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19. ‘Umar Succeeds

‘Umar came to power as the Second Caliph 14 years after the Hijrah (635 AD). He proved to be the most effective among the caliphs in directing the policy of the Muslim World and its events.

The period of his leadership was full of spectacular accomplishments and conspicuous events. If the policy of a head of state has domestic and foreign aspects ‘Umar's policy had all that plus past and future aspects for its influence went beyond the boundaries of his own reign with far-reaching consequences.

The success of his external policy was dazzling to the eyes of the historians Muslim and non-Muslim alike. He inherited from his predecessor Abu Bakr a World-War against the two great empires of his time: The Persian and the Roman empires.

The Muslim forces during his reign faced the Persian armies and were able to place Iraq and Persia including Al-Ahwaz and Azarbaijan under the dominion of Islam.

The Muslim forces on the North Western front were able to defeat the Romans and bring Syria and Egypt into the Islamic Jurisdiction.

Thus under his leadership Muslim armies were able to disintegrate the two prominent empires of his time; the spiritual conquest which accompanied the military conquest as the greater of the two. His policy towards the non-Muslim inhabitants of the conquered lands was fair. He levied taxation on the conquered land plus a personal taxation on the adult males.

None of the followers of other religions were oppressed during his reign. He recognized their natural rights and freedoms. History recorded his word as directed to Amr Ibn Al-Aus who was his appointed governor of Egypt whose son hit a Coptic Christian: "Amr when did you enslave people after they were born free?"

His domestic policy was mostly successful. It may be summed up as follows: In relation to his family; in relation to Muslims in general; in relation to his colleagues of the companions of the Prophet; and in

relation to the members of the House of the Prophet.

In relation to himself and his family his policy was ideal. Hundreds of millions of dirhams (a dirham of his time is equivalent to a dollar of our time) were pouring into the treasury of the Islamic State. Though he had unlimited authority he and his family lived in poverty. It is reported that he said: "I deal with the Muslims' treasury as I deal with a fund of an orphan. If I am in no need I will not touch it; and if I am in need I only satisfy my necessity."[1]

In relation to the Muslims in general his policy was characterized as just firm and helpful. He sufficiently provided for the soldiers their families and the inhabitants of Medina plus many others.

As to his relation to the companions, he alloted to them according to the record of their participation in the defense of Islam. Trying to prevent the companions temptation of wealth or fearing the use of their brilliant record for advancing their influence he prevented the companions from residing in any city other than Medina.

"I am standing at the mouth of Al-Harrah (the entrance of Medina) he said holding the Qureshites' throats and belts lest they fall into the fire."[2] Thus he kept the ambitious companions of the Prophet under his watchful eyes.

In relation to the members of the House of the Prophet his policy was mixed with admiration and caution. He did not grant any governmental post to any of them. However the tension between him and ‘Ali which started after the death of the Prophet and continued during the period of

Abu Bakr abated and gradually was replaced by a friendship which grew by the passage of time. ‘Umar used to resort to ‘Ali's counsel in important events seeking solutions of serious problems.

When he was informed that the Persian government had mobilized an extremely huge army to fight the Muslims he wanted to attend the battle in order to strengthen the morale of the Islamic army.

When he consulted the Imam ‘Ali and other companions the Imam told him: "The Islamic cause did not triumph or retreat by a great or small number. It is the religion of God Who made it prevalent and His host which He prepared and extended until it reached what it reached and appeared as it appeared.

We are promised by God and He will fulfill His promise and help His Host. The place of the leader is the place of the string in the beads. It collects them and makes them join each other. If the string breaks the beads will scatter and never rejoin each other completely.

Though the Arabs today are few compared to others they are numerous through Islam and strong by their unity. Be like an axis of a mill let the mill go around and let the Arabs participate in the war without your presence. If you leave you will leave behind you dangers which will be of more concern to you than what you will face.

"If the Persians see you on the battlefield they will say: 'This is the source of the danger. If you destroy him you will triumph.' Their war will be more intensive and their hope in defeating the Muslims will grow higher.

"As to what you mentioned of the Persian march to fight the Muslims God the Almighty hates their march more than you do and He is more capable of changing what He dislikes. As to what you have mentioned of their great number we never fought by quantity. We fought only by the help of God and His assistance."[3]

‘Umar and ‘Ali's Knowledge

‘Umar was deeply impressed with ‘Ali's profound knowledge. It is reported that he said: "No one should give any verdict at the Mosque (of the Prophet) when ‘Ali is present." When he made wrong decisions in Islamic rules ‘Ali used to correct him.

He repeatedly said: "Had ‘Ali not been present ‘Umar would have perished (spiritually)."[4] He expressed his serious need to ‘Ali's knowledge by saying: "May God not keep me to a problem when Abu Hassan (‘Ali) is not available.".

A lady was accused of adultery because she gave birth to a child six months after she married. ‘Umar decided to stone her. ‘Ali said to him: "Leader of the Believers if she appeals to the Book of God contesting your decision she will prevail against you." God says: "Pregnancy and nursing periods are thirty months."

Again He says: "Mothers nurse their children two complete years for whoever wants a complete nursing." If we subtract twenty four months from thirty the balance would be six months. ‘Umar reversed his position and let the lady go free.

‘Ali at one time was with ‘Umar while others were present. When he left one of them criticized ‘Ali and accused him of pride and conceit. ‘Umar said: "A man like ‘Ali is entitled to be proud. By God without his sword the pillar of Islam could not have been erected. He is the highest magistrate in the nation its earliest Muslim and its most honorable."[5]

When the critic asked what prevented him from giving him the leadership after the death of the Prophet ‘Umar replied: "We did not like his young age and his love to his clan.".

However this does not mean that ‘Umar used to consult ‘Ali in all affairs or follow all his opinions in religion. ‘Umar was extremely independent. Sometimes he appeared as if he were in disagreement with the Prophet. The Messenger made the duty of any pilgrim who did not accompany animals of sacrifice to perform a pilgrimage of "Tamattu" (in which the pilgrim takes leave of restrictions which are imposed at the start of the Pilgrimage).

The Prophet commanded such a person to make the seven circuits around the Kaaba and the seven walks between Al–Safa and Al– Marwah; then it would be legal for him to approach his wife before he resumed his pilgrimage again before leaving for Arafat.

The Prophet also legalized the temporary marriage.'Umar chose to prohibit both and to punish severely whoever married a woman for a limited period. Muslim in his Sahih reported that Abu Nudrah said the following: "Ibn Abbass (a cousin of the Prophet) used to legalize "Muta" (temporary marriage) and Ibn Al–Zubayr used to prohibit it. When I mentioned that to Jabir Ibn Adbullah (a prominent companion of the Prophet) he said: In my presence the following took place":

We practiced the temporary marriage during the days of the Prophet.... When 'Umar came to power he said: God used to legalize to His Messenger whatever He chose through whatever He chose. The Qur'an was revealed to regulate our life. You have to complete your pilgrimage and the Omrah (which precedes the pilgrimage) as God commanded you to do (without terminating the regular restrictions before going to Arafat). Desist from marrying women for a limited time. If a man married a woman for a limited time and is brought to me I shall stone him (to death)."6

This opinion of the Second Caliph concerning pilgrimage seems to be in a clear conflict with the Holy Qur'an:

"And when you are in safety any pilgrim who at the "Omrah" (the devotional part that precedes going to Arafat) satisfies his carnal desires (after terminating the state of restriction) until the resumption of pilgrimage he should offer what is easily available of sacrificial animal. If he can not he should fast three days during the pilgrimage and seven when you have returned; that is ten in all. That is for the one whose family is not residing at the Inviolable place of worship." The Holy Quran Chapter 2 verse 196.

The hadith however clearly indicates that temporary marriage was legal during the time of the Prophet and that he did not Prohibit it after legalizing it. Had the Messenger prohibited such a marriage the Second Caliph would have reminded the companions of that prohibition. His saying:

"Desist from marrying a woman for a limited time" tells us that the companions were still practicing the temporary marriage during his time. Otherwise he would not have commanded them to stop that practice. Had the Messenger prohibited such a practice after he legalized it the companions would not have continued to practice it and the Second Caliph would not have had to admonish them and threaten to stone those who practiced such a marriage.

As to the pilgrimage of "Tamattu " the Messenger in his valedictory pilgrimage said while he was in Mecca: "Had I been at the beginning of my pilgrimage I would not have accompanied the sacrificial animals and I would have made it Omrah (separate from the pilgrimage by termination of the restrictions of the Ihram). Whoever did not accompany sacrificial animals should terminate his Ihram and make it Omrah."

Suraqah lb Malik Ibn Jaasham stood up and said to the Messenger: Is it for our present year exclusively or forever? The Messenger put the fingers of his two hands between each other and said: "The Omrah entered into the pilgrimage (repeating that twice) It is not for this year. It is forever." 7

Thus the extreme independence of the Second Caliph had made him prohibit the pilgrimage of Al-Tamattu and legalize killing the practicer of temporary marriage. Yet the Messenger commanded the Muslims to make the pilgrimage of Al-Tamattu and legalized temporary marriage.

A man so extremely independent in his opinion would not be expected to consult the Imam ‘Ali in every problem or follow all his opinions. However he considered ‘Ali to be the most knowledgeable among the companions and the highest authority on religion.

Dialogues About The Caliphate

The relationship between the Caliph and the Imam continued to improve and finally ‘Umar married Om Kulthoum daughter of the Imam. In spite of these improvements history as far as I know does not record any dialogue between the Caliph and the Imam concerning the caliphate.

But the Caliph had several dialogues with Abdullah Ibn Abbass (a cousin of the Prophet and the Imam) concerning the disagreement between the Imam and himself. In most of these dialogues ‘Umar appeared to be satisfied with what took place. One of the dialogues went as follows:

‘Umar: "... The Qureshite community was unwilling to let you (the Hashimites) have the honor of both the caliphate and the Prophethood lest you compromise the right of your community. Quraish chose for itself. It succeeded and made the right decision."

Ibn Abbass: "... You said that the Qureshites were unwilling to let us have the honor of both the caliphate and the Prophethood. But the Almighty described some people as "resentful" when he said: 'Because they resented what God had revealed God nullified their deeds.' You said that the Qureshite community chose for itself and that it succeeded and made the right decision. Had they chosen for themselves what God chose for them the right would have been on their side neither objected to nor envied...." 8

In another dialogue ‘Umar told Ibn Abbas the following: "There were high words from the Messenger of God (concerning ‘Ali). But those words did not constitute a clear evidence for his leadership nor did they eliminate all excuses (for those who did not side with him). The Messenger was trying to give ‘Ali the leadership. He wanted to record his name when he was in his ailment but I prevented him from doing that for the interest of Islam. By the Lord of the Ka-abah Quraish will never rally around him. Had he come to power after the death of the Prophet the Arabs would have revolted against him. "9

In another dialogue the following conversation took place: ‘Umar: "Son of Abbass this man has exerted himself in worship until he had become lean trying to show his piety.".

Ibn Abbass: "Who is that man?" ‘Umar: "That is your cousin (‘Ali).".

Ibn Abbass: "What does he gain by showing his piety?" ‘Umar: "He wants to present himself for the caliphate." Ibn Abbass: "The Prophet nominated him for the caliphate and he did not attain it.".

‘Umar: "He was in his youth and the Arabs thought that he was too young. But now he has reached the age of maturity. Did you not know that God never sent a Prophet before the age of forty?".

Ibn Abbass: "People of wisdom and good judgement regard him perfect and mature since God heightened the light of Islam. But they consider him deprived and unlucky.".

‘Umar: "He will reach it after difficulties then his foot will slip and he will not reach his aim. Abdullah you will witness that. Then the dawn will appear to anyone who has two eyes. Then you will know the soundness of the opinion of the early migrant companions who diverted the leadership away from him."[10]

In another dialogue ‘Umar appeared to have remorse for the way in which ‘Ali was treated. He said to Ibn Abbass while they were walking on one of the streets of Medina holding hands: ‘Umar: "I think that your man (‘Ali) was treated unjustly.".

Ibn Abbass: "Amir Al-Mu'mineen (leader of the Believers) give him back his right.".

‘Umar took his hand away from the hand of Ibn Ab- bass and left while talking to himself angrily. Then he stood and called Ibn Abbass. When Ibn Abbass came to him ‘Umar said:

"What prevented the Qureshites from giving him the leadership was his age. They thought he was too young." Ibn Abbass replied: "By God neither God nor His Messenger considered him too young when they commanded him to take the chapter of "Bara-ah" from your man (Abu Bakr) when he was setting out taking with him Bara-ah to announce it in the pilgrimage.".

Upon this the Caliph turned away from Ibn Abbass and left hurriedly.[11]

In another conversation with Ibn Abbass ‘Umar appeared to be milder than usual. He said to Ibn Abbass: "... You may think that Abu Bakr was the first one who pushed you (the Hashimites) back. He did not mean that. Something emerged and there was no wiser way for him to take than the path he took.

Had he not had his opinion about me he would have given you your share of the leadership. Had he done that your people (the Qureshites) would not make you enjoy the leadership.... They look at you as a bull looking at his butcher."[12]

The Dimensions Of ‘Umar's Policy

The attitude of the Second Caliph towards Quraish and its line of thinking was far-reaching in its

consequences. We can see its effects in the events that took place before and after his reign where it directed the future policies of the Muslim World to a great extent.

His influence was visible during the days of Abu Bakr. He was the man behind his election and his strongest supporter and the most effective person in establishing his leadership.

The following anecdote shows the extent of his influence during the days of Abu Bakr: Oyeinah Ibn Hissn and Al-Aqra Ibn Habis came to Abu Bakr and said: "Caliph of the Mesenger of God: There is a piece of unproductive land void of herb and useless. We request that you give it to us so we may till it and plant in it. God may benefit us through it in the future."

Abu Bakr consulted the companions around him. As they counseled him positively on the matter he wrote a document signed it and the witnessing companions also signed it. Then he handed it to the two men.

Since ‘Umar was not present among the companions the two men went to him to have his signature on the document. As they found him busy applying tar on a camel they informed him that the Caliph had given them a document and that they came to have his signature. They asked him if he would like to read it or they should read it to him.

He told them to read it to him. As he heard it he took the document spat on it and erased the writing. The two men exploded in anger and made uncomplimentary remarks.

He told them that the Messenger of God used to appease them when the faith of Islam was not in strength. God had strengthened Islam. "Go away " he said to them "and do whatever is in your power."

They went back to Abu Bakr complaining and said to him: "We do not know who is the ruler. Is it you or ‘Umar?"

Abu Bakr replied: "He is if he wants to be."

When ‘Umar came the following dialogue between him and Abu Bakr took place: ‘Umar: "Tell me of this land which you gave to the two men. Is it yours or does it belong to all Muslims?"

Abu Bakr: "It belongs to all Muslims." ‘Umar: "What made you give this land to these two men excluding the rest of the Muslims?"

Abu Bakr: "I consulted the companions around me and they agreed.".

‘Umar: "Have you consulted all the Muslims and acquired their consent?".

Abu Bakr: "I had told you that you are more capable-than I in handling the nation's affairs but you prevailed against me (and made me the Caliph)."[13] It is difficult to understand how ‘Umar expected Abu Bakr to consult all the Muslims in giving a piece of unproductive land while he did not consult all the

Muslims in giving Abu Bakr the leadership.

The leadership was more important to the Muslims than a piece of land. However the event tells us of the magnitude of his influence during the time of Abu Bakr.

His influence extended not only to the time of Abu Bakr. It was also visible at the ailment of the Messenger himself. The readers of the Sahihs know that the Prophet wanted during his ailment to write a document to assure that the nation would not go astray.

‘Umar opposed writing such a document and said that the Prophet was overpowered with his ailment or that he was hallucinating. By his objection the Muslims were deprived of the Prophet's document which was expected to illuminate for the nation the path of its future and provide it with security against straying.

Pre-Arranged The Future Of The Muslims

The influence of his policy in directing the future of the Muslim world can be clearly seen in many decisions which he took while thinking that they were in the interest of the nation. But they were fraught with grave consequences.

The following are only a few of those decisions: 1. He did away with the method of the Prophet (which Abu Bakr followed) of distributing the public funds among the Muslims equally. When ‘Umar was questioned about his uneven distribution he said "I will not equalize the ones who fought the Messenger with the one who fought with the Messenger.".

He allocated to every companion who attended the Battle of Badr an annual salary of five thousand dirhams; and to every participant in the Battle of Uhud four thousands. He gave the child of a Badrian two thosuands except Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein.

He equalized them with their father ‘Ali because of their relation to the Prophet. He alloted twelve thousand Dirhams for each one of the wives of the Prophet.

To those who migrated before the surrender of Mecca he alloted three thousand dirhams and to those who adopted Islam at the time of the surrender of Mecca two thousands each. Then he made the rest of the Muslims one category giving them 25 dinars a year or according to their religious positions their reading of the Holy Qur'an and their endeavor in the defense of Islam.

He allotted to the Yemenites and the Qaisites who were in military service in Iraq and Syria salaries ranging between two and three thousands. He made the minimum of their salaries three hundred dirhams.[14]

The Caliph was motivated by good intentions when he preferred the early Muslims and the defenders of

Islam. He had a very justifying reason in preferring the relatives of the Messenger and he should have given them more than he did because they were entitled at least to the sixth of the fifth of the spoils of war according to the Holy Qur'an:

"And know that whatever you may gain a fifth of it belongs to God His Messenger the relatives the orphans the needy and the wayfarer if you do believe in God and what We revealed to Our servant on the day of decisive event when the two forces confronted each other And God has power over everything." The Holy Quran Chapter 8 verse 41.

However it is very difficult to justify religiously his preference of the Badrians over the Ohdians and the Ohdians over those who embraced Islam before the surrender of Mecca and those who embraced Islam on the days of its surrender over those who adopted Islam later.

We cannot justify such preferences after the Messenger of God distributed the Islamic funds equally among the Muslims.

It was a beautiful poetic statement on the part of the Caliph when he said: "I will not equalize the ones who fought the Messenger with those who fought with him" and it would have been very sound if he preferred the early Muslims by glorifying them and placing them spiritually above others.

Preference in fund-distribution could also be permitted if the funds belonged to the Caliph personally. But it was an injustice to give to one category more than others from a fund owned by all Muslims equally. The allowance with which he preferred the early Muslims was owned by the rest of the Muslims and he took it away from them without their permission.

Had the allowance been deserved by the preferred categories the Messenger would have given it to them rather than to the rest of the Muslims. Otherwise he would be distributing among all Muslims what belonged to the earlier Muslims.

Thus we should either say that the Messenger had deprived the early Muslims from what they deserved of allowance or that 'Umar deprived the majority of the Muslims from their right in the allowance with which he privileged the early Muslims. Which theory should we choose?

Undesirable Consequences

Whether inequality in distribution was legal or illegal it certainly led to the creation of a new wealthy class among the Muslims. The minority which benefited from the preference acquired much more than it needed for spending.

Thus the members of such a minority were able to invest their surplus money in purchasing and selling properties and in trade.

As a result the Muslim Society was divided into an extremely wealthy class and another class that could satisfy its needs without prosperity and a third class deprived and unable to acquire the necessary food and clothes. However the consequences of this division in the society did not appear violent during the reign of ‘Umar.

In fact the Second Caliph witnessed the signs of the evils of this division at the end of his reign when he said with an obvious remorse: "Should I be given the opportunity to do it again I would take the surplus fund of the wealthy and return it to the poor." But time was not on his side. He died before he could rectify the situation.

It is worthy to note that the preferred classes enjoyed what they had acquired and believed that they were religiously entitled to what they acquired. When the Imam came to power and wanted to go back to the method of the Prophet and to return to the deprived people what belonged to them the privileged minority revolted against him.

They used all the means at their disposal in combatting him to preserve their privilege. Why not? They had enjoyed those prerogatives for over twenty years and to them they became natural rights.

Subversive Elements In The Caliph's Regime

Overlooking the obvious risks the Second Caliph placed in high positions politically ambitious and religiously unscrupulous men from Quraish. This led to many grave consequences after his death.

Ibn Al-Aws

He appointed Amr Ibn Al-Aws governor of Egypt before he professed Islam Amr was extremely hostile and harassing to the Prophet. He lambasted the Holy Prophet with seventy verses of poetry.

Belatedly Amr chose to become a Muslim after he foresaw through his wiliness and intelligence that the Prophet and his followers would have the upper hand.

The conspiracy of Amr appeared later when he became a leading agitator against Uthman after Uthman dismissed him and replaced him with Abdullah Ibn Sarh. He continued his malicious campaign until Uthman was assassinated.

Then he used Uthman’s assassination for his own unholy goal. He became the second man in the aggressor party which fought ‘Ali the Imam of the truth with the pretext of avenging the blood of Uthman whose death was brought about by the agitation of Amr and others like him.

The Umayyads In

The Second Caliph appointed Muawiya son of Abu Sufyan as the governor of Damascus. He appointed his brother Yazeed Ibn Abu Sufyan the governor of Jordan. When Yazeed died the Second Caliph added Jordan to the area of Muawiya's rule.[15]

By this the power of Muawiya began to grow politically and militarily. During the reign of ‘Umar Muawiya became important enough to be feared and reckoned with.

When ‘Umar was stabbed he said to the members of the Electoral Convention according to what Ibn Abbas reported: "... And if you exchange jealousy and hatred and refuse to co-operate with each other Muawiya will snatch the authority from your hands."[16]

The Hashimites Out

The Second Caliph did not put any of the Hashimites in any position of power though they had efficient men such as Ibn Abbas. ‘Umar was asked why he did not give him a governorship of a province in spite of his knowledge and capability. The Caliph expressed his apprehension that Ibn Abbas might make his own interpretation of the Islamic rule.

Evidently the Second Caliph thought that Ibn Abbas might legalize for himself or his relatives to take some of what God allotted for relatives of the Prophet in the Holy Qur'an of the fifth of the spoils.

The Caliph seemingly kept the Hashimites away from high offices of any Islamic provinces lest they gain some popularity in those areas. He thought that people of those provinces might glorify them because they were from the clan of the Holy Prophet.

With his love for God and His Messenger the Caliph was expected to keep the Umayyads out of his regime because of their opposition towards the Prophet. He was also expected to give the Hashimites substantial positions in his regime for the sake of the Prophet. Contrary to all expectations the Second Caliph kept the Hashimites out and brought the Umayyads in and kept them there.

The Caliph kept Muawiya in his position in spite of what he knew of his ambition and of what he witnessed of growth of his power. He kept him for the duration of his reign contrary to his method of dismissing his appointed governors and replacing them with others.

The Caliph seemingly was impressed with Muawiya's administrative ability and his efficiency in policing his borders which neighbored the Roman Empire. Yet ‘Umar used to believe that the victory of the Muslims and their success did not depend on a person or persons regardless of their ability for God aids the Muslims by the power of Islam rather than the power of persons.

He dismissed Khalid Ibn Al-Walid from the command of the Syrian front after he became extremely

popular. He replaced him by Abu Obeidah Ibn Al-Jarrah who was relatively unknown to make the Muslims realize that God would help them without need for the leadership of Ibn Al-Walid.

The Caliph might have been lulled by the obedience of Muawiya to him. Thus he wanted to benefit from his intelligence and administrative ability and Muawiya did not represent a threat to him. The Second Caliph had a very strong personality and none of the Muslims could dare challenge him.

The obedience of Muawiya to him however should not have made him forget what he knew of the danger of the Umayyads to the future of Islam; for 'Umar heard from the Messenger what should have alienated him from them.

He said to Ibn Abbas that he heard the Messenger of God saying:

"The children of Umayyad will ascend to my pulpit and I saw them in my dream jumping on my pulpit like monkeys." And about them the following verse was revealed:

"And We made the vision which We have shown thee only a faith-testing trial for the people and (the men you were shown are) the tree which is cursed in the Holy Qur'an."[17]

'Umar said also to Al-Mughirah Ibn Shubah (who was one-eyed): "Mughirah have you ever seen anything through your eye after you lost it?" When Mughirah answered in the negative 'Umar said to him: "By God the children of Umayyad will make Islam lose its eye as your eye was lost: Then they will blind Islam until it will not be able to know where to go or where to come." [18]

The Umayyad's Reign Was Not Inevitable

Probably what the Caliph heard from the Messenger concerning the children of Umayyad made him believe that their coming to power was pre-destined and inevitable.

Therefore he allowed himself to walk in this path which placed the Umayyads readily in power. Thus he did that while submitting to what he thought to be a pre-destined future.

Probably his belief that the arrival of the Umayyads to the high office was inevitable made him say to Ibn Abbas that 'Ali shall arrive to the caliphate after a serious confusion then his foot will slip and he will not accomplish his aim.

Then he said to Ibn Abbas: "Abdullah you will be a witness and the morning will be clear to anyone who has two eyes then you will know the soundness of the opinion of the early migrants who diverted the caliphate from him.".

Of course the arrival of the children of Umayyad to power became conceivable and expected after they became an important part of the Islamic regime and after their most intelligent became the governor of a highly important part of the Muslim State. The presence of Muawiya and his like in positions of power

was expected to be an important obstacle which ‘Ali would face if he were to come to power.

As a matter of fact the difficulties and obstacles were steadily increasing and accumulating during ‘Umar's reign and continued to increase after his death until it became impossible for ‘Ali to rule peacefully.

This was not due to a weakness in ‘Ali but it was due to the events which took place before his arrival to power.

These events were not inevitable for those events were made by man and his will and were not pre-destined by God. Had ‘Umar not placed Muawiya in a position of power or had he not kept him in power Muawiya would not have become an obstacle in ‘Ali's path for without the governorship of Syria Muawiya would have been an ordinary man.

What the Prophetic Word Meant

What the Holy Messenger said about his vision in which he saw the children of Umayyad reaching the pulpit of the Holy Prophet was a warning to the nation to take a road that will not lead to this consequence. But the nation took the road which brought the Umayyads to that pulpit.

The Holy Messenger informed the nation that his grandson Al-Hussein would be killed and that ‘Ali would fight those who breached the covenant the aggressor party and the Kharijites (seceders). He also informed ‘Ali that the nation would betray him.

He informed Al-Zubayr that he would fight ‘Ali unjustly. He informed the mother of believers Ayeshah that she would be barked at by the dogs of Al-Hou-ab while she is deviating from the right road.

He also informed the Muslims that the aggressor party would kill Ammar Ibn Yasir.

The Holy Prophet did not inform the Muslims of all these events to tell them that they were pre-destined from God. He did not mean to tell the Muslims that the predicted events were inevitable and that the will of man would not be a factor in bringing them or preventing them.

Had he meant that then the disobedients the sinners the murderers the breachers of the covenants and the aggressors would not be blamable. What the Messenger wanted to say was that these expected events which saddened him would take place as a result of wrong choices by the nation or by some of its leaders.

The attitude of the Prophet in forecasting these events is like the attitude of a physician who warns a physically weak person of what will happen to him if he does not take preventive measures which he prescribes to him.

If the patient refuses to take the preventive medicine then he becomes ill his illness would not be a result

of predestination nor would it be inevitable. His illness would be the result of his own failure and mis-choice.

The Messenger forecast these ugly events which he expected and prescribed to the nation the right measure to prevent their occurrence namely the adherence to the Book of God and the teachings of the members of his House.

He told the Muslims that the adherence to these two elements represented a security for the nation against the ugly events and all deviations of any kind. The nation however did not heed the warning of the Holy Prophet nor could it appreciate the seriousness of his statements and its dimensions.

It took a different road which led to those evil events.

For this I believe that the Second Caliph was wrong when he said to Ibn Abbas that morning would appear to anyone who has two eyes and that Ibn Abbas himself would be a witness and discover the soundness of the opinion of the early migrants who diverted the caliphate from ‘Ali.

The fact is that what happened to ‘Ali did not prove the soundness of the opinion of the early migrants. Rather it proved that they had committed a costly and terrible mistake. Had they not diverted the caliphate from ‘Ali after the death of the Holy Prophet the clouds would not have accumulated in his horizon nor could those obstacles and difficulties have accumulated in his road.

‘Ali could have arrived to a peaceful reign even after the caliphate was diverted from him twice. Had the Second Caliph used his tremendous influence in taming the Qureshites and directing them towards ‘Ali ‘Ali would have achieved his goal.

Had he kept the Umayyads out of his regime and avoided the creation of the preferred class of early companions through his inequal distribution of public funds ‘Ali would not have had serious problems.

Even after all these events took place ‘Ali could have had a peaceful rule if ‘Umar had named him as a successor or formed the Electoral Convention of members with a positive attitude towards ‘Ali rather than Uthman. Had ‘Ali succeeded in coming to power peacefully the Muslims would have been avoided all the faith-testing crises to which the death of Uthman led.

1. Ibn Sa’d Al-Tabaqat Part 3 p 276.
2. Abdul-Fattah Abdul-Maqsud Al-Imam ‘Ali Ibn Abu Talib Part 1 p. 223
3. Al-Sayed Al-Radhi Nahjul-Balaghah Part 2 pp. 29-30.
4. Abdul-Fattah Abdul-Maqsud Al-Imam ‘Ali Ibn Abu Talib Part 1 p. 226.
5. Ibn Abu Al-Hadid his Commentaries on Nahjul-Balaghah Vol. 3 p. 179.
6. Muslim in his Sahih Part 8 p. 169.
7. Muslim. Sahih Muslim Part 8 pp. 172-179.
8. Ibn Al-Athir in his hook Al-Kamil Part 3 p. 31.
9. Ibn Abu Al-Hadid Commentaries on Nahjul-Balagha Part 3 pp. 97 105 and 155.
10. Ibn Abu Al-Hadid Commentaries on Nahjul-Balagha Part 3 pp. 97 105 and 155.

11. Ibn Abu Al–Hadid Commentaries on Nahjul–Balagha Part 3 pp. 97 105 and 155.
12. Ibn Abu Al–Hadid recorded this dialogue in his Commen– taries on Nahjul–Balagha Vol.3 p.94.
13. Ibn Abu Al–Hadid his Commentaries on Nahjul–Balaghah Vol.3 pp. 108–109.
14. Ibn Sa'd in his Al–Tabaqat Part 3 pp.296–297.
15. Dr. Taha Hussein Al–Fitnat Al–Kubra Part 1 p.118.
16. Ibn Abu Al–Hadid in his Commentaries on Nahjul–Balaghah Vol.1 p.62.
17. Ibn Abdul–Hadid his Commentaries on Nahjul–Balaghah Vol. 2 p. 376. There are more hadiths recorded by the Imatn Al– Razi in his "Commentaries on the Holy Qur'an " Chapter 17 Part 5 pp. 413–414.
18. Ibn Abu Al–Hadid Commentaries on Nahjul–Balaghah Vol. 2 p.277.

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