar made a speech where he confirmed his friend Abu Bakr's situation. Umar said, 'How far! No two participate in a horn! By Allah, the Arabs do not accept to make you the emirs over them whereas their Prophet is not from you. But the Arabs do not refrain from submitting to those among whom the prophethood is. We have in this the clear proof against whoever resists. Who can dispute with us on the authority and the rule of Muhammad while we are his fellows

and tribe? (No one does that) except one who delivers falsehood, deviates in sin or involves in perishment...’

There was nothing new in Umar’s speech except that he confirmed Abu Bakr’s saying that the Muhajireen were worthier of the Prophet (S) because they were from his tribe. If this justification was the evidence on which the Muhajireen depended to prove their right of the caliphate, then Imam Ali (a.s.) was to be the caliph because he was the closest one to the Prophet (S).

The logic of Abu Bakr and Umar in their speeches was the look to the position of the caliphate and nothing else, whereas what Islam wanted by the caliphate was to apply the best, just systems of rule on the real stage of life. They both paid no attention to that nor to its importance for the Prophet (S). They just cared for the authority.

Anyhow, the principle of kinship, which Abu Bakr and Umar relied on, was best found in Imam Ali (a.s.). Muhammad al-Kilani says, ‘He (Umar) argued against them (the Ansar) by the kinship of the Muhajireen to the Prophet (S); nevertheless, the duty of justice determines that the caliphate should be for Ali bin Abi Talib as long as this kinship was a proof to get the Prophet’s inheritance. Al-Abbas was the closest of people to the Prophet (S) and he was worthier of the caliphate, but he ceded his right to Ali (a.s.). Hence, Ali was the only one who had the right of the caliphate.’¹¹

Al-Habbab’s Speech

Al-Habbab bin al-Munthir, who was from the chiefs and leaders of the Ansar, replied to Umar addressing the Ansar, ‘O people of the Ansar, be determined and do not listen to the sayings of this man and his companions that they may extort your share in this matter (the caliphate). If they refuse to give you what you ask them for, then you exile them from the country and assume these affairs over them. By Allah, you are worthier of this matter than them, because it is by your swords that people submitted to this religion...if you want, we shall set it (war) off by Allah! No one denies what I say, or I will break his nose with the sword!’

This speech was revolutionary and full of threatening and determination. If the Ansar responded to their chief, they would not suffer all the crises and disasters that their Medina faced in the event of al-Harrah and other events during the Umayyad and the Abbasid reigns. The Umayyads called Medina as “al-Khabeethah; the malicious city” after the Prophet (S) had called it as “at-Tayyibah; the good city’. Anyhow, Umar, who was the champion of the situation on that day, shouted at al-Habbab, ‘May Allah kill you!’ Al-Habbab replied to Umar, ‘But may He kill you!’

Abu Bakr feared that the situation might be complicated, and so he said to the Ansar in a diplomatic way, ‘Choose Umar or Abu Ubaydah!’ Umar said to Abu Bakr plottingly, ‘Could this be while you are alive? No one can take you away from your position which the messenger of Allah had put you in.’

Some writer says commenting on this saying of Umar, ‘We do not know when the messenger of Allah

(S) had put Abu Bakr in the position of caliphate. Was that after he (the Prophet) had deposed him (Abu Bakr) from reciting the Sura of Bara'a (9) in Mecca (before the public) while he was yet in the middle of the way (to Mecca) and he ordered Ali to recite it instead of him? The heaven did not choose him to recite this Sura as the many true traditions say. Or after he (the Prophet) made him in the army of Usama like any other soldier and made Usama, who was a young man, the leader over him? When did the Prophet (S) appoint him as a chief and an authority for the nation?'

The party of Quraysh hastened to pay allegiance to Abu Bakr fearing that the situation might be complicated and they might lose the opportunity. Umar paid homage to Abu Bakr, and then Basheer, Usayd bin Khudhayr, Uwaym bin Sa'ida, Mi'an bin Adiy, Abu Ubayda bin al-Jarrah, Salim the mawla of Abu Huthayfa, Khalid bin al-Waleed and others. These men tried their best to force people to pay homage. Umar's stick played a good role in the field. Al-Ansar were heard saying, 'You have killed Sa'd.' Umar said, 'Kill him! May Allah kill him. He is a man of sedition.'¹²

Umar's companions were about to kill Sa'd. He was harmed too much, and then he was carried to his house while he was very angry, for his hopes were lost and his wishes scattered. When the homage to Abu Bakr was paid so promptly, his party carried him to the mosque in a procession as a bride was carried home.¹³

All this was done while the messenger of Allah (S) was still laid in the bed of death and not buried yet. Imam Ali (a.s.) was busy preparing him for burial, and when he knew about the homage to Abu Bakr, he recited this verse of poetry:

"Some people said as they liked and transgressed when Zayd was afflicted by his calamities."¹⁴

The opinion of the pure Prophet's progeny was completely ignored in the homage of Abu Bakr, and since that day they faced all kinds of disasters and misfortunes. All the distresses they faced were the result of the Day of al-Saqeefa.

The tribes of Quraysh were delighted with the homage of Abu Bakr. They considered that a great victory that would fulfill all their hopes and wishes. In fact, Quraysh did not deserve any position in the state because they fought the Prophet (S) since the first day of his mission, exiled him from Mecca, and were determined to kill him. Thus, Quraysh had no right in the Prophet's position and succession. If there was no clear text from the Prophet (S) on Imam Ali's caliphate, the Ansar would be worthier of the Prophet (S) than others.

Joys and delights spread among all the tribes of Quraysh. Historians say that when the people of Mecca knew about the Prophet's death, they wanted to announce apostasy of Islam, but when they knew that Abu Bakr had become the caliph, they submitted and announced their pleasure and delight.

Abu Sufyan's Situation

Abu Sufyan, as historians say, opposed the caliphate of Abu Bakr. He went to Imam Ali (a.s.) inciting him to revolt against Abu Bakr and promising him of support saying, 'I see a clamor that is not put out except by blood O family of Abd Manaf. How does Abu Bakr extort your rights? Where are the two deemed-weak ones? Where are the two oppressed ones? Where are Ali and al-Abbas? Why has this matter (the caliphate) come to the lowest family of Quraysh?'

Then he said to Imam Ali, 'Stretch your hand so that I pledge allegiance to you. By Allah, if you want, I will fill it against him (Abu Bakr) with horsemen and infantry.' Then he recited this poetry as exemplification:

"Nothing will keep to lowness, except the two subjugated things; the camels and the tent-peg. This is tied with its rope, and this is split but no one cries for it!"

Abu Sufyan wanted to exploit the situation to destroy the actual rule and then he would carry out his tendencies, but Imam Ali (a.s.) knew that well. Therefore he did not respond to Abu Sufyan; rather, he scolded him saying, 'By Allah, you do not want by that except sedition. By Allah, how often you plotted against Islam. We are in no need of your advice.'¹⁵

Abu Sufyan kept on provoking sedition and asking Imam Ali (a.s.) to dispute with Abu Bakr. Definitely, Abu Sufyan's opposition to Abu Bakr was not real but pretended by which he wanted to plot against Islam and deceive Imam Ali (a.s.). Therefore, Imam Ali (a.s.) turned away from him and paid no attention to his false support.

The relation between Abu Bakr and Abu Sufyan was too firm. Al-Bukhari mentioned that once Abu Sufyan passed by some Muslims among whom there were Abu Bakr, Salman, Suhayb and Bilal. One of them said, 'Would that the swords of Allah have taken its right from this enemy of Allah!'

Abu Bakr was angry and said, 'Do you say this about the chief and master of Quraysh?' Abu Bakr went to the Prophet (S) and told him what those men said. The Prophet (S) said to him, 'O Abu Bakr, you might displease them. If you displeased them, you would displease Allah...'¹⁶

This event shows that the relation between Abu Bakr and Abu Sufyan was intimate. During his caliphate, Abu Bakr tried his best to attract Abu Sufyan and gain his sentiment. He appointed him a governor on the area between Hijaz and Najran.¹⁷ He as well, appointed his son Yazeed a leader over some military battalions and escorted him walking on foot while Yazeed was riding on a mount. Abu Bakr made all that in order to take off the garment of lowness which the Prophet (S) had dressed Abu Sufyan with. Since that day, the Umayyads got important and their influence increased.

By the government of Abu Bakr, the position of the Ansar abated little by little and all their hopes were disappointed. They faced more lowness during the reigns of the caliphs and then it was clear to them

their great mistake in ignoring the right of Ameerul Mo'minin Imam Ali (a.s.) and that they had thrown themselves into abysses of rashness.

Imam Ali Refrains from Pledging Allegiance

Imam Ali (a.s.) announced his denial to Abu Bakr's allegiance and considered it as a clear aggression against him. He was the first mujahid in Islam, the Prophet's brother, and the gate of the town of his knowledge. He was to the Prophet (S) as was Aaron to Moses. Abu Bakr knew well Imam Ali's position to the caliphate, and it was not thought that people would take it away from him.

Since the first, Al-Abbas, the Prophet's uncle, came to Imam Ali (a.s.) and said to him, 'O my nephew, give me your hand to pledge allegiance to you, and thus people will say: the uncle of the messenger of Allah has pledged allegiance to the cousin of the messenger of Allah, and then no two will disagree on you.'

Imam Ali (a.s.) said to him, 'Who seeks this matter (the caliphate) other than us...?' [18](#)

Dr. Taha Husayn commented on this situation saying, "Al-Abbas thought of the matter and saw that his nephew was worthier of inheriting the authority because he was brought up by the Prophet (S), was the first in being a Muslim, had done well for Islam, excellent in all battles and situations, and the Prophet (S) called him "brother", until one day Umm Aymen said to him (the Prophet) jokingly: 'You call him brother and you marry your daughter to him?!' And because the Prophet (S) said to him, 'You are to me as was Aaron to Moses except that there will be no prophet after me', and said to Muslims another day, 'Whoever I am his guardian Ali is to be his guardian'. Because of that, al-Abbas came, after the Prophet's death, to his nephew and said to him: stretch your hand so that I pay homage to you.'" [19](#)

Forcing the Imam to Pay Homage

The Party of Quraysh agreed on forcing Imam Ali (a.s.) to pay homage to Abu Bakr. They sent after him a group of policemen who surrounded and brought him to Abu Bakr unwillingly and in a low manner. They shouted at him, 'Pay homage to Abu Bakr!'

Imam Ali (a.s.) replied, 'I am worthier of this matter than you. I do not pay homage to you. Rather, you are required to pay homage to me. You have taken this matter from the Ansar and argued with them by the kinship to the Prophet (S) and you take it from us the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) by force. Did you not claim to the Ansar that you were worthier of this matter because Muhammad was from you and so they gave you the leadership and delivered to you the emirate? I argue against you by the very thing which you argued by against the Ansar. We are worthier of the messenger of Allah alive and dead. Be fair to us if you are believers; otherwise, incur oppression on yourselves while you know.' [20](#)

Umar bin al-Khattab followed the way of violence towards the Imam for he had no evidence to reply with. He said to Imam Ali (a.s.), 'You shall not be let alone until you pay homage.'

Imam Ali (a.s.) said to him, ‘Milk some milk that you shall have half of it, and support him (Abu Bakr) today to recompense you tomorrow!’

Imam Ali (a.s.) exposed the secret that made Umar so zealous for the homage of Abu Bakr. Umar took that strict situation towards Imam Ali (a.s.) so that the caliphate would come to him after the death of his friend.

Imam Ali (a.s.) said to Umar, ‘I neither accept your saying nor do I pay homage to him...’

Abu Bakr feared that the situation might be complicated, and so he said to Imam Ali (a.s.), ‘If you do not pay homage, I shall not force you to do.’

Abu Ubayda bin al-Jarrah said to the imam deceitfully, ‘O cousin, you are young and these are the old men of your people. You have no experience and awareness of the affairs like theirs. I do not see except that Abu Bakr is more potent than you in this matter and more tolerant and expert in it. Give this matter to Abu Bakr, and if you remain alive, you will be fit for this matter in your virtue, religiousness, knowledge, understanding, favor, lineage and being son-in-law (to the Prophet).’

This deceit moved the latent pain inside the imam who said to the Muhajireen, “O people of the Muhajireen, do not take the authority of Muhammad in the Arabs away from his house to your houses, and do not keep his family away from his position and right among people. By Allah O the people of the Muhajireen, we are the worthiest among all people of him (the Prophet) because we are the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) (his household). We are worthiest of this matter (the caliphate) than you for from among us there is the reciter of the Book of Allah, the aware of the religion of Allah, the knower of the Sunna of the messenger of Allah, the undertaker of the affairs of the subjects, the defender of them against misfortunes, the equally divider among them. By Allah, he is from among us. Therefore, do not follow fancy that you may deviate from the way of Allah and be more away from the truth...”²¹

However, the people turned a deaf ear to Imam Ali’s speech and they panted after the rule and authority. Their previous ignorance (jahiliyyah) came back to them, as Prof. Abdul Fattah Abdul Maqsood says, and they committed against the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) all what Allah had prohibited.

[The Attack on Imam Ali’s House](#)

Most of historians and narrators have mentioned the companions’ attack on Imam Ali (a.s.) and Fatimah’s (s.a.) house which was sacred to the Prophet (S) who stopped everyday for six months at its door and recited this Qur’anic verse,

“Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House, and to purify you a (thorough) purifying.” 33:33

Umar and some other companions attacked Fatimah and Ali’s (peace be upon them) house and threatened of setting fire to it. The following are the narrations of the historians who have mentioned this

fact:

Al-Balathiri

Al-Balathiri mentioned that Abu Bakr sent for Imam Ali to pay homage to him but Imam Ali (a.s.) refused to pay homage. Therefore Umar came with a wick. Fatimah (s.a.) met him at the door and said to him, 'Shall you set fire to my door?'

He said, 'Yes, and this is stronger than what your father had brought.'²²

At-Tabari

He mentioned: "Umar came to Ali's house wherein there were Talha, az-Zubayr and some men from the Muhajireen, and said to them, 'By Allah, I will burn (the house) over you or you come out to the homage.' Az-Zubayr went out drawing his sword, but he stumbled and fell to the ground and the sword fell from his hand. They (Umar and his fellows) jumped on and took him."²³

Ibn Abd Rabbih

He said: "Those who did not pay homage to Abu Bakr were Ali, al-Abbas, az-Zubayr and Sa'd bin Ubada. As for Ali, al-Abbas and az-Zubayr, they remained in Fatimah's house until Abu Bakr sent to them Umar bin al-Khattab to make them get out of Fatimah's house. He said to him, 'If they refuse, you should fight them.' Umar came with a torch intending to set fire to the house. Fatimah (s.a.) met him and said, 'O ibn al-Khattab, have you come to burn our house?' He said, 'Yes, or you enter into what the nation has entered into.'²⁴

Ibn Abil Hadeed

He said, 'Umar came to Fatimah's house with some men from the Ansar and a few from the Muhajireen and said, 'I swear by Whom in Whose hand Umar's soul is, either you come out for the homage or I will burn the house over you.'²⁵

Ash-Shahristani

Ash-Shahristani mentioned from an-Nidham that Umar was shouting: 'Set fire to her (Fatimah) house with all those in it.' There were none but Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn inside the house.²⁶

Kahhala

Umar Redha Kahhala said, "Abu Bakr found that some men had defaulted his homage like al-Abbas, az-Zubayr and Sa'd bin Ubada. They were with Ali bin Abi Talib in Fatimah's house. Abu Bakr sent to them Umar bin al-Khattab who called out to them while they were inside Fatimah's house. They refused to come out. Umar ordered firewood to be brought. He said, 'I swear by Whom in Whose hand Umar's soul is, either you come out (for the homage) or I will set fire to it (the house) over all those in it.'

It was said to him, ‘O Abu Hafs,[27](#) Fatimah is there.’

He said, ‘Even though!’[28](#)

Al-Mas’oodi

He mentioned that al-Abbas went to Ameerul Mo’minin (Imam Ali) when the messenger of Allah (S) died. Ameerul Mo’minin and some men of his followers remained in his house with what the messenger of Allah had entrusted him. People (Abu Bakr’s men) attacked his house, set fire to the door and took him out by force. They pressed the Principal of Women behind the door.[29](#)

The fact of their determination to set fire to Imam Ali and Fatimah’s (peace be upon them) house is certain and has no way for doubt.

Hafidh Ibrahim, the Poet of the Nile, says,

“And a saying to Ali that Umar said;

How noble its hearer is and how great its sayer is:

‘I burn your house and leave you alive not in it,

If you do not pay homage, though the daughter of al-Mustafa is therein.’

None but Abu Hafs was its sayer before the Knight of Adnan and its Guard.”[30](#)

Abu Bakr’s party acted very severely and violently just to firm the rule for themselves. They ignored the sacredness of the house which they attacked. It was the house of the revelation and prophethood. It was the house wherefrom the Word of Monotheism was raised. They paid attention to nothing of that. They announced their mottos against the prophetic family since the first moment after the Prophet’s death. Umar said, ‘Prophethood and caliphate should not gather in the same house.’

They tried to burn the house of the daughter of the messenger of Allah (S) for the sake of rule and authority. This fact was proved by the very lovers of the rule and authority who trod on everything in the way of fulfilling their desires.

Abu Bakr regretted too much what he committed against the house of Fatimah, the Principal of all Women of the Worlds. He said in his last illness, ‘I do not regret anything in this world except three things I have done that I wished I had not done...I wished I had not exposed anything in Fatimah’s house...’[31](#)

Once another, he said, ‘I regret nothing except three things that I wished I had not done; I wished I had not exposed Fatimah’s house and left it alone even if it was closed on war.’[32](#)

The attack on Fatimah’s house made Abu Bakr upset and uneasy feeling regret and sorrow at the last moment of his life.

[The Aggression Against Fatimah \(s.a.\)](#)

Another certain fact is that Abu Bakr's men aggressed against Fatimah (s.a.) because she stood firmly against them. She tried her best to refute their plots and take the right back to its people. She had self immunity for she was the daughter of the messenger of Allah (S) and the principal of the women of the world. However, those men did pay no attention to all that and they insisted on carrying out their policy whatever the cost might be. They turned their backs to the truth.

In consequence of that flagrant aggression against the daughter of the messenger of Allah (S), she miscarried her child that the Prophet (S) had named al-Muhsin. Here, we quote some historic texts without commenting on them:

[Ash-Shahristani](#)

Ash-Shahristani narrated from Ibrahim bin Sayyar that Umar beat Fatimah until she aborted her fetus. He was shouting, 'Set fire to her house with whomever in it!'^{[33](#)}

[Ibn Hajar](#)

Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani said in the biography of Ahmed bin Muhammad bin as-Sariy bin Yahya bin Darim Abu Bakr al-Kufi, 'Muhammad bin Ahmed al-Kufi was reliable most of his life. Once I visited him while there was a man narrating to him: 'Umar kicked Fatimah until she aborted (her fetus) Muhsin.'^{[34](#)}

[Al-Mas'oodi](#)

He said, 'They pressed the principal of women against the door until she miscarried Muhsin.'^{[35](#)}

[Ath-Thahabi](#)

He mentioned a tradition narrated from Muhammad bin Ahmed bin Hammad al-Kufi...that he said, 'One day, I visited him while there was some man narrating to him that Umar kicked Fatimah until she miscarried Muhsin.'^{[36](#)}

[Ibn Qutayba](#)

Ibn Qutayba said, 'Muhsin was aborted after the pressure of Qunfudh al-Adawi.'^{[37](#)}

[As-Safadi](#)

He said that Umar beat Fatimah's abdomen on the day of the homage until she miscarried al-Muhsin.^{[38](#)}

[At-Tabari](#)

He said, 'The cause of her (Fatimah) death was that Qunfudh, the mawla of the man (Abu Bakr), thrust her with the iron part of the sheath of his sword by his (Umar) order and she miscarried Muhsin, and

because of that she became badly ill.’[39](#)

At-Tabrisi

He mentioned the protest of Imam al-Hasan (a.s.) against a group of the enemies of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) among whom there was al-Mugheera bin Shu’ba to whom Imam al-Hasan (a.s.) said, ‘As for you O Mugheera, you are an enemy to Allah, a deserter to His Book, and unbelieving in His prophet. You are an adulterer and you must be stoned. It is you who hit Fatimah the daughter of the messenger of Allah (S) and made her bleed and she miscarried what there was in her abdomen out of your belittling the messenger of Allah, opposing his orders, and violating his honor. The messenger of Allah (S) had said to her, ‘O Fatimah, you are the principal of the women of the Paradise.’’ [40](#)

Al-Majlisi

Sheikh al-Majlisi quoted from Irshad al-Qulub that Fatimah (s.a.) said, ‘Umar took the whip from Qunfudh’s hand and stroke with it my upper arm and the whip wound on my arm and it was like a ring. Then he kicked the door with his foot against me and I was pregnant. I fell on my face to the ground. He hit me with his hand and my earring scattered. And then, I miscarried Muhsin that was killed with no guilt.’[41](#)

These were some of the sources that have mentioned the event of the aggression against Fatimah (s.a.). All the Shia believe in this fact as true, and there are many traditions transmitted from the Infallible Imams (a.s.) about this event. However, these events show that those people were ready to commit anything for the sake of rule and authority.

Abrogating the Khums

One of the oppressive procedures that Abu Bakr took against the Prophet’s progeny was that he abrogated the khums[42](#) which had been determined by Allah for the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) as mentioned in the Holy Qur’an,

“And know that whatever thing you gain, a fifth of it is for Allah and for the Messenger and for the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, if you believe in Allah.” 8:41

Muslims have agreed on that the Prophet (S) took a share from the khums for himself and gave another share to his relatives. He kept on doing so until he left to the better world. When Abu Bakr assumed the caliphate, he abrogated the Prophet’s share and the share of his relatives. He prevented the Hashemites from khums and treated them like others.[43](#)

Fatimah (s.a.) sent to Abu Bakr asking him to pay her what had remained from the khums of Khaybar, but he refused to pay her anything.[44](#)

Poverty attacked the house of the Hashemites after they had been prevented from their rights that Allah

had determined for them. The reason behind that was to make Imam Ali (a.s.) weak and unable to stand against Abu Bakr. This was a kind of blockade that nowadays some countries impose on their opponents.

Confiscation of Fadak

And from the severe procedures that Abu Bakr followed against Fatimah (s.a.) was his confiscating of Fadak to the public treasury.

Fadak was a village in Hijaz about two or three days (of travel) from Medina.⁴⁵ It belonged to the Jews and was near to Khaybar.⁴⁶

As for its boundaries to the Infallible Imams, Fadak comprehended all the regions of the Muslim world. Historians have mentioned that once Harun ar-Rasheed (the Abbasid caliph) said to Imam Musa bin Ja'far al-Kadhim (a.s.), 'I like to give Fadak back to you.'

Imam Musa al-Kadhim (a.s.) said, 'I do not take it except with all its limits.'

The caliph said, 'What are its limits?'

The Imam said, 'If I define it, you may not give it back.'

The caliph said, 'I adjure you by your grandfather to do.'

The Imam said, 'Its first limit is Aden.' The caliph changed color.

The Imam added, 'The second limit is Samarqand.' The caliph was astonished.

The Imam added, 'The third limit is Africa, and the fourth is after the islands and Armenia.'

Harun ar-Rasheed lost his mind and he said, 'He did not leave anything for us.'⁴⁷

The Muslim state that had covered most of the world was for the imams of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) but it was taken from them by force and the Umayyad and the Abbasid kings overcame it with no right.

Fadak was not conquered by the Muslim armies, but it was from that which Allah had granted to His prophet by peacemaking in the seventh year of hijra; therefore, it was completely the Prophet's property.

When the Muslims conquered the forts of Khaybar, Allah threw fear and terror into the Jews' hearts and they hurried to make peace with the messenger of Allah on condition that they would give him the half of their lands. Thus Fadak became the Prophet's property.

When Fadak was in the Prophet's possession, this verse was revealed to him,

"And give to the near of kin his due." 17:26

Many recurrent, true traditions were transmitted confirming that the Prophet (S) had sent for Fatimah (s.a.) and donated her with Fadak and al-Awali saying to her, 'This is a share that Allah has determined for you and for your progeny.'⁴⁸

Fatimah (s.a.) acted in Fadak as an owner to her property. The Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) had no source of income except Fadak as Ameerul Mo'minin said, 'Only Fadak was in our hands from all what the sky shaded.' After the Prophet's death, Abu Bakr confiscated Fadak to the public treasury. The reason behind that was to weaken Imam Ali (a.s.) economically and paralyze the oppositionist movement against Abu Bakr.

Ibn Abil Hadeed says, 'One day, I asked Ali bin al-Fariqi, the teacher of the western school in Baghdad: Was Fatimah true?

He said: Yes.

I said: Then why did he (Abu Bakr) not give her Fadak whereas she was true near to him?

He smiled and said some pleasant words: If he gave her Fadak today just for her claim, she would come to him tomorrow claiming the caliphate for her husband and would move him from his place and he could not apologize or agree about anything because he would confirm that she was true in whatever she claimed without a need for evidences or witnesses"⁴⁹

Anyhow, the governments that followed Abu Bakr and Umar did with Fadak due to their fancies. Uthman bin Affan donated Fadak to Marwan bin al-Hakam and that was one of the reasons of the revolt against Uthman as historians say.⁵⁰ After Marwan's death, his descendants inherited it one from the other until Umar bin Abdul Aziz assumed the rule and he took it from them and returned it as charity.⁵¹

Fatimah Asks for Fadak

After Abu Bakr had confiscated Fadak, Fatimah (s.a.) asked him to give it back to her. Historians say that Abu Bakr asked Fatimah (s.a.) to bring him witnesses that the Prophet (S) had donated Fadak to her and she did. The witnesses were Imam Ali (a.s.) and Umm Aymen about whom the Prophet (S) said she was from the people of the Paradise. Abu Bakr wrote a book to give Fadak back to Fatimah (s.a.), but Umar took the book, spat on it and tore it into pieces.⁵²

It was mentioned that Abu Bakr regarded neither the witness of Imam Ali (a.s.) nor Umm Aymen's. He said: 'Ali pulls the fire toward his loaf, and Umm Aymen is a non-Arab woman that she does not speak good Arabic.'

Anyhow, the Shia theologians commented on this event with many points which we mention some of here:

1. Abu Bakr asked Fatimah (s.a.) to prove that the Prophet had donated Fadak to her though Fadak was

in her possession, while the one who should have a proof was the claimer (Abu Bakr), and as he had no proof he had to take an oath on his claim according to the famous rule “evidence is required from a claimer and oath from a denier”.

2. Abu Bakr ignored the position of the daughter of the messenger of Allah who was the principal of the women of the nation and the worlds and that Allah would be pleased for her pleasure and displeased for her displeasure as the Prophet (S) often said. She was one of those whom Allah had imposed the love to them on the nation when saying,

“Say: I do not ask of you any reward for it but love for my near relatives.” 42:23

And she was one of those whom Allah had purified and kept uncleanness away from them when saying,

“Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House, and to purify you a (thorough) purifying.” 33:33

And she was one of those whom the Prophet (S) disputed by them with the Christians of Najran where Allah had said,

“But whoever disputes with you in this matter after what has come to you of knowledge, then say: Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and ourselves and yourselves, then let us be earnest in prayer, and pray for the curse of Allah on the liars.” 3:61

And she was from the righteous whom Allah had said about,

“Surely the righteous shall drink of a cup the admixture of which is camphor.” 76:5

All that required Abu Bakr to definitely believe Fatimah’s claim.

However, Abu Bakr seized Fadak and joined it to the properties of the state which made Fatimah (s.a.) lose the only source of living for her and her children. We are Allah’s and to Him we shall return!

Imam Ali (a.s.) asked the (Prophet’s) companions to support him and to take his right back to him. Historians say that Imam Ali (a.s.) took Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn (peace be on them) on a mount and went to the companions asking them for help. Fatimah (s.a.) asked the companions to support her husband, but they apologized and said, ‘We have already paid homage to Abu Bakr, and if your cousin (Imam Ali) came to us before him, we would not pay homage to other than him.’⁵³

How flimsy justification it was! They were certainly responsible for that because Imam Ali (a.s.) was busy preparing the Prophet (S) for burial. He could not leave the Prophet (S) laid on the bed of death and go to people who seized the opportunity to appropriate the rule.

¹. Saqeefa means a shed. Most of the Prophet’s companions had gathered in the shed of Bani Sa’ida on that day to

choose a caliph after the Prophet (s) although the Prophet (S) had appointed Imam Ali (a.s.) for this position and announced that before Muslims on many occasions.

[2.](#) The Ansar (helpers) were the people of Medina who received, believed, and assisted the Prophet (S) and his companions after the immigration from Mecca.

[3.](#) Tareekh ibnul Atheer, vol.2 p.224.

[4.](#) The Muhajireen (immigrants) were the first Muslims who had emigrated from Mecca to Medina.

[5.](#) The Life of Imam al-Husayn bin Ali (a.s.), vol.1 p.235.

[6.](#) Ibid., p.236.

[7.](#) Tareekh at-Tabari, vol.3 p.307, al-Kamil fit-Tareekh, vol.2 p.222.

[8.](#) Tareekh at-Tabari, vol.3 p.62.

[9.](#) An-Nass wel Ijtihad, p.7.

[10.](#) Shura means "consultation".

[11.](#) The Influence of Shiism in the Arabic Literature, p. 5.

[12.](#) Al-Iqd al-Fareed, vol. 3 p. 62.

[13.](#) Sharh Nahjol Balagha by ibn Abil Hadeed, vol. 6 p. 19.

[14.](#) Ibid., p. 14.

[15.](#) Al-Kamil fit-Tareekh, vol. 2 p. 220.

[16.](#) Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 2 p.362.

[17.](#) The Life of Imam al-Husayn bin Ali, vol. 1 p. 253.

[18.](#) Al-Imamah wes-Siyasah, vol. 1 p. 4.

[19.](#) Ali and his Sons, p. 19.

[20.](#) The Life of Imam al-Husayn bin Ali, vol. 1 p.256.

[21.](#) Al-Imama wes-Siyasa, vol. 1 p. 11-12.

[22.](#) Ansab al-Ashraf, vol. 1 p. 586.

[23.](#) Tareekh at-Tabari, vol. 3 p. 198.

[24.](#) Al-Iqd al-Fareed, vol. 5 p.12.

[25.](#) Sharh Nahjol Balagha by Ibn Abil Hadeed, vol. 1 p. 124.

[26.](#) Al-Milal wen-Nihal, vol. 1 p. 56.

[27.](#) Umar's surname.

[28.](#) A'lam an-Nisa', vol. 4 p. 114.

[29.](#) Ithbat al-Wasiyya, p.123.

[30.](#) Divan of Hafidh Ibrahim, vol. 1 p. 75.

[31.](#) Tareekh at-Tabari, vol. 2 p. 619, Mizan al-I'tidal, vol. 2 p. 215, Kanzol Irfan, vol. 5 p. 631.

[32.](#) Lisan al-Mizan, vol. 4 p. 189.

[33.](#) Al-Milal wen-Nihal, vol. 1 p. 57.

[34.](#) Lisan al-Mizan, vol. 1 p. 268.

[35.](#) Ithbat al-Wasiyya, p. 143.

[36.](#) Mizan al-I'tidal, vol. 1 p. 139.

[37.](#) Manaqib Aal Abi Talib, vol. 3 p. 133.

[38.](#) Al-Wafi bil-Wafiyyaat, vol. 5 p. 347.

[39.](#) Dala'il al-Imama, p. 134, and quoted in Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 43 p. 170.

[40.](#) Al-Ihtijaj, vol. 1 p. 401.

[41.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 30 p. 348-349.

[42.](#) Khums is one fifth of one's gains and income that must be given to the imam or his deputy.

[43.](#) Tafsir al-Kashshaf, vol. 2 p. 221 in interpreting the verse of khums.

[44.](#) Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 3 p. 36, Sahih Muslim, vol. 2 p. 72.

[45.](#) Mu'jam al-Buldan, vol. 4 p.238.

[46.](#) Majma' al-Bahrain, vol. 5 p. 283.

[47.](#) Manaqib Aal Abi Talib, vol. 4 p. 320.

[48.](#) Shawahid at-Tanzil, vol. 1 p. 441, ad-Durr al-Manthur, vol. 2 p. 151, Kanzol Ummal, vol. 2 p. 158, Rooh al-Ma'ani, vol. 5 p.58.

[49.](#) Sharh Nahjol Balagha by Ibn Abil Hadeed, vol. 1 p. 198.

[50.](#) Al-Iqd al-Fareed, vol. 4 p. 283.

[51.](#) Tareekh Abul Fida', vol. 1 p. 168.

[52.](#) Al-Ihtijaj, vol. 1 p. 122, as-Seera al-Halabiyya, vol. 3 p. 362.

[53.](#) Al-Imama wes-Siyasa, vol. 1 p. 16.

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