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Part 1:The Emergence of Shi'ism

Preliminary Remarks

With respect to the first question – "What is the origin of Shi`ism?" –one may safely regard Shi'ism as a consequence that is natural to Islam, representing a thesis whose realization is imperative for the Call (or Mission of Islam[1]) if the latter's sound progress is to be assured.

It is possible for us logically to infer this thesis from the Call of Islam, led by the Prophet, because its formation was natural and due to particular circumstances. The Prophet had put into practice a revolutionary leadership, and drove for a comprehensive change of society, its conventions, structures and ideas. But the road to such a change was not to be a short one. It was long, extending the length of that deep spiritual chasm separating pre-Islam from Islam. The calling pursued by the Prophet had to begin with the man of pre-Islam in order to create a new being out of him; it was from the pre-Islamic world that the man of Islam would issue, carrying the new light to the rest of the world. This Mission had to extirpate every last root and vestige in him of pre-Islam.[2]

Within a short period of time, this remarkable leader was able to make quite amazing progress in the drive for change. But this drive had also to continue its lengthy path even after his death. The Prophet had known for some time that his term was nearing an end. He openly announced it at the "Farewell Pilgrimage."[3] Death hardly took him by surprise. That means that he had ample opportunity to ponder the fate of the Mission beyond his lifetime, even if we disregard the element of a liaison with the hidden world, or for that matter the direct Grace of God evinced by the Message revealed to him.[4]

In the light of this, we may note that the Prophet had before him three possible paths to choose from with respect to the future. First, the path of denial; second, the affirmative path (for example, consultation); third, appointment.[5] These will constitute the three discussions to be taken up below.

1. These two terms, "Call" and "Mission" of Islam, are used interchangeably in this translation – Translator.
2. The Qur'an affirms that "He is the one who sends down to His servants the clear signs, that He may bring ye out of the veils of darkness and unto the Light" (57:9 "alHad").

3. This was done at the formal address of the Farewell Pilgrimage, where he declared: “I am about to be summoned forth, and am about to reply.” And in another account: “It is as if I am being summoned forth and am answering. Verily, I leave thee two weighty things...” (Sahih Muslim, IV4:1874). `Abd Allah b. Mas`ud, is reported as saying, `We were with the Prophet [May God Bless him and his household] one night, when he sighed. So, I asked him, `What ails you, O Messenger of God?' He said: `My death has been announced to me”' (Mukhtasar Ta'r'ikh Ibn Asakir XVIII:32).
4. That is, if we suppose the Prophet to have been so keen to have his blessed calling go the full length set for it – as indeed it was his nature to be – and to have striven to take it to the rest of the world, it could only be that he took it upon himself to reckon the future.
5. That is, of a successor – Translator.

The First Discussion: Denial, Neglecting the Question of Succession

1

Based on such an attitude, the Prophet would have assumed a stance of denial with respect to the Mission of Islam, being content to pursue his own leadership role and to direct the Mission only while he lived. He would thus have abandoned it to circumstance and chance. But such a position of denial cannot be assumed for the Prophet, because it would have to arise from one of two issues that fail to apply to him.

First Issue

This consists of the belief denial and neglect cannot affect the fate of the Mission, and that the *Ummah* that would soon inherit the Call of Islam was capable enough to assume the responsibility of protecting it and ensuring against its distortion.

In fact, this belief has absolutely no basis. Rather, the pattern of events was such as to point to something else. This is because the Call – being from the outset a mission for revolutionary change aimed at constructing an *Ummah* and at eradicating every root of pre–Islam from it – would become exposed to the worst dangers if the stage were suddenly voided of its leader, or abandoned by him without any pre–arrangements.

Firstly, there are the inherent dangers engendered by trying to confront this vacuum without any advance planning, and by the urgent need to take a makeshift position while still under the massive shock of having lost the Prophet.

If the Messenger had abandoned the stage without planning the course of the Islamic Mission, the *Ummah* would for the first time have faced the responsibility of managing the most serious problems of

its mission without a leader but brandishing not the slightest prescription. The situation called for immediate and swift application – despite the gravity of the underlying problem – because a vacuum cannot persist.[2]

Indeed, a hasty measure was taken at a moment of shock for the *Ummah,* reeling as it was from the loss of its leader. This was the shock which, by its very nature, was to upset the course of thinking in Islam, leaving it in such disarray that its effects induced a well-known Companion to announce that the Prophet neither has nor will die.[3] But such a measure could not but entail danger, with the most undesirable consequences.

Second are the dangers emanating from a message that is not consummated at a level that could allow the Prophet to be certain of anticipating the actual procedures soon to be taken, and to keep within the fold of the Islamic Call. That would not have enabled him to prevail over latent dissensions that continued to survive in crevices deep inside the hearts of the Muslims, which dissensions were based on the divisions between the *Muhajirun* (those who migrated to the City of Medina) and the *Ansar* (native Medinans); the Quraysh and the rest of the Arab tribes; Mecca and Medina.[4]

Third, there axe dangers arising from that segment of society which passes under the cover of Islam; but against which it used to conspire during the Prophet's lifetime. This is the group that the Qur'an collectively calls the "Hypocrites."[5]

If we add to them a good number of those who embraced Islam after the taking of Mecca, who were more resigned to the new order of things than open to truth as such, we can then assess the threat posed as all these elements seized their opportunity for a broad initiative, doing so just when – the stage being cleared of the leader as the custodian – a large vacuum had existed.[6] Hence, the gravity of the situation after his departure was not something that could have been hidden from any leader seasoned in doctrinal matters, let alone the Seal of the Prophets.[7]

It might well be true that Abu Bakr, moreover, had no intention of leaving the scene without a positive intervention ensuring the future of political authority, on the argument that there was need of precaution under the circumstances.[8] It may also be true that people rushed to `Umar, when he was wounded, imploring him: "O Commander of the Faithful, if you would only nominate someone."[9]

This was done out of fear of the vacuum that the Caliph would soon leave behind, notwithstanding the political and social solidity which the Islamic Mission had attained a decade after the passing away of the Prophet. Also, `Umar may well have named six persons[10] in his will in deference to the latter's presentiment of danger. He must have seen the depth of this perilous situation on the Day of the Saqifah and what Abu Bakr's Caliphate would bring in its train, in view of its doubly improvised appearance, since he declared that "Abu Bakr's oath-taking was an oversight from whose evil God has shielded us."[11]

Abu Bakr himself regretted his hasty acceptance to become the sovereign as he bore the heavy

responsibility that went with it, in that he became aware of the seriousness of the situation and the need to venture some quick solution. When he was censured for accepting to be sovereign, his words were: “God's Messenger has died, and the people only recently were in a state of faithless ignorance. I took alarm that they might be beguiled, but my companions charged me with the task.”[12]

If all of the above is valid,[13] at any rate, it stands to reason that the Prophet and exemplar of the Call to Islam would have been the most aware of the danger of denial,[14] most perceptive and farsighted in his understanding of the nature of the situation and the exigencies of the change he pursued in an *Ummah* newly emerging from faithless ignorance, in the words of Abu Bakr.[15]

Second Issue

The second issue which could explain why the leader would have disavowed the fate of the Mission, or its progress, after his death goes as follows. Despite his awareness of the danger of the situation, he did not attempt to fortify the Mission of Islam against this danger, supposedly because he was mindful of the advantages. And so, his only concern was to protect the Mission while he lived in order to benefit from it and to enjoy the gains, caring little to secure its fate beyond his own lifetime.

This explanation cannot hold true for the Prophet, even if we should refuse to describe him as a Prophet dedicated to God through everything connected to the Message, making him out instead to be a leader with a message no different from any other. Yet, in the entire history of message-bearing leaders no one matches Muhammad in his earnestness toward the Call or, to his last breath, in his devoted sacrifice for its furtherance. His whole life proves it. Even as he lay on his deathbed, his illness worsening, he was concerned about a battle he had earlier planned. Preparing to deploy Usamah's forces, he repeated: “Make ready the army of Usamah, send it forth, send off Usamah!” as he fainted now and then.[16]

If the Prophet's attentiveness toward a single problem of military interest relating to the Call could go to that length, as he slowly expired on his deathbed; if knowing that he will die before plucking the fruit of victory did not prevent him from tending to the battle; in short, if he could maintain active interest while drawing his last few breaths of life - how, then, could one possibly think that the Prophet did not lived through moments of anxiety over the fate of the Call? How could he not have planned for its welfare in the face of anticipated dangers?

Finally, there is one record in the Prophet's life, during his last illness, which is sufficient to refute the entire case for the “first path.” It shows that nothing was more remote for such an outstanding leader as our Prophet Muhammad than to assume the position of denial with respect to the future of the Call, simply because of a lack of sensitivity to the dangers or to a disinterest in its nature.

This record, upon whose line of transmission all fair-minded Muslims - whether Sunni or Shi'i -without exception agree upon, is as follows. With certain men present in the house where he was about to face death, including `Umar b. al Khattab, the Prophet made a request: “Bring me the inkwell and tablet[17]

that I may write you an epistle. After this you shall never stray."[18]

This attempt by the leader – the soundness and authoritative transmission of whose account, once again, is roundly accepted – points unequivocally to the fact that he did reflect on the future. He saw clearly the necessity to provide a plan by which the *Ummah* can be fortified against deviation and the Mission of Islam protected from dissolution or ruin.

Hence, it is not possible to presuppose a position of denial[19] for the Prophet.

1. The titles given to the three discussions in both the first and the second chapters were construed from Imam Sadr's own statements, but are not part of the original text.
2. It is well recognized that a head of state's empty seat engendered countless perils and dangers, particularly in the absence of clearly stipulated constitutional provisions for quickly filling the vacancy. See Dr. al-Rayyis, al Nazarijyat al-siyasiyyah al-islamiyyah, p. 134.
3. See al-Shahrastani, al-Milal wal-nihal I:15, where he states: `Umar b. al-Khattab: 'Whosever says that Muhammad has died I shall slay with this mine own sword. He has ascended to Heaven.'" Cf. Muhammad b. Jarir al-Tabari, Ta'rikh al-Tabari II:233: "He said that Muhammad indeed did not die and that he would go over to the one spread rumour of his death and cut off his hands and smite him at the neck..."
4. On this state of affairs, there is no lack of evidence. For example, al-Bukhari, Muslim and al-Tirmidhi (in Kitab al-tafsir) recount, on the authority of Jabir b.`Abdullah: "We were on an expedition, when a Muhajir struck someone from the Ansar. The Ansari called out, `O Ansar [help me]!' while the Muhajirun called out, `O Muhajirin [help me]!' The Prophet heard all this and said `What pagan cry is this?' Ibn Sallul was also heard saying. `They have done it. By God if we return to Medina the stronger will drive out the weaker'" (al-Shaykh al-Nasif, al Tajj –al jami li1-usul 1V:263).
5. During the Prophet's lifetime, the "Hypocrites" as a group sought to play a menacing role through plots against Islam, the Messenger of God himself and the Muslims. See the previous note, for instance, for the statement by Ibn Sallul, who headed the "Hypocrites." They happened to stir up all manner of falsehoods and to disseminate disruptive rumours, as in the Battles of Uhud and Ahzab. Consequently, God revealed the "Surah of the Hypocrites" in the Qur'an, in which He exposed this malicious group, informing His Messenger of their designs and whatever they sought to hide. See, for example, al-Fakhr al-Razi's Tafsi'r First ed.VIII:157 (Cairo: al Khayriyyah,1308 AH); al-Zamakhshari al-Kahshaf IV:811
6. During the Prophet's lifetime, the "Hypocrites" as a group sought to play a menacing role through plots against Islam, the Messenger of God himself and the Muslims. See the previous note, for instance, for the statement by Ibn Sallul, who headed the "Hypocrites." They happened to stir up all manner of falsehoods and to disseminate disruptive rumours, as in the Battles of Uhud and Ahzab. Consequently, God revealed the "Surah of the Hypocrites" in the Qur'an, in which He exposed this malicious group, informing His Messenger of their designs and whatever they sought to hide. See, for example, al-Fakhr al-Razi's Tafsi'r First ed.VIII:157 (Cairo: al Khayriyyah,1308 AH); al-Zamakhshari al-Kahshaf IV:811
7. Ibid.
8. Regarding the story of Abu Bakr's appointment of `Umar b. al-Khattab as his successor, there are the following words uttered by Abu Bakr: "If you have accepted my command while I live, it would be unbecoming that you should differ after me..." (Mukhtasar Ta'rikh Ibn Asakir XVIII:308-09); Ta'rikh al-Tabari II:245, 280.
9. Ta'rikh al-Tabari II:580 – Imam. Ibn Manzur, Mukhtasar Tarikh Ibn Asakir XVIII:312.
10. Tarikh al-Tabari II:581 – Imam
11. Tarikh al-Tabari, ed Muhammad Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim II:205; ibid, II:581.
12. Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-balaghah, ed. Abu al-Fadl Ibrahirn II:42 – Imam. Tarikh al-Tabari II:353. Abu Bakr said: "Would that I had not accepted it..."
13. `Umar wished the deliberations would have ended and a Caliph selected before his wounding, so that he might die a tranquil death knowing that Islam would progress after him..." (Dr. Muhammad Husayn Haykal, al-Faruq `Umar II:313-314).
14. The Prophet Muhammad, during his blessed calling, earnestly desired for the unity of the Ummah and the progress of Islam, no doubtless more intensely than any of his Companions. For God has declared: "...a beloved friend taking to heart

that ye should suffer adversity, ardently concerned for you, and to the, faithful most kind, compassionate" (Qur'aan, 9:128 "al-Tawbah"). What is important is that his concern for the Ummah, his teaching of the Companions the necessary avoidance of discord, and his practical experience in this hardly need proof, especially as the Qur'an is replete with tens of ayat calling for the repudiation of all dissension, its causes and motives. How can one then imagine that this compassionate Prophet could have passed over the chief cause of strife (namely, the question of leadership) without setting up what is likely to obstruct and to bar its baleful effects; the more so that this same perception impelled the first and second Caliphs themselves to appoint successors, as is clear. Cf. Tarikh al-Tabari II:580.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibn al-Athir, Ta'rikh al-Kamil II:318 - Imam. See also Ibn Sad, al-Tabaqat al kubra II:249.

17. Literally, a "shoulder blade," on which important documents used to be written. It must be recalled that this was the period just before the Muslims had introduced a new paper substance as a mass commodity, for the first time in history - Translator.

18. Sahih al-Bukhari I:37; Kitab al-`ilm 8:161; Kitab al-i'tisam. See also Sahih Muslim V:76 (Ch. "al-Wasiyyah") (Cairo: Matba`at Muhammad 'Ali Sabih); Musnad al-Imam Ahmad I:355; cf Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabaqat al-kubra II:242-44 - Imam.

19. Every Muslim believes in the preeminence of the Messenger's personality as a leader, let alone as a Prophet-Messenger, which discounts unconditionally the presupposition stated above. Indeed, the Muslim usually holds such a presupposition to be illegitimate with respect to the Prophet for at least two reasons. One, it would be contrary to the Prophet's familiar life-conduct unanimously acknowledged by the entire community. His noble life abounds with goodly works and continuous struggle for change, construction and salvation of the Ummah. Second, the presupposition runs contrary both to those hadiths which have numerous, uninterrupted lines of transmission and to what he taught the Ummah with respect to diligence - indeed, to the point of declaring: "Whosever wakes without a care for the affairs of the Muslims is not one of them" (Usul al-kafi II:131). His disinterest in the fate of the Call and of the Ummah would have actually make him derelict in his obligations and trustworthiness.

The Second Discussion: The Affirmative Path Represented by the Consultative Order

The second path consists in the hypothesis that the Prophet had mapped out the future of the Islamic Mission after his death, adopting an affirmative stance by establishing a custodianship and an experienced leadership for the *Ummah* based on a consultative order, where the first, doctrinally-steeped generation would bring together both *Muhajirin* and *Ansar.* Representing the *Ummah,* this is the generation that was to constitute the base for political authority and the mainstay for the leadership of the Mission as it expanded.

It should be noted, however, that the situation which generally prevailed for the Prophet, including the Mission and those who promoted it, was not conducive to this course. In fact, it tends to contradict such a hypothesis. That he held the mission's leadership which came immediately after him to a system of consultation operated by the *Ummah's* first generation of *Muhajiran* and *Ansar*, or ever opted for such a course, is highly questionable. Here are some points of clarification.

First Issue

Had the Prophet adopted an affirmative position towards the future of the Mission that envisaged setting up straightaway a system of consultation to be emulated after his death, with the Mission's command resting on a leadership emanating directly from such a system, the most obvious thing would have been for him to take measures to apprise the *Ummah* and those actively engaged in its cause of some system of consultation, its limits and particulars. He would have informed them about its religious and sacred character, or prepared the community intellectually and spiritually in order for it to accept such a system, it being a community which originated partly among clans. For before Islam, the *Ummah* did not live by political consultation, but rather by an arbitrary tribal and clan system based on domination through power, wealth and hereditary relations.[1]

It is obvious that the Prophet did not seek to give advice on a consultative system, whether in respect of its legal particulars or its intellectual concepts. Naturally, if this were ever undertaken, it would have been reflected in the *hadiths* handed down from the Prophet. It would certainly have been reflected in the minds of people – at least the *Ummah's* first generation comprised of both *Muhajirin* and *Ansar* whose responsibility it should have been to apply such a system of consultation. But we simply do not find any legal notion in the *hadiths* of the Prophet delimiting any such order.[2] There are no particular traits within the mentality of the *Ummah,* or that of the first generation, that specifically reflect such advice.

Actually, the early generation contained two currents. The first was the one led by the members of the Prophet's Household; the other expressed itself at the Saqifah and in the Caliphate that emerged after the passing of the Prophet. Clearly, the former meant belief in Guardianship (*wisayah*) and the Imamate[3], along with an emphasis on close kinship to the Prophet; and none of that reflected any belief in the idea of consultation.[4]

Regarding the second tendency, all the records and the evidence concerned with the: Prophet's actual practice yield a picture which leaves little doubt that he did not believe in the system of consultation (as suggested); nor did he build a practical policy based on it. The same attitude is found among other groups within that generation of Muslims which witnessed the death of the Prophet.[5] This is supported by the fact that Abu Bakr, his physical state worsening, inaugurated `Umar b. al-Khattab and ordered `Uthman to record the oath. He wrote:

In the Name of God the Merciful and Compassionate. That is what Abu Bakr, Successor of God's Messenger, has obligated the Faithful and the Muslims with. Peace be with you. To God I give praise before thee. Thereupon, I place `Umar b. al-Khattab at your service. So hearken and obey![6]

`Abd al-Rahman b. `Awf then interjected, saying, "And what becometh of you, O Successor of God's Messenger." To which he replied, "I am to depart. But you have increased my torment: as you watch me deposit this trust upon someone from your midst, each of you scowls, demanding all to himself..."[7] It is clear, from this succession and the disapproval of the opposition, that the Caliph was not thinking in the

spirit of any system of consultation. He took it as his right to designate a successor, and to expect compliance with this designation from the Muslims. This is why he commanded them "to hear and to obey."[8] It was not a question of presenting or announcing a candidate, but one of investiture and obligation.

`Umar, in turn, found it within his right to impose a successor upon the Muslims. He did it through a circle of six persons, to whom he assigned the task of designation, leaving the rest of the Muslims no role whatsoever in the selection.[9] But this meant that his method of succession did not express the spirit of consultation, any more than did that of the first Caliph. Upon being asked by the populace to appoint a successor, `Umar declared, "If one of two men – Salim Mawla Abi Hudhayfah and Abu `Ubaydah b. al-Jarrah – had come to me, I would have done that with him, as I trust him; had Sahm been living, I would not have set it up as a consultation."[10]

On his deathbed, Abu Bakr told `Abd al-Rahman b. `Awf in confidence, "I wish I had asked the Messenger of God to whom is the right. No one then would have challenged it."[11] When the *Ansar* had gathered at Saqifah in order to make Sa`d b. `Ibadah the *Amir,* someone from their midst called out: "When the Qurayshi *Muhajirs* refuse, they or some group in their midst say, `We are *Muhajirun.* We are [the Prophet's] clan and the first to have embraced Islam.' To which we retort, `One *Amir* from us, one from you'; less than this we shall never accept."' But in his address, Abu Bakr answered them: "We are the *Muhajir* clans of the Muslims and the first to embrace Islam. In this respect, the populace comes after us. We axe the clan of the Messenger of God and, of all the Arabs, foremost in kinship [to him]."[12] When the *Ansar*, proposed that the Caliphate alternate between the *Muhajirin* and the *Ansar,* Abu Bakr answered:

When the Messenger of God was sent the Arabs were too self-important to abandon the religion of their forefathers, so they opposed and distressed him. But God has marked off those of His people who migrated as being the first [*al-Muhajirin al-awwalin*] to have faith in him. In all the earth, they were the first to worship God; they are his [i.e. the Prophet's] friends and his kin, the mostt deserving to rule after him. None but the unjust would contest this... [13]

Encouraging the *Ansars* rigidity was al-Habbab b. al-Mundhir, who contended, `.`Stay your course! People are under your sway, and should anyone insist, then let there be one *Amir* from us and another from them..."[14] 'Umar responded by saying: "As likely as two swords sheathed together! Who shall' quarrel with us, his Friends and kinsfolk, about the authority of Muhammad, or what he has bequeathed, but a deceiver – one given to sin and tangled in failure?"[15]

In sum: the method used by the first and second Caliphs to appoint a successor; the absence of any disapproval of it by most Muslims; the spirit that dominated the thinking of the *Muhajirin* and the *Ansar* (the two rivals of the first generation on the Day of Saqifah); the initial tendency which clearly set the *Muhajirin* on the path to establishing a principle restricting all power to themselves; the *Ansar's* exclusion from power; the emphasis on what the Prophet has bequeathed, justified in terms of the precedence

enjoyed by his clan above all others; the readiness of many *Ansar* to accept the idea of two Ami`rs (the one from the *Ansar*, the other from the *Muhajirin*); Abu Bakes expression of regret, upon becoming Caliph, for failing to ask the Prophet about who was most qualified after him: etc.[16] – all this makes it clear beyond the shadow of a doubt that the thinking adopted by that segment of the first generation of Muslims to whom power was transferred after the Prophet's death was not based on consultation. No definite idea about such a system had existed. How then can one imagine the Prophet giving legal and intellectual notification of a consultative system, or preparing a whole generation of *Muhajirin* and *Ansar* for the transfer of leadership within the Mission of Islam based on such a system? How can it be so if no conscious application of such a precise system or concept to be found?[17] By the same token, one cannot imagine that the Messenger, as the leader, could have put this system in place, given it legal and conceptual definition, and then failed to apprise the Muslims of it or to educate them in it.[18]

All that only proves that the Prophet never intended to offer consultation as an alternate system. It is unlikely that it was proposed in any manner corresponding to its importance, and later to vanish altogether from every quarter and every political tendency.[19] What makes this truth quite plain are the following points.

First of all, by its very nature the consultative system was new for the kind of milieu that had never seen, before the prophethood of Muhammad, any finished system of governance,' which makes it all the more necessary that a concentrated effort to inculcate it would have been undertaken, as indicated above.[20]

Secondly, being a foggy notion, "consultation" is ill-suited as something having any chance of being implemented, however much one tries to expound its details, measures and standards of preference in the event of disagreement; or, indeed, whether these standards depend at all ran number and quantity, or on quality and experience, etc. – in short, all the things that might have given the idea its features and suitability for implementation[21] right after the Prophet's death?

Thirdly, in one forth or another, in fact consultation enunciated for the *Ummah* an exercise of authority by way of *mutual consultation* and a determination of political self-determination the responsibility for which attaches to a great number of people (namely, all those implicated in the consultation). Therefore, if it were a legally-sanctioned political rule, to be implemented after the Prophet, it would have been presented to as many of these people as possible. And they would have had a positive view of consultation, each bearing his measure of the responsibility.[22]

These points prove that if the Prophet were to adopt the consultative system as a substitute for what existed during his own lifetime, he would have been duty-bound to give full scope to preparing for the idea of consultation, both in terms of depth and in a general psychological sense. He would have had to fill every gap, disclose every detail that could make it a practical idea.

At that level, he would need to give it quantity, quality and depth – which was an impossible thing to do. But all these features then would have had to be expunged anyways from the Muslims' midst, *the*

Prophet's own contemporaries. For one would think that the Prophet had to present the idea of consultation in an appropriate form, on a scale called for by the situation, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in order to make it comprehensible to the Muslims; before political impulses were suddenly awakened, obscuring the truth and forcing the people to suppress whatever they happened to hear from the Prophet about consultation, its precepts and details.

But this hypothesis, too, is not practicable. Whatever may be said about these impulses, they did not apply to ordinary Muslims, the Companions of the Prophet who had no part in political events after his death, or in raising the pyramid of the Saqifah.

Their position was only secondary, though one that always represents a numerically large portion of every society, regardless of how much politics may impinge upon it.23

Had consultation been proposed by the Prophet in the desired dimensions, the politically–motivated would not have been the only audience to hear its stipulations. On the contrary, different people would have heard them. These stipulations would have been reflected naturally among the common people who had known the Prophet; just as the Prophetic traditions recorded by the Companions themselves did, in fact, with respect to the superiority of Imam `Ali and his Guardianship (*wisayitihi*).

How, then; can political impulses have failed to prevent hundreds of *hadiths* by the Prophet concerning Imam `Ali, his Guardianship and religious authority24 from reaching us through the Companions, even though they conflicted with the dominant current at the time; whereas nothing has come down to us that conveys the least information about the notion of consultation.25

Indeed, those who typified the dominant current frequently disagreed in their political stances. It was in the interest of one or the other faction to use consultation as a slogan against the other. Still, we do not know of any of these factions having employed this slogan as a judgement actually taken from the Prophet. For example, one might observe Talhah's rejection of Abu Bakr's designation of `Umar, over which he was indignant.26 Despite this, he never contemplated playing consultation as a card against this designation, or to condemn Abu Bakr's stance by claiming that he contradicted what the Prophet had said about consultation and selection.

Second Issue

The second point is this. If the Prophet had decided to make the first generation –– one that included both the *Muhujirun* and the *Ansar* from among his Companions – overseers of the Islamic Mission after he was gone, responsible for continuing the drive for change, this would have obliged him, as the leader, to enlist their broad intellectual and apostolic commitment in such a way as to maintain certain theoretical depth; in the light of which they could consciously seek practical application.

In this way, from the Divine Message itself would issue solutions to the constant problems faced by the

Islamic Mission; especially as the Prophet, auguring the fall of Khusraw and Caesar,27 knew that the Islamic Call would soon see a grand victory. He knew that the Islamic *Ummah* would shortly include new peoples in its ranks and extend over great distances. It would soon be its responsibility to inculcate these peoples in Islam, to fortify itself against the dangers represented by this expansion, and to apply the provisions of the Law to the inhabitants of the lands conquered.

This was in spite of the fact that, of all generations, the first that inherited the Call was the most inculpable, the most prepared to sacrifice. But it was one that showed no indication of any special preparation to assume the custodianship of the Mission, let alone a deep or wide-ranging instruction in its notions. The records that warrant this rejection of this are too many to be included here.

Indeed, in this connection one might observe that, all .told, what the Companions have managed to transmit in stipulations from the Prophet in the area of legislation does not exceed a few hundred *hadiths.*28 At the same time, the Companions numbered close to twelve thousand, as reckoned by the history books.29 The Prophet used to live among thousands of them in a single city, with a single place of worship, morning and night. Therefore, would there not have been in these records some indication of a special preparation?

Actually, the Companions were known to avoid putting questions to the Prophet. Instead, awaiting a querying Bedouin arriving from out of town, they would allow one from their midst to overhear the answer.30

They were of the opinion that it was more convenient to abstain from asking about the legal provisions of decrees that had not yet come to pass. With this idea in mind, `Umar proclaimed from the pulpit, "I forbid anyone to ask about what does not exist. It is God who discloses that which He brings forth..."31 "It is not permissible," he insisted, "for anyone to ask about what is not. God has given His Decree for what He brings forth into existence..."32 One day, a man came to Ibn `Umar asking about something.

He replied, "Do not ask about something that is not. I heard `Umar b. al-Khattab denounce the person who asked about what is not..."33 A man also queried Ubayy b. Ka`b concerning a particular problem; the latter told him: "My son, has what you ask me about come to pass?" "No." "Then allow me to defer my answer until it has," Ubayy b. Ka`b returned." 34

`Umar one day was reciting the Qur'an, and then stopped at the words:

"And (We) produce therein Corn, and grapes and nutritious plants, olives and dates, enclosed gardens, fruits and abban [`fodder'].35

Then he said, "We know all of these, but what is the *`abb'.* By God, this is onerous. You are not accountable for what you cannot understand. Follow only what appears limpid to you in the Book, and act accordingly. What you do not know leave to the one who can master it ..."36

In sum, the Companions tended to be averse to all questioning beyond the limits of current, definable problems. This tendency, of course, led to the scanty number of legal stipulations transmitted from the Messenger. But beyond that, it led to the need for sources other than the Book and the Prophetic Tradition (*sunnah*) – such as juridical discretion (*istihsan*), analogy (*qiyas*) and other types of independent legal judgement (*ij'tihad*) in which the personal identity of the interpreter comes into play.37

Their aversion thus paved the way for an infiltration of the legislative process by the human personality through men's particular tastes and ideas. And such a tendency was furthest removed from the special apostolic preparation required by this generation. Such a preparation implies extensive training and instruction in the legal resolution of problems soon to be faced during its leadership.

Just as the Companions had refrained from querying the Prophet, so they failed to collect his sayings and traditions (*sunnatihi*),38 although these comprised Islam's second (legislative) source.

Collection is the only method of preserving and protecting them from loss or distortion. Based on Yahya b. Sa'd (who transmitted, in turn, from `Abd Allah b. Dinar), al–Harawi uttered these disparaging words: "Neither [the Prophet's] Companions nor those who followed used to write the sayings [*hadith*]. Instead they conveyed them verbally and committed them to memory."39

In fact, according to Ibn Sa`d's *Tabaqat,* the Second Caliph had been confused as to the best position to take with respect to the Prophetic Tradition (*sunnat al–rasul*). This persisted for a month, after which he announced –a prohibition against recording any of it." Thus it was that the Messenger's practice, the most important source for Islam after the Holy Book itself, was given over to fate, subject to forgetfulness here, to distortion there and, finally, to the passing away over a course of about 150 years of all those who had it stored in their memory."40

The exception in this regard were those who upheld the (rights of the) Prophetic Household (*ahl al–bayt*). They tirelessly began recording and collecting from the very first period. There are narratives relating how the Imams had collected a voluminous book in which are gathered the words of the Messenger himself in the handwriting of `Ali b. Abi Ta1ib's4142

Does anyone honestly believe that an artless course – if, indeed, even artlessness is pertinent – such as eschewing all questioning about an event prior to its occurrence, or of refusing to record the Prophet's practices once they materialize, can ever make one equal to the task of heading the new apostleship at the most critical and most difficult phase of its protracted course? Does one really believe that the Messenger has left his Tradition (*sunnatahu*) scattered about without record or precision, while enjoining adherence to it?43

Or, would it not have been necessary to establish the statutes of "consultation" and to fix its norms (if indeed he were preparing the way for such a system), so as to set it on a stable and definite path, where idiosyncracies would not come into play. 44

Is not the only reasonable explanation for this approach by the Prophet that he prepared Imam `Ali as the leading authority and for a practical leadership after he is gone; indeed, pouring immeasurable knowledge ("a thousand doors") and turning his Tradition entirely over to him.[45] Events after the Prophet's death have confirmed that the generation of *Muhajirin* and *Ansar* could not truly claim to be in possession of definite instructions for the many significant problems confronted by the Mission of Islam.

So much so that neither the Caliph nor his circle of supporters had any clear idea of how to govern the prodigious land area, over which Islam had triumphed, according to the religious rule of law – whether to distribute it to the soldiery or to make it an endowment for collective use by the Muslims.'[46]

Is it conceivable that the Prophet would assure the Muslims of their imminent triumph over the "Land of Khusrow and Caesar,"[47] making the *Muhajirin* and *Ansar* custodians over the Mission of Islam to preside over this conquest, but then fail to inform them how the religious rule of law needed to be implemented over these great expanses of land that would soon to come into the fold of Islam?

What is more, the generation contemporary with the Prophet did not posses any clear, definite idea even of purely religious matters, although the Prophet performed his acts hundreds of times in his Companions' full view. One may mention, by way of example, the prayer for the dead. This is an act of worship that had been openly performed by the Prophet numerous times. He performed it at public funerals, which were open to all participants and worshippers.

Despite this, the Companions apparently did not consider it necessary to know the ritual itself so long as the Prophet performed it and so long as they followed him, step by step. As a result, they disagreed after his death over how many times to utter exaltations to God during prayers over the dead. Al–Tahawi related, on the authority of Ibrahim:

God's Messenger died while people were still arguing over the exaltation of God at funerals. One could hardly wish for less than to hear a man say, "I heard the Messenger exalt God five times'; and then another to say, "I heard the Messenger exalt God four times." They disagreed on this until the death of Abu Bakr. When `Umar succeeded him and saw how people disagreed, he became very troubled.

So he communicated to some men from among the Companions of the Messenger the following: "You are fellows to the Companions of the Messenger: when you bring disagreement to the people, they will [continue to] disagree after you. When you bring agreement concerning a matter, people will agree on it." It was as if he had roused them from sleep. For they answered, "What an excellent view, O Commander of the Faithful!"[48]

Hence, the Companions used mostly to rely on the Prophet, while he lived, sensing no immediate need to understand the legal rulings or notions so long as they were in his charge.[49]

It might be argued that this depiction of the Companions, together with whatever the records say about their lack of fitness to lead, contradict what we generally believe – namely, that the moral education

given them by the Prophet was tremendously successful; since it brought into being a towering, apostolic generation.

The answer to this is as follows. In the foregoing, we have tried to establish an actual picture of the entire generation that witnessed the Prophet's death, without finding anything that might contradict in any significant way the positive value of the moral education given by the Prophet during his noble life. The reason is that we believe Prophetic moral education, at the same time, to be a stupendous instance of Divine (Grace) – indeed the revival of a messengership quite unique in the lengthy history of prophethood – we find that neither this belief nor a realistic valuation of the product of such an education can stand solely on a picture of the final results, separate from the circumstances and conditions. Nor can it be had by noting the quantity apart from the quality.

To *clarify,* let us consider the following example. Supposing there is a teacher teaching the English language and its rules to a number of pupils. Now, let us suppose we would like to evaluate his teaching abilities. We cannot be satisfied with the teaching of the subject matter alone, nor with what the pupils managed to assimilate or to grasp of the English language and its rules. Rather, we would tie this to the time frame he needed to teach. We would also have to determine the pupil's prior standing; their initial proximity or distance to an English environment; the amount of difficulty or exceptional toil met with in the process of teaching hindering its natural course; and, finally, the which the teacher had in view as he taught his pupils the rules of language. The final product is as much a function of the teaching process as it is of various other pedagogical conditions.50

Concerning the valuation of the moral education given by the Prophet, one must take into consideration:

One, the brevity of the period in which the Prophet had been able to provide moral education; it did not exceed two decades from the oldest companionship of those few who befriended him at the outset; it does not exceed one decade relative to the *Ansar*, and is no more than three or four years relative to the enormous numbers entering Islam –starting from the Accord of Hudaybiyyah and onwards to the triumph over Mecca.

The second consideration concerns the (general) situation prevailing before the Prophet had begun to play his role, the one experienced intellectually, spiritually, religiously and behaviorally. It includes whatever people happened to be bound to out of naivety, intellectual idleness and impetuousness in diverse areas of life. I find no need to elaborate the point further, it being self–evident that Islam was not a project for superficial social change, but rather for a change at the roots. It was the revolutionary construction of a new community. This implies a vast spiritual parting of ways between, on the one hand, the new situation realized through the Prophet's efforts to educate the *Ummah*; and, on the other, the one that preceded.51

The third consideration has to do with the profusion of events in this period – all kinds of political and military struggles that took place on numerous fronts. This is a matter that distinguishes the nature of the

relation between the Prophet and his Companions from the type of relation that existed between a person like Jesus Christ and his disciples. It was not a relation that was quite that of a teacher or mentor devoted exclusively to the training of his pupils, but one that corresponded to the Prophet's position alike of mentor, military leader and head of state.[52]

The fourth concerns what the Muslims collectively faced as a result of their friction with the People of the Book[53] and various religious cultures encountered through social and doctrinal struggle. This friction, along with what those imbued in previous religious cultures had maintained within this forum, in opposition to the new Call, was a source of constant agitation and disturbance. It is widely known that it gave shape to an intellectual current based on Israelite legends,[54] which crept rather spontaneously or inadvertently into many areas of thought.[55] A careful perusal of the Qur'an is enough to reveal both the scope of the content of counter–revolutionary thought and Divine Revelation's concern to guard against and to contest its ideas.[56]

Fifthly, the goal which the mentor, at that stage, strove to achieve at a general level was the creation of a healthy popular base that would permit those presiding over the new Mission – whether in his lifetime or thereafter – to collaborate with it and to persevere along the path of experiment. At the time, the short term objective, as such, was not to raise the *Ummah* up to the level of the leadership itself, in a way that required complete understanding of the Message or a comprehensive grasp of its precepts.

It did not demand absolute adherence to its ideas. At that stage, to define the goal with this in mind is quite logical, and necessary with respect to the nature of the drive for change. It would be unreasonable to prescribe a goal that is incompatible with practical possibilities. Practical possibility in a situation such as the one Islam faced could never exist except within the limits alluded to here, since the spiritual, intellectual and social division between the new Mission and the corrupt reality that prevailed at the time did. not allow people to rise to a level at which they could immediately lead the Mission.

We shall elaborate on this in the next point,[57] demonstrating its modality –which is that the continuity of guardianship with respect to the new and revolutionary experience is best embodied in the *imamate* of the Prophetic Household (*ahl al–bayt*) and `Ali's Succession. It was inevitable, imposed by the logic of change upon the course of history.

Sixthly, the Prophet left behind a large portion of the *Ummah* comprised of those who became Muslims after the Conquest – that is, who entered Islam after Mecca had been won over[58] and after the new Mission had become politically and militarily preponderant in the Arabian Peninsula.

The Prophet had had scant opportunity to deal with these Muslims in the brief period that followed the conquest. The bulk of his dealings with them, in his capacity as sovereign, was strictly a function of the juncture that the Islamic State was passing through. It was at that juncture that the idea of "those whose hearts were brought together" (*al–mu'allafah qulubuhum*) appeared, one that acquired a place in the legislation concerning almsgiving (*zakat*)[59] and other procedures. But this part of the *Ummah* was not

isolated from others; it merged with them. It was influential and was, in turn, influenced.

Viewed within the framework established by these six issues, Prophetic moral education yielded prodigious results; it achieved a unique transformation and brought up a righteous generation wellsuited for what the Prophet was aiming for: to form a sound, popular base that could rally support around the leadership in this new experiment.

But this generation appears then to have acted as a sound, popular base so long as well–guided leadership was embodied in the Prophet. If the leadership had been able to maintain this Divine course, the base would have played its true role. This in no way implies that it was ready in practice to assume this leadership, or itself to steer the Islamic experiment.

Such a readiness requires a greater degree of pious and spiritual merging with the Call, much better comprehension of its precepts, concepts and various perspectives on life. It required a more thorough cleansing of its ranks of the "Hypocrites," infiltrators and "those whose hearts were brought together[60] – who collectively continued to form a portion of this generation having a certain numerical importance,[61] and historical factuality.

This segment had its negative effects, as indicated by the sheer bulk of what the Qur'an says about the Hypocrites, their schemes and postures. It nevertheless had individuals – such as Salman, Abu Dharr, `Ammar and others – whom experience was able to mold exquisitely for an apostolic purpose and of assimilating in its crucible.[62]

That these individuals were found among the larger generation taken as a whole, in my view, hardly proves that the latter ever collectively attained the kind of level that could justify vesting it with the tasks of the Islamic experiment simply on the basis of consultation.

Even the majority of these individuals – as lofty of manner, deeply loyal or sincere as they may have been towards the Call of Islam – did not have in them anything that justified assuming they were apostolically qualified to preside, either intellectually or culturally, over this experience. Islam is not just a human outlook to be intellectually worked out in the course of practice and application,[63] and its concepts crystallized through faithful experimentation.

It is the very Message of God whose precepts, or concepts, are delimited and endowed with the general legal provisions demanded by the experience.[64] Leadership in the Islamic experiment cannot do without a grasp of the details and limits of the Message; it has to attend to its precepts and concepts.[65]

Otherwise, it will be forced to look to mental precedents and to its own tribal underpinnings. And that would lead to certain regression for the course of the experiment; particularly when one notes that Islam constitutes the seal of all the heavenly messages: it has to stretch over time, transcending the limitations of era, region and nation.[66]

This fact did not permit the leadership that was to establish the foundation for this temporal span to engage in trial and error, heaping mistake upon mistake over time until the resulting hiatus threatened the entire experiment with breakdown and collapse.[67]

All of the above suggests that the instruction administered by the Prophet to the *Muhajirin* and the *Ansar*, at a general level, was not such as would be required for the preparation of a leadership intellectually or politically mindful of the future of the Islamic Call and the drive for change. It was a kind of instruction, rather, that was conducive to building a watchful popular base, one which could rally around the Mission's present and future leadership.

Any hypothesis claiming that the Prophet had been planning to hand over leadership of the experiment and custodianship after his death immediately to the *Muhajirin* and *Ansar* would entail, among other things, having to accuse the most sensible and discerning leader in the entire history of reform, one bearing a Divine Message, of being incapable of distinguishing between two things: a level of awareness called for by the popular base of the Mission, and one called for by the Mission's leadership, intellectual and political guidance.

Third Issue

The Call of Islam is for change and a new way of life. It aims at building a new *Ummah,* extirpating every root and trace of pre-Islam.

Collectively, the Islamic *Ummah* had hardly been under the aegis of this movement of change for more than a single decade, at most. In the logic of doctrinal missions – or any calling for change, for that matter – this short span of time was insufficient to raise a generation under the tutelage of the Call to some level of awareness, objectivity and emancipation from the dregs of the past.[68]

It did not allow it to fathom fully what this new Call offered; nor could it help it, leaderless, to qualify for custodianship, bear full responsibility and complete the drive for change. The logic of doctrinal missions impels toward doctrinal tutelage for the *Ummah* for a longer period of time, permitting it to adapt to the custodians' higher level.[69]

This is not something that can simply be inferred. It describes a truth demonstrated by the events that took place after the Prophet's death. It manifested itself within half-a-century or less of practice by the *Muhajirin* and the *Ansar* – *leading* and assuming custody of the Mission. No sooner had a quarter of a century of custodianship passed than the "Rightly-Guided Caliphate" and the Islamic experiment led by the *Muhajirin* and the *Ansar* began to –crumble under the heavy blows delivered by Islam's old enemies[70] – although from within, not from without.

The latter were able gradually to penetrate the executive centers and furtively to exploit the leadership, which they then impudently and fiercely wrenched control of. They compelled the *Ummah,* its first and

foremost generation, to abdicate its identity and headship. Governing was thus transformed into hereditary kingship,71 characterized by a disregard for respectability, slaying of the innocent,72 squandering of wealth,73 suspension of punishments and freezing of legal rulings,74 and playing with people's destinies. Land and spoils became the Quraysh's only requital, as the sons of Bani Umayyah jostled over the Caliphate.75 The situation in which the experiment found itself after the Prophet was gone, along with the consequences that shook it violently a quarter-century later, support -our reasoning - which is that an immediate transfer of political and intellectual authority to the *Muhajirun* and the *Ansar* after the Prophet's death was a step too early to take and not at all timely.

Therefore, that the Prophet had ever taken such a step is simply untenable.

1. Dr. `Abd al-`Aziz al-Duri, al Nuzum al-islamiyyah (Baghdad: Matba'at Najib, 1950), p. 7; Dr. Subhi al-Salih, al Nuzum al-islamiyyah (Dar al--`Ilm lil-Malayin,1965), p. 50.
2. In his book al-Nazariyyat al-siyasiyyah al-islamiyyah, Dr. Dia' al-Din al-Rayyis has acknowledged that the Caliphate in that form upon which rests the consultative order has no basis in the hadiths. Rather, it was based on a consensus among the Prophet's Companions, or Sahabah, on the grounds that it was predominant (p. 106, in a note in response to Arnold). This becomes clearer upon his response to and debate with Dr. 'Ali `Abd al-Razzaq, in al-Islam wa usul al-hukm, as the latter denies the existence of any contemporaneous legal text which could have benefited the system of politics and government. However, Dr. al-Rayyis answers by arguing on the basis of the actual practice of the Righteous Caliphs (al-khulafa al-rashidin). Their deeds are of decisive legal value in Islam (p. 148-45). See the reliable and exhaustive discussion on the text that is alleged to deal with "consultation" in `Allamah al-Sayyid Kazim al-Ha'iri, Asas al-hukumah al-islamiyyah (Beirut: Matba`at al-Nil, 1399 AH), p. 81 ff.
3. That is, leadership of the Imam.
4. Imam 'Ali disavowed the idea of consultation and the recourse to it by those who attended the Conference of Saqifah, where Abu Bakr had used the pretext of his closeness to the Prophet. See the "Shaqshaqiyyah Address" and, in particular, `Ali words, "What a consultation!..." (Nahj al-Balaghah. Sharh al-Imam Muhammad Abduh I:30, 34).
5. Note the discussions and arguments that took place on the Day of Saqiqah, as there was no mention, either explicit or implicit, of "consultation." What did arise was quite different, including the thesis of "One Amir from us, one from you." Abu Bakr, and after him `Umar b. al-Khattab, rejected this idea, which the latter hastened to lay to rest by taking Abu Bakr's hand and saying: "Open thy hand that I may swear thee in..." For texts relating to the Saqfah, see Tarikh al-Tabari (Dar al-Turath) II:234ff, esp. p. 203; also Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh al-Nahj, ed. Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim VI:6-9.
6. Ibn Manzur, Mukhtasar Tarikh Damashq XV III:310; Tarikh al-Tabari' II:352.
7. Ta'rirkh al-Yaqubi II:126 (Tab'at al-Najaf al-Haydariyyah) -Imam. Cf. Mukhtasar Tarikh Ibn `Asakir XVIII:310; Tarikh al-Tabari, First Edition IV:52 (al-Husayniyyah al-Misriyyah).
8. In Mukhtasar Tarikh Ibn Asakir XVIII:312, Qays b. Ab1 Hazim is recorded as saying: "Umar left us, document in hand and accompanied by Shadid, his protege, saying. "O People, hearken to the words of the Successor of God's Messenger, I wish for you `Umar, so accept his oath." In another version: "Hearken and obey what is contained in this paper."
9. Umar said to Suhayb: "Lead the prayers for three days. Then admit Ali, `Uthman, al-Zubayr, Sa`d, `Abd al-Rahman b. `Awf and Talhah, if he comes forward. Have `Abd Allah b. `Umar attend, even though the matter concerns him little. And observe them: if five of them are in unison over one man and a sixth declines, extirpate the latter or strike off his head with your sword., If only four agree on someone from their midst and two decline, then strike both their heads; if three accept one man and three another, then let `Abd Allah b. `Umar adjudicate in favour of one side, from which he is to select one man. Should they disagree with `Abd Allah b. `Umar's judgement, take then `Abd al-Rahman b. `Awf's side and slay the rest if they are loathe to accept what people have agreed on..." Cf Tarikh al-Tabari II:581; Ibn Athir, al-Kamil fi al-ta'rikh III:67 (Tabat Dar Sadir). This text has no commentary.
10. Tabaqat b. Sa`d III:343 (Beirut: Tab°at Dar Sadir) - Imam. Cf. Tarikh alTabari II:580 (Dar al-`Ilmiyyah). The report here differs from Ibn Sa`d's.

11. Ibid II:242.
12. Ibid. II:235
13. 'Ibid II:242. Imam 'Ali responded by arguing something similar to the following, found in Mukhtasar Ta'rikh Ibn Sad XVIII 38-9.
If the pursuit of Islam and faith alone could qualify a human being for the Caliphate, besides a necessary propinquity with the Prophet, or that he is friend and kin, then `Ali has gone the farthest in the worship of God and faith in the Prophet's Message. Indeed, his worship of God was not preceded by idolatry - he has never prostrated himself before idols - unlike all the others. As for his proximity to the Messenger, he was his closest kin. Strictly speaking, he was his heir [wali], brother and vicar - the only person to lead in his stead. (Cf. Musnad al-Imam Ahmad IV:281)
According to this reasoning, he is the most rightful person to succeed, no other.
14. Tarikh al-Tabari II:241 ff, for events in 11 AH.
15. Ibid II:243; Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah VI:6-9 - Imam.
16. Ta'rikh al-Tabari II:354.
17. This is because, going by the present hypothesis, if attention had been drawn to such a system, as would invariably be required, then we would have come across a specific concept in texts pertaining to this generation, or some specific application. However, nothing of the sort has been detected, as the Imam Baqir al-Sadr rightly pointed out.
18. Because instruction normally occurs in his noble biography and blessed tradition, but bearing on issues of a lesser nature and importance than this question; it takes place in myriad contexts or situations.
19. The abiding truth is that all details pertaining to the idea of consultation have vanished even at a level which might have defined its most basic features as a system of rule, as it has not been related that any of the contenders, whether at the conference of Saqifah or afterwards, had come forward with or clung to a single text in any degree. For the Saqifah texts, see Ta'rikh al-Tabari II:234ff.
20. The abiding truth is that all details pertaining to the idea of consultation have vanished even at a level which might have defined its most basic features as a system of rule, as it has not been related that any of the contenders, whether at the conference of Saqifah or afterwards, had come forward with or clung to a single text in any degree. For the Saqifah texts, see Ta'rikh al-Tabari II:234ff.
21. This is in respect of the need for sufficient clarification to help settle the issue of leadership, now left vacant; thus averting the dreaded dangers that accompany the absence of precise standards in this connection.
22. That is, as is the case with every legal responsibility, for this will be elaborated on. This was exactly what the Prophet was wont to hold regarding all legal responsibilities. God says: "We brought down a remembrance that ye may clarify to the people what has come down to them" (Qur'an 16:44 "al-Nahl") If it were legally-sanctioned rule, a duty that had to to be performed by those qualified, it would have required clarification.
23. That is, as came to pass in the attempt to expunge the principle of walayah (or "guardianship") in `Ali's case. Despite this, the relevant texts have not all disappeared Many texts have come down through recurrent and uninterrupted transmission. Cf. Ibn Manzur, Mukhtasar Ta'rikh Ibn Asakir, XVII:356ff, XVIII:1-50. If there were any texts or statements on consultation as a system, they have passed into oblivion.
24. See the appended study. Cf. Ibn Manzur, Mukhtasar Ta'rikh Ibn Asakir XVII:354, XVIII:I-50; Abu Na'im, Hilyat al-awliya' I:66; Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabaqat al-kubra II:338; al-Qanduzi, Yanabi al-mawaddah I:62ff; al-Nassa'i, al-Sunan al-kubra and al Khasais V:128ff.
25. It is noteworthy that the Muslim writers investigating the question of political order or the Caliphate, who dismiss the whole idea of stipulation and designation (illustrated by hundreds of Prophetic traditions), relying instead on the notion of a consultative system and using the Qur'an among other sources, have not come across any Prophetic texts in support of their claims. As a result, they are compelled to rely on the biographies of the Companions. And yet, they have not been able to give a logical interpretation for the Companions' rather confused and incongruous situation in the midst of which a successor was appointed. Cf Dr. al-Rayyis, al-Nazariyyat al siyasiyah al-islamiyyah; `Abd al-Fattah `Abd al -Maqsud, al-Saqifah mal-khilafah.
26. Cf. Ibn Manzur, Mukhtasar Ta'rikh Ibn Asakir XVIII:230, on the story concerning al-Sha'bi, who was with Talhah, al-Zubayr, Said and `Abd al-Rahman.

27. Ta'rikh al-Tabari, First Edition II:92 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al--`Ilmiyyah). This relates to the Prophetic hadith at the time when a trench was being dug.
28. Cf. Sunan Abi Daud, on account of its specialty in hadiths on legal rulings; Imam Malik's al-Muwatta ; with a total of 1570 hadiths, some of which are mursal.
29. The four volumes of Ibn Hajar's al-Isabah fi tamyiz al-sahabah count up to 12,267. See Dr. Akram Diya' al-`Umar's Buhuth fi ta'rikh al-sunnah al-musharaffah, Third edition (Beirut. Mu'assasat al-Risalah,1975) (the note on p. 71). Cf. Dr. Subhi al-Salih, Ulum al-hadith wa mustalahahu, p. 354. It is related on Abu Zar'ah that the Prophet left behind 114,000 Companions.
30. Dr. Subhi al-Salih, Nahj al-balaghah, Imam `Alis's Sermon No. 210, p. 327. He said: "Not all of the Messenger's Companions used to question or query him, so much so that they preferred that a Bedouin or a complete stranger to ask and they listen. But none of it would go past me without my asking and retaining..."
31. Sunan al-Darimi I:50 (Nashr Dar Ihya' al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah).
32. Ibid I:50 - Imam.
33. Ibid. I:50 - Imam.
34. Ibid 1:50 - Imam.
35. Qur'-an 70:27-31, `"Abasa'.
36. Al-Suyuti, al-Itiqan fi Ulum Qur'an II:4, ed. Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim.
37. Shafi`ite legal interpretation (ijtihad) dismisses the two theories of "legal or juridical discretion" (istihsan) and "unbounded interests" (al-masalih al-mursalah), as religious law (al-shariah) takes it upon itself to clarify every legal ruling needed by man, whether through explicit text, allusively or legally-sanctioned analogy, This is because legal discretion has no regulative mechanism or scale by which one can weigh the true against the false. It is reported that Shafi'i had said, "To use legal discretion is to legislate." See al-Madkhal al fiqhi al-amm by Dr. Mustafa al-Zarqa I:124-25.
38. On the question of the writing of the hadiths, their prohibition and subsequent endorsement, what was found and recorded by Dr. Subhi al-Salih, 'Ulum al-hadith wa mustalihihi (Tab'at Dar al-`Ilm lil-Malayin), p. 20ff (in the notes).
39. Ibid.. See also Sunan al-Darimi I:119 (Ch. "Who ought to disregard the written hadihs?" ["man lam yara kitabat al-hadith"]).
40. Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabaqat al-kubra III:287 (Tab`at Dar Bayrut,1405 AH).
41. The first official collection of traditions was written by Muhammad b. Muslim b. Shahab al-Zuhri (dd.124 Al-1), as ordered by `Umar b. `Abd al--`Aziz. He is said to have affirmed: "This knowledge has never been put into a collection before." Cf. Dr. Subhi al-Salih, Ulum al-hadith wa mustalihatuhu, p. 46.
42. Usul al-Kafi I:241-42 (Ch. "Dhikr al-sahifah wal jafr wal jami`ah") (Tehran: Nashr Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah, 1388 AH).
43. As in Hadith al-thaqlayn ("Two Weights': "Verily, I have left among you that by which, if you adhere to it, you shall never go astray after I am gone...," whose reliability has been indicated above; see, for example, Sahih Muslim IV:1874; cf. Muhammad Taqi al-Hakim, al- Usul al-Ammah, his study on the Sunnah.
44. In n. 17 above, we alluded to issues concerning the confused matter of consultation, differences over its proper criteria and features from one Caliph to the other. Cf. `Abd al-Fattah Abd al-Maqsud, al-Saqifah wal-khilafah, p. 264.
45. Cf Shaykh al-Mufid, al-Irshad, p. 22; al-Qanduzi, Yanabi al-mawaddah I:62. See also this book's appendix, "The Intellectual and Moral Upbringing of Imam `Ali..."
46. Ibn al-`Arabi, Ahkam al-Qur'an IV:1778 ("al-Hashr"); cf, al-Baladhuri, Futuh al buldan, p. 268.
47. On the prophecy of their conquest, see Tarik al-Tabari II:92 (Beirut: Dar al Kutub al ilmiyyah).
48. `Umdat al-qari; Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari VIII:137, Ch. "Takbir `ala al janazah" (Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath) - Imam.
49. Dr. Mustafah `Abd al-Razzaq, Tamhid li-Ta'rikh al falsafah, p. 272.
50. The Imam splendidly draws attention to the precise criteria for the task of teaching and its final product. These criteria and observations are relevant to any effort at intellectual or moral training - and, likewise, to the effort to give a substantial appraisal of a similar case.
51. On what made Arabian and Hijazi society what it is before Islam, see Dr. Jawad `Ali, Tarikh al-`arab qabl Islam (Sections on "religion" and "society'.)

52. Indeed, the variety of responsibilities and their natures, the challenges encountered by the Prophet as leader were so serious that the he could not find sufficient time to complete his education and instruction of wide sectors of the Islamic community. Cf. Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, Ulum al-Qur'an, pp. 96-100.

53. In its wider sense, the expression "People of the Book" refers to Jews, Christians and Muslims, but often refers to the former two when interreligious relations are the subject - Translator.

54. In reference to legends about people or events of the Israelite period -Translator.

55. Cf. Muhammad Husayn al-Dhahabi, al-Isra'ilayat fi tafsir wal-hadith (Damascus: Dar al-Iman, 1985).

56. Cf "Surat al-Munafiqun" of the Qur an. One might note here the actions and movements of the Jews, the roles they played in Islamic history; cf. Muhammad Jawad Mughniyyah, al-Isra'iliyyat fi al-Qur'an (Beirut).

57. That is, the following chapter entitled "The Third Path."

58. Al-Zamakhshari, Tafsir al-Kashshaf IV: 810 ("Tafsir Surat al-Nasr").

59. As God says in the Qur an: "Alms are for the poor and the humble, those who administer it and for those whose hearts have been reconciled, for those in bondage, in debt and in the way of God; and for the wayfarer: Thus is it ordained by God..." (Qur an 9:60 "Surat al-Tawbah")

60. They appear to be numerous so as to constitute a burden upon the State's financial reserves, whose concellation the second Caliph had defended on the argument that Islam had become mighty and powerful.

61. This is readily available in most interpretations of Surat al-Munafiqin.

62. As the Prophet said, "God hath commanded me to love four [persons], telling me of His Love of them: `Ali, Abu Dharr, al-Miqdad and Salman" (Sunan Ibn Majjah, I:66). Cf. al-Tajj al jai lil-usul III:405.

63. Among circles of theorists and thinkers, a common statement is that theory is enriched through application. That is why the Imam points out that Islam is not of this sort.

64. Cf "Nothing have we ommitted from the Book..." (Qur'an 6:38 "Surat al An'am"...and we sent down to thee the Book explaining all things..." (Qur'an 16:89 "Surat al Nahl") ...so take what the Messenger assigns to you, and deny yourselves..." (Qur an 59:7 "Sural al-Hashr")

65. See our study appended at the end of this book.

66. We have not sent thee but [as a Messenger] to all men..." (Qur an 34:28, "Surat Saba") We have not sent thee but as Mercy for all..." (Qur'an 21:107, "Surat al Anbiya")

67. The Prophet Muhammad wanted to spare his Ummah the bitterness and pains that go with trial and error, along with the suffering and calamity this may bring upon it He said: "Come! Let me write you a letter that you may never go astray after I am gone..." Yet the greatest loss - as expressed by Ibn 'Abbas - was that the Messenger was prevented from doing so. See the story in Sahih al-Bukhari VIII:161 (Ch. "al I'tisam").

68. Note the cases of defection and apostasy after the Prophet had died, all the plain inconsistencies and departures from Islam's clarities and morality committed even by some high-ranking military chiefs - as in the case of Khalid b. al-Walid who, in the story of Malik b. Nuwayrah, was accused by the second Caliph `Umar of "killing a Muslim [i.e. Malik b. Nuwayrah] and then coveting his wife." Cf. Tarikh al-Tabari II:280 (Beirut: Dar al-Turath), the edited printing.

69. That was the logic of previous missions, as in Da'ud's (David's) succession by Sulayman (Solomon); similar Musas (Moses succession by Harun (Aaron): "He said, Be heir of my people and be just..." Finally, this is necessitated by the logic of things and that of the final Religious Law (al-Shariah). Cf Appendix.

70. He means to allude to those who embraced Islam at the time of the taking of Mecca. Among "those whose hearts were brought together" was Abu Sufyan and Mu awiyah, Tarikh al-Tabari II:175.

71. Cf. Ibn Khaldun, al-Muqaddamah (Tab`at Dar al Jil), p. 227 ("The Transformation of the Caliphate into a Monarchy" Ibn Athir III:199 (Tab`at al Halabli) relates that `Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Bakr interrupted Marwan, as the latter was giving sermon from the minbar of Medina, in order to defend Mu`awiyah's point of view, shouting at him, "By God! you lie as much as Mu'awiyah. Neither of you intends anything good for the Ummah. You want to make it Heraclean; whenever an Heraclius dies another rises in his place." Cf. al-Suyuti, Tarikh al-khulafa p. 203.

72. Ibn Athir III:487 relates that Hasan al-Basri, one of the most prominent of those who succeeded the Companions, had stated, "Murawiyah has four traits; if he had but one trait, it would be violation. His leaping upon this Ummah sword in hand to seize power, without any deliberation, while there were Companions of virtue; bequeathing the throne to his drunkard son

Yazid; making his claims on Ziyad; killing Hajar b. `Adi and his confidants. Woe upon him for Hajar! Woe upon him for Hajar and his confidants!...”

73. Cf. al-Tajj al jami lil usul V:310; for further details, see Sayyid Qutb's al-Adalah al-ijtimaiyyah fi al-Islam, p. 231 ff

74. See what al-Suyuti relates in his Tarikh, p. 209ff, regarding “What abominable transgressions were perpetrated by Yazid against the Prophet's grandson, Husayn; the confinement of the rest of the family; the assault on Mecca, seizure of Medina, killing of its inhabitants and outrages against loved ones!”

75. He means Abu Sufyan's statement to `Uthman upon acceding to power. Cf. al Suyuti, Tarikh al-khulafa; p. 209; al-Maqrizi, al-Naza` wal-takhasum bayna Bani Hashim wa Bani Umayyah, ed. Dr. Mu'nis, p. 56.

The Third Discussion: Affirmation Represents Choice and Designation

The third hypothetical path is that of affirmation, representing the preparation and investiture of whomever will lead the *Ummah*. This is the only path in keeping with the natural order of things. It is especially reasonable in light of the conditions surrounding the Islamic Call, the people promoting it and the Prophet's own conduct.1

The third option, then, is that the Prophet had adopted an affirmative stance toward the future of the mission after his death, selecting at God's behest a person for candidate whose presence was intrinsic to the Islamic Mission. Consequently, he would have to prepare this person for an apostolic mission2 and special leadership, so that intellectual authority and political guidance of the experiment may be vested in him...

The purpose was to continue building, after the Prophet's departure, the leadership of the community and its doctrinal edifice, supported by a vigilant popular base composed of *Muhajirin* and *Ansar*. Further, it was to permit the community to draw ever closer to a level qualifying it to shoulder the responsibilities of leadership.

Hence, it appears that this path is the only one likely to secure a healthy future for the Mission and to protect the experiment as it grows.3 Certain widely and continuously-reported traditions about the Prophet indicate that he endeavoured to provide special apostolic preparation and doctrinal instruction to one person working for the Islamic Call; this, at a level suited for intellectual and political authority. To this person he entrusted intellectual and political leadership as well as the future of the Call of the *Ummah* after him.4 This illustrates that the Prophet as leader acted in accordance with the third path, as beckoned to and imposed by the very nature of the circumstances we saw above.

The only propagator of Islam designated for such apostolic preparation, to be handed over the future of the Islamic Call and set up as intellectual and political leader, was 'Ali b. Abi Talib. The Prophet

nominated him for this task insofar as his presence was an intrinsic part of the Islamic Mission. He was the foremost Muslim and fighter for its cause all during the tenacious struggle against its foes. This is not to mention his place in the life of the Prophet himself. For he was a foster son to him, opening his eyes for the first time in the Prophet's lap. He grew up in his care, and had ample opportunity to interact with him and to follow in his footsteps, certainly more than any other human being did.5

There is a brimful of evidence from the lives of both the Prophet and Imam `Ali that the former had been been providing Ali with special apostolic training. The Prophet used to single him out for the concepts and truths he transmitted concerning the Call of Islam. For instance, whenever `Ali exhausted his line of questioning with the Prophet, the latter would anticipate him, thereby contributing further to the cultivation of his mind.6 They would spend long hours, day and night, in private. The Prophet opened `Ali's mind to the ideas of the Mission; he taught him about the problems to be encountered along the way and the practical approach adopted until the last day of his noble life.

In his *al-Mustadrak,* al-Hakim relates the words of Abu Ishaq: "I asked al Qasim b. al-`Abbas, `How is it that `Ali is the heir of the Messenger of God?' He replied, Because among us he is the first to reach him and the closest in clinging to him..."7

In *Hilyat al-Awliya*' Ibn `Abbas' asserted that "We used to discuss how the Prophet had sworn `Ali in with seventy oaths, which he would never have asked of anyone else."8

In *al-Khasa'is,* al-Nassa'i relates that Imam `Ali had stated, "I had a status with the Prophet that no other person possessed. I used to call on the Prophet of God every night. If he was praying, he would finish off with praisngs to God. When not praying, he would admit me in."9

It is also related that Imam `Ali had said, "My visitations to the Prophet were of two kinds: one by night and another by day..."10 And al Nassa'i recounts that he used to say, "Whenever I questioned the Prophet he obliged; when I remained silent he anticipated me..."11 This is also related by al-Hakim in his *al-Mustadrak,* with a note on its soundness, based on two famous authorities, or *shaykhayn*12 al Bukhari and Muslim. Al-Nassa'i says that Umm Salamah declared the following:

About the one to whom Umm Salamah has sworn allegiance: "Of all people `Ali is closest to God's Messenger ...On the very morning that Gods Messenger was to die, [the Messenger] sent for 'Ali. I believe he had dispatched him for something. Then he asked thrice: Has `Ali arrived vet? The latter returned before sunrise. When he came back we knew that [the Messenger] was in some need of him. So we left the house. And that same day we were with the Messenger at A'ishah's house, which I was the last to leave, sitting behind the door, very near to them. `Ali was leaning over him. He was the last person with him, as far as we know. The Messenger took him in confidence and imparted his secrets.13

In his famous Qasi`ah Sermon, Imam `Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, described his unique relationship with the Prophet and the meticulous preparation and moral education he enjoyed:

You well know my place of close kinship and special standing with God's Messenger. He put me in his lap when I was a child, embraced me close to his heart, offered me shelter at his berth. And there, admitted into physical contact with him, I scented his fragrance.

He chewed the food bits to feed me. Never did he find in me a mendacious word nor a patterer's deed. I used to follow him as the weaned young camel does its mother's trail. And every day he would bring up some new teaching in morals, admonishing me to emulate him. Every year he retired to [the Cave of] *Hira'*, where I alone would see him. No single roof then had joined God's Messenger and Khadijah in Islam but that I was its third member.

I witnessed the light of the revelation and the message, and inhaled the scent of prophethood.[14] These and other testimonies give us a picture of the kind of special apostolic preparation that the Prophet was accustomed to giving Imam `Ali as instruction for leadership in the Mission of Islam. There are a great many records about Imam `Ali's life after the death of the Prophet which reveal the special training for leadership whose effects were duly reflected in him.

The Imam excelled, indeed was an authority, in resolving difficult problems for the leaders who governed at the time.[15] But there is not a single occasion known from the Caliphate period when Imam Ali consulted another, either for an opinion in Islam or for a way to rectify a situation. On the other hand, we know of tens of instances in which those leaders felt the need to refer to Imam `Ali, despite certain wariness.

But if there is abundant evidence that the Prophet had been giving special training to the Imam in order to continue the leadership of the Mission after he was gone, the evidence is no less great that the Prophet as leader of the *Ummah* had made known his plan; and that intellectual and political leadership over the Mission was transferred by him to Imam 'Ali. This is observable in the *hadiths* of "al-Dar,"[16] 'al-Thaqlayn" ("the Two Weighty Things"),[17] "al-Manzilah,"[18] al"Ghadir"[19], indeed, of tens of other Prophetic traditions."[20]

Within the framework of the Islamic Call, Shi'ism is thus embodied in the thesis postulated by the Prophet – at God's behest – aimed at securing the future of the Mission. Accordingly, it is not a phenomenon that was foreign to this stage of events, but a necessary result. It was natural to the Call's genesis, exigencies and initial circumstances, which drove Islam to give birth to "Shi-`ism."

More particularly, it required of the first leader that he prepare the second leader for the experiment[21] through whose hands and those of his successors this experiment will continue to develop in a revolutionary sense. Only then could it draw closer to its goal of change: tearing out every root and vestige of the pre-Islamic past and constructing a new community in accordance with the exigencies of the Call and its responsibilities.

1. No doubt, after excluding the two previous suppositions, only this one remains logically acceptable.
2. See our explanation in the Appendix about this selection and the whole (intellectual, practical and moral) enterprise of

apostolic training.

3. Because, as the texts make explicit, the training of the Caliph who happens to lead would be complete and the person actually designated.

4. Cf the texts copied in our Appendix concerning our Sunni brethren.

5. See Imam `Ali's address known as “al-Qas'iah,” as mentioned in the Appendix. Cf. Nahj al-balaghah pp. 300-01, edited by Dr. Subhi a1-Salih.

6. It is held that Imam `All had said, “Whenever I questioned him - that is, the Prophet - he would oblige. But when I remained silent, he anticipated me...” (al Nassa'i, al-Sunan al-kubra V:142; al-Sawa`iq al-muharraqah), p. 127.

7. Al-Hakim al-Nisaburi, al-Mustadrak ala al-sahihayn, III:136, hadith No. 4633 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al Ilmiyyah).

8. Abi Na`im, Hilyat al-awliya' I:68 (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-`Arabi, 1407 AH).

9. Al-Sunan al-kubra, “al-Khasais” V:140, bath No. I/8499.

10. Al-Sunan al-kubra, “al-Khasais” V:140, bath No. I/8499.

11. Ibid. V:141.

12. Al-Mustadrak III:135, hadith No. 4630, ed. Mustafa `Abd al-Qadir `Ata' (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, 1411 AH).

13. Al-Nasaa'i, al-Sunan al-kubra V:154, Ch. 54. Cf the story in Mukhtasar Ta'rikh Ibn 'Asakir XVIII:21.

14. Nahj al-balaghah, ed. Dr. Subhi al-Salih, Sermon No. 192.

15. See Appendix; cf. al-Suyuti, Tarikh al-khulafa ; pp. 180-82. As `Umar b. alKhattab said, “God forbid that there be as problem and no Abu al-Hasan to solve it.” Ibn Hajar, al-Sawaiq al-muhriqah, p. 127.

16. Hadith al-Dar upon the revelation of these words of the Qur'an: “Warn thy closest kinsfolk” (Qur'an 26:214, “Surat al-'Ushara”). Cf. Tafsir a1-Kabir III:371 (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah).

17. Hadith al-thaqlayn is provided by the compilers of sihah, sunan and masanid. Cf. Sahih Muslim IV: 1873; Sahih al-Tirmidhi V:596, edited by Kamal al-Hut (Dar al-Fikr).

18. Hadith al-Manzilah: “You have the position with respect to me that Harun had with Musa...” (Sahih al-Bukhari V:81, Ch. 39).

19. For hadith al-Ghadir see Sunan Ibn Majjah, Introduction, Ch. 11 143; Musnad al Imam Ahmad IV:281 (Beirut: Dar Sadir).

20. For elaboration on this theme, see the Appendix.

21. For the second Caliph's words to the consultative members, see Mukhtasar Ta'rikh Ibn Asakir XVIII:35.

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