

[Home](#) > [Sulh al-Hasan](#) > [Part 2: On the Political Attitude](#) > [Kufa During The Days Of The Pledge Of Allegiance](#) > Al-Hamra'

Kufa During The Days Of The Pledge Of Allegiance

Sa'sa'a b. Sawhan al-`Abdi¹ described Kufa as: "the dome of Islam and top of speech." However, there were rude persons in Kufa. They prevented the people from obeying those who were in charge of authority (i.e., the Prophet's family). Also they prevented the people from meeting them. These were the manners of the possessors.

The Muslims inhabited Kufa in the year 17 A.H., namely directly after the conquest of Iraq.²

The early houses of Kufa were built of reed. However, they burned down. So they were built of adobes. The streets of Kufa were twenty cubits wide. Its lanes were seven cubits wide. The places of the buildings were among its streets. They were forty cubits wide. Also alqatay` (plots of land) were among its streets. They were sixty cubits wide.

The Mosque was the first thing to be built in Kufa. It was built in the Middle of the area which was chosen to build the city. A strong man threw arrows at all directions. Then the houses were built beyond the arrows. So the area before the arrows was allotted to build the Mosque and its yard. In front of the Mosque, they (the Muslims) built a porch on which they built pillars made of marble, which the followers of Kasra (a Persian king) brought from the ruins of al-Hira. They (the Muslims) dug a trench around the yard of the Mosque to prevent the people from building houses near it.

Suddenly, the buildings of Kufa increased. For the Commander of the faithful (Amir al-mu'minin) emigrated to it. Then he regarded it as a headquarters after the Battle of the Camel on the twelfth of the month of Rajab, in the year 36 A.H.

Among the motives of this initiative (the Emigration of Imam 'Ali to Kufa) was that the resources of Hijaz (Saudi Arabi) became so weak that this country depended on other resources from other countries. The most harmful thing for a certain country is that it depends on the resources of other countries. However, Kufa and Iraq did not suffer from the paucity of resources. In other words their resources were more than

their needs. There were also military factors. For example military rebels used Iraq as a base for their hostile acts.

Prominent Muslim figures came successively to Kufa, from various Muslim countries. For it was the capital of the Caliphate. The Arab tribes from the Yemen and Hijaz, and the Persian communities from al-Mada'in and Iran inhabited Kufa. Trade markets became active in it. Scientific studies became bright in it. Gardens and villages were built around it. Glorious history, arts, sciences lasted in it for a long time.

Shi'ism (tashayu) for Imam 'Ali and his sons, peace be on them, prevailed Kufa under the Hashimite ruling. This phenomenon has been in it since that time. Because of the mixed groups who inhabited the new city, other hostile desires appeared there beside Shi'ism. After a short time, such hostile motives became the reason for creating historical events in Kufa.

The pledge of allegiance to al-Hasan, peace be on him, occurred when Kufa pledged allegiance to him. Then all the people there agreed on his nomination though they rarely agreed on a certain idea.

Throughout his life in this city, al-Hasan, peace be on him, showed the noble qualities which the family of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family, inherited. Those noble qualities were: goodness, good manners, noble feelings, gentle traits, wide patience, excellent mind, knowledge, religious devotion, worship, and the like. So the hearts of the people inclined towards him.

The Pulpit of the succession, though sad for the late Imam ('Ali), smiled at the Prophetic qualities inherited by its new Successor. For he was the best person in piety, refraining from the life in this world, and collecting all good traits. For this reason, he (al-Hasan) was a unique figure. Thus all different persons agreed on him willingly. Moreover, all the elements of leadership necessary for the leader of a nation or the Imam of people gathered in al-Hasan.

The festivals of the pledge of allegiance to al-Hasan, peace be on him, in Kufa ended in the hoped manner. They resulted in strength, activity, and mobilization. However, fate has rules that do not occur according to the measures of minds, nor do they occur according to the desires of selves. So the political atmosphere in the city of (Kufa), that celebrated the appointment of the Successor for the first time in its history, was still stagnant, clouded, and mingled with much suspicious disturbance.

That was what Kufa suffered from because of the effects of the violent battles that happened in the neighboring places, namely in Basrah, Nahrwan, and Siffin. In Kufa, at that time, there were many supporters for the martyrs and victims of these battles from both parties. Those supporters were very eager to avenge the blood of their martyrs. So they spared no effort to carry out their purposes. Some of these purposes were good, while some of them were evil. The evil purposes were the reason for creating disagreement in the Muslim community.

Though al-Hasan was in the beginning of his succession, all the hearts inclined towards him. For he was the son of the daughter of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family. To love him was

among the conditions of belief. To obey him was among the conditions of the pledge of allegiance to him.

Ibn Kathir said: "They (the Kufans) loved him (i.e., al-Hasan) more than they loved his father.[3](#)

Al-Hasan, peace be on him, was still safe from all parties. That is because he did not react to destroy the purposes of some people or to injure the sensitive cord of the stubborn ideas of some people. That is because the ways through which Islam lived at that time were sometimes subjected, in such Muslims, to personal aims and were sometimes to fanatic opinions.

Many of those people were selfish and ambitious. Their selfishness and ambitions exceeded the limits of Islam. Thus they thought that they would achieve their ambitions through pledging allegiance to al-Hasan. Al-Hasan's good manners made them pledge allegiance to him. For his manners reminded them of the manners of his grandfather, may Allah bless him and his family. Also they memorized a tradition from the Companions of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family. The tradition said that al-Hasan was the most similar person to Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, in form and nobility.

In fact, they (the Kufans) understood al-Hasan's great manners as they were.

Many of those who were opposed to al-Hasan's ideas and thoughts competed with each other for the above-mentioned ambitions. So they pledged allegiance to him of their own accord as the loyal believers did. Then they, after a short time, were the quickest of all the people in escaping from his camps. That is because they thought that they would obtain their ambitions through the leniency of al-Hasan, peace be on him. However, they found it difficult for them to get their ambitions when al-Hasan assumed the succession. For he was very strict in enforcing the Islamic law even with his close relatives such as his brother and cousin.

For this reason, it was natural for the leaders in Kufa to oppose al-Hasan, peace be on him, as they had opposed the late Imam (i.e., Imam 'Ali) who said to them: "You have filled my heart with puss and loaded my bosom with rage. You made me drink mouthfuls of grief one after the other." In this manner, that corrupt group of people clung to their angry partisanship. Meanwhile they found a strong supporter abroad (i.e., Mu'awiya in Syria). Also in this manner, various kinds of problems began to appear because of that abominable partisanship.

Groups of the opportunists took advantage of that critical stage. They were able to communicate with the people of Kufa to provoke them to mutiny against the obligatory Successor, to violate morals, and to break the pledge of Allegiance to him, peace be on him. These kind of people, who were 'like men,' resorted to riot, boycott, and disobedience when the Islamic Succession was moved to the new city (Kufa) in Iraq. For the Islamic Succession there was clear in carrying out the Islamic laws and was severe in enforcing justice. They were restless because they were hopeless of the world of that succession. For such a kind of succession was religious, not worldly. Also they knew that the succession

would not allow them to achieve their worldly ambitions.

So they (the rebels in Kufa) took advantage of the disagreement between the new Successor in Kufa and Mu'awiya in Sham (Syria). They found that disagreement appropriate for them to renew their activities to get possible urgent interests through deceiving the two parties (i.e., al-Hasan and Mu'awiya). Thus they were before two choices: either they get their ambitions through the new succession or they co-operate with each other to corrupt and destroy it. In the meantime, Mu'awiya promised to achieve their ambitions. Accordingly, money and promises were the strongest weapons the rulers in Sham used to destroy the new succession in Kufa throughout that time.

In this manner, the changeable desires, the different ideas, the bad manners, and the impudent quarrels were able to weaken the attitude of al-Hasan, peace be on him, in Kufa.

Thus the people during the pledge of allegiance to al-Hasan, peace be on him, were many parties. We may classify them as follows:

The Umayyad Party

The greatest persons who belonged to this party were: `Amr b. Hurayth, `Ammara b. al-Walid b. 'Aqaba, Hajar b. `Amru, `Umar b. Sa'd b. Abu Waqqas, Abu Burda b. Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, Isma'il and Ishaq the two sons of Talha b. `Ubayd Allah, and the like. Strong elements with followers and influence belonged to this party. They played a dangerous role in destroying the succession of al-Hasan, peace be on him, through their riot, plots, and disobedience.

"So they wrote secretly to Mu'awiya to listen and obey him. They urged him to come quickly to them. They guaranteed to hand over al Hasan when they got to his camp, or to kill him treacherously." [4](#)

In his book `Ta'rikh, al-Mas'udi told us [5](#): "Many of them (the Kufans) wrote secretly to him (Mu'awiya). They became hasty in promises for him and asked him for powers."

"Mu'awiya plotted against `Amr b. Hurayth, al-Ash'ath b. Qays, Hajar b. Abjar, and Shibth b. Rib'i through his spies. In the meantime he said to one of his spies: "If you kill al-Hasan, I will give you one hundred thousand dirhams, an army of the armies of Sham (Syria), and a daughter of my daughters." Al-Hasan, peace be on him, heard of that. So he wore his breastplate. He guarded against them and did not head them in prayer. So one of them (the above mentioned persons) threw an arrow at him. However, the arrow did not hit him because of his breastplate. [6](#)

One of these texts is enough to explain Mu'awiya's intentions. In this manner, they (the Kufans) did evil deeds intentionally. They did the deeds of the traitor who waited for an opportunity. Their mean attempts were clear even under the clouds of deception and hypocrisy. In other words their attempts seemed exposed and blatant at the hour of the summons to the obligation.

Also in this manner, they (the Kufans) were throughout that time the leaders of riot, helpers of plots, and fingers of the enemy in the city (of Kufa).

The Kharijites co-operated with them (the Kufans) to overthrow the Hashimite Caliphate during its two holy times. That is because the Kharijites and the Kufans shared the same plan. The evidence for this is what has been in the last text concerning the participation of alAsh'ath b. Qays and Shibth b. Rib'i, who were among the leaders of the Kharijites in Kufa.

The Kharijites

They were the enemies of Imam 'Ali, peace be on him, from the day when the event of the arbitration (al-tahkim) took place. Also they were the enemies of Mu'awiya.

The leaders of the Kharijites in Kufa were: `Abd Allah b. Wahab al-Rasibi, Shibth b. Rib'i, al-Ash'ath b. Qays, and Shimr b. Dhi al-Jawshan.

The Kharijites insisted on waging war against Mu'awiya more than the other people in Kufa did. It was they who pledged allegiance to al Hasan, peace be on him, on the condition that he should fight against those who went astray (i.e., the Syrians). However, al-Hasan refused their pledge of allegiance according to this condition. He wanted them to pledge allegiance to him to conform to "listening and obeying."

Moreover, he asked them to fight against him whom he fought against and to make peace with him whom he made peace with. So the Kharijites went to his brother al-Husayn, peace be on him. They said to him: "Stretch out your hand to pledge allegiance to you as we had pledged allegiance to your father to fight those who went astray (i.e., the Syrians)." So al-Husayn, peace be on him, said to them: "I seek protection with Allah, I cannot accept your pledge of allegiance as long as al-Hasan is living." So they (the Kharijites) went to al-Hasan again and pledged their allegiance to him as he had stipulated before.[7](#)

I (the author) think that there was no aspect of enmity when the Kharijites wanted to pledge allegiance to al-Hasan, peace be on him. Besides there was no aspect of enmity when they insisted on fighting those who went astray from the Syrians. In the meantime, some followers of al-Hasan, peace be on him, supported the Kharijites to declare war. However, when you read the stages of the matter of al Hasan, you will understand that the Kharijites were the reason for creating critical conditions from which al-Hasan suffered. You have read in the foregoing text that two leaders of the Kharijites took part in the ugliest Umayyad plot in Kufa

The Kharijites used effective, fearful methods when they provoked the people against the Umayyads. Their methods undermined the belief of many people with doubts. That was the reason for the spreading of the Kharijites after their decisive defeat at the Battle of al-Nahrwan.

Concerning the methods of the Kharijites, Ziyad b. Abih said: "Indeed, the words of these (Kharijites)

goes quicker to the hearts than the fire goes to the reeds." In this connection, al-Mughira b. Shu'ba said: "When they (the Kharijites) stayed at a place for two days, they corrupted those whom they associated. [8](#)

The Kharijites told lies and thought that they told the truth. They did evil deeds and thought that they did good deeds. They relied on Allah, but there was no religious relation between Him and them.

We will mention the Kharijites again when we discuss the members of the Army in the following chapters.

The Doubters

We have read something about the doubters in what al-Mufid, may Allah have mercy on him, has mentioned concerning the members of the Army of al-Hasan, peace be on him. We think that they have been called the doubters because they were affected by the ideas of the Kharijites while they did not belong to them. They were hesitating. Namely they did not belong to a certain party.

I (the author) have known that al-Murtada has mentioned the doubters at a great length and regarded them as unbelievers in his book 'al-Anal', vol. 3, p. 93. It is as if that he understood that the doubters had doubts about the origin of the religion.

The doubters were a group of the people of Kufa. They were from the defeated rabble there. They had no intention to do good, nor had they an ability to do evil. However, their existence in itself was evil. It was a help for corruption, and a tool in the hands of the wrongdoers.

Al-Hamra'

They belonged to the armed men in Kufa. Their number was twenty-thousand men, as al-Tabari said in his book 'Ta'rikh'. When Kufa had been divided into one-sevenths, they lived in the one seventh which was allotted to their allies who belonged to the Banu (sons of) 'Abd al-Qays. They (the Hamra') did not belong to the Banu of 'Abd al-Qays, nor did they belong to the Arabs. Rather they were a mixed band from the friends and the slaves. Maybe, most of them were from the sons of the Persian women who were taken prisoners at the Battles of 'Ayn al-Tamr and Jalawla' in the years 12- 17 A.H. So they carried weapons in the crisis of al-Hasan in the year 41 A.H., and in the crisis of al-Husayn in the year 61 A.H.

The Hamra' were the police- men of Ziyad who killed the Shi'a in the year 51 A.H. They were from those who carried out their duties well when the evil tempted them. More likely, they were the soldiers of the victorious tyrants.

The Hamra' became powerful because they helped Ziyad suppress the events and the disturbances took place in Kufa during the first century A.H. Moreover, they became more powerful in Kufa when they ascribed it to themselves. So Kufa was called the Kufa of the Hamra' (Kufat al-Hamra').

Basrah, like Kufa, had mixed groups of people (Hamra'). Ziyad, who was the governor of Basrah then, was afraid of their power there, so he tried to destroy them. However, al-Ahnaf b. Qays prevented him from doing that.

Some modern writers have attributed the Hamrd' to the Shi'a, while they were far away from them. For they spared no effort to destroy the Shi'a and their Imams. We do not deny that there might be some of them who adopted the beliefs of the Shi'a. However, the Shi'a are not judged by the few persons. The followers of al-Hasan, peace be on him, lived in Kufa beside these hostile people. The followers of al-Hasan were greater in number than the Hamra' in the capital of Imam 'Ali, peace be on him. Among al-Hasan's followers were a number of the Emigrants (muhajrin) and the Supporters (ansar). They followed 'Ali to Kufa. They had a high social rank. The people respected them because they were the Companions of the Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family.

The great figures of the Shi'a in Kufa proved their loyalty to the members of the House (Ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them. They pledged allegiance to al-Hasan, peace be on him. Thus he (al-Hasan) summoned them to jihad (holy war) after his succession during the critical situations. If those Shi'a had been safe from the plots of the other citizens, they would have defended Kufa against the dangers of the Syrians. No one can deny the ability and the activity of that blessed group of people. By the activity we mean the abilities that helped that Shi'ite group to bear and understand the hardships. Also they help them find solutions to these hardships.

Among that blessed Shi'ite group were: Qays b. Sa'd b. `Abbada al-Ansari, Hujr b. `Abu al-Kindi, `Amr b. al-Hamq al-Khizali, Said b. Qays al-Hamadani, Habib b. Muzahir al-Asadi, `Adi b. Hatam al-Ta'i, al-Musayyab b. Nujayya, Ziyad b. Sa'sa'a, and the like.

As for the reckless, opposing foreigners, and the mercenaries, they did their best to overcome those abilities and to change that power.

Al-Hasan, peace be on him, was aware of that atmosphere full of various inclinations, disturbances, and opinions. It was necessary for him, at the beginning of his succession, to tell the people frankly about his plan and his attitude which he had concluded from his real conditions both in Kufa and abroad.

It was Mu'awiya who was the enemy abroad. Thus he disturbed Kufa through his various plots. Also he had taken the reins of authority. Moreover, his own country Sham (Syria) was stable. It was not permitted for al-Hasan, peace be on him, to overlook Mu'awiya. That is because the latter was not an easy enemy. Meanwhile al-Hasan would have not been safe from his plots if he had overlooked him. Indeed al-Hasan had been the most ready person to destroy Mu'awiya if he had found available means to achieve that during his conditions.

As for Kufa, it had a dangerous opposition. The opposition was near to al-Hasan, peace be on him, in place. However, it was far away from him in spirit, meaning, and aims. So this kind of opposition engaged the Imam and held his attention.

It was sorrowful for al-Hasan, peace be on him, to see such of people in his capital (i.e., Kufa). For their desires and ambitions had controlled them, and their opinions divided them. Besides, they did not know the meaning of loyalty, the safeguard of the religion, and the rights of the neighbor. They abandoned their morals, so they became an exploited tool for opposition, treason, and corruption. They followed every crower and rambled in every valley. So they were not appropriate for a political field, nor were they appropriate for a war field. It is enough for you to know that they were the reason for creating disturbances, riots, and fear.

In this way, since the ancient times, the Iraqis have the ability to understand opinions and violent revolts on various occasions.

Through his tested attitude, al-Hasan, peace be on him, showed his talents that were always the good news of a bright victory. However, he suffered from awful adversities came down on his attitude as the decree came down from the sky.

Al-Hasan, peace be on him, had predicted many events before they occurred. However, the precautionary procedures prevented him from mentioning those events openly. So he made hints for them. For this reason he said the following vague words which he quoted from the Qur'an: "I see what you do not see."

I (the author) wonder: At that time al-Hasan, peace be on him, saw those active festivals which the Muslim community held to express their loyalty to their new Successor. However, why did the new Successor see what they did not see?

It was the insight that was among the qualities of al-Hasan, peace be on him. He used such an insight in war and peace and in all his steps towards his enemies and his friends.

Unfortunately, the historical encyclopedias have not paid attention to many examples. That is because they are necessary for us to indicate the historical policy of al-Hasan, peace be on him, especially during the first period of his short time. Namely the period that preceded the declaration of holy war (jihad) in Kufa. So we have collected some extracts from here and there to show his skillful policy that is beyond doubt. So he led that shaky community wisely.

The following are some examples about al-Hasan's wise leadership:

1. Al-Hasan, peace be on him, made a certain form for those who wanted to pledge allegiance to him, and he refrained from accepting the conditions which the others made to pledge allegiance to him. He was ready to accept that pledge of allegiance from the people provided that they should listen and obey him, fight those whom he fought against, and make peace with those whom he made peace with. Thus the people admired his ability to run war and peace at the same time.

In this way he was able to please the two parties in Kufa, namely those who wanted war and those who

wanted peace. That is because the general situation in Kufa forced him to take such wise precautions for a certain time.

2. Al-Hasan, peace be on him, raised the salaries of the fighters to 100%. That was the first step he took when he became a successor. Then the successors after him followed his example.[9](#)

This step al-Hasan, peace be on him, adopted to promote the salaries refreshed the morale of his army and made a large number of people ready to render their services for jihad (holy war).

Also this step means that al-Hasan, peace be on him, was ready to declare war. However, it does not show us clearly that he was resolute to wage war as long as it was a step of refreshment at that new time. Besides this step was among his wise acts that led the Muslims to unity, not to discord. In the meantime it was wise readiness for the future that would force him to wage an expected war.

3. Al-Hasan, peace be on him, ordered the two men to be killed, for they spied for his enemies. Also he threatened those who might spy on him in Kufa and Basrah. Al-Mufid, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "When Mu'awiya b. Abu Sufyan learned of the death of the Commander of the faithful (Amir al-mu'minin), peace be on him, and the people's pledge of allegiance to his son, al-Hasan, peace be on him, he sent a man from Himyar secretly to Kufa and a man from Banu al-Qayn to Basrah. They were to write reports to him to undermine affairs for al-Hasan, peace be on him. Al-Hasan, peace be on him, learned of that. He ordered the Himyari to be brought out from (the tribe of) Lakhm in Kufa. He had him brought out and executed. (Al-Hasan) wrote to Basrah. Ordering the Qayni to be brought from the Banu Sulaym. He was brought out and executed."[10](#)

Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani has mentioned a report similar to what al-Mufid has mentioned: "You sent men to use deception and to carry out assassinations and you sent out spies as if you want to meet (in battle). That is something that will soon happen, so wait for it, if Allah wills. I have learned that you have become haughty in a way that no wise man would become haughty. In that you are just as al-Awwal described:

Say to him who desires the contrary of the one who has died:

Prepare for another like him, as if (from the same) root.

I and the one among us who has died are like the one who

Goes in the evening so that (the other) may come in the morning.

Many people urged al-Hasan, peace be on him, to wage war against Mu'awiya from the day when he took the reins of authority in Kufa. However, he considered their viewpoints carefully.

In Chapter 5, which you will read soon, we will analyze the political attitude at that time. You will know that this deliberation was the only measure at that time of al-Hasan, peace be on him.

5. Al-Hasan, peace be on him, made Mu'awiya forget his shaky, baseless attitude through exchanging letters. Through Mu'awiya's answers full of insults to al-Hasan, peace be on him, the people were able to know the former's character which was unknown for them. Besides the letters paved the way for al-Hasan to show the reasons for his war against Mu'awiya. Suddenly, Mu'awiya became the defeated party according to the logical viewpoint of the wise though he was victorious, after that, according to the logical viewpoint of those who depend on force.

One of these skillful measures which al-Hasan, peace be on him, used to carry out his political plan during his short time, between the death of his father (peace be on him) and his determination to wage war, is enough to explain al-Hasan's wise policy.

- [1.](#) See chapter: The Leaders of the Shi'a, in this book. Al-Mas'udi, Hamish b. al-Athir, vo1.6, p.118.
- [2.](#) Al-Baladhuri, Futuh al-Buldan. Al-Buraqi, Ta'rikh al-Kufa. Al-Hamawi, al-Mu'jam. However, al-Hamawi opposed him when he said: "Basrah was inhabited six months before Kufa in the year 14 A.H."
- [3.](#) Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya, vol. 8, p.41.
- [4.](#) Al-Mufid, al-Irshad, p. 170. Al-Tubrisi, A'lam al-Ward.
- [5.](#) Al-Mas'udi, Hamish b. al-Athir, vol.6, p.42. I (the author) say: I think that many people from Sham might have written to al-Hasan, peace be on him, at that time as the Kufans wrote to Mu'awiya. We have known that the two parties (the Kufans and the Syrians) were ready to break their promises whenever worldly desires tempted them. You have to see `al-Mahasin wa al Masawi', vol. 2, p.200, by al-Bayhaqi, to know that the followers of Mu'awiya wrote to imam 'Ali, peace be on him. Also try to see Ta'rikh, vol. 3, p. 12, by al-Ya'qubi, to know that all followers of `Abd al-Malik b. Marwan wrote to Mas'ab b. al-Zubayr and asked him for safety and gifts. So we must understand that the Syrians wrote to al-Hasan, but their letters have remained secret for us, for al-Hasan did not reveal the secret as Mu'awiya did, or the historians have intentionally ignored this matter as they have ignored many matters.
- [6.](#) `Ilal al-Sharai', p.82.
- [7.](#) Al-Imama wa al-Siyasa, p. 150.
- [8.](#) Al-Tabari, Ta'rikh, vol. 6, p. 109.
- [9.](#) Ibn Abu al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balagha, vol.4, p. 12.
- [10.](#) Al-Mufid, al-Irshad, p. 168. al-Anwar. Kashf al-Ghumma.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/sulh-al-hasan-shaykh-radi-aal-yasin/kufa-during-days-pledge-allegiance#comment-0>