

Shi'a Islam: Belief System, Leadership And History

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This text provides a comprehensive overview of the Shi'a school of thought and its core beliefs. Through an exposition of key facts of early Islamic history, it proves that it was and still is in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Prophet (S) and his Ahl Al-Bayt ('a).

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Dedication

We beseech God Almighty by His beloved Prophet Muhammad (S) and his household Ahl Al-Bayt ('a). May God's peace and blessings shower upon them without end, with the fulfilling of His promise and spread of His light that shall defeat all darkness and lead mankind to freedom, justice, unity and salvation with the arrival of the awaited Saviour – Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj), the upholder of truth and justice in the world, inshaAllah!

Whence have I come from?

What fore have I come?

Where am I to go?

Show me my home

Sheikh Bahai

– Philosopher, mathematician, architect, poet, political scientist, adviser, astronomer, scholar, mystic

Foreword

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, the Beneficent the Merciful

In His name that is Love, Goodness and Generosity

In His Name that created man and guided him

In His Name that sent His chosen ones with His message and His religion for mankind to know Him and taste eternal and true Love

Dear readers!

The goal of this book is to present an overall understanding of the Shi'a Islamic school of thought, in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Prophet (S) and his Ahl Al-Bayt ('a).

In that regard, this book is neither a black-and-white factual book nor a historical compendium. Its purpose, however, is to start a dialogue with common sense, one that is in line with the Ahl Al-Bayt's teachings. The overall aim of this book is to provide the reader with an overall understanding of the meaning of Shi'a, what it stands for, what it is founded on and constitute a foundation for future research

The build-up of this book is focused on comprehensive headlines followed by more specific, substantial and prevailing subheadings. This will include various questions posed to give a wider insight into this subject.

Take note that the citing of historical events connected to those with determinant and prominent roles in pivotal past events has been crucial in shedding light on many aspects of history. In that regard, sensitive questions have been put forth with respect, based on actual encounters made in the past. Therefore, the mention of renowned personalities is not intended to personally attack any school of thought or, God forbid, anyone's faith.

To summarize, the main focus in this book has been to put forward Shi'a belief and the Shi'a school's foundations to the public at large and exhort the readers to reflect.

Do questions arise whilst reading? Good! Read more, reflect and search on.

This book is dedicated to the Prophet (S), his daughter Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a), his chosen successor Imam Ali ('a), his grandchildren Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a), and the nine following Imams ('a) from Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) progeny. May this be a step to hasten the arrival of the twelfth

Imam ('aj), inshaAllah!

Den Väntades Vänner

Anniversary of Eid Ghadir –
18 Thul Hijja 1440 / 20th of August 2019

Preliminary Notes

For an enricher read, the reader is kindly requested to bear in mind the following fundamental factors:

Observe that for every question; there are multiple verses in The Holy Qur'an, that illustrate the question's many aspects and angles. That is in addition to the fact that every verse in itself, except having an overall outward explanation, also contains many fine details that shed light on more principles and subtle factors that both clarify historical associations and describe guiding directions. For that reason, every verse includes a whole world of clear truths, knowledge, depth and secrets. The verses recorded in this book constitute only a fraction of all verses that are related to every subject. For more depth in every question, it is required that the searcher devotes themselves to deeper studies of the Holy Qur'an, its interpretation commentary and its related ahadith (narrations) and history.

In the question of historical perspective and the limited possibility to include the whole course of history with all its details, mainly the prior, more crucial and unanimous historical events have been accounted for. Again, the searcher is responsible for follow-up any loose ends and research.

Chapter 1: Islamic Perspective On Humanity And The World

Questions addressed in this chapter:

Three basic questions:

High worth and great potential of man

The unlimited essence of man – an eternal soul

The basic needs of man

Superficial needs

Profound needs

Why is the world filled with war and egoism when we could live in peace and be well?

The human belief

Three Basic Questions Every Person Tussle With

Who Am I?

Who am I? Most likely, the most basic human question of all time!

You have probably, just like every other person, asked this question to yourself in one instance or another, throughout your life. A universal question, which every person, consciously or subconsciously, deliberately or not, is confronted with some time during their lifetime. An existential question that in periods of life, not least in the teenage years, becomes more evident and a foundation in the identification of the self. So, who are you?

What Am I Doing Here?

What am I doing here? The accompanying natural question, which man often asks after the prior question.

Have you ever, for example, as a result of a shocking event or when tiresome of the same routine of existence, questioned the meaning of life? This can be the foundation of which a revaluation of your whole life comes into place, one that can encourage positive change. However, in the moment of questioning, oftentimes regretful, many things lose colour and meaning. This often leads man to seek the real meaning of life; the meaning of which, if without, man would lose motivation to live. It is also then that man realizes the meaning of life to be more than the material and worldly matters that surround him and that surrounds him, none of which can satisfy him.

The purpose of which I have come to this world and live here, the goal of life or the meaning of life, are just some ways to express it. Something man, in her nature, needs as a drive and motivational power to live consciously. So, what are you doing here? And what is the meaning of your life?

Where Am I Headed?

Where am I headed? This is the third naturally followed question and also the most neglected.

What are the goal and the meaning of life? What happens after death? Every human may ask those questions at some point during their lifetime, especially in relation to major changes in life, like the loss of someone close or an eye-opening experience. For many people, these questions are extreme and frightening, something they would rather not think of and cast-off. However, the question remains, can one run away from the inevitable by not thinking of it? For many, these questions disappear in an aimless day-to-day existence, and one day one wakes up and realizes that many years have passed by, with no guarantee of how much life one has left. Then a question echoes; what have I done in my life and how much of it is worth it in the end? But instead of waking up with a crisis and be panicked, to then be filled with regret or push aside and keep on neglecting the question, is it not an alternative to start thinking of an essential question of your life now?

So, what is the meaning of your life? And how are you going to meet death, which is, without a doubt, what we all face?

Man – With An Enormous Inner Potential To Fulfil

Man – An Unlimited Soul In A Limited World

Why even when you have fulfilled your wishes do your excitement not last, and you do not feel lasting peace? Why is it that you can have everything, or in a moment achieve one of your goals, to then feel empty the next and then keep seeking? What can explain that even once you have reached the peak of your success, which you have strived for many years, you are still left unsatisfied? And the real question: what is it that constantly drives the human being to seek for more and get tired of monotony, even in the adequate existence? Why is it that the human being is never satisfied?

Throughout life, it is natural and desirable that we all evaluate ourselves to see where we are headed. In such an evaluation, not seldom do we reflect back and examine ourselves to then discover what we have spent years of our lives on and how we have worked and strived to achieve different goals. Shortly after the achievement of those goals, we realize the lack of satisfaction and still wish for more, or even for something else. Not long after that, a new goal is set and yearned for, to then again be achieved and yet again do we realize, it is not enough. We further recognize that there is something else that we are yearning and searching for. And so, the journey continues... What is it with this continuous quest? Why is it that the human is never content, and what does it indicate?

This continuous quest is based on an inner longing every human has; a longing for eternity and perfection. As a matter of fact, the human has a deeply rooted tendency to love perfection and seek it, and also not be content with the transient and imperfect.

For some, a modern car can come to be the highest aim, but only for a period of time. Soon after, a better car takes the former's place and thereafter, a newer one. For others, education or another kind of knowledge define their highest goals for happiness and perfection; however, this kind of happiness is not

infinite and lasts only for a short time. For some, it is the property and other fortunes, a certain position of power or plain money. But after reaching those aims, still, one does not feel satisfied, even in that moment of success, why? The resulting consistent question, which echoes within oneself after every achievement, is: "What next...?"

Man, tragically, continues on this hunt for something that, in the end, will not satisfy his inner longing to eternal happiness. The problem is the human tendency to set defected goals that do not last, and defects are not what one wants. We do not want the imperfect, the faulty or the incomplete and that which does not last. We want eternity. We want infinity and perfection. For these reasons and many more, the human being's ultimate goal can never be something materialistic. That is due to the fact that that which is materialistic is limited and lacks in that regard, which will never satisfy us and always have us looking for the next goal. The human being's deep longing after that which is eternal and absolute, will therefore never be quenched by such goals, something our experiences have witnessed.

The inner tendency of the human being for perfection and complete happiness drives her to be in constant search of it. However, in lack of better judgment, most run after illusions, for example, money, fame or power, in the hope that those bring long lasting joy. That leads most people up entangled in their day-to-day lives and lost in wordy slough, which at the end of the day leaves them unhappy. If anything, they feel, particularly those more conscious, distress and experience themselves imprisoned in life, like one stuck in a treadmill. The reaction of some would be to bury one's head in the sand, like an ostrich, to not see reality and to spare oneself the thought of it to avoid feeling bad. Some may numb the pain by seeking out fleeting and false raptures in intoxicants, or sex and plays, of which all are addictive.

Others, however, turn to more sound alternatives like their jobs, sports or diverse hobbies. And then there are some who look for a higher aim and try to dedicate their lives to a higher purpose, such as helping others, devoting themselves to research or run public utility campaigns. In one way or another, one needs to give one's life a meaning to not lose one's senses and be destroyed by hopelessness.

Islam indicates that the human being is a creature with many aspects, and her reality is her soul. The human has a material body in this world, working as a ship for the soul, and with the help of, the human being can manoeuvre and manage in this world. However, the human's essence is her soul, and when the body decays and perishes with death, the soul lives on forever.

Islam also points out that the human being, like the world, is constantly evolving and is headed towards perfection. Life is a gift, and the world is filled with goodness and hope, which makes out the breeding ground for the human's fulfilling of her potential and humankind growth and maturing.

Islam also says that there is already a great, beautiful and noble meaning of life, that every human is unique and can achieve greatness, and that all people, who together form an interlacing unity, can flourish side by side. The world could simply look different from what it looks like today, and everyone could live with peace, joy, happiness and hope. One must only believe and strive for the realization of it

together.

The Human Need – The Superficially Evident And The Profoundly Veiled

Man has many needs. What are those needs and are all of them of the same kind or are they of different ones? Can one need to be defined differently?

The needs of man can be divided into more superficial evident needs that are easily known and are repeatedly reminded of. Physical needs such as thirst, hunger and sleep, are some examples.

However, man has other more profound and veiled needs, in comparison to the superficial ones. Those are mostly spiritual inclinations such as longing for perfection, eternity and infinity. These are intrinsic needs pushing him and underlie, for example, his insatiable desire to constantly want more and to want better.

The Choice To Be Lower Than Animals Or Higher Than Angels

It is apparent that the human's ambition is higher than to be limited to this world. Taken by itself explains man's inner reality and longing of his soul. The question, 'What is next...?' that often arises after the accomplishment of goals and originates from the soul's longing to eternal perfection.

God says regarding man:

“[So mention] when your Lord said to the angels, “Indeed, I am going to create a human being from clay. So when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My [created] soul, then fall down to him in prostration.” (The Holy Qur'an, 38:71-72).

“And We have certainly created for Hell many of the djinn and mankind. They have hearts with which they do not understand, they have eyes with which they do not see, and they have ears with which they do not hear. Those are like livestock; rather, they are more astray. It is they who are heedless.” (The Holy Qur'an, 7: 179).

Imam Ali ('a) has said:

“Most certainly, God the Glorious the Majestic has placed within angels aql (brain, intellect and reason) without shahwa (lust and desire), and placed within animals shahwa without aql, and placed within man both; so the one whose aql masters his shahwa is better [higher] than angels, and the one whose shahwa masters his aql is worse [lower] than animals.”¹

Accordingly, man is characterized by his enormous intrinsic potential, which if looked after and fulfilled, can make him reach a higher position than that of angels. That is due to the fact that man has had lower needs and desires he has fought to master, unlike angels who have not needed to undergo such struggle or overcome something. However, if this potential remains undeveloped or is spent on lower

ends, the man reaches a state lower than that of animals. Since man is gifted with reason but has chosen not to use it rightly so, but animals do not have it nor do they have the ability to use it, to begin with.

Man is, therefore, the result of his inner struggle between lower needs, drawing him to his earthly aspects, and higher ones, drawing him to his heavenly origin.

Why Do Conflicts Occur?

In this battle occurring within every person, the object is to differentiate between superficial and profound needs as well as defining the profound needs, as in the spiritual inclinations, properly and answer them with the right resources. For example, money could be the highest definition of riches for a person, but another sees knowledge to be such, and a third could see the highest riches to be wisdom, extracted from knowledge. Depending on how each of them defines riches, they will also strive for different things. Even though the spiritual inclinations have the same foundation in all humans, different people define them in various ways and also answer them, more often than not, with wrong resources.

When a spiritual inclination is defined as the lower needs and answered with material resources, unbalance occurs. Because the soul is of another nature than the material body and therefore needs resources of the same nature as itself, so, whilst the earthly body needs earthly food, the soul also needs the right kind of nourishment. Therefore, man cannot quench his thirst for the eternal, the search of his soul, by obtaining more of the material. The material is always limited and is never enough to fill man, that is his soul. The physical body and its lower needs, are however limited so that when a man eats more, even when no longer hungry and the bodily needs are filled, something else drives him to do such. It is, in fact, the profound needs of man's soul that drive him because his soul has not been filled yet. However, man does mistake his soul's inclinations and tries to fill it with resources for the body, only so in vain.

If a man does not realize this, he will continue searching for more of the material resources in vain. But in reality, it does not matter how many of those he gets; he will never have enough. Since many people fall into this trap and due to the limitations of material resources, conflicts occur. Every person, driven by their own unsaturation, wants everything for themselves.

The Human Belief

We All Believe In Something

All humans have beliefs. We all believe in something, even the ones who consider themselves as non-believers. How so?

This question can be looked upon from two aspects. The first one is that even the one who says he is no

of no faith has a belief in his disbelief. In other words, to believe that you do not believe it is in itself a way of belief of not believing. This is important because it clarifies how essentially a belief is for man and how it is not something that man can be without.

The other aspect is the actual belief that's inherent in every man and which is mentioned in The Holy Qur'an, as fitra. In short, fitra infers a spiritual testimony of the realities of the world who constitute a common base for all of mankind.² The humans common for universal virtues are a part of this aspect.

God urges man to use his reason constantly and to reflect, this by presenting parables and encouraging him to reflect on those who have come before him, their history, actions and destinies.

"If We had sent down this Qur'an upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled and coming apart from fear of God. And these examples We present to the people that perhaps they will give thought." (The Holy Qur'an, 59:21).

Simultaneously God says in regard to man's essence and reality, that is man's soul:

"And they ask you, [O Muhammad], about the soul. Say, 'The soul is of the affair of my Lord. And mankind has not been given of knowledge except a little'." (The Holy Qur'an, 17:85).

Admittedly man has been blessed with aql (reason) and the ability, with the help of his senses and gathering of knowledge and experiences, to distinguish and conclude: but is this enough? Is this enough for man to be able to manoeuvre himself through life's ups and downs and to reach real happiness?

Regarding aqaed (the principles of faith) the emphasise lies on reason and reflection in order to reach a pure conviction. Simply said, the conviction in faith cannot be inherited or imitated. Therefore, it is every human being's duty, including Muslims by birth, to study the religion and to research its fundamentals to reach their own conviction regarding the principles of faith. When this conviction is reached, it will become the foundation of which faith will be built upon. More detailed aspects of the religion, as for example issues of law, will arise following said conviction. For example, in the question of religious laws and instructions, the starting point for acceptance of these laws is the fact that their origin is the Creator, the One who has a holistic view of what's best for His creation according to His definite wisdom. This as well as the fact that they are mediated through His infallible Prophet (S).³

Even if all the underlying reasons for every rule and decree aren't clear for man, the acceptance of them is based upon the fundamental acceptance of God is the Omniscient, the Wise, the Merciful, Creator. In other words, when a conviction is reached regarding the fundamentals, and when the Creator's Omniscient and Wisdom above his creation becomes self-evident, man will realise that laws and decrees from this Merciful Creator are in man's best interest as well as being the guidance towards the aim of creation.

Therefore, a man should through his own reason obtain conviction within the usul-e-din (pillars of faith)

which make up the fundamentals of faith, unlike the furo-e-din (branches of faith), where the practice of them is based upon following the scholars. Proof of this can clearly be seen in the following verses.

“And when it is said to them, ‘Come to what God has revealed and to the Messenger,’ they say, ‘Sufficient for us is that upon which we found our fathers.’ Even though their fathers knew nothing, nor were they guided?” (The Holy Qur'an, 5: 104).

The following verses clearly point toward the Holy Prophet's (S) role and the fact that God handed over the ruling to him (S), and what is apparent is that the Holy Prophet (S) acts solely in accordance with God's will.

“O you who have believed, obey God and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to God and the Messenger, if you should believe in God and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in the result.” (The Holy Qur'an, 4:59).

“And what God restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns – it is for God and for the Messenger and for [his] near relatives and orphans and the [stranded] traveller – so that it will not be a perpetual distribution among the rich from among you. And whatever the Messenger has given you – take; and what he has forbidden you – refrain from. And fear God; indeed, God is severe in penalty. (The Holy Qur'an, 59:7).

“Indeed, We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], the Book in truth so you may judge between the people by that which God has shown you. And do not be for the deceitful an advocate.” (The Holy Qur'an, 4: 105).

“The only statement of the [true] believers when they are called to God and His Messenger to judge between them is that they say, ‘We hear, and we obey.’ And those are successful.” (The Holy Qur'an, 24:51).

Consequently, it is every human being's own responsibility to ask the basic questions to themselves, reflect and follow-up to get answers and further research to reach conviction in belief. When this conviction is established man is thereafter imposed to follow the experts, who have had the possibility to devote their lives to studying these directions and have therefore obtained true knowledge in their subjects. Today people seek out experts within various fields when they themselves cannot get absorbed in different subjects. Firstly, they assure themselves that the one they seek out is an expert and is knowledgeable within their field and after that, follow their directions. It can be equated to when a person seeks out a doctor and then follows given instructions, even though the details are not always comprehensible.

Chapter 1 – Summary

Three basic questions every man tussle with are, ‘who am I?’, ‘what am I doing here?’ and ‘Where am I headed?’. These questions are connected to the purpose of life and man’s inner drive to reach the aim of his creation.

Man is valuable and unbounded. He has a soul and an intrinsic longing to true happiness and to that which is perfect. Therefore, man is always setting new goals and strives towards them in hopes of finding true happiness and perfection. This perfection will, in fact, not be achieved while striving for materialistic goals, all of which have defects and miss perfection. Therefore, man is not satisfied whilst achieving them.

Man can get to know himself and his profound needs, to strive for deep goals that give eternal happiness in relation to the goal of his creation.

It is every man’s own responsibility to ask himself the basic questions, reflect and follow-up to reach answers and continue researching to reach conviction in belief.

1. This hadith is reported in, *Ilal ash-Sharai'* volume 1 p. 4–5, among others.
2. The topic of fitra is dealt with extensively in the next chapter; see B3.
3. The topic infallibility has been dealt with later in the book; see F3.

Chapter 2: What Is The Key Element Of Islam?

Questions addressed in this chapter:

Tawhid; belief in One God – the source of all monotheistic religions

The existence of God – how do I know that God exists?

Who is God, and what is He like?

Attributes of God

What does God want of me?

Purpose of mankind’s creation

What is the purpose of life?

How can I attain my creational purpose?

God's guidance – Prophethood and Imamah

Day of Judgment

A. Tawhid – One God

“Say, ‘He is God, [who is] One” (The Holy Qur'an, 112:1).

“God, the Eternal Refuge” (The Holy Qur'an, 112:2).

“He neither begets nor is born” (The Holy Qur'an, 112:3).

“Nor is there to Him any equivalent.” (The Holy Qur'an, 112:4).

The first and most fundamental of the pillar of faith [in Islam] is tawhid, also reflected in the saying of *la ilaha illa Allah* (there is no deity but Allah [God]). Tawhid is the belief that there is but One Omnipotent Almighty God, Creator and Lord. The oneness of God builds the foundations of all godsent religions which are categorized under the term monotheistic religions or under Abrahamic religions, named after the arch-prophet Ibrahim ('a) [Abraham]. Tawhid is the fundamental pillar of faith of which all other principles of religion and the universe are built upon.

The importance of this principle is distinctly mentioned in The Holy Qur'an, and more closely in the above-mentioned surah called surah at-Tawhid. Tawhid means the unity of God. God is One without anyone alike, the Unique, the Independent, the Eternal without no beginning nor end, the Perfect without defects, the Independent to which all is dependent on and the Unbounded.

A Deeper Meaning Of Tawhid

Imam Ali ('a) has a beautifully and elegantly described God and explained tawhid in the following words:

“Eyes cannot see Him with direct witnessing. But hearts perceive Him through the realities of belief. He is known through the proofs that point to Him, described by the signs. He cannot be compared to a man. He cannot be apprehended by senses. My Lord is near all things without physically touching them. Far away without being separate. He is a speaker, but not with reflection. Manifested but not physically. Has revealed himself but not with being seen with sight [or vision]. He is separate but not with distance. Near but not with sacrificing His loftiness. He does without endeavor. He moulds, but not with limbs. He is subtle but cannot be attributed to being concealed. He is great in His greatness, but cannot be measured. He is the All-Hearing but cannot be attributed to a sense of auditory organs. He is All-Seeing but cannot be attributed with a sense [of sight]. He is the Most Merciful but cannot be attributed to the weakness of the heart. He was before all things so nothing can be said to be before Him, and He is after all things so nothing can be said to exist after Him. He is within all things but not integrated with them nor separate from the. He exists but without coming to existence. He acts without compulsion. He approves

but not with motion. Places do not contain Him, and He is not contained in time, and attributes do not limit Him. The need of sleep [or slumber] never affect Him, His existence precedes time itself, and His being precedes non-existence, His eternity is before all origins, He was a Lord before there was anything to belord, and God before there was anything to be a deity of. He was known before there was anything known, He was All-Hearing before anything was to be heard. Faces feel low before His greatness and hearts tremble out of fear of Him. Souls strive desperately to attain his satisfaction.”¹

Tawhid On Four Levels

The practical aspect of tawhid is the belief in God’s unity and oneness. Whilst worshipping God, one should focus on His essence, His attributes and His work in creating such unparalleled creations.

Accordingly, it means God has not begotten, nor is He begot. There is no partner or equal to Him and that he is fully independent and not in need of anything or anyone.

How can one begin to comprehend the attributes of God? Tawhid not only highlights the oneness of God but also connotes the multiple attributes that allow us to understand the unlimited inherent attributes of this great being further. God’s attributes are neither defective nor limited or separate from His being. Therefore, God is not attributed in the same way we attribute various creations in our surroundings. For instance, Man is comprised of a physical body and a metaphysical soul, and this does not restrict every person’s characteristics allowing for uniqueness.

However, man will always remain man irrespective of his attributes. The fact that man is not absolute and their attributes are changeable means they are bound to defections and imperfections. Man can, therefore, have knowledge and power; however, that knowledge and power are enclosed with defects, limitations, growth and reduction.² Besides, many of the man’s attributes are acquired and learned. Howbeit, God’s attributes belong only to Him and are not received or acquired, or will ever seize to exist or be taken from Him. God’s attributes are absolute, perfect, unchangeable, and they are one with His being. For example, God being the Almighty and the Omniscient, also means all power belongs to God, and that He knows everything. Therefore, there is no other.³

Consequently, in the question of worship, tawhid means that only God is worthy of worship because He is God, Creator and Lord.

B. How Do I Know God Exists?

How do I know God exists? And how can I believe in something I cannot see?

“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth. But is it not sufficient concerning your Lord that He is, over all things, a Witness?” (The Holy Qur'an, 41:53).

Many intangible matters such as feelings, knowledge and attention cannot be comprehended by man's senses, yet we know they exist because we apprehend their signs and effects. Therefore, man can derive the existence and occurrence of many things through signs, indicating His existence instead of actually seeing them. Man's senses allow him to perceive signs abstractly and transcendentally, with the help of intellect and rational derivations, come to know of them.

Knowledge Of God, Through His Creation

God, in fact, manifests Himself through His signs in creation. In that way, we get to know God through the signs that point to Him. Similar to how one acquaints themselves with a writer through their text, we can acquaint ourselves with God through His word. Whilst the used wordings and formulations show the writer's skills and proficiency, God's creation points to His stature, including His knowledge and power. The purport of the writer's text indicates their purpose and the message to convey, and as such creation mirrors God's work and His knowledge.⁴

Consequently, through proof and signs in creation, man can be guided to realize God's existence. God is constantly reminding us of the decisive reality in which He wants to open our eyes for, and everything in life has something to tell us of God's many attributes. That being said, God is constantly speaking to us through everything that exists and is happening around us and declaring Himself and His will.

Various Ways And Degrees Of Conviction

There are multiple ways to reach knowledge and multiple degrees of conviction. A parable for this would be when a person sees a cloud of smoke from a distance and draws a conclusion of the presence of fire. A higher level of realizing the existence of fire is actually to see the fire and feel its warmth. Whilst the one who burns themselves in the fire obtains a higher and apprehensible knowledge of fire's reality.⁵

Similarly, man's knowledge and conviction of the immaterial and transcendental world and the Creator can reach various levels. The first level of conviction, from the above parable, is rational and can be reached through deriving the conclusion with available signs and evidence. For this, two things are needed; to know how to perceive information, mainly through senses, and thinking. Man's senses represent the upmost channels for knowing and fulfils the first requirement. In other words, to apprehend the surrounding world with all its phenomena and collect information. Therefore, man is provided with information through his senses, based on the information and with the help of reasoning can come to conclusions. In that way, a man will come to various conclusions, setting the foundation for faith and conviction. This ability, to perceive knowledge, think and come to conclusions that lead to a conviction, are intrinsic human abilities, and therefore all people have the possibility to reach conviction in this manner.

When it comes to knowledge of God and conviction of His existence, the rational derivation is fundamental. In multiple verses in the Holy Qur'an, God calls man to reflect on his surroundings and

ponder on the world in which he lives, as a fundamental step to knowledge, faith and conviction.

“Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, and the [great] ships which sail through the sea with that which benefits people, and what God has sent down from the heavens of rain, giving life thereby to the earth after its lifelessness and dispersing therein every [kind of] moving creature, and [His] directing of the winds and the clouds controlled between the heaven and the earth are signs for a people who use reason.” (The Holy Qur'an, 2: 164).

The existence of God, intellectually and rationally, can be derived through several indications, among them three main focuses:

The proof of order (the creational syncing)

Everything created must be derived back to a creator (cause–effect)

Man's instinctive belief in his own inherent nature (fitra)

B1. The Proof Of Order And The Creational Syncing – Logical Derivation

From the smallest atom to the biggest galaxy; how come there is a reoccurring pattern? What is the implication behind all elements, with all their disparate attributes, consisting of the same elementary building block, that is to say, the atom? Why does the cell, constituting the smallest building block in all living organisms, have similar functions irrespective of if it is in a unicellular organism or far more sophisticated mammals?

The proof of order is about how the order of creation and syncing witnesses a higher Omniscient and One Creator.

Man's nature has a tendency to try to find explanations to that which fascinates him, like nature and how everything fits together like a beautifully composed symphony. God calls upon us to look around and examine the world, use intellect and reason and based on that, derive our own conclusions. He says:

“[And] who created seven heavens in layers. You do not see in the creation of the Most Merciful any inconsistency. So, return [your] vision [to the sky]; do you see any breaks?” (The Holy Qur'an, 67:3-4).

A Reoccurring Unity Permeating Creation

One cannot avoid seeing the harmony, interconnection and unity among creations of various phenomena and beings. This harmonious diversity forms a unity like beautiful tones in a melody or like

the gearwheel in a clock; complicated in heights of its simplicity, refined to the smallest detail and interacting to make an entirety.

For instance, the solar system and the galaxies obey the power of attraction and the gravitational pull, as does the small atom. The planets orbit around the sun while the electrons orbit around the atomic core. This is whilst all the enormous galaxies are composed of various elements, whose building blocks are the smallest atoms. In turn, the atom consists of electrons, protons and neutrons. The variation in these components' numbers and bindings, causes various atoms that, in turn, generate different elements with numerous attributes, in regards to density, colour and taste. A beautiful and worthy of reflection example is the transparent crystal, also the firmest, most beautiful and most expensive gemstone, the diamond. This jewel is in actuality nothing but the black, smooth element carbon, that turns to a beautiful diamond while under extreme pressure and heat.

In the same way, all living beings, animals and plants, consist of the same elementary design and structure. Biologically, from the smallest living unicellular organism to plants, to animals with the advanced and highly-developed system, to man, they all follow the same elementary system. The smallest complete building block in all these organisms, the cell, consists mainly of numerous common parts and a variety of homogenous functions. Despite this united foundation, the diversity and the great variation among living beings in regards to physiology and features are completely fascinating.

Even sound and light could be taken as examples. Science has shown that all sound, whether high or low, beautiful or deafening, is actually constructed on the same foundation and that the variation depends on differences in frequency, among other things. Likewise, it is the same light, but in different wavelengths, that generates various colors we see. In other words, all colours have the same united basis. Not only does science show a correlation in these reoccurrences and similarities, but there has all been a number of credited theories in wave-particle duality that suggest the relationship with every other creation formed by particles.

The Unity Beyond Coexistence

An additional remarkable example is the coordination of two things that do not coexist, however, one of which, created earlier, ensures the need of the other, long before its creation. For instance, the actuation of the mother's lactation in relation to pregnancy, even before the child is born. The most remarkable thing is not only is it the child's food prepared, but ready to be used at birth. Or that breast milk is the most nutritious, perfect and completely adjusted after the newborn's needs and delicate system. The food is prepared and conserved in a vessel, that is the breast, developed many years before the child's birth, and is even adjusted for the child for easy access. Observe that this is to supply the needs of something before it even comes to be, by incorporating this function into the biomechanics of creation.

Therefore, it is not about the development on the basis of the current need in another, but rather the preparation for the future and reproduction. Does this not require foresight and an overall plan,

consisting of both present and future conditions and needs? Can randomized reactions, unconscious procedures or some missing higher forms of consciousness, knowledge and intelligence, have the ability to plan for future needs that do yet not exist? Does this, and an enormous amount of other amazing examples surrounding us, not signify that this coherent construction is a conscious work of a Powerful Being?

With a little reflection, one can come to realize that as small the chances are for a pen or a lamp to come to be by chance and without the interference of higher intelligence accordingly to a conscious plan, the complete compatible nature cannot have come in such away. Man's creative ability to find new solutions and invent things is, in fact, thanks to his higher consciousness and knowledge. Is it then not more likely that a powerful and conscious Being has created this marvellous world rather than a lifeless matter, through a series of random events?

Both the united foundation and the coordinate association found in creation points to planned and conscious construction. The beautiful variation and diversity we see in creation is a result of a higher organized interplay, containing both the superficial and visual aspects but also the processes and laws unseen by the eye, but very much recognized. What does this unity and syncing, found in every corner and angle of creation, anything but a Unified Creator; One God?

The unity in creation points to and witnesses of the unity, conciseness, knowledge and power of the Creator. In the Holy Qur'an, God calls upon the thinking man to look around at creation, so that reflection may lead to insight:

“Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding.” (The Holy Qur'an, 3: 190).

“And not alike are the two bodies of water. One is fresh and sweet, palatable for drinking, and one is salty and bitter. And from each, you eat tender meat and extract ornaments which you wear, and you see the ships ploughing through [them] that you might seek of His bounty, and perhaps you will be grateful.” (The Holy Qur'an, 35: 12).

Islam And Science – No Contradiction

While some seek proof of the higher Omnipotence only in the origin of the cosmos and in an unusual phenomenon, the Qur'anic method turns man's attention to what seems to be an 'ordinary' phenomenon. Among them birth, death, embryonic state, growth, nature and its diverse phenomenon as the sun, moon, stars, rain, the sea and life as we know it. Man is encouraged to see God's presence and signs of Him, in all surroundings. All phenomenon makes living examples of God's power, wisdom, and mercy. Acknowledgement of these examples of all leads to higher knowledge of God. In Islam, God, knowledge of Him and turning to Him, is not excluded from mere natural catastrophes or hardships like disease or death. God is evident in the soft drizzle fall, in the fresh breeze, in the fair smell of a rose and in a child's

laugh.

Before the days of Technology and developed scientific thinking, it was not unusual explaining various phenomena with myths about mystical powers. Now, However, when science has developed, and clarified answers on some of the people's questions, the presence of a higher power has been dismissed by some as myths and legends. Many of those who reject a higher power, argue they must either deny scientific mappings or keep an outdated world view, or approve scientific evidence and give up their religious beliefs. They carry a view of contradiction and the impression that religion and science are not compatible. This view supports the dangerous underlying impression that religion can only be kept in the shadow of ignorance and that science can flourish in the absence of religious belief. That they can't be two non-mutually exclusive occurrences.

History indicates the clear correlation between Islam and science and how the most successful scientists and researchers of the past were, in fact, Muslim. Whose studies and achievements help pave the foundations for modern science. They studied and led research themselves, encouraged knowledge-based understanding and supported their students and common people to seek knowledge. Avicenna (Ibn Sina), Geber (Jabir Ibn Hayyan), Al-Khawarizmi, Zakariya Razi, Jamshid Al-Kashi, Al-Farabi, Biruni, Nasir Al-din Al-Tusi, Mulla Sadra and Baha Al-din Al-Ameli, even known as Sheikh Bahai, are only a few monumental examples.

These great personalities who were at the forefront of scientific revolutions within their fields were also very successful in theology and religious practice. Besides, their relationship with God, The Holy Qur'an, and Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) was an inspiration for them to which they gained motivation to advance in their fields despite the divergence. This is clear in their work, not least in their texts and their poems, because most of them had a comprehensive insight in all contemporary subject fields including philosophy, literature and poetry.⁶ They saw unity in creation and science, because the Source who generated both, is One and the same.

The Holy Qur'an, is, above all, a book of guidance and is mainly intended for that purpose. Therefore, it is not limited to scientific facts, and even scientific facts appearing in The Holy Qur'an, should be seen in the light of guidance. This includes all subjects ranging from history, mathematics, biology, astronomy, morals and jurisprudence.

However, the Qur'an clearly states that it would not be possible for people to know and understand many of the scientific facts in the Qur'anic verses when they were first revealed. It is now, after the development of scientific research after hundreds of years, that some of the facts are confirmed by advanced scientific methods. This is undeniably fascinating as it makes a clear and complete proof of the missing contradiction between religion and science, but that there is also an association between those for man's guidance.

"Then We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and We made the clot into a lump [of flesh],

and We made [from] the lump, bones, and We covered the bones with flesh; then We developed him into another creation. So blessed is God, the best of creators.” (The Holy Qur'an, 23: 14).

“Have those who disbelieved not considered that the heavens and the earth were a joined entity, and We separated them and made from water every living thing? Then will they not believe?” (The Holy Qur'an, 21:30).

“And We placed within the earth firmly set mountains, lest it should shift with them, and We made therein [mountain] passes [as] roads that they might be guided.” (The Holy Qur'an, 21:31).

“And We made the sky a protected ceiling, but they, from its signs, are turning away.” (The Holy Qur'an, 21:32).

And it is He who created the night and the day and the sun and the moon; all [heavenly bodies] in orbit are swimming.” (The Holy Qur'an, 21:33).

B2. Everything Is Created, And All That Is Created Must Be Derived Back To A Creator – Philosophical Derivation

From something as basic as a wheel to something so advanced as a computer chip; can they have come to existence by themselves? Can an ascertainment be made that someone must have constructed and made those, be avoided?

Whenever a man is faced with an event or a phenomenon, the intellect tends to automatically search for its underlying cause, because man has an inner belief that there must be a cause to every effect. This cause–effect derivation underlies all questions and scientific researches. Whether it is a physician or a sociologist, or a researcher within other scientific fields, all seek to discover the cause of every phenomenon. Many researchers spend all their lives in pursuit of answers and present multiple theories. Researchers are constantly following each other's steps and continuing the search for relevant answers without ever supposing that anything has ever happened by itself, without any underlying cause. This means that man's intellect differentiates between phenomenon, that is what has come to existence, also called contingent existence⁷, and accordingly seeks that which has caused the contingent existence.

Our world is filled with contingent existences, entities that have sometimes not existed but have come to do so. Each one of those phenomena, contingent existence or also creations, must similarly have underlying causes and creators. This reality, man reacts instinctively with his reason and is then confirmed by science and logic.

Contingent Existence

How do we know something is created and therefore is contingent existence? What criteria must be

fulfilled for something to be classed as such?

There are multiple common criteria for all contingent existence. These are:

- A contingent existence has a starting point; its existence has been initiated sometime, and it is possible that it does not have to exist.
- A contingent existence has an ending point, as to say it is fully possible for its existence to stop.
- A contingent existence is changeable; not least due to two earlier criteria.

Consequently, it is obvious, from the above-mentioned attributes, that a contingent existence is limited and independent on another to exist.

In short, every phenomenon that can emerge, end or change is contingent existence, and therefore, dependent on an underlying cause to exist. What does this mean?

A Necessary Existence

The fact that every contingent existence requires an underlying cause that has generated it means two possible alternatives: the underlying cause is either itself a contingent existence, hence dependent on another for its existence, or the underlying cause is independent and self-existing.

When a contingent existence, in other words, a creation, has been caused by another contingent existence, of which has also been caused by third contingent existence, and so on, this chain of creations that have created other creations, will need a first cause. A parable to this would be a child whose birth depends on its parents, who in turn depend on their parents and continues on in a long chain where every couple has generated the next generation and where every generation is dependent on the one prior to it, to exist. Obviously, since this chain has started existing, it must have started somewhere. How else could it have come to existence? Particularly, when it is completely possible for it to have not existed and also to stop existing altogether.

If we deny the occurrence of the first cause, in the above-mentioned case, it would be like denying the occurrence of all the contingent existences present, in the above-mentioned case, all generations. How? Imagine a marathon race where every contestant is not allowed to start running until another contestant starts running. In such a case, the race will never start because every contestant's start is dependent on another's, who in turn is dependent on a third contestant's, and so on. The necessity of a starting shot that is not dependent on the contestants, starting the race is therefore axiomatic. It is only to ascertain that if the race has started, there must be a starting shot since it could not have started otherwise. Therefore, a first cause, in this case, a starting shot, in itself independent of the other contestants, has started everything. Similarly, all contingent existences, as in creations, dependent on their cause, which is in turn dependent on its own cause and in case the first one does not come to existence, and the next

one will not either. Because we sometimes through our senses, among other things, perceive the existence of matters, creations and phenomenon, we can come to know that this chain must have been started by an independent first cause. The questions are then, what this first cause is and how it could do so?

Our world is a phenomenon; it was initiated at some stage; it is fully changeable, and it is possible for it to cease. Therefore, it fulfils all the criteria to be a contingent existence. Likewise, the above-mentioned example, our world, filled with contingent existences and is itself one, points to the occurrence of a starting shot and a first cause. The first cause can in turn not be dependent on something other than its own existence, because otherwise, it would have been a contingent existence and not the first cause. Hence, the first cause must be ONE Necessary Independent Existence.⁸

The First Cause – One Necessary Existence

What are the criteria of the First Cause, and how do we know it exists?

In contrast to contingent existence, the First Cause is:

Necessary; as it must exist to generate contingent existences. Observe that existence itself of contingent existences show that the First Cause exists because otherwise, the contingent existences would not exist themselves. The fact that contingent existences exist proves that the starting shot must have started the chain.

Self-existing; as the one whose existence depends on something else, is dependent on its cause to exist, and can consequently not be the First Cause, as its cause has preceded it. So, the First Cause, that does not depend on a cause preceding it must be Self-existing.

Independent; that which is dependent on something is also in need of it. The First Cause, which is Self-existing and therefore has always existed, is independent as well as self-sufficient.

Non-material or physical; as independence means independence from everything. This is while a physical or material being is in need of matter and components, and so is accordingly limited within time and space etc.

Infinite; as to exist, cease or change require a cause. Therefore, it must have always existed and continued so forever, with no beginning, end or change. That makes the First Cause, also called the Necessary Existence, infinite and eternal.

The First Cause, also the Necessary Existence – Self-existing, Independent and Infinite – is therefore beyond all limitations and is neither dependent or bound to factors as time, space, needs and the like of which contingent existences are bound to. In such a way, the Necessary Existence is completely free of defects and is therefore perfect.

Why Must This Necessary Existence Have To Be One?

It is impossible that two exist, both of which fulfil all the above-mentioned criteria, to be One Necessary Existence. That is because a Necessary Existence that has another necessary existence besides itself is no longer necessary itself. How? When one existence is necessary, it deprives the necessity of the other. In other words, if one existence is necessary and exists, the other one loses its function to be necessary and is therefore not so anymore. The presence of more than One Necessary Existence would also automatically mean a limitation and dependence. Both can, therefore, not be infinite and independent without restricting the other's infinity and independence. Whilst A Necessary Existence must be independent so that its own existence will not depend on another.

Moreover, the existence of more than ONE Originator presupposes a defect syncing in the current uniformity and such defect would be very visible in creation. Hence, the Necessary Existence could not be other than ONE. God says:

“[And] who created seven heavens in layers. You do not see in the creation of the Most Merciful any inconsistency. So, return [your] vision [to the sky]; do you see any breaks? Then return [your] vision twice again. [Your] vision will return to you humbled while it is fatigued.” (The Holy Qur'an, 67:3-4).

“God has not taken any son, nor has there ever been with Him any deity. [If there had been], then each deity would have taken what it created, and some of them would have sought to overcome others. Exalted is God above what they describe [concerning Him].” (The Holy Qur'an, 23:91)

“Had there been within the heavens and earth gods besides God, they both would have been ruined. So exalted is God, Lord of the Throne, above what they describe.” (The Holy Qur'an, 21:22).

One Self-Existing Independent Necessary Existence

Consequently, even if existence is a result of a series of existences, for instance, the universe with all its galaxies, its first initial particle must have been created by a Creator when nothing else existed. No logic or science can claim that the absolute first particle that existed before anything else was there, irrespective of attributes, size or composition, just came to be from nothing.

Someone might argue that what if the universe, or its first particle, always has existed? Let us check the facts. It is a fact that the universe is in constant motion and alterations. We also know, through laws of physics, that motion and alteration do not occur by themselves because the change of condition requires a cause. Accordingly, external power is required to put motion or change its direction. In other words, if there is no external influence, matters are constant, and no change will occur. Therefore, we come back to verify that an alternating universe needs something to begin its first movement. Whether from this aspect or that alteration is a criterion proving a contingent existence, it implies that an external

power must have operated for the first particle to exist, then stopped being a mere particle and transformed into this universe we know of today. Hence, the universe cannot have appeared out of anything and with no external influence.

Does this fact not point that the universe, being in constant alternation, is not as it once was before? What made it change? Should it not have continued being the same and in its original form, unless an external power has initiated the change? What has given rise to the billions of changes that have caused the universe, including our planet, to be in this present setup that has made possible the occurrence of life? What is the source of power that has started all of this and is Itself living to be able to give life?

What is more logical and probable after looking at the evidence? A Necessary Existence that has always existed and enabled everything and been the First Cause? Or that matter just existed and circulated until it became this out of mere coincidence? How can a chance be the reason for a universe that requires a cause to every existing motion and alternation? Even more importantly: how can chance be the reason for a universe so precise and coherently constructed?

“Then is He who creates like one who does not create? So will you not be reminded?” (The Holy Qur'an, 16:17).

“And those they invoke other than God create nothing, and they [themselves] are created.” (The Holy Qur'an, 16:20).

“Their meat will not reach God, nor will their blood, but what reaches Him is piety from you. Therefore have We subjected them to you that you may glorify God for that [to] which He has guided you, and give good tidings to the doers of good.” (The Holy Qur'an, 22:37).

Why Must The Creator Hold Certain Attributes?

The following natural derivation is accordingly, the initial original power that has created the very first particle must be self-existing. Why? Because if it itself needed a cause to exist, it would be a dependent existence, and as a matter of fact be part of the ‘coming to existence’-chain, dependent on a cause for their existence. However, logically the chain of contingent existences must have its origin in an external, starting-up Power, self-existing and Independent.

The fact that the chain of existence is already ongoing implies that a starting shot has existed and started it. Otherwise, the chain would not have started as no one would initiate it. As nothing can cause something – no starting shot, no race – implies that the original Source of existences, that has caused all contingent existences must itself be Infinite and Eternal. If this Self-existing Infinite Eternal Necessary Existence did not exist then no contingent existence would have existed either. And if it was not infinite and eternal, it would have a beginning, which means it would have been in need of a starter.

Hitherto, we have derived that the Very First Underlying Necessary Cause is Self-existing, and

accordingly also Independent and Infinite. The First Cause is Independent because a Self-existing being is not really self-existing as long as it is dependent on something else to exist. In other words, even if this starter-up is in need and dependent on something else to exist, it would be no difference between it and other existences, as it also needs a starter-up starting shot. The First Cause is also infinite because if the Self-existing is limited, it is subjected and not immune to influence from another, which also makes it dependent.

“Say, ‘He is God, [Who is] One.’ (The Holy Qur'an, 112:1).

“God, the Eternal Refuge.” (The Holy Qur'an, 112:2).

“He neither begets nor is born” (The Holy Qur'an, 112:3).

“Nor is there to Him any equivalent.” (The Holy Qur'an, 112:4).

Who other than God is the High Wise Source of power, who is Self-existing, Independent and Infinite?

“God – there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of existence.” (The Holy Qur'an, 3:2).

“That is God, your Lord, Creator of all things; there is no deity except Him, so how are you deluded?” (The Holy Qur'an, 40:62).

“And do not invoke with God another deity. There is no deity except Him. Everything will be destroyed except His Face. His is the judgment, and to Him, you will be returned.” (The Holy Qur'an, 28:88).

Why Must It Be God?

Here someone might ask why this Power has to be God and not a self-propelled cosmos, operating spontaneous and unplanned reactions, happening randomly? Interestingly, according to science, spontaneous or coincidental reactions lead to less order and greater disorder. This is while anyone who perceives the world and nature easily verifies its synced, coherent and precise order. Additionally, it is almost scientifically impossible for spontaneous events to produce a creation with such synced precision, from all aspects and angles. The fact that everything, from an egg and a sperm to a solar system and ecosystem, is constructed and adjusted to perfectly fit and function, like a hand in a glove and a key in a lock, rather indicate a planned order.⁹ Therefore, creation can impossibly have occurred unplanned and by chance, which in turn means A Self-conscious, Intelligent, Wise, Almighty, Perfect Creator is behind all of it.

What is more to it is that God proclaims Himself as Creator, not only through His signs within us and around us, but through His messengers and prophets ('a).¹⁰

“That is God, your Lord; there is no deity except Him, the Creator of all things, so worship Him. And He is Disposer of all things.” (The Holy Qur'an, 6: 102).

“Exalt the name of your Lord, the Highest,” (The Holy Qur'an, 87: 1).

“Who created and proportioned, ” (The Holy Qur'an, 87:2).

“And Who destined and [then] guided.” (The Holy Qur'an, 87:3).

How Is The Emergence Of A Higher Developed Existence From A Less Developed Existence To Be Explained?

How can a much lesser developed phenomenon cause a more advanced one? For instance, how could a unified clod or mass expand in the initial stages of creation and transform to all planets and galaxies? Or, how could cells “spontaneously” develop to completely functional organisms with all their marvellous attributes?

The differences in levels of perfection and development in regards to consciousness, intelligence and power in various creations, is notably existing. However, the less perfect and developed can never cause the more perfect and highly developed. For instance, when a camera is in need of a higher intelligence for its construction and build, how could our eyes, which are much more advanced, have come to exist by chance and by coincidence. How could it have occurred for nature that some cells, among millions, are ‘all of sudden’ going to be developed for this purpose? And that the same procedure is to be repeated in other organisms as ‘spontaneously’. If the components of a camera were all piled up, is it possible that they, on their own, put themselves together before it even exists? How could the camera come to be if not a higher and more developed intellect caused its construction and combined its components, of which each one is precisely and accordingly developed for its specific purpose? Can a man with higher consciousness, intelligence and power, than the rest of nature to the degree of taming nature to his conversion, have been constructed by nature?

What we perceive today in this marvellous world around us, things that are less perfect have caused the perfect phenomenon. But after looking closely and considering, it would be like stating that something as impossible as a person who has learned to speak Swedish fluently by someone who has no mastery of the language. Just as when someone wants to finance a project with their own capital, they cannot insert a higher sum than what he owns, in that project. Likewise, a broken vehicle cannot fully function by itself, without an engineer. Neither can a fallen house be inhabitable and newly renovated, spontaneously without an external influence, who has the ability and therefore is more perfect. Hence, external power must cause all the phenomena around us where less developed units seem to cause greater and more complex ones. How could the world be created by a less perfect entity? From chaos or even non-existence, to be the fully structured existing world surrounding us today, without the influence of a higher and more perfect source of power, aware and in power of its actions?

If anything, a functioning vehicle or a house allowed to develop and age “spontaneously” and with no maintenance, will decay with time as it is impossible for a higher temperature to occur from a lower temperature without external influence. The continuing functioning order and development in the world, indicates the underlying Wise Omnipotence’s supervision, administration and structure in creation.

B3. The Human Fitra (Inherent Inner Belief) – Instinctive Derivation

What Is Fitra?

Have you ever been in an extreme situation, experienced great fear, desperation or utter danger to life? What happened within you and what inner feeling did you have? When you felt disconnected from everything and beyond saving, what did you hold onto in your desperate moment of despair? Was it not, a gleam of hope to an indescribable source of power, to save you in spite of everything? This superior source of power you clasp to within you, and to which you placed your hope to the very end, is God; and the witness witnessing this truth is deeply rooted within all of us.[11](#)

Within every man, there is an inherently instinctive belief. This inherent belief is revealed in common tendencies, not learnt but nonetheless found in all mankind, irrespective of era, culture or national belonging. The distaste to lies and oppression, and predilection for truth, justice and freedom are examples of such tendencies, common for all people, as the inclination for the immortal, infinite, perfect and lasting happiness. Observe that the currency of these tendencies is irrelevant to man’s actual actions. For instance, man can lie but still, all prefer truth. Some can go as far as to convince themselves that they tell the truth, when they actually lie, only because of the inner tendency to incline towards desiring truth. The witnessing of God’s existence and unity is included in this instinctive, inherent, non-learned belief. In the Qur’anic language called, fitra.

“So, direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the fitra of God upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of God. That is the correct religion, but most people do not know.” (The Holy Qur'an, 30:30).

Man is created with this inherent inner belief, according to Islam, consists of only goodness. [12](#) In His wisdom, God has created man so that his fitra, naturally and without external force, can drive and guide him to goodness; and soon enough to the Source of all good.[13](#) However, when these inherent tendencies are neglected, or when man deviates and goes against them, their effect is reduced. Nevertheless, they still exist within man and can express themselves and be known in various ways and degrees.

The Function Of Fitra

Fitra and its tendencies work as man's inner force. For instance, the inner inclinations for lasting happiness are the cause of man's never-ending search for happiness. This inexhaustible longing for happiness makes a man look for it everywhere, on all occasions and in everything believed to cause it. Surely, man's perception, definition and allusion of happiness can vary and even change. The variation and change occur in the same individual during their lifetime and are affected by knowledge, life goals, life situation, experiences and other factors. But the tendency itself and the will to achieve happiness, a continuous force, is lasting and unchangeable. Therefore, man tends, more often than not, to begin the search for happiness in money, power, fame, beauty, health and immortality. The allusions can differ but what all people have in common is the strive for eternal happiness. This is due to the wish and tendency for happiness is intrinsic in man through his fitra, and it continues to drive him.

When a man realizes that the happiness, which he is looking for, is not to be found in material things and that it cannot be bought with money, the allusions are altered, but the search continues. This is due to a man feeling an inner longing for the real Source of happiness, the true and ultimate purpose and goal in life, and so the reoccurring questions echo in him: "Who am I?", "What am I doing here?" and "Where am I headed?". It is at the same time, because of the same reason that some people when neglecting or push down this longing and these questions, this inner echoing is no longer as strongly heard or becomes quiet altogether.

However, it is there and can suddenly be known in the least expected moments; oftentimes in consequence of a shocking or life-threatening situation. Man's instinctive belief can be likened to a guiding light, whose strength can increase or otherwise, depending on how well taken care of this inner treasure that God out of His benevolence and mercy has created within each man.

Fitra Expressing Itself

Have you ever wondered why one might get bad conscience about treating someone unfairly and lie?

That which is in popular parlance called "bad conscience" and emerges instinctively is a clear example of our inherent fitra expressing itself. When we consciously act b'Adalah, it shows in forms of uncomfortableness followed by an inner accusing voice: conscience. This accusing voice originates from the inner tendency and attraction we have to the good, causing us to reject the bad. This is due to the fact that all negatives are defects and opposites to goodness and perfection, our fitra's attractions. In such a way, our conscience works as an inner guardian, and a compass, whilst its protest warns and is an alarm reminding about the inner tendencies man carries in his fitra.

If a man chooses to neglect its guiding signals and good inclinations, these will slowly but surely be veiled and be less apparent to him. For instance, all people who first-time experience someone is bullied or treated unjustly, feel bad about it. This, whilst many who have often witnessed such situations, tend

not to show any form of opposition to injustice, finally becoming apathetic to it. Likewise, it is hard lying the first time, but if one continues doing so, it becomes easier every time. As a matter of fact, the conscience is weakened by this suppression, quietening or drowning, and is shut down.

Our fitra that is our inherent inner nature can be flourished or buried out of negligence, depending on our priorities, choices, actions and habits.

Have you ever been immensely frightened and involuntarily sought help from an indescribable source of power?

However, this inner instinctive belief is concealed and buried; it always surfaces in extreme situations, for instance, during immense fright. Then it comes to force in a way that cannot be missed out. Imagine yourself on a ship out in the open sea or on a plane in the sky, and you suddenly hear an explosion. The plane starts shaking strongly and starts dropping in altitude, and you realize the plane is plunging. In that very moment of fright and the belief that your last moments are upon you; what happens within you? Who do you seek? Whom do you turn to, in your inward? Who do you clasp onto for rescue?

Without a doubt, the answer is the same for all. At that moment, all turn to the same Source of unity and Force; a higher Power indescribable but fully recognized. As a matter of fact, fitra makes itself remembered, treads forth and shows us the instinctive belief within a Protector, who can save us when no one else is around. In our most vulnerable moments, we clasp after The One who is Greater and Higher than all hardships and He who wills over everything and everyone, including all law of nature and phenomenon., who can miraculously save us.

Unfortunately, when the extreme situation has passed, and man is rescued, the experience gradually loses significance and is forgotten. Some even try to persuade themselves into believing whatever happened to be false and doubt its reality. Concurrently, the instinctive belief is numbed, and the awakened feeling is returned to its earlier condition. That being said, most people tend to fall back to their old ways and lives, habits and behaviours. God describes this in the Holy Qur'an:

“So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the fitra of God upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of God. That is the correct religion, but most people do not know.” (The Holy Qur'an, 10:22).

“And when they board a ship, they supplicate God, sincere to Him in religion. But when He delivers them to the land, at once, they associate others with Him.” (The Holy Qur'an, 29:65).

Fitra Expressing Itself In Other Ways As Well

Children's spontaneous reactions when they witness someone lying, not keeping their promise or not acting as they have preached, is a familiar sight. The question, however, is how come all children are sensitive to it and respond to such a phenomenon? This is irrespective of culture, nationality, social

norms and living standards, or even being taught by someone. Why is the inclination for truth, disliking lies and breaking promises, a recurrent trait in all children? This is also implied to the phenomenon as empathy, disapproving violence, and picking genuine kindness.

Another instance is children's ideas of who 'the good' and 'the bad' are when they watch movies. What makes a child wanting to categorize personalities into good or bad? And what makes them always wanting to belong to the good side and embody the role of the good hero instead of the bad villain?

Again, it is a matter of fitra. Considering children are not as affected by the surroundings, fitra is more apparent in them and notable in their unlearnt behaviour. The child's access to fitra is, therefore, more intact since their fitra has not lost significance or become veiled by contradictory influences of the surroundings and personally conflicting actions. This is shown in these common traits, initially strong but can come to be strengthened or weakened, depending on how they are received by their surroundings, especially by parents.

C. Who Is God?

Who to answer this better than God Himself.

God says:

"And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me – indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the suppliant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me [by obedience] and believe in Me that they may be [rightly] guided." (The Holy Qur'an, 2:186).

"Indeed, I am God. There is no deity except Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance." (The Holy Qur'an, 20:14).

"O Moses, indeed it is I – God, the Exalted in Might, the Wise." (The Holy Qur'an, 27:9).

"But when he came to it, he was called from the right side of the valley in a blessed spot – from the tree, 'O Moses, indeed I am God, Lord of the worlds.'" (The Holy Qur'an, 28:30).

"He is God, other than whom there is no deity, Knower of the unseen and the witnessed. He is the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful." (The Holy Qur'an, 59:22).

"He is God, other than whom there is no deity, the Sovereign, the Pure, the Perfection, the Bestower of Faith, the Overseer, the Exalted in Might, the Compeller, the Superior. Exalted is God above whatever they associate with Him." (The Holy Qur'an, 59:23).

"He is God, the Creator, the Inventor, the Fashioner; to Him belong the best names. Whatever is in the heavens and earth is exalting Him. And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise." (The Holy Qur'an, 59:24).

“And of His signs is that you see the earth stilled, but when We send down upon it rain, it quivers and grows. Indeed, He who has given it life is the Giver of Life to the dead. Indeed, He is over all things competent.” (The Holy Qur'an, 41:39).

Answering the unbelievers' questions, asked the Prophet (S) regarding God's person, the following verses were sent:

“Say, “He is God, [who is] One” (The Holy Qur'an, 112:1).

“God, the Eternal Refuge” (The Holy Qur'an, 112:2).

“He neither begets nor is born” (The Holy Qur'an, 112:3).

“Nor is there to Him any equivalent.” (The Holy Qur'an, 112:4).

These are a few examples among many verses in the Holy Qur'an, where God proclaims Himself. In the verses, God describes Himself through His attributes and proclaims Himself through His signs. As God is not material and accordingly cannot be perceived by sight or be physically pointed, His signs are expressions of His existence. Similarly, to how the trail of footsteps informs us of someone's presence, although we ourselves have not seen the pedestrian, creation witnesses of its Creator's existence and His attributes.

God is, therefore, the Almighty Creator who has created the whole world with all its fairness and greatness, found in nature, space, also within ourselves. Every person admiring their surroundings and sees within themselves will consciously or unconsciously feel an incontrovertible truth, whether they call it a greater might, a supernatural entity or God. Somewhere deep within man, this truth is witnessing its own existence and is moving man to seek its source. In other words, our curiosity, outward observations and intellectual conclusions are united with our inner testimony and together make a force to seeking our origin and purpose. This makes up the foundation of man's journey to know God; a bewildering journey man and leading him beyond his highest intellectual comprehension.

Why Is God Called Allah?

It is commonly known that God is called Allah in Islam. The term Allah is itself a compound of 'Al-' and 'ilah', whereas 'Al-' is a definite article, equivalent to the English 'the', whilst 'ilah' means god. The literal meaning of Allah is 'The God' and the meaning of The One and Only Unique God has consisted of the meaning of Allah. In other words, Allah mirrors the concept of tawhid in its whole, even in this linguistic aspect. It makes the term Allah as unique as Him whom the word describes. Hence, the name Allah is the original and is the stamped reference to God in Islam.

The difference between the name Allah and God's other names, wherein each is an attribute also referring to God's characteristics, is shown to be, among other things, inapplicable to anyone but God.

Moreover, the other attributes can be bounded to the name Allah as a further description of it. However, this name cannot be used as a descriptive to other attributes. Allah can, therefore, be said to be God's special name.

Observe that it is not a matter of a specific god belonging to a religion or an ethnic group, but rather a matter of the Almighty Creator and Lord of the worlds, who is everyone's God, Allah the Merciful the Beneficent!

“Say, ‘I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind” (The Holy Qur'an, 114: 1).

“The Sovereign of mankind” (The Holy Qur'an, 114:2).

“The God of mankind.” (The Holy Qur'an, 114:3).

C1. The Attributes Of God

What is God like? What attributes does he have and what does He want?

The first of faith's principles describing God is Tawhid, which is to say there is only One God. God also has many describing Him, for instance, God is the Beneficent and the Merciful, the Omniscient and Almighty Creator. God is likewise The Wise, The Just, The Unique and Infinite, who cannot be compared to by His creations.

“God – there is no deity except Him. To Him belong the best names.” (The Holy Qur'an, 20:8).

While every existence has a Creator who is Self-existing, Independent and Infinite, it could be deducted that He is ONE, because more than one infinite being would automatically mean limitation. In other words, it cannot exist two infinite beings, because of the existence of one means in itself the limitation of the other, and vice versa. How? Imagine two infinite beings existing. It is apparent that where one begins the other ends, and where one is the other cannot be, because they limit each other. It would be like having an infinitely growing globe, without anything stopping it. But if there were two globes, and both grew, they could impossibly grow infinitely without colliding and limiting each other. Hence, the occurrence of two infinite beings is not possible and a contradiction, logically unacceptable. Likewise, the independency would be undermined in the presence of other than ONE such being, because they would, if anything, be dependent on each other.

“God has not taken any son, nor has there ever been with Him any deity. [If there had been], then each deity would have taken what it created, and some of them would have sought to overcome others. Exalted is God above what they describe [concerning Him].” (The Holy Qur'an, 23:91).

“Say, [O Muhammad], ‘If there had been with Him [other] gods, as they say, then they [each] would have sought to the Owner of the Throne away.” (The Holy Qur'an, 17:42).

“Had there been within the heavens and earth gods besides God, they both would have been ruined. So exalted is God, Lord of the Throne, above what they describe.” (The Holy Qur'an, 21:22).

Therefore, God is the Perfect, whom all creations are drawn to. He possesses the divine and perfect attributes we are constantly, consciously or otherwise, in search of. As God is Infinite, He is therefore never described to have any shortcomings or weaknesses either.

“And to God belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and to God is the destination.” (The Holy Qur'an, 24:42).

“Indeed, it is We who give life and cause death, and to Us is the destination.” (The Holy Qur'an, 50:43).

“He created the heavens and earth in truth and formed you and perfected your forms, and to Him is the [final] destination.” (The Holy Qur'an, 64:3).

Hence, He is not a God of a chosen people or a God who prefers a certain ethnic group. God does not differentiate people due to their race, colour, gender or nationality.

“But the Jews and the Christians say, ‘We are the children of God and His beloved.’ Say, ‘Then why does He punish you for your sins?’ Rather, you are human beings from among those He has created. He forgives whom He wills, and He punishes whom He wills. And to God belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them, and to Him is the [final] destination.” (The Holy Qur'an, 5: 18).

The only distinction among people, in God's eyes, is their piety.

“O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you. Indeed, God is Knowing and Acquainted.” (The Holy Qur'an, 49: 13).

He is, therefore, the Just. He does not have any needs. He never acts with evil or oppresses anyone.

“Have they not travelled through the earth and observed how was the end of those before them? They were greater than them in power, and they ploughed the earth and built it up more than they have built it up, and their messengers came to them with clear evidence. And God would not ever have wronged them, but they were wronging themselves.” (The Holy Qur'an, 30:9).

“[Who say], ‘Our Lord, let not our hearts deviate after You have guided us and grant us from Yourself mercy. Indeed, You are the Bestower.’” (The Holy Qur'an, 3: 18).

“Say, [O Muhammad], ‘My Lord has ordered justice and that you maintain yourselves [in the

worship of Him] at every place [or time] of prostration, and invoke Him, sincere to Him in religion.' Just as He originated you, you will return [to life]." (The Holy Qur'an, 7:29).

God always acts in accordance with His promise to mankind in His message.

"To Him is your return all together. [It is] the promise of God [which is] truth. Indeed, He begins the [process of] creation and then repeats it that He may reward those who have believed and done righteous deeds, injustice. But those who disbelieved will have a drink of scalding water and a painful punishment for what they used to deny." (The Holy Qur'an, 10:4).

"O mankind, fear your Lord and fear a Day when no father will avail his son, nor will a son avail his father at all. Indeed, the promise of God is truth, so let not the worldly life delude you and be not deceived about God by the Deceiver." (The Holy Qur'an, 31:33).

He is the Merciful and the Beneficent. In His mercy, God sent a message to guide man to be his best, and He has put within every man a guiding light¹⁴ in safekeeping and provided man with inner and outer means¹⁵, leading to Him.

"So, direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the fitra of God upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of God. That is the correct religion, but most people do not know." (The Holy Qur'an, 30:30).

"We have already sent Our messengers with clear evidence and sent down with them the Scripture and the balance that the people may maintain [their affairs] injustice. And We sent down iron, wherein is great military might and benefits for the people, and so that God may make evident those who support Him and His messengers unseen. Indeed, God is Powerful and Exalted in Might." (The Holy Qur'an, 57:25).

"And for every nation is a messenger. So, when their messenger comes, it will be judged between them an injustice, and they will not be wronged." (The Holy Qur'an, 10:47).

The Attributes Of God Are Unparalleled

How do God's attributes differentiate from His creation's attributes?

When God's characteristics are described by His Names, these attributes are in their absolute form when applied to God. To moderately clarify this, we can take man as an example. Man can be prescribed the quality of compassion when acting compassionately; note that this quality is given through an act and could increase or otherwise, depending on how compassionate man's action is. This does not imply to God; God is the characteristic of Compassion itself. It is, therefore, of utmost importance to understand that God is not comparable to His creation's limited qualities.

In this regard, Imam Ali ('a) has said the following regarding God:

“Praise is due to God whose worth cannot be described by speakers, whose bounties cannot be counted by calculators and whose claim (to obedience) cannot be satisfied by those who attempt to do so, whom the height of intellectual courage cannot be appreciated, and the diving of understanding cannot be reach; He for whose description no limit has been laid down, no eulogy exists, no time is ordained, and no duration is fixed.”¹⁶

Hence, it is beyond our intellectual capacity to comprehend God with our senses; for a limited being like a man to understand and perceive God is an impossibility due to the fact that limitation cannot contain infinity. It is the equivalent of a bowl trying to the sea. To understand and realize a truth, it is required that one can comprehend and understand it. A limited being in this case, man, cannot possibly comprehend the Infinite, that is to say, God. However, the limited can apprehend a bit of the Infinite, just like the bowl can contain an amount of water from the infinite sea. Man can, in various ways, by different methods and on many levels, understand God’s existence, even though he cannot understand His existence and be complete.

The various proofs discussed earlier, make up different methods and procedures, leading to the same conclusion. This can be paralleled to science’s, mathematics’ or philosophy’s deriving methods. The intellectual method resembles the researcher, who when asked about water answers with its structural H₂O formula. The perceptible and everyday method also describes the same water but through perceiving it, hearing its flood and feeling its humidity. Whilst the heartily and inward method resembles a recognition of the water through its thirst-quenching effect. People can come to know God and notice Him through various methods, leading to a conviction.

C2. ‘Adalah – Divine Justice

Why is God’s justice emphasized among the pillars of faith?¹⁷

‘Adalah¹⁸ that is divine justice is another principle of faith, deriving from tawhid. God is the Just, who does not oppress or do injustice to any of His creations. The best in the eyes of God are those with most piety. God judges all equally and therefore, one’s position in a hierarchy is irrelevant. Each man is responsible for his own actions and is judged by his condition, the same as everyone else. Divine justice is a Qur’anic principle and a rational matter, of course:

“Indeed, God does not wrong the people at all, but it is the people who are wronging themselves.”
(The Holy Qur'an, 10:44).

“Indeed, God does not do injustice, [even] as much as an atom’s weight; while if there is a good deed, He multiplies it and gives from Himself a great reward.” ***(The Holy Qur'an, 4:40).***

These verses show that God, in His sent message, is clearly distanced from the possibility to do injustice to others. God has bestowed upon us with an intellect to differentiate between good and evil. Whilst

goodness covers all actions associated with perfection, evil covers all defected actions, such as injustice. Given God is Perfect in all respects, it is not logical that God would act spitefully or unjustly.

“And [by] the soul and He who proportioned it” (The Holy Qur'an, 91:7).

“And inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness” (The Holy Qur'an, 91:8).

“He has succeeded who purifies it” (The Holy Qur'an, 91:9).

“And he has failed who instils it [with corruption].” (The Holy Qur'an, 91:10).

Matter Of Good And Evil

If God is good, why is there evil in the world? Why did God create Shaitan [Satan], whom with evil whispers incites towards evil and misguides people? Why does God not stop ‘bad events’ such as natural catastrophes or accidents from happening?

The classical questions and the likes are as a matter of fact based on the notion that evil is a phenomenon by itself, actively created. Sometimes, this notion is radicalized more so and perceived as a good against evil paradox, where God with good powers is perceived to battle evil, a solid equivalence to goodness. Hence, it is a matter of two independent opposite poles, equally enabled to act, and whereas God is a part of this equation, on the good side; an equation whose exit is not either clear, but left to hope for its victory. This is whilst, Islam's view is that of a God above this and greater and mightier than to be limited, subdues or framed by these concepts.

To begin with, it is of utmost importance to dissect each of these questions and analyze included aspects within each one of them. To sum up, three factors are decisive. These could be put together in the three following questions, all of which are connected:

- What is evil? Is it a created phenomenon?
- Who is Shaitan (Satan)? Is he created evil?
- What do we classify ‘bad’ events and evil as? Are natural catastrophes, accidents and similar matters, really evil?

We could start with the last question, and that which people tend to view as bad that is accidents befalling us, natural catastrophes and diseases. When it comes to natural catastrophes, we know from science that earthquakes, floods and storms are in fact, natural consequences in nature's system. The physical world, including earth's tectonic plates, seasonal weather and the gulf stream, are conditions for seasonal shifts and other changes within nature's cycle. Without these changes, life would cease to exists and therefore, these phenomena, with their natural consequences, are in fact the system's side

effects.

The fact that man is affected sometimes has nothing to do with evil, but it is a consequential factor by living in this world. This does not mean that everything that happens does so randomly and that there is no reason to why you of all would be affected by a certain event; there are rather personal questions that require reflection. What is current for the question's overall aspects, is that it is not about evil or that these phenomena are neither evil nor apart of some kind of evil. It could be likened to a snake's poison, from one aspect seen as 'evil' because it is de'Adalahy, however from another aspect, it is the snake's defence mechanism and also a foundation to cure some illnesses for man.

The same is applied to diseases and accidents befalling us, however with a slight difference. Just as with natural phenomena, we know diseases are consequences of our lifestyles combined with diverse factors like genes, diet, physical activity, sleep etc. Therefore, the disease has nothing to do with evil. It can be likened to bad grades at the end of the semester, due to the student's lack of studying. The result is nothing but a natural consequence and is not due to the teacher's 'evilness'. The reason why we perceive the named phenomenon as evil is linked to man's tendency to see matters from his own perspective and whatever hurts him to be so.

The question is, what about accidents not caused by man's actions? Accidents are in one way or another, the results of influences of which we have affected. The difference is that in accidents, the actual factors are less evident, and therefore the immediate causes are diffuse, as in the case with diseases evolved during a long period of time. Therefore, it is harder to derive their cause, and they are categorized as 'events'.

Hence, it stands clear that in such cases, it is not a question of real evil, but it is all by our own definition and interpretation of each matter. Man has a tendency to call whatever seems to hurt him or make his life harder. However, we perceive it to be evil. It is possible to see it differently. How many have felt enriched after the passage of hardships in life? How many have not looked back and felt thankful for whatever they have been through? How many have not grown, become stronger and discovered new potentials within themselves in the light of strenuous hardships? Is it not that man's successes were born out of hardships he has survived? Does mankind ought to be thankful for the hard times that have birthed unwavering force of will in their heroes and freedom fighters? Is this counted for in all discoveries, conveniently named in the saying, 'necessity is the mother of invention'? Is a man not like the rough diamond or unmined gold ore in need of heating up in order for the pure gold to be extracted? The experiences of life make us often note that whatever we perceived in the beginning to be evil is, in the end, a blessing, paving the way and help us to refine ourselves and bloom.

"Indeed, with hardship [will be] ease." (The Holy Qur'an, 94:6).

"Fighting has been enjoined upon you while it is hateful to you. But perhaps you hate a thing, and it is good for you, and perhaps you love a thing, and it is bad for you. And God Knows, while

you know not.” (The Holy Qur'an, 2:216).

Further on to the other question related to Shaitan and his evil, the Qur'anic description, with the Prophet's (S) and Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) reports, clarifies the picture. God says:

“And [mention] when We said to the angels, ‘Prostrate to Adam,’ and they prostrated, except for Iblis. He was of the jinn and departed from the command of his Lord. Then will you take him and his descendants as allies other than Me while they are enemies to you? Wretched is for the wrongdoers as an exchange.” (The Holy Qur'an, 18:50).

By way of introduction, this verse shows two fundamental factors; the first is that Shaitan, or also called Iblis, is one of the djinn, and the second is that he defied God's orders on his own. He had the possibility to obey or defy, and on this occasion, he chose to defy.

Iblis belonged to the invisible[to man] species of djinn. Djinn, like man, is God's creation given desire, free will and the ability to distinguish between right and wrong. This makes them beings responsible for their own fates and will, therefore, be questioned for their actions. Accordingly, djinn like a man will be subjected to questioning, evident in the following Qur'anic verses:

“O company of djinn and mankind, did there not come to you messengers from among you, relating to you My verses and warning you of the meeting of this Day of yours? They will say, ‘We bear witness against ourselves’; and the worldly life had deluded them, and they will bear witness against themselves that they were disbelievers.” (The Holy Qur'an, 6: 130).

The verse mentioned earlier concludes that Iblis was among angels while defying God's orders. These questions arise: how come Iblis was among angels when he himself is djinn? And, why were God's orders for angels to bow in sojood before Adam ('a), also implying to Iblis?

From the narrations, supported by Qur'anic verse, it is apparent that Iblis's position had led him to be among angles, as the only survivor of his species. Furthermore, the narrations say that Iblis was so prominent in his worship to such a level that he was in sojood before God for thousands of years. It is clear Iblis was a djinn. He reached a high position and later chose to defy God's orders. Those matters confirm the presence of Iblis's free will. Therefore, he was not created evil but chose to with his own actions. He was overtaken by pride, and so defied God's orders. Afterwards, he chose to proceed in his enmity towards Adam ('a) and his progeny to misguide them, except the undefiled devoted servants, whom he does not touch. Thereby, Iblis was transformed to the driven out, cursed Shaitan.

“And [mention] when We said to the angels, ‘Prostrate before Adam’; so, they prostrated, except for Iblis. He refused and was arrogant and became of the disbelievers.” (The Holy Qur'an, 2:34).

“[Iblis] said, ‘By Your might, I will surely mislead them all. Except, among them, Your chosen servants.’” (The Holy Qur'an, 38:82-83).

From the answers given to these questions, the answer to the first given question is very much clarified. Much of that which we classify as evil is a matter of perspective while other instances imply other than pure evil. In other words, God has not created anything evil. Another note of interest is that the concept of evil, which Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) clarifies, is, in fact, the absence of good – a so-called non-existential concept. It can be compared to shadow or shade, only seen in lack of sunlight, hence a non-existential phenomenon. Similarly, evil is the result of that empty space occurring in the absence of good. Hence, the creation of God is good in essence and evil is not something created. However, that which is created is free to choose and act; however; they like due to their free will. Existence is in itself good because it is derived from the source of Existence, the Necessary existence and the First Cause, God.

D. What Does It Mean To Me That God Exists?

What does the Creator want from His creation? What is the relation between Him and His creation? Why has God created us?

Moreover, what is the purpose of the creation, and what does God will with it? As God is Independent and with no need whatsoever, why has He created creation? God's wisdom and justice imply that there must be a reason for this; what is it? And where do I, as human, fit into this equation?

When one accepts and believes in the existence of God, a fact a reasonable man cannot deny and whose evidence is within and around us, one will want to know God more. God's existence brings one to look for the meaning of life to see His purpose in creation and in oneself. Naturally, every man, even if he believes not in God, looks for that purpose. That is due to his inherent knowing that there exists a purpose to live. With a bit of reflection on creations coherent existence, man can come to understand how this must be true:

“And We did not create heaven and earth and that between them in play.” (The Holy Qur'an, 21: 16).

If you are aware already of whom has the knowledge you seek, do you turn to that source or do you keep asking and try to know that which has already come to your knowledge? As there is an Omnipotent Creator, who knows creation and its secrets, it is only natural to seek true knowledge deriving from this Creator. That is true knowledge about ourselves, our surroundings and most importantly, about life's purpose. And as God Himself has sent answers to man's every question with His infallible, therefore trusted and reliable, messengers, why not think and consider what they have brought forth?

D1. Purpose Of Life And Creation

What Is The Purpose Of Life?

Man witnesses, at different stages of life that all accomplished worldly goals can only give temporary

happiness at most. This passes into an empty feeling and a longing for something more. Man's soul, also the heart of his essence, created for eternity, is not satisfied with other than the Source of eternity. The lasting happiness, perfection to which man always seeks, and the eternal inner peace is with God, who is Perfection and Eternity itself.

“And there will remain the Face of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honor. And there will remain the Face of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honor.” (The Holy Qur'an, 55:26-27).

“Whatever you have will end, but what God has is lasting. And We will surely give those who were patient their reward according to the best of what they used to do.” (The Holy Qur'an, 16:96).

True knowledge of God means knowing the divine attributes and all secrets to happiness, resulting in a natural search to reach God. That means seeking to be like Him and mirror His attributes. That is what brings man to perfection and happiness. Therefore, God is the Purpose of life – the path is to know Him and the goal to reach Him.

Religion is there to awaken this inner longing within man and show him the fastest, easiest, and safest way to reach it. In other words, God has sent His Prophets ('a) to guide man to the straight path to Him. Hence, everything within the monotheistic religions, above all Islam, orbits around God and our relationship with Him. This includes the purpose of the prophets' ('a) missions and every individual's goal in life. In this way, tawhid forms the central part of religion, making it the fundamental requirement of faith. Instructions, acts of worship, and reflections are means to which man can be awakened to his reality, to start taking care and refine his soul.

It ought to be mentioned that, by reaching God, man receives all secondary inclinations to which his soul craves. This is due to the fact that man is driven to be like the one he loves and tends to be like whomever he holds dear. For instance, man loves perfection and all virtues. This preference acts as a force within man. As humans start to seek and know God, they realize that God is, in fact, Perfection and that He has all its virtues in their perfect form. With this knowledge, a man takes after the divine attributes and receives qualities such as being just, loving, generous, magnanimous etc. all of which are ideal.

By fulfilling his potential, man can reach the position of becoming khalifat-Allah (vicegerent of God). This is considered to be the purpose of life!¹⁹

“Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire – of women and sons, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle and tilled land. That is the enjoyment of worldly life, but God has with Him the best return.” (The Holy Qur'an, 3:14).

Then Why Were We Sent To This World?

Have you not felt that whatever happens to you is actually aimed at you, that there is something being

conveyed to you? Have you not experienced that many events in your life at one point, seemed to have happened accidentally or did not really make sense, but do now and have a meaning when you look back at them? Reflection about everything that has happened in one's life, how personally adjusted they are to oneself, can eventually lead to many insights about one's purpose in this world.

We are here in accordance with God's plan. The worldly life is a test; a training scene with possibilities to evolve and grow. Life is a test; a chance to prove, mostly to ourselves, that we are worthy of a happy and eternal life, in the hereafter. This fact includes all people without reservation, whoever they might be, and wherever they might stand in life. Man differentiates from all other creations with his advanced intellect and a relatively free will to affect his own situation and future. These attributes point to the man having a special goal in comparison to other creations. God did not create man only to perish. This cannot be expected from a Perfect, Eternal and Wise Creator, who creates everything with a purpose.

“And We have certainly honoured the children of Adam and carried them on land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created, with [definite] preference.” (The Holy Qur'an, 17:70).

“[He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best in deed – and He is the Exalted in Might, the Forgiving.” (The Holy Qur'an, 67:2).

“Do the people think that they will be left to say, ‘We believe’ and they will not be tried?” (The Holy Qur'an, 29:2).

“Does man think that he will be left neglected?” (The Holy Qur'an, 75:36)

“Then Satan whispered to him; he said, ‘O Adam, shall I direct you to the tree of eternity and possession that will not deteriorate?’.” (The Holy Qur'an, 20:120).[20](#)

The message of God, sent with His prophets ('a), always conveyed a purpose with the creation of man. In many Qur'anic verses, the word khaleedoon (the eternalized) appears in reference to man's life in the hereafter. Prophet Muhammad (S), the last messenger of God, has said regarding this:

“You have not been created to perish, quite the opposite, you are created for eternal life.”[21](#)

It is also clearly stated by God in the Qur'an:

“And I did not create the djinn and mankind except to worship Me.” (The Holy Qur'an, 51:56).

“Race toward forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden whose width is like the width of the heavens and earth, prepared for those who believed in God and His messengers. That is the bounty of God which He gives to whom He wills, and God is the possessor of great bounty.” (The Holy Qur'an, 57:21).

“God is the ally of those who believe. He brings them out from darknesses into the light. And those who disbelieve – their allies are Taghut. They take them out of the light into darknesses. Those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide eternally therein.” (The Holy Qur'an, 2:257).

Accordingly, this life is a starting point, hotbed and preparation for the eternal life to come. It is in this world man prepares himself, picks provision and grows to then harvest in the hereafter. As it is narrated in the Prophet's (S) hadith, based on Qur'anic verses:

“This world is the cultivated land for the hereafter.”²²

“Whoever desires the harvest of the Hereafter – We increase for him in his harvest. And whoever desires the harvest of this world – We give him thereof, but there is not for him in the Hereafter any share.” (The Holy Qur'an, 42:20)

“Whoever should desire the immediate – We hasten for him from it what We will to whom We intend. Then We have made for him Hell, which he will [enter to] burn, censured and banished.” (The Holy Qur'an, 17:18).

“But whoever desires the Hereafter and exerts the effort due to it while he is a believer – it is those whose effort is ever appreciated [by God]” (The Holy Qur'an, 17:19).

“To each [category] We extend – to these and to those – from the gift of your Lord. And never has the gift of your Lord been restricted.” (The Holy Qur'an, 17:20).

“This world and this life are a training ground for the hereafter, the quality of your harvest depends on what you grow. It is impossible to grow grain and harvest wheat, to get flowers from a thorn or to grow dates from colocynth.”²³²⁴

It is in this world that man is raised and trained, to put the foundation to his eternal journey. This can be likened to the mandatory schooling, which influences how close the student is to his or her goal. Therefore, the hereafter is the last abode to all mankind. At the end of time, all people will be awakened to answer all which they have done in their worldly lives. The hereafter is eternal and whether it will be a happy or tragic end depends on how we choose to spend our lives now. To help mankind reach this goal, God has sent guiders to guide, help and lead mankind to this path. Prophet Muhammad (S) is the final one in the longlisted Godsent prophets ('a), all of whom have had the same mission to inform and help people reach their creational purpose. Consequently, Islam is the final and highly preserved version of God's message, as it is for all mankind till the end of times. ²⁵

“And who is better in religion than one who submits himself to God while being a doer of good and follows the religion of Abraham, inclining toward truth? And God took Abraham as an intimate friend.” (The Holy Qur'an, 4:125).

“Our Lord, and make us Muslims [in submission] to You and from our descendants a Muslim

nation [in submission] to You. And show us our rites and accept our repentance. Indeed, You are the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful.” (The Holy Qur'an, 2: 128).

“And whoever turned away after that – they were defiantly disobedient.” (The Holy Qur'an, 3:82).

“Indeed, the religion in the sight of God is Islam. And those who were given the Scripture did not differ except after knowledge had come to them – out of jealous animosity between themselves. And whoever disbelieves in the verses of God, then indeed, God is swift in [taking] account.” (The Holy Qur'an, 3: 19).

“Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an, and indeed, We will be its guardian.” (The Holy Qur'an, 15:9).

D2. Day Of Judgment

What happens after death? What does the Day of Judgment mean? Why does it exist and what purpose does it serve? What happens at Judgment Day?

“And certainly, did We create man from an extract of clay. Then We placed him as a sperm-drop in a firm lodging. Then We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and We made the clot into a lump [of flesh], and We made [from] the lump, bones, and We covered the bones with flesh; then We developed him into another creation. So blessed is God, the best of creators.” (The Holy Qur'an, 23: 12-14).

“O People, if you should be in doubt about the Resurrection, then [consider that] indeed, We created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then from a clinging clot, and then from a lump of flesh, formed and unformed – that We may show you. And We settle in the wombs whom We will for a specified term, then We bring you out as a child, and then [We develop you] that you may reach your [time of] maturity. And among you is he who is taken in [early] death, and among you is he who is returned to the most decrepit [old] age so that he knows, after [once having] knowledge, nothing. And you see the earth barren, but when We send down upon it rain, it quivers and swells and grows [something] of every beautiful kind.” (The Holy Qur'an, 22:5).

God has created man with the potential of becoming His vicegerent and given him the ability and means to achieve this. He has let the man go through life's trials and therefore it is obvious that He will evaluate all of it. The Day of Judgment is the day this evaluation takes place in the Divine court. It is also on this day every creation will be graded and pay for their actions. The Day of Judgment contains everything, including mankind throughout history, and affects the whole world. This day also has many names, each one describing an aspect of that day, known to be the day secrets will be revealed and the truths of actions exposed. This is because man's most inner intentions will be disclosed, and the covered reality manifested. On this great day, God will assemble all; mankind and djinn and other creations. The dead

will be raised to life, veils of neglect and matter will fall, and the truth will be seen by all. All will witness this great day, and each one will be questioned.

“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds – [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge. And God created the heavens and earth in truth and so that every soul may be recompensed for what it has earned, and they will not be wronged.” (The Holy Qur'an, 45:21-22).

“Say, ‘God causes you to live, then causes you to die; then He will assemble you for the Day of Resurrection, about which there is no doubt, but most of the people do not know.’” (The Holy Qur'an, 45:26).

The Day of Judgment is the day every man will be faced with the results of his choices. It is Divine justice that reward is to be given to the one who acted good and punishment for the one who did evil, in the hereafter. This is in accordance with the hereafter's measurements, as man's limited lifetime in this world is a basis and capital for his life in the next.

“So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.” (The Holy Qur'an, 99:7-8).

What Happens On The Day Of Judgment?

The Day of Judgment, also the final day in this world, has many phases. To begin with, it is initiated when the surrounding world's current existence ceases, and the world is prepared for accountment. The earth shakes, skies crack, mountains crumble, and celestial bodies fall out of their orbits. All of the universes will enter a new stage. These events are described evidently in the Holy Qur'an, especially in many verses in the last juz'.

“When the sky breaks apart” (The Holy Qur'an, 82:1).

“And when the stars fall, scattering” (The Holy Qur'an, 82:2).

“And when the seas are erupted” (The Holy Qur'an, 82:3).

“And when the [contents of] graves are scattered” (The Holy Qur'an, 82:4).

“A soul will [then] know what it has put forth and kept back” (The Holy Qur'an, 82:5).

“O mankind, what has deceived you concerning your Lord, the Generous.” (The Holy Qur'an, 82:6)

In relation to this, the dead are brought back to life, and all of the creation assembles. People will then perceive their actions in their real shapes and step into the divine court.

“That Day, the people will depart separated [into categories] to be shown [the result of] their deeds.” (The Holy Qur'an, 99:6).

“So whoever does an atom’s weight of good will see it.” (The Holy Qur'an, 99:7).

“And whoever does an atom’s weight of evil will see it.” (The Holy Qur'an, 99:8).

The Day of Judgment manifests God’s absolute dominion, mightiness, mercy and justice. Those who have not lived an upright life in this world cannot be placed on equal footing with those who have. And therefore, all will be judged in accordance with the way they lived.

“It is the Day when a soul will not possess for another soul [power to do] a thing, and the command that Day is [entirely] with God.” (The Holy Qur'an, 82:19).

“[All] sovereignty that Day is for God; He will judge between them. So, they who believed and did righteous deeds will be in the Gardens of Pleasure.” (The Holy Qur'an, 22:56).

“And they who disbelieved and denied Our signs – for those there will be a humiliating punishment.” (The Holy Qur'an, 22:57).

“And We place the scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection, so no soul will be treated unjustly at all. And if there is [even] the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it forth. And sufficient are We as an accountant.” (The Holy Qur'an, 21:47).

“So today no soul will be wronged at all, and you will not be recompensed except for what you used to do.” (The Holy Qur'an, 36:54).

E. How Can I Attain My Creational Purpose?

Take a moment to be alone and detach from your day-to-day business and life’s hectic treadmill; take a long walk in the woods or by the shore and give yourself some time. Think about your existence and dive deep within yourself. Deep within, what do you long for? Ask yourself: who am I? What am I doing here? What is my life based on, and why? What is the purpose of everything? How will it all end?

It is rare that one gets the time off to stop and think about what happens around, what they are doing, and what the point is. But these are questions all of us must ask ourselves. It is after all one life, with unknown years, we are made to live. Who knows – your life or mine might end before we reach the end of this sentence. Has it not been worth the while to have thought and had a purpose then?

If we give ourselves space and the possibility to think about existence and reflect about ourselves, our creation and creation as a whole, we will surely realize we are more than talking two-legged animals. It is more to man than eating, sleeping and breeding. Man’s intellect, abilities and doings, inner tendencies and deep longings, his belief in higher ideals and fight to reach beyond sensation, is noticeable within

him and can be seen throughout history.

Reflecting on these questions – who I am, what I am doing here, and where I am headed – are introductory steps to finding and yearning to achieve one's creational goal. By studying and reflecting on one's existence and knowing oneself, man can receive insight into his reality and know his Lord.[26](#)

What the Creator wants from His creation is clear as it is, He who has purposefully created them with a plan. Therefore, it is of importance to seek and find answers given by Him. As no one knows creation better than their Creator, He is also their best guide. To start moving in this direction and actively wanting to discover and reach the Creator, and one's purpose is in itself the first fundamental step towards the right path. God will carve out the way for whoever seeks to find Him.

“O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.” (The Holy Qur'an, 2: 186).

Human Free Will

Islam emphasizes the concept of responsibility, duty and obligation in every man to himself, his Lord, his fellowmen and other creations. In fact, every man is responsible for his own actions, within the framework of free will, given to him by God. At the same time, both our lifespans and the time of our death are predestined by God. But that does not imply that our actions are as well. We are free with regard to our actions and therefore responsible for them. This is also a foundation to be justly judged on the Day of Judgment – based on our free will, we have made active choices. God offers us guidance to be able to differentiate good from evil; thereafter, it is our choice to follow that guidance or not:

“Indeed, We guided him to the way, be he grateful or be he ungrateful.” (The Holy Qur'an, 76:3).

To be able to know the requirements to reach our goal, God has sent guiders in every period of time, to enlighten people and show the way to Him. Hence, it is our responsibility to work towards that knowledge and path actively.

E1. God Has Sent Guides

God has by His wisdom and mercy sent down guiders among people to convey His message and guide them. To accept and follow that guidance results in salvation and to turn away results in the opposite.

The guiders are people chosen and elected by God based on His wisdom. They are similar to others in creation; however, they are superior in their personal character and virtues. God, Wise and Omniscient, has always equipped His sent guiders with whatever is demanded to prove their veracity, superior knowledge and wisdom, among others. With this, every guider has continued on the path of the preceding guider.[27](#)

E2. One And The Same Line

All of God's sent guiders follow the same line and convey the same message, calling to the submission and worship of God.²⁸

“Or have they taken gods besides Him? Say, [O Muhammad], ‘Produce your proof. This [Qur'an] is the message for those with me and the message of those before me.’ But most of them do not know the truth, so they are turning away.” (The Holy Qur'an, 21:24).

“And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], ‘Worship God and avoid Taghut.’ And among them were those whom God guided, and among them were those upon whom error was [deservedly] decreed. So, proceed through the earth and observe how was the end of the deniers.” (The Holy Qur'an, 16:36).

Chapter 2 – Summary

A. The first and most fundamental pillar in Islam is tawhid, the belief in One God

B. Through signs and proof in creation, man can be led to the existence of God.

B1. The order of the system is about creational order and syncing witnessing a higher Omniscient Creator. The order, syncing and nature of creation proof a correlation between all components forming a whole. This points to the existence of one and the same Creator.

B2. Proof of cause–effect implies that every created existence and being must be derived back to a creator, as every effect has a cause.

B3. Fitra is the innate instinct belief witnessing of truths, among them the human nature of disliking of immoral acts. Fitra drives a man to seek perfection and happiness. It seeks a higher power and creator to find and stick to, especially during hardships. This innate instinct is more apparent in those who do not actively oppose it and have therefore veiled it, as for instance children and come to show in all in extreme situations where people feel alone and powerless.

C1. God is described by His attributes and signs. When God's qualities are described by His names and attributes, there are no attributes increased, decreased or any that come to be. God is all those attributes in their most perfect and thorough form.

C2. ‘Adalah; Divine justice, is a principle of faith. God is Just; He does not oppress or do any injustice to any of His creations.

D. The existence of God implies that one must seek after the purpose of life, to more clearly be able to see God's purpose in creation.

D1. God, Himself, is the purpose of life, that is to say by knowing Him and reaching Him. To reach God is to be like Him and mirror His attributes. This will lead man to perfection and happiness, that which every man eventually wants in his journey to various goals. Religion aims to awaken this inner wish within man and show him the right, fast and easy way to it.

D2. Day of Judgment is when God resurrects people back to life so that they may be held responsible for their actions in this world.

E. One can achieve the aim of their creation by studying and reflecting on what God wants from His creation, to identify the specific path and actions, and then act upon that.

E1. God, by His wisdom and mercy, has sent down guiders among men to convey His message and guide them.

1. The Imam's ('a) utterance is in response to a person by the name of De'leb who asks the Imam ('a) whether he "sees" God, whereupon Imam Ali ('a) answers affirmatively and clarifies the nature of this seeing that occurs with the eyes of the heart. This depiction is narrated in Nahjul Balagha sermon 179.
2. More follows on B2; this subject will be more explained further on section, "contingent existences".
3. More follows on B2; section "Necessary Existence".
4. More follows on C and C1; on the discussion, "Who is God?" and "Attributes of God" and "Matter of good and evil".
5. Observe that 'perceiving' God is not a physical seeing with sight, as God is no physical Being with material aspects, to be seen with physical means. More follows on B2.
6. The poem of Sheikh Bahai in the beginning of this book exemplifies of this.
7. 'A contingent existence' is called momkin Al-wjood in Arabic terms; theological and philosophical terminology.
8. "The Necessary existence" is called wajib Al-wojood in Arabic terms; theological and philosophical terminology. Mulla Sadra, 17th century known philosopher, have come up with this term in his books.
9. This subject has been discussed earlier in this chapter on "The proof of order"; see B1.
10. More to be continued on the next chapter, on the subject, "God does not leave creation without a guide"; see F.
11. Based on a discussion between Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) and a non-believer on the existence of God, Imam Al-Sadiq's ('a) answer is based on the teachings of the Qur'an, among them the verses [10:22] and [29:65].

Source: Bihar Al-Anwar volume 3 p.41 riwaya 16; volume 67 p.137 riwaya 7; volume 92 p.232 riwaya 14 and p. 240 riwaya 48.

12. As God is good, and evil is a non-existential phenomenon. More on this in C2; "matters of good and evil". The fact than people go astray and do evil, is within the frame of free will, more on this on E. The reason why people offend is mainly because they misunderstand what they believe gives them happiness and thus fails to apply how happiness is to be achieved. For example, man in his pursuit of happiness – perfection and eternity – can get the idea that money and power entail this.

The very inclination to seek happiness, which is deeply rooted in man, is good and not evil. Rather, it is a driving force that causes man to constantly strive. However, the very purpose a person may assume for what brings about happiness was inadequate or incorrect. Furthermore, in his attempt to achieve that aim, man can violate and oppress others.

13. Fitra is mostly connected to the soul seeking its heavenly origin, while man also have other forces within, among them nafs; stands for the natural needs and animalistic wants. In an uncontrolled condition, nafs can bring a man down to the worldly foully and imprison him on the cost of heavenly and spiritual longing. However, nafs makes a part of the human being and has the essential function of driving man to satisfying his bodily needs and survive. So, there is a mainly two opposites in human beings, one driving them to the heavenly and the other to the worldly; it is through this struggle and in

their balance, man's potential and high creational position is discovered.

14. This subject is touched upon in the chapter regarding "The human fitra"; see B3

15. Inner means are mainly aql (reason, intellect and heart) given by God. Those are means to which man gets the ability to differentiate, reflect and think. And with deeper reflection come to conclusions and conviction. Outer means are mainly the message of God, sent to mankind through His prophets ('a). This subject is touched upon from E1 and further on.

16. Imam Ali ('a) have great deep declarations of God, making intellects astounded and waters the truth-seeking soul. In many of those, God is described by being undescribed limited attributes and notions. This can be found in Nahjul Balaghah, sermon 1, et al.

17. This subject is touched upon in the book Selection from Glimpses of Nahjul Balaghah by Shahid Mutahhari (r.a.). More on the subject of 'Adalah and its historical and theological background can be read in "Divine Justice" by Shahid Mutahhari (r.a.). The preface of the book, Shahid explains the historical background to how the concept of 'Adalah has a prominent position and its many aspects within Islamic theology, jurisprudence and social fabric- debates. Observethat the concept of 'Adalah is mentioned in many aspects in Qur'anic verses and so it is given a special emphasis in the Holy Qur'an. The book is online at:

<https://www.al-islam.org/al-tawhid/generAl-tawhid/selection-glimpses-nah...> [7]

18. Imam Ali ('a) has regarding the definition of 'Adalah (justice) said: "Justice places each thing on its rightful place." (Nahjul Balaghah, words of wisdom 429). The meaning of justice is giving each thing, with regards to its conditions, its right. This meaning is of importance as its implementation can for instance seem otherwise in distributing, but is nonetheless justly made. And vice versa, a visibly equal distribution can be unjust, as every person or thing has not been given its rights, in regards to its conditions. And at the same time, justice can require an equal distribution in other contexts.

19. Every human is like a unique flower, to bloom fully in the light of God's nearness and in realization of this main goal in his being. More on this subject can be found in the book, Goal of life by Shahid Mutahhari (r.a.). Online at:

<https://www.al-islam.org/goal-life-murtadha-mutahhari> [8]

20. Shaitan uses the human inner inclinations for infinity and eternalization, tempting Adam ('a) to eat from the forbidden tree. The matter of the human inner tendencies is discussed in the first chapter of this book, on "The human needs – superficially evident and profoundly veiled".

21. This hadith is narrated in Majalis Al-Sadooq p.198 et al.

22. This hadith is narrated in Sharh Al-Kafi by Al-Mazandarani volume 2 p.120 hadith 92 et al.

23. A bitter and poisonous plant.

24. Shahid Mutahhari (r.a.) refers to this hadith in his book Eternal life. Online at:

<https://www.al-islam.org/eternal-life-life-after-death-murtadha-mutahhari> [9]

25. The term Islam, from the roots silm and salam with the meanings, peace and harmony, means submission before God. Therefore, Islam, with its wide meaning, is the religions of submission before God, while Muslims are referred as those who submit to God and His will. Consequently, all monotheistic religions are enveloped by the term Islam, while all the other prophets ('a), who have conveyed the same message of submitting to God, identify themselves in Qur'anic verses as Muslims, from that same meaning. Islam, as the final and definitive religion preached by Prophet Muhammad (S), on the command of God, is the specific meaning of the term.

26. The Prophet (S) has said, "Whoever knows himself knows his Lord" (Bihar Al-Anwar volume 2, p.32). This hadith is deep in meaning and therefore many deep discussions arise regarding its meaning, trying to uncover some of its aspects.

27. This subject is touched upon more thoroughly in the next chapter; see F.

28. This subject is discussed on the matter of prophethood; H, and more thoroughly on, "Why guiders are needed" in the next chapter; see F.

Chapter 3: God's Continuous Guidance Through His Chosen Guides

Questions addressed in this chapter:

– Pillars of Islam – common for all Muslims

What is the main difference between Shi'a and Sunni?

– What is the meaning of Imamah (divine chosen leadership)?

Why are guiders/leaders needed?

Who appoints them, and why?

What characteristics do they have?

What methods do they use, for whom are they intended for and what is their goal?

E3. Pillars Of Islam – Common Foundation For All Denominations

The main difference between Shi'a and Sunni can briefly be understood in the perception of Islamic leadership, which is Imamah. Different views are held regarding the central role it should hold, the function it serves as well as to whom the choice of it befalls.

In general terms, there is no major difference between the Shi'a and Sunni school of thought, on these three basic pillars of faith:

- **Tawhid** – Allah as the only God without equal.
- **Nubuwwah** – God's servant and messenger, Prophet Muhammad (S), as the last of God sent prophets.
- **Qiyama** – Judgment Day, accounting and life after this.

Both Shi'a and Sunni, and in fact, all who enter Islam, believe in these three pillars. These pillars form the basis of Islam's doctrine while the testimony “la ilaha ill Allah; Muhammad Rasoul-Allah” (there is no deity except God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God) is the literal sign to enter Islam.

Imamah and ‘Adalah (divine justice) are viewed in Shi'a Islam to fall under the pillars of Nubuwwah and

tawhid respectively and are therefore an extension and an essential complement to the three foundational pillars. Imamah is a continuation of Nubuwwah, as there is a need for a guide for people in every time. Moreover, ‘Adalah is an integral part of tawhid and a prerequisite for the Day of Judgment, where the premise of reckoning befalls on account of God’s justice.¹ These two concepts are also referred to as usul-e mathhab, the pillars of the doctrine, which characterize Shi'a belief.

The concepts are even accepted in the belief of most Sunni branches, albeit with minor differences. For instance, it is not given the same extent of centrality as in the Shi'a orientation. While the emphasis is often put on ‘Adalah as Muslim orientations hold differing views in its regard, it is the contrasting notions of Imamah that serves as the principal difference between Shias and Sunnis. Other differences stem from this contrast. The differences are mainly notable in the practical details following various regulations and within fiqh (jurisprudence). However, since Imamah is a matter of belief in the Imams (‘a) from the Prophet’s (S) lineage/kin as rightful, divinely chosen, infallible leaders and the mediators of religion after the Prophet (S), such a view permeates the whole of religion in its practical dimensions and can become crucial even in the minor matters.

In What Way Does Imamah Become Crucial?

Islam is a living religion, bestowing guidance to people with intent to uphold human wellbeing and progression at all times. In the course of changing times and societal progress, there are constantly new questions emerging. This is, for instance, seen, while not limited to, the field of fiqh (jurisprudence). Akin to the religion as a whole, fiqh is living and constitutes open spaces for students and conclusions to be drawn that are relatable to the present day while being entrenched in the prescribed framework given.

In this regard, alongside the Qur'an and the Prophet (S), Shias also rely on the Prophet’s (S) Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) – the Imams (‘a) of his lineage – as infallible and divinely chosen guides. The customs of Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) become, similar to the Prophet (S), hadith and sunnah. Therefore, their word and actions are upheld as a source by the Shi'a; it provides the basis for the practical implementations of God’s commands written in The Holy Qur'an, as well as for fatwa (legal pronouncements). The words and actions of the Imams (‘a) are consecutively based on the word of God, the Qur'an and the Prophet’s (S) words and actions, which are the epitome of the Qur'an in practice. In contrast, Sunnis do not regard the Imams (‘a) as divinely chosen with an exclusive position nor with precedence in interpretation. Instead, they imply that all of the Prophet’s (S) companions hold a similar position, some of which are more prominent and dominant as personalities and/or in narrating hadiths. Amongst them, there are principally four jurists² that have been adopted as the founders and leaders of the four Sunni orientations, all of which have a collection of hadiths and fatwas used within the Sunni branches.

In practical terms, in any instance where a Shi'a jurist issues a fatwa within a fiqh question, he begins with the Qur'an and substantiates with the Prophet’s (S) and Imams’ (‘a) ahadith and implementations alongside logical reasoning. This is contrary to a Sunni jurist who would begin with the Qur'an and substantiate with the Prophet’s (S) and the companions’ ahadith and implementations as well as the

books of their four leaders.

Consequently, the disparity in the issue of Imamah becomes the most crucial question in which disparities exist. While the Sunni school of thought also believes in the concept, it is not acknowledged as a divinely chosen leadership. Nonetheless, Sunni Muslims still adore and respect the Prophet's (S) Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), comprised by the Prophet (S), his daughter Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) and the twelve Imams ('a). They consider Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) to be of the most devout, righteous and intelligent personalities of their time.³ In comparison, the Shi'a Muslims regard Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) to be in a lofty and unique position as divinely chosen, infallible leaders that are descendent from the lineage of the Prophet (S). The words and actions of Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) are a reflection of the Prophet (S) and therefore of equal importance to follow.

F. God Does Not Leave Creation Without A Guide

God is the Merciful, the Wise and the Utterly Just, and has accordingly created us with a purpose and creational purpose. Can He then call on us to achieve such an aim without providing us with the necessary means needed to attain it? From a historical point of view, delineating God's sunnah (procedure, approach based on His established principles that prevail in the world system and operates the world), has God ever left mankind without a guide?

The answer to both questions is a prompt "No!". God's wisdom predicates that He does not create anything without purpose and goal whilst His justice deems that He would not require that which is not possible to achieve. This leads to the fact that God has equipped man with all the necessary means and conditions⁴ required for him to achieve his purpose of creation. This constitutes, *inter alia*, the need for guidance and guides that serve as a paragon for the journey towards God. In fact, it is one of God's established principles that for every period of time, there shall be a guide. God says:

"And those who disbelieved say, 'Why has a sign not been sent down to him from his Lord?' You are only a warner, and for every person is a guide." (The Holy Qur'an, 13:7).

It is rather the case that God never leaves humankind without a guide that facilitates man to achieve his aim of creation. In essence, if God has set forth a purpose that demands the need for a guide, by virtue of His justice, the means necessary for its fulfilment will be bestowed by Him. God further says:

"Mankind was [of] one religion [before their deviation]; then God sent the prophets as bringers of good tidings and warners and sent down with them the Scripture in truth to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed. And none differed over the Scripture except those who were given it – after the clear proofs came to them – out of jealous animosity among themselves. And God guided those who believed to the truth concerning that over which they had differed, by His permission. And God guides whom He wills to a straight path." (The Holy Qur'an, 2:213)

A question for contemplation: why would God, who has never left humanity without a guide, suddenly after the Prophet's (S) death leave the people without one? Historically, God has continuously sent His prophets ('a) and their successors for guidance and to lead people to Him, so why would He not do so after His last Prophet (S)? At a time when neither man's creational purpose has been fulfilled, nor his need for guidance ceased, why would a God that is both wise and just, abruptly stop providing mankind with His guides? Why would God deviate from His sunnah when all the given parameters remain uniformly unchanged? On the contrary, it is rather that God's wisdom and justice purposes that humanity is endowed with guidance so long as the need prevails and until the creational purpose is fulfilled.

The Leaders Of Guidance – God's Or The People's Choice?

A guide is an essential prerequisite to reach the path and achieve the goal, but is it fundamental that the guide is chosen by God?

Envision yourself on a journey to reach a certain destination. Ask yourself: do I need guidance and a correct address to reach the place intended for? If you find yourself in a completely unknown area and on unfamiliar roads, would it be beneficial to ask a person acquainted with the area for guidance and directions? Can a person who does not know the destination and the correct path to it guide you correctly? Whom would you prefer asking; the one that has only heard of the destination or the one that has been there before?

The notion that a guide is ordained by God is upheld and supported by numerous Qur'anic verses and prophetic sayings. Nonetheless, the claim can also be proven through logical reasoning. It is essential for a guide to fulfil a series of requirements and conditions before being recognised as a legitimate guide. Amongst which is having knowledge and being aware of the righteous path and goal. They must themselves be pioneers on the path which they guide others towards. At the same time, it is necessary for them to uphold the highest possible degree of piety, wisdom and expertise to ensure that they do not follow their desires, fall to temptation or commit mistakes along the path.⁵ Evidently, people do not have the capacity to determine whether or not all conditions are met in a guide since man's insight in the matter is both inadequate and deficient.

For instance, a person may seem to fulfil the conditions when, in reality, his true intent could be hidden or changed with time. The person cannot even with certainty guarantee his own goodness will remain intact over the course of time. Man is a complicated being and within himself holds a whole world with countless uncharted layers to be explored. This man, who is somewhat of a mystery even to himself, cannot know with certainty what choices to take in regard to unknown situations until they occur. Who other than God – the Omniscient, most knowing of the manifest and hidden, the One that knows everything about His creation and hence what is best for them – will know? Who other than God maybe just in their choice of guides that hold superior authority and command over His creations?

A divinely chosen leadership even after the Prophet's (S) passing is, therefore as self-evident as during

his lifetime. It ensures people do not end up on a misguided path at times when circumstances change, and previously unknown lurking dangers come to light. The need for a guide who is both justified to lead and informed of the right path, its pitfalls and traps and how best to avoid them, is always relevant, even after the Prophet (S). The continuation of this divinely chosen leadership is, therefore, both a necessity and a condition that provides the best prospect for humanity to reach its creational purpose.

It is clearly stated in The Holy Qur'an, that God never leaves people without a guide.[6](#) God sends His guides to the people so that they shall journey on the path towards Him and flourish in achieving their full potential and therefore, their purpose of creation.

"God chooses messengers from among the angels and from among the men; surely Allah is Hearing, Seeing." (The Holy Qur'an, 22:75).

"He knows what is [presently] before them and what will be after them. And to God will be returned [all] matters." (The Holy Qur'an, 22:76).

Qur'anic Evidence

One of the most apparent verses in The Holy Qur'an, in which God refers the choice of an Imam as a divinely chosen leader and in which the magnitude of the position of Imamah is displayed is the following verse:

"And [mention, O Muhammad], when Abraham was tried by his Lord with commands, and he fulfilled them. [God] said, 'Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people.' [Abraham] said, 'And of my descendants?' [God] said, 'My covenant does not include the wrongdoers.'" (The Holy Qur'an, 2:124).

In the present verse, God is talking about Prophet Ibrahim ('a), and the trial the prophet was subjected to in relation to the commandment to sacrifice his son Ismail ('a). Prophet Ibrahim ('a) submitted to God's order, together with his son. God rescued Ismail ('a) at the last moment and accepted the sacrifice from Prophet Ibrahim ('a).[7](#)

This incident took place at a later age of Prophet Ibrahim ('a), when his son Ismail ('a), whom God had bestowed upon Prophet Ibrahim ('a) after a long wait, had reached adolescence. By that time, Prophet Ibrahim ('a) was already a prophet and a chosen messenger and had been given the high status of Khalil-Allah (God's friend). But it is only in the context of this great trial, after many previous trials, that God entitles the Prophet Ibrahim ('a) as Imam.

The verse essentially clarifies two crucial points, one of which is that the choice of Imam is by God Himself, while the other is that the position of Imam is of such importance that Prophet Ibrahim ('a) receives it after passing a great trial.[8](#)

Why Is A Guide Needed?

Why does God send guides? What is their mission, and what are they destined to do? What methods do they use to carry out their mission?

The main goal of God's sent guides is to awaken people and reconnect them to their human reality; to their soul, and thereby to their Lord!

In a worldly life of pitfalls and highs and its conspicuous luring diversity, man tends to fall into neglect and slumber in regard to himself and his spiritual well-being. The primary mission of God's sent guides is to awaken people of the forgotten reality they are immersed in and make them return to their *fitra*⁹, which innately professes *Tawhid*¹⁰. By virtue of this, people are freed from all that enslaves them and keeps them from fulfilling their true potential. It is only by being God's servant, submitted to Him alone and holding fast to goodness and justice, that God's chosen guides lead people to actualize their innate disposition in the light of worship.

“So, direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the fitra of God upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of God. That is the correct religion, but most people do not know.” (The Holy Qur'an, 30:30).

The significant mission that the Godly sent guides hold is primarily carried out by reminding people of certain truths regarding themselves, the course of life, one's own presence in this world, the prevailing order of this life, and the afterlife. This, among other things, reminds people of all the blessings that surround them and which they enjoy without really thinking about it. The remembrance and attention of these forgotten blessings urge man to reflect on his origins and at the same time awaken the feeling of gratitude within.

“And God has extracted you from the wombs of your mothers not knowing a thing, and He made for you hearing and vision and intellect that perhaps you would be grateful.” (The Holy Qur'an, 16:78).

“And not alike are the two bodies of water. One is fresh and sweet, palatable for drinking, and one is salty and bitter. And from each, you eat tender meat and extract ornaments which you wear, and you see the ships ploughing through [them] that you might seek of His bounty, and perhaps you will be grateful.” (The Holy Qur'an, 35:12).

By virtue of fostering logical thinking through thought-provoking questions and reasonable arguments, these guides seek to uncover the truths that govern this world and illuminate the creational purpose. Some of the current topics for man to reflect upon include, but are not limited to, creation, nature's harmony, man's own being and creation, death as an actuality in all human life and the history of the people that have preceded.

“And it is He who spread the earth and placed therein firmly set mountains and rivers, and from all of the fruits He made therein two mates; He causes the night to cover the day. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who give thought” (The Holy Qur'an, 13:3).

“Similar situations [as yours] have passed on before you, so proceed throughout the earth and observe how was the end of those who denied.” (The Holy Qur'an, 3: 137).

“Then We sent after them Moses with Our signs to Pharaoh and his establishment, but they were unjust toward them. So, see how was the end of the corrupters.” (The Holy Qur'an, 7: 103).

These questions help man find himself and realise his true position in regard to creation. That is to say; these questions are beneficial in finding the answer to the three fundamental questions that human beings naturally seek to find answers for.¹¹ As man realises his place in existence, such insight will affect all his relations; relation to God, to other people and to the whole of creation. As man's life has a clear purpose and her relations clear frameworks, man becomes actively in charge of his own destiny and life choices.

“O People, if you should be in doubt about the Resurrection, then [consider that] indeed, We created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then from a clinging clot, and then from a lump of flesh, formed and unformed – that We may show you. And We settle in the wombs whom We will for a specified term, then We bring you out as a child, and then [We develop you] that you may reach your [time of] maturity. And among you is he who is taken in [early] death, and among you is he who is returned to the most decrepit [old] age so that he knows, after [once having] knowledge, nothing. And you see the earth barren, but when We send down upon it rain, it quivers and swells and grows [something] of every beautiful kind.” (The Holy Qur'an, 22:5).

The guides give reminders to the people to serve as a wakeup call to awaken man so that he opens his eyes to reality and recognizes the truth. They deliver a message of felicity in regard to the possibility of meeting God, man's ability to refine and achieve happiness and eternal life, while also warning of the consequences of not preparing for the encounter with God.

“Indeed, We have sent you with the truth as a bringer of good tidings and a warner. And there was no nation but that there had passed within it a warner.” (The Holy Qur'an, 35:24).

In essence, the guides seek all these gateways to draw man's attention towards God's signs so that he becomes acquainted with his Lord, wherein man can become alive in the heart and the soul, which is the essence of his being. It may be stated that the supreme mission of the guides is to sharpen the hidden diamond within each person. This entails uncovering man's abilities and his, yet to flourish, intellectual and spiritual powers that God has placed within him.

Every human being is a unique world in his own right, waiting to be discovered, developed and flourished. If a man would achieve his full potential and make his intellect flourish and at the same time,

refine his soul, it would be a great leap forward for all of creation. The effects would be evident within all possible dimensions, worlds and fields, not least within all forms of knowledge and sciences in this world. [12](#)

In contrast, adhering to wrongness and falsehood, negligence, sins and moral depravity acts as a veil and prevents the above-mentioned potentialities from being fully realized and manifested. The man enters a state of being unbalanced when excess and/or lack of focus is given to physical needs, the self, material comforts and worldly bondage. Islam advocates a middle way where balance is the key point. It is from such a perspective that, for instance, living in libidinous ways is considered as unbalanced as living in celibacy. Man's essence as a whole is made of several parts, each inciting different needs and potentials, and therefore the whole of the man must be taken into account without one aspect suffering at the expense of another. Therefore, the mission of God's guides can be further explained as promoting man's refinement and his abilities based on the balance of her entire being, to the extent that man himself is willing and receptive. This is both through the universal instructions in the form of the rules and laws of religion as well as through more individual-based inspiration at the intellectual, hearty and spiritual level.

On these grounds, God's commands are communicated to people through instructions sent by their Creator and Lord. These instructions make up the prerequisites for a life of the calibre God intended for man. In brief, it may be said that the mission of God's guides is to portray and assist man to lead a good life here on earth whilst also refining man to prepare for his permanent abode in the next world.

All of the aforementioned missions are neither standalone nor independent of each other. Rather, they constitute a whole, as one puzzle piece can only be put in place together with the other pieces. Ultimately, the mission of the guides sent by God can be viewed as threefold; to guide towards tawhid; to lead man towards absolute happiness in light of his relationship with God; to foster humanity's prosperity by the establishment of justice in society.

F1. God's Guidance Through His Chosen Guides – The Messenger And His Successors

Messenger – Prophets ('A)

Who are God's sent guides, and what are their characteristics? What is the mission of the messenger, that is, the prophets ('a)? What role do they have in relation to their mission?

One of the basic principles of faith in all divine religions is precisely the question of prophecy, as well as the necessity of a messenger whom God has chosen, designated as a guide, and sent to the people with His message.

“And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], ‘Worship God and avoid Taghut.’

And among them were those whom God guided, and among them were those upon whom error was [deservedly] decreed. So, proceed through the earth and observe how was the end of the deniers” (The Holy Qur'an, 16:36).

“And never would your Lord have destroyed the cities until He had sent to their mother a messenger reciting to them Our verses. And We would not destroy the cities except while their people were wrongdoers” (The Holy Qur'an, 28:59).

God's prophets ('a) are chosen among the people and in most cases, belong to the people to whom they have been sent to guide. In virtue of being God's representatives, the prophets ('a) are the most devout and righteous among the people, even before attaining prophethood. Therefore, they hold the best basic postulates to call the people to a path on which they themselves are pioneers. In addition to their high morals, truthfulness, care and love for all men, Prophets ('a) have also been bestowed with knowledge, wisdom and miracles from God. They hold the highest knowledge pertaining to the path to God and man's purpose of creation and are therefore best suited to guide people towards God.

“Certainly, did God confer [great] favour upon the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from themselves, reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom, although they had been before in manifest error.” (The Holy Qur'an, 3: 164).

“There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you and to the believers is kind and merciful.” (The Holy Qur'an, 9: 128).

“And what prevented the people from believing when the guidance came to them except that they said, ‘Has God sent a human messenger?’” (The Holy Qur'an, 17:94).

“Say, ‘If there were upon the earth angels walking securely, We would have sent down to them from the heaven an angel [as a] messenger.’” (The Holy Qur'an, 17:95).

Among the qualities of God's chosen ones are purity of the soul, high morals and lack of self-interest. These qualities prevent them from going astray and permit them to guide others fully. Purity and infallibility¹³ secure the prophets ('a) from making mistakes while carrying out their missions and not becoming corrupt. There exist numerous accounts in history of people, who initially hold good intentions and attributes but end up becoming oppressors, oftentimes even becoming the same tyrants they initially fought against. Such circumstances may never befall a prophet ('a). Moreover, the purity of the prophets ('a) is a prerequisite for leading others to purity.

“Just as We have sent among you a messenger from yourselves reciting to you Our verses and purifying you and teaching you the Book and wisdom and teaching you that which you did not know.” (The Holy Qur'an, 2:151).

“Take, [O, Muhammad], from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them to increase, and invoke [God’s blessings] upon them. Indeed, your invocations are reassurance for them. And God is Hearing and Knowing.” (The Holy Qur'an, 9: 103).

The main reason for sending prophets ('a) is so that they show mankind the way to gain accurate knowledge of God and the forgotten reality. God has, by His mercy and with His wisdom, sent prophets ('a) to guide the people back to Him and away from negligence and distraction, which prevents them from attaining true felicity.[14](#)

“And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam – from their loins – their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], ‘Am I not your Lord?’ They said, ‘Yes, we have testified.’ [This] – lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, ‘Indeed, we were of this unaware.’” (The Holy Qur'an, 7: 172).

“He has certainly succeeded who purifies himself.” (The Holy Qur'an, 87: 14).

“O you who have believed, do not follow the footsteps of Satan. And whoever follows the footsteps of Satan – indeed, he enjoins immorality and wrongdoing. And if not for the favour of God upon you and His mercy, not one of you would have been pure, ever, but God purifies whom He wills, and God is Hearing and Knowing.” (The Holy Qur'an, 24: 21).

There is a common mission that permeates through God's chosen prophets ('a), pertaining to the fact that all prophets ('a) and successors follow the same line and communicate the same message.

“Say, [O believers], ‘We have believed in God and what has been revealed to us and what has been revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the Descendants and what was given to Moses and Jesus and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him.’” (The Holy Qur'an, 2: 136).

“And [recall, O People of the Scripture] when God took the covenant of the prophets, [saying], ‘Whatever I give you of the Scripture and wisdom and then there comes to you a messenger confirming what is with you, you [must] believe in him and support him.’ [God] said, ‘Have you acknowledged and taken upon that My commitment?’ They said, ‘We have acknowledged it.’ He said, ‘Then bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses.’” (The Holy Qur'an, 3: 81).

The prophets ('a) receive the message from God and communicate it forward to the people. Therefore, their obedience is, in part, with God's obedience in a descendent line. With this, their mission involves communicating God's message, guiding people to God, judge between them, and directing and leading society to God.

“Mankind was [of] one religion [before their deviation]; then God sent the prophets as bringers of

good tidings and warners and sent down with them the Scripture in truth to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed. And none differed over the Scripture except those who were given it – after the clear proofs came to them – out of jealous animosity among themselves. And God guided those who believed to the truth concerning that over which they had differed, by His permission. And God guides whom He wills to a straight path.” (The Holy Qur'an, 2:213).

“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed God; but those who turn away – We have not sent you over them as a guardian.” (The Holy Qur'an, 4:80).

The Last Messenger's Successors – Imams ('A)

What happens to leadership after the last Prophet (S)? What does the term Imam mean? Who is referred to as Imam according to the various Muslim orientations? And what do Shias mean by the specific term Imam?

Imagine that you want to reach a destination and ask for an address. The one queried can either point to the target and describe how you can get there or act as a guide and offer you to follow him and accompanies you the whole way until you have reached your destination. The need for a guide to lead the way to the goal is a necessity in itself, but an Imam additionally provides active assistance. In fact, an Imam would lead the one who so desires all the way to the goal to ensure his or her arrival. Therefore, Imamah is both to guide and lead concurrently.[15](#)

The word 'Imam' in itself refers fundamentally to the one who assumes leadership and leads; essentially, the one that provides directions as well as guides. For instance, both Shi'a and Sunni Muslims call the one leading the prayer 'imam', or more precisely 'imam jama'a' (leader of the collective prayer), to indicate that the person in question is leading the prayer. The Imam ('a) as a divinely chosen guide is a comprehensive title for a guide in all aspects of faith and life. The Imam ('a) is the ultimate giver, interpreter and protector of God's message; in particular with regard to the complete and ultimate message that God sent with Prophet Muhammad (S).[16](#)

God has never left people without guides and has sent His prophets ('a), one after another, for the guidance of men throughout history.

“And never would your Lord have destroyed the cities until He had sent to their mother a messenger reciting to them Our verses. And We would not destroy the cities except while their people were wrongdoers.” (The Holy Qur'an, 28:59).

Therefore, it is unfeasible that God would leave people without guidance after Prophet Muhammad (S), the seal of the prophets ('a). Humanity's need for guidance continues until the Day of Judgment. In other words, as long as humanity and its need for guidance exist, the need for a guide will be incumbent, and God provides for this need. Therefore, there are, and there must be, divine guides even after the

Prophet (S), in accordance with God's promise that no people will be left without a guide.[17](#)

The fundamental need for leaders, not the least at a community level, is a matter of course that everyone, both Muslim and non-Muslims, recognizes. The need for leaders in religion as experts to turn to is a factor that both Shias and Sunnis agree upon. There is no divergence of views as to the basic question of the necessity of leaders in various contexts on a general level, whether it be in specific matters or in the especially needed area of social governance. The questions that follow are then; who the leader should be and what qualities should a leader have? And, further, how should the leader be appointed?

In addition to the aforementioned areas of leadership (religious and societal), the Shi'a school, which is based on following the Prophet (S) and his Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), indicates the necessity of the third area of leadership; spiritual. This form of leadership aims to lead people to perfect their human essence, namely in the realm of spiritual and moral aspects. A leader, in this context, is a guide who safeguards and nourishes man's spirituality on the path to reach kamal (perfection) and perfect akhlaq (character/moral). As noted by the Prophet's (S) words in the famous hadith (narration):

“Surely I have been sent to complete makarim Al-akhlaq (good character) [in mankind]”[18](#)

To be able to guide this path and lead people to such spiritual heights, it is necessary that the leader himself is a wayfarer and possesses the highest and most refined and magnificent character traits. God says in this regard in reference to the Prophet (S):

“And indeed, you are of a great moral character.” (The Holy Qur'an, 68:4).

And further, God encourages believers:

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of God an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in God and the Last Day and [who] remembers God often.” (The Holy Qur'an, 33:21).

“Say, ‘Obey God and obey the Messenger; but if you turn away – then upon him is only that [duty] with which he has been charged, and upon you is that with which you have been charged. And if you obey him, you will be [rightly] guided. And there is not upon the Messenger except the [responsibility for] clear notification.’” (The Holy Qur'an, 24:54).

Three Aspects Of Leadership

Accordingly, there are three main aspects of leadership in the Shi'a school of thought:

The political and societal leadership – the first specific meaning of Imam, is precise 'the leader of society'. All – non-Muslim, along with different Muslim schools – agree on the need for leadership in society. However, the view on the conditions that ought to apply to that leader differs as well as who that leader should be.

The religious leadership – constitutes the second specific meaning of Imam, in which all Muslim schools of thought, as a whole, agree on. However, once again, differences appear in the set conditions by the Shi'a school of thought on the religious leader, particularly in regard to the condition of infallibility.¹⁹ As in the previous point, this becomes crucial in the determination and personification of the leader in practice.

The moral and spiritual leadership – the third specific meaning of Imam, is in regard to human spiritual development and elevating the essence of humanity. In view of this, the Shi'a school claim that the leader must be insan kamil (the perfect human being) and be at the height of moral refinement and spiritual elevation in practical terms. Thereby, the insan kamil can be a leader, a guide and a hujja (argument and proof) for other people. In addition to infallibility, this also requires extensive knowledge of the reality of the world, including ghayb (the hidden), and connection with the divine source of truth and wisdom.

An Imam according to Shi'a, is a perfect human being who holds the highest spiritual rank and is fully proficient in religion and all that is required for the well-being of mankind to achieve its aim of creation. It is for this reason that the Imam is the most competent to lead society and humans to perfection in all aspects.

With regard to political leadership, it is clearly supported in both the Qur'an and the Prophet's (S) sunnah (procedure and approach in word and action). The Qur'an mentions the Prophet's (S) societal leadership role in both specific contexts such as planning, defence and judgment as well as in more general contexts.

“Indeed, We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], the Book in truth so you may judge between the people by that which God has shown you. And do not be for the deceitful an advocate.” (The Holy Qur'an, 4: 105).

“O you who have believed, obey God and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to God and the Messenger, if you should believe in God and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in the result.” (The Holy Qur'an, 4:59).

“Say, [O Muhammad], ‘If you should love God, then follow me, [so] God will love you and forgive you your sins. And God is Forgiving and Merciful.’” (The Holy Qur'an, 3:31).

There are examples of the societal leadership role in the history of other prophets ('a) as well; more known and prominent examples are the Prophets ('a) Dawood ('a) [David], Sulayman ('a) [Salomo], Moses ('a) [Muses] and Haroon ('a) [Aron]. Other prophets have also had similar roles in inspiring revolution and leading the community against their contemporary tyrants.

“One of the women said, ‘O my father, hire him. Indeed, the best one you can hire is strong and the trustworthy.’” (The Holy Qur'an, 28:26).

“And Aaron had already told them before [the return of Moses], ‘O my people, you are only being tested by it, and indeed, your Lord is the Most Merciful, so follow me and obey my order.’” (The Holy Qur'an, 20:90).

Concerning religious leadership, it is clear that the prophets ('a), as God's emissaries, are both recipients and mediators, and the first to follow and execute His wahy (revelation). With this role in mind, they constitute the living reference that people turn to in order to receive God's message. A follow-up question emerges in this context; what happens after the passing of the last Prophet (S)? Who can be deemed qualified for such a role and possess the capacity to complete the mission? It is evident, on the basis of previous arguments presented, that the religious leadership cannot cease after the Prophet's (S) passing, as the need for it remains. So, who will be the successor?

Likewise, the moral and spiritual leadership remains relevant, and a need after the Prophet's (S) passing and again begs the question: who is the successor?

It is clear that each prophet ('a) was the successor to the previous prophet ('a), as is specified in the verses of the Qur'an and the fact that all the prophets ('a) were followers of the same line and conveyed a uniform message.²⁰ It is also clearly stated that there could be several prophets ('a) concurrently, where one had the position of a leader whilst the other was a companion – such as Prophet Loot ('a) who was the companion of Prophet Ibrahim ('a).²¹ It is a matter of the fact that the prophets ('a) always left a representative or referred to a successor after themselves on the basis of God's order and that people were never left to their own devices. As illustrated when Prophet Musa ('a) was to attend God's meeting on Mount Tur [Sinai], he left his brother Haroon ('a) as his representative among Bani Israel.²² This again leads us to the question: who has God chosen as successor and leader after His last Prophet (S)?

Why Are Successors Needed?

A question that may arise: why is there a need for a successor after a prophet ('a)? As it is solely the prophets ('a) who receive the descended revelation, some claim that this ceases with the prophets ('a). The argument is used to question whether the message that remains after a prophet ('a) is sufficient for continuous guidance.

As it has been mentioned before, the need for leadership in various aspects continues to be relevant, if not even more so, after the last Prophet (S). Man is in need of the divine revelation, sent through wahy, in order to reach the goal safely and in the fastest, easiest and best way. Admittedly, man has been blessed with aql (reason, intellect, and mind) and he gains knowledge through experience, but this is, as it has been found, not sufficient.²³ Therefore, just as man needs food, drink and housing for his bodily well-being, he needs spiritual nutrition through divine guidance for his spiritual well-being, but also for his physical, social and psychological well-being.

The function of divine revelation may be likened to a manual, sent by the Creator, through a guide, for the guidance of creation. Meanwhile, the guide has the function of an adept instructor, the guiding teacher and the thoughtful trainer. The lack of a guide and instructor explaining and demonstrating the practical application of revelation would be like using a book on theoretical medicine without turning to a doctor! Even the most complete medical book can be misinterpreted unless a medical expert, who has an overview of the subject, interprets the symptoms, understands the connections and applies the knowledge correctly. Similarly, in addition to God's sent revelation, a pure and expert guide is needed who explains the true meaning and practical implementation of the revelation and carries out its application. In other words, the existence of divinely chosen Imams ('a) free from defects is necessary alongside the Qur'an. The two go hand in hand and are required together for a correct and complete understanding and interpretation of the revelation.[24](#) The same notion is applicable to the question of leadership for the soul and the community.

F3. The Guides After The Prophet (S)

On the basis of the previous discussion whereby the need for a guide was asserted to be logical and necessary, it follows that there must be divinely chosen guides after the Prophet (S). This is upheld by Qur'anic verses, testifying that all people have been given a guide, as illustrated by historical context and by God's constant endowment of guides to the people. Therefore, the natural question that leads is: which are these guides that are to guide humanity to God after Prophet Muhammad (S)?

The Prophet (S) has in numerous narrations stated that there are guides after him and even mentioned their number, that they are the Imams ('a) from his Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), and given a specific account of who they are.[25](#) People are commanded by God through the Prophet's (S) words and actions to follow these Imams ('a). That is to say, the Imams ('a) are chosen by God Himself as rightful leaders to continue the prophets' ('a) path and protect religion.

Just as the prophets ('a) have been the most pious, pure, knowledgeable and morally noble among their people and therefore chosen by God to lead the people to their Lord, the same is required of the chosen leaders after the last Prophet (S). Historical accounts attest to the fact that the Imams ('a) were exceptional among the people of their time in terms of piety, purity, knowledge, insight, and indeed all the noble values.[26](#) This is in view of the religion being the road to human refinement and continuously demands leaders who are pioneers on the road. In order to qualify and be able to lead the people in the best way, these leaders must be at the lowest risk of making mistakes, being distracted, deceived, tempted or falling for their own desires.[27](#)

The Prophet (S) announced the Imams ('a) as successors and leaders after him, in the same manner as the previous prophets ('a) announced the coming prophets ('a) and successors as well as the last Prophet (S). And likewise, each Imam ('a) announced to his people both the Imam ('a) to follow and the subsequent Imams ('a), as well as the final Imam ('aj).

“And [mention] when Jesus, the son of Mary, said, ‘O children of Israel, indeed I am the messenger of God to you confirming what came before me of the Torah and bringing good tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name is Ahmad.’ But when he came to them with clear evidence, they said, ‘This is obvious magic.’” (The Holy Qur'an, 61:6).

One of the Prophet's (S) well-known companions, who is the narrator of hadith and accepted as an authentic source by both Sunni and Shi'a Muslims, is Ibn Abbas. In the case of the Qur'anic verse where each group of people is said to have a guide²⁸, Ibn Abbas says:

“After the revelation of this verse, the Prophet (S) laid his holy hand on his chest and said, “I am the warner” and then pointed to Ali's ('a) shoulder and said, “O Ali, you are the guide, and through you, those who are guided will receive true guidance.”²⁹

This has been recounted and narrated in many reliable narrations among Sunni scholars' own books, on the authority of several different companions, including Imam Ali ('a) himself, who was the Prophet's (S) first and foremost companion. The question that emerges is how it can be that, although the Prophet (S) openly and clearly expressed the notion, some insist on denouncing the true meaning of the verse and the historical events in which the Prophet ('a) proclaimed Imam Ali's ('a) position?

Imam Ali ('a) has also said in accordance with the verse:

“Truly, the earth is not left without a divine representative who stands up with divine evidence and argument, either [while he is] visibly visible or obscurely hidden, so that God's evidence and the argument are not destroyed.”³⁰

Imam Al-Baqir ('a) and Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) have also, in a comment to the above verse, said:

“Every Imam is the guide of the people in his day.”³¹

The fact that the earth is not left without a divine guide, either openly and visibly or in obscurity and hidden³² is only confirmable and in agreement with Shi'a Islamic faith.

As the verse states that in every time and for every people there is a guide, and the first of which according to the Prophet (S) is Imam Ali ('a), the natural follow up question is: who are the others?

Since these guides are chosen by God and exist in every age, it is also by God and through His Prophet (S) that we have been told that the guides are the twelve Imams ('a). In addition to Imam Ali ('a), the eleven following Imams ('a) of Prophet Muhammad (S) are descended through his daughter Fatimah az-Zahra ('a) and Imam Ali ('a) and are; Imam Al-Hasan ('a), Imam Al-Husayn ('a), Imam Al-Sajjad ('a), Imam Al-Baqir ('a), Imam Al-Sadiq ('a), Imam Al-Kadhim ('a), Imam Al-Ridha ('a), Imam Al-Jawad ('a), Imam Al-Hadi ('a), Imam Al-'Askari ('a), and the Imam of our time, Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj).³³

Accordingly, the Prophet (S) and Fatimah az-Zahra ('a) together with the twelve Imams ('a) are known

as fourteen ma'someen (infallible and sinless ones).

F4. 'Isma (Infallibility) – Why Is It A Requirement?

It is known that a credible person that represents something must live according to the values of that which he represents. A high ranking official at a company can be taken as an example. Today we know that corporate cultures are very important and carefully created based on values that everyone in the company is aware of. If a high representative of the company at a fair behaves contrary to these values, the spectators will develop distrust against the entire company. How is it then possible for a sacred and faultless message, from a faultless God, which is intended to lead mankind toward its aim of creation, be represented by a man who can do wrong and thereby undermine the whole purpose and meaning of the message? God who holds absolute Wisdom and provides absolute Guidance would never appoint a guide who risks destroying, corrupting, or undermining the reliability of the infallible and holy message presented.

The Imams ('a) are therefore the foremost among the people across all areas and in all of the goodness. This gives them the authority to be leaders of the people. In this context, a characteristic found in all of God's chosen leaders, including the Imams ('a) is distinguishable – namely 'isma, which means infallibility.

To be free from faults, defects and sins is an essential characteristic of God's guides, implying that they are neither affected by lustful desires to commit sins nor make mistakes in their tasks. Ordinary people often fall into various weaknesses and traps owing foremost to man's moral impurities, which take the form of self-love and egocentric desires, or deficiencies in faith, knowledge and will. God's chosen guides, however, must be protected from such ill vices. They are free from all shortcomings and defects that may, in whatever way, act as a hindrance to God's message being delivered to people in full.

The guides' infallibility stems from their strong conviction and knowledge of God and the reality of creation. Infallibility is a necessary trait that provides the greatest opportunity to be able to trust the guides and ensure the accuracy of the message. The necessity of this quality lies in the fact that God's message, which is to reach people and guide them to Him, must not be corrupted or damaged along the way. Simply put, the source of the revelation, that is God, is without any flaw, and so equally the revelation in which He sends to His servants is flawless. Therefore, the guides must also be flawless, i.e., infallible, in order to ensure that the revelation reaches people fully and correctly.

F5. Derivation Of The Imams ('A) Infallibility From The Holy Qur'an

The concept of the Imams' ('a) infallibility can be derived from several verses of the Holy Qur'an, namely the following verses:

- The verse on Imamah – ‘I am to make you an Imam.’
- The verse on Hadi – ‘For every people there is a guide.’
- The verse on Tathir – ‘God wants to purify you, Ahl Al-Bayt.’
- The verse on UI ‘ul-amr – ‘Obey God, the messenger and UI ‘ul-amr (the ones that have been given authority.’

The Verse On Imamah – ‘I Am To Make You An Imam’

When Prophet Ibrahim ('a), who was already a prophet, overcame a number of difficult trials fruitfully, God told him, ‘I appoint you as an Imam.’³⁴

“And [mention, O Muhammad], when Abraham was tried by his Lord with commands, and he fulfilled them. [God] said, ‘Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people.’ [Abraham] said, ‘And of my descendants?’ [God] said, ‘My covenant does not include the wrongdoers.’” (The Holy Qur'an, 2: 124).

The first point to note in connection with this verse is that Prophet Ibrahim ('a) was given the position of Imam after successfully overcoming certain trials. Ibrahim ('a) was already a prophet at the advent of being given the additional status of Imam and leader. This is evident through the verse whereby God specifically states that Ibrahim ('a) was raised to an Imam after passing the trials given to him.

Accordingly, one can derive that the position of Imamah is higher than that of prophethood³⁵ and therefore, like prophethood, necessitates infallibility. This is vital as the mission of an Imam is essentially to preserve, complete and implement the prophetic path.³⁶

The second point is that Prophet Ibrahim ('a) asked God at the end of the verse if his offspring will be given this position, whereby God replies that it cannot be given to the sinners. That is to say; the verse signifies that God’s covenant of Imamah will not include all, it will only be granted to a selected group of Ibrahim’s ('a) offspring who do not act unjustly or commit sin. Therefore, through this verse, God concludes that the position of Imamah requires infallibility and the meaning of the verse serves as evidence for the infallibility in God’s chosen Imams.

The Verse On Hadi – ‘For Every People There Is A Guide’

“And those who disbelieved say, ‘Why has a sign not been sent down to him from his Lord? You are only a warner, and for every person is a guide.” (The Holy Qur'an, 13:7).

It is clear, through the previously given explanations regarding this verse and the question of guides, that the guides are divinely chosen³⁷. Furthermore, the Prophet (S) proclaimed Imam Ali ('a) as the first specific guide to whom this verse refers to³⁸, whilst the Imams ('a) of Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) make up the succeeding guides to whom the verse refers to.³⁹

Owing to the fact that no conditions or confining framework in the description of a guide are mentioned in verse, it implies an absolute and complete guide. An absolute and perfect guide, with absolute authority, must be an infallible guide. God does not send someone that risks committing mistakes to guide people.⁴⁰

The Verse On Tathir– ‘God Wants To Purify You, Ahl Al-Bayt’

“And abide in your houses and do not display yourselves as [was] the display of the former times of ignorance. And establish prayer and give zakah and obey God and His Messenger. God intends only to remove from you the impurity [of sin], O people of the [Prophet’s] household, and to purify you with [extensive] purification.” (The Holy Qur'an, 33:33).

In this verse, it is clear that God purifies Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) from rijs – everything that involves filth and lowliness including unbelief, idolatry, sins, ignorance and lack of knowledge, Shaitan's access, mistakes, deficiencies, moral decay, oblivion and all other imperfections. Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) in this verse refers to the Prophet (S), Imam Ali ('a), Fatimah az-Zahra ('a), Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a), as well as the nine successive Imams ('a) descended from Imam Al-Husayn ('a).⁴¹ It is clear that they are purified from sin and defects and that their purity has been made perfect by God; being completely cleansed from sin means they are infallible. The Prophet (S) has also said about this:

“My Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) and I are free from sins.”⁴²

In regard to this matter, the question usually arises as to who is actually included in Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) and who the verse is referring to, as it begins with speaking about the Prophet's (S) wives.

The beautiful Qur'anic subtlety and the precision of each wording and expression constitutes a clear, brilliant verity for every person who comes into contact with the Qur'an and studies it carefully and thoughtfully, especially for the trained eye and for those who have knowledge of the Arabic language. It is also this precision that sheds light on the question at hand and clarifies its answer.

As mentioned, the beginning of the verse addresses the Prophet's (S) wives, as is evident from both the explicit address “O Prophet's wives” declared in the preceding verse and the feminine plural pronouns used in the tathir-verse and its preceding and subsequent verses.⁴³ However, when it comes to the particular part of the verse where Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) is mentioned, and it is stated that God has determined to purify Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), the pronoun suddenly changes into masculine plural form. In the Arabic language, a masculine form is all-encompassing and can include both men and women, unlike the feminine one, which only includes women. Therefore, the question arises; why this change of pronoun?

It is clear that the change from a feminine pronoun at the beginning of the verse to the masculine form in the middle of the verse has a meaning. So, what does it mean? Given that the masculine pronoun can include both men and women while the feminine pronoun can only include women, the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) in verse does not refer to the addressed feminine group mentioned earlier in verse. Accordingly, it

means that ‘Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a)’ refers to a specific group that includes both men and women. So, who are the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a)?

Furthermore, these verses, along with others, where a considerable sharper tone is employed⁴⁴, makes it clear that the Prophet’s (S) wives were not free from committing sins and mistakes. It is owing to this reality and in association with historical events that the injunctions, in these verses and others, specifically address the wives. Consequently, the Prophet’s (S) wives cannot be meant in the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) that are described as being purified from the impurity of sins; particularly not in the absolute sense given in the verse, which in that case leads back to the question of who is included in Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a).

The answer to the question has been given by the Prophet (S) himself. This particular part of the verse was revealed when the Prophet (S) was in a gathering together with his closest household consisting of his daughter Fatimah az-Zahra’ (‘a), her husband, Imam Ali (‘a) and their sons, Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) and Imam Al-Husayn (‘a). The Prophet (S) conveyed this revelation repeatedly to the people, and it was reiterated on numerous occasions. By way of example, the Prophet (S) used to gather Imam Ali (‘a), Fatimah az-Zahra’ (‘a), Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) and Imam Al-Husayn (‘a) by his side and recite precisely this part of the verse in other’s presence while explicitly stating that this gathering of five constitutes Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a). On some occasions, the Prophet (S) even illustrates this by spreading a quilt or cloak over this gathering of five and reciting the same verse, while other people in close proximity, even the Prophet’s (S) wives, are not included.⁴⁵ The occurrence of this event led to the title ‘ashab Al-Kisa’ to become widely known among the residents of Medina, alongside the title ‘Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a)’.

It is also narrated that subsequent to the revelation of the verse, during a period of several months, the Prophet (‘a) stopped daily at Imam Ali (‘a) and Fatimah az-Zahra’s (‘a) front door and greeted them with the phrase “Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a)” so that people nearby could clearly hear it.⁴⁶

The Verse On UI ‘Ul-Amr—‘Obey God, The Messenger And UI ‘Ul-Amr.’

“O you who have believed, obey God and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to God and the Messenger, if you should believe in God and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result” (The Holy Qur'an, 4:59).

In the following verse, God commands believers to obey God and to obey the Prophet (S) and “UI ‘ul-amr (those who have been given authority).” The command “obey” in this verse indicates absolute and complete obedience as no reservations or conditions for obedience are stated. Furthermore, the obedience to UI ‘ul-amr accompanies the obedience to the Prophet (S), whose obedience is subordinate to the obedience to God according to the formulation of the verse. Therefore, this command to obey God, the Prophet (S) and UI ‘ul-amr mean total obedience in all circumstances. The question that arises here is who these UI ‘ul-amr that must be obeyed unconditionally are?

It is obvious that these UI ‘ul-amr cannot be any person, even if they are good, as unconditional obedience does not exist for people who can make mistakes. In other words, the unconditional obedience of someone who is not infallible is neither logical nor consistent with the other teachings of Islam. When God, who is infallible, commands His own obedience, and also to the Prophet (S) who is also flawless, and then to a third group, God cannot refer to anything other than infallible guides.

When one of the Prophet’s (S) prominent companions, Jabir Ibn Abdullah Al-Ansari (r.a.), asks the Prophet (S) about which UI ‘ul-amr the verse is referring to, the Prophet (S) answers:

“They are my successors and the Imams of the Muslims after me, the first of which is Ali Ibn Abu Talib, and after him, in order, Hasan, Husayn, Ali Ibn Al-Husayn [as-Al-Sajjad], Muhammad Ibn Ali [Al-Baqir], Ja’far Ibn Muhammad [as-Sadiq], Musa Ibn Ja’far [Al-Kadhim], Ali Ibn Musa [Al-Ridha], Muhammad Ibn Ali [Al-Jawad], Ali Ibn Muhammad [Al-Hadi], Hasan Ibn Ali [Al-Askari] and Al-Mahdi.”⁴⁷

This is completely in line with the Prophet’s (S) statement:

“Whoever obeys Ali obeys me, whoever obeys me, obeys God, whoever does not obey Ali does not obey me; whoever disobeys me does not obey God.”⁴⁸

Chapter 3 – Summary

E3. The main difference between Shi'a and Sunni Islam pertains to the question of Islamic leadership (Imamah)

F. Every time and era, there is a guide, and God never leaves humanity without a guide that can help people achieve their purpose of creation. The guides are the prophets ('a) and the Imams ('a).

F1–3. People need guidance. The Prophet (S) has mentioned in many narrations that the guides after him are the Imams ('a) from Ahl Al-Bayt ('a).

F4. To be free from error and sin is an attribute found in all of God's guides. They neither get affected by impious desires to commit sin nor make mistakes in their duties. This is paramount for their reliability and assurance that the message is presented correctly.

F5. Infallibility can be derived from several verses in the Holy Qur'an, amongst which is the verse of Imamah, verse of a guide for every people, the verse of tathir and the verse where God commands the believers to obey Ulo-l-amr.

^{1.} The subject of God's justice and why it is of essential value, not least in reference to its historical and practical aspects in matters such as man's free will and so forth, has briefly been touched upon in the book; see C2 and E. The question of 'Adalah and its practical meaning has long been a prevalent subject of discussion, mainly in the theological and philosophical arena and especially during the first centuries of Islam's history.

On the basis of such topic, different lines of thoughts have emerged and given rise to ramifications within the Islamic

school. Asha'era and “Adalahiyya are two main branches that arose primarily as a result of the pertaining discussion. A group called Asha'era and some other Sunni branches became known as Asha'era, while Shi'a and some other Sunni branches like Mu'tazila became known as “Adalahiyya, based on their main stance on ‘Adalah and divine justice. In broad terms, the Asha'era claimed that justice is not a concept of its own of which God's actions are in unity with; therefore, they did not consider justice to have an intrinsic reality.

Such standpoints eventually led to questions of the following nature; whether there is a justice that man can perceive without the need for external instructions and furthermore whether man has a free will. In contrast to “Adalahiyya who held that ‘Adalah is real and in unity with God's actions, through this premise it is possible for man to perceive justice and have a free will, within the framework prescribed by God, and thereby is held accountable for his actions on the basis of justice. This is a deeper discussion that needs to be studied more closely by interested parties. For more information, refer to Shahid Mutahhari's (r.a.) books; see C2.

2. Nu'man Ibn Thabet known as Abu Hanifa – Hanafi school; Malik Ibn Anas – Maliki school; Muhammad Ibn Idris known as Shafe'i – Shafi'i school; and Ahmad Ibn Hanbal – Hanbali school. They were coetaneous with Imam Al-Baqir ('a) and Imam Al-Sadiq ('a); see W2.

3. There are many narrations regarding this, frequently observed in Sunni sources by Sunni scholars. Amongst them is Abu Hanifa, which has said about Imam Al-Sadiq ('a): “I have not witnessed a wiser being than Ja'far Ibn Muhammad [as-Sadiq] and he is the most learned amongst the people”. (Siyar A'lam Al-Nobala' by Shams ad-Din Thahabi volume 6 p.257; and Tarikh Al-Kabir volume 2 p. 198–199 hadith 2183).

4. Internal means such as aql (reason, intellect and brain) and the ability to discern and contemplate as well as reflect, and fitra as inner innate guidelines, as well as external means such as prophets ('a) and their successors. These topics have been covered throughout the book; see B3 and E1.

5. The topic is dealt with in greater detail later in the chapter; see F4.

6. This is raised in various verses, for instance in verse 13:7 in the Holy Qur'an.

7. The whole story of prophet Ibrahim ('a) is beautifully portrayed in the Holy Qur'an, including this incident which is illustrated mainly in surah as-Saffat (the Holy Qur'an 37:102–112).

8. For a more detailed account of the subject, see to the book Imamah by Ayatullah Makarim Shirazi (HA)

9. The topic of fitra has been dealt with extensively earlier in this book; see B3.

10. The topic of tawhid has been discussed earlier in this book; see A.

11. Read more on this topic in the beginning of the first chapter.

12. This fact is prominent in all God's chosen prophets ('a) and Imams ('a), not least in the superiority of their wisdom and knowledge in all scientific fields, which is briefly touched upon in the subject “Islam and science – no contradiction”: see the end of B1. The Prophet (S) and all the twelve Imams ('a) were living examples of the efflorescence of human potential and the breadth of its scope and nurtured all who were receptive and had the will to develop. Their closest companions were most often seen as prominent figures in society within various fields. As portrayed during the lifetime of Imam Al-Baqir ('a) and Imam Al-Sadiq ('a), who lived in a time where science was in focus and was given space to develop. They left a great impression within the scientific fields and nurtured students that ended up having a crucial role in the development of science on a global scale.

13. The topic of infallibility is discussed more extensively further in the chapter; see F3.

14. The topic of fitra has been dealt with previously; see B3.

15. For a more detailed account of the subject, see to the book Imamah by Ayatullah Makarim Shirazi (HA). Online at: <https://www.al-islam.org/lets-learn-about-imamate-naser-makarem-shirazi> [10]

16. Beyond the extensive meaning of the word Imam, the Shi'a use the title as a specific term in reference to the twelve Imams ('a) of the Prophet's (S) kin. The instances where the title is followed by ('a) refers to one of the twelve Imams ('a), whereby ('a) stands for “alayhi as-salam” (peace be upon him/her/them). Even the prophet's daughter, Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) and other prophets ('a) are given the same greeting when mentioned to pay due respect. Whilst (S) is used for the Prophet (S) and stands for “salla Allah alayhi wa Aalehi wa sallam” (God's blessings be upon him and his family [Ahl Al-Bait ('a)]); founded on God's command in the Holy Qur'an 33:56. Furthermore, (r.a.) stands for “ridhwan-Allah alayh” (may

God's contentment be with him/her/them) and is used in the book for deceased companions or scholars. The abbreviation (HA) stands for "hafedhah-o-Allah" (may God protect him/her/them), used for scholars who are alive.

- [17.](#) The topic has been dealt with extensively earlier in this chapter; see F.
- [18.](#) This hadith has been cited in both Sunni and Shi'a sources; including Sunan Al-Kubra of Beyhaqi volume 10 p.323; and Bihar Al-Anwar by Allamah Al-Majlisi volume 68 p.382.
- [19.](#) The topic of infallibility will be dealt with extensively later in the book; see F3.
- [20.](#) See sections E2 and H.
- [21.](#) This is referred to in the Holy Qur'an in 29:26.
- [22.](#) This event is narrated in several verses in the Holy Qur'an including 7:14. The topic has been discussed in greater detail later in the book in connection with hadith Manzila; see section O and so on.
- [23.](#) In accordance with man's potentiality, the conditions that form part of her creation as well as her superficial and profound needs, human reason can be influenced by many factors. This leads to man, despite his ability to discern right from wrong, does not always make the right choice. This topic was touched upon in the first chapter of the book.
- [24.](#) The Prophet (S) asserts this on numerous occasions, not least in what has been known as hadith ath-Thaqalayn (tradition of the two weighty things)
- [25.](#) See chapter 4; C1.
- [26.](#) More of the historical account follows later in the book, in the depiction each Imams' ('a) life.
- [27.](#) The topic has been extensively discussed in the previous section; see F.
- [28.](#) "And those who disbelieved say, "Why has a sign not been sent down to him from his Lord?" You are only a warner, and for every people is a guide." (The Holy Qur'an 13:7).
- [29.](#) The hadith refers to the Holy Qur'an 13:7. This hadith and its likes are narrated in both Sunni and Shi'a sources, some of which are: Shahid Al-tanzil by Hakim Al-Haskani volume 2 p.358, 359, 362; Durr Al-Manthur of Suyuti volume 6 p.379; Majma 'Al-Bayan of Tabarsi volume 10 p.795; Tafsir Kabir by Fakhr Razi volume 19/14; and Al-Mizan of Tabatabai volume 20 p.341; Usul Al-Kafi volume 1/22 chapter the properties of knowledge (sefat Al-elm) hadith 1 et al.
- [30.](#) This hadith is also narrated in several sources. For more references, refer to one of these sources: Ihqaq ul-Haqq volume 3 p.88-89 and others.
- [31.](#) The hadith is given in Noor ath-Thaqalayn volume 2 p.482-485. For the hadith and more on the subject, refer to lesson 7 in the book Imamah by Ayatullah Makarim Shirazi.
- [32.](#) Given the fact that the Prophet (S) and the Imams ('a) already in their time spoke of an Imam in "occultation" or "concealed" speaks to the fact that it would gain currency and prepared the people by speaking of it. The history that led to this and what was to apply in a time with limited access to the Imams ('a), especially the final Imam ('aj), becomes clearer in connection with the history of the Imams ('a) given later in the book.
- [33.](#) The Prophet (S) spoke of the twelve Imams ('a) on numerous occasions and some of his ahadith in this respect is given later in the book, see G5.
- [34.](#) The topic has been briefly touched upon in section "Qur'anic evidence" for God's choice of Imams; see F.
- [35.](#) This is a deep question that has been briefly touched upon in connection with verse [2:124], whereby God clarifies that prophet Ibrahim ('a), who already is a prophet, is given the position of Imam after overcoming certain trials with success. This implies that the position of Imam required special conditions to be received. For a detailed account on the subject, refer to the book Imamah by Ayatullah Makarim Shirazi.
- [36.](#) Note that this verse illustrates that a prophet could also get the position of Imam, as in the case of prophet Ibrahim ('a). Prophet Muhammad (S), as the foremost of God's servants and the last prophet with the final message, also held both the position of prophet and imam.
- [37.](#) The subject has been dealt with extensively earlier in the book; see F.
- [38.](#) This fact can be ascertained from numerous ahadith and in connection with numerous historical events in which the Prophet (S) proclaims God's choice of Imam ('a), amongst which is the hadith narrated by Ibn Abbas; see F3. The Prophet's (S) speech in Ghadir Khumm also declares this fact.
- [39.](#) See G5.
- [40.](#) The subject has been dealt with extensively earlier in the book; see F4.

[41.](#) This is cited in most Sunni and Shi'a sources including Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, the Sunni Hanbali branch leader, in his book Musnad Ibn Hanbal volume 1, p.331, volume 4, p.197 and volume 6, p.292.

[42.](#) This hadith is found in this formulation and other similar ones in several sources including: Dala'el an-Nobowwa by Beyhaqi volume 1, p.171; Imta 'Al-asthma' volume 3, p.208; Tafsir ad-Durr Al-Manthoor volume 5, p.377-378.

[43.](#) There are several verses, that follow one another, that are of relevance; see the Holy Qur'an, 33:28-34.

[44.](#) In the Holy Qur'an 66:1-5, God sharply refers to an event in which two of the Prophet's (S) wives were, according to the verse, involved in.

[45.](#) This event is repeated and narrated by several people, some of whom are the Prophet's (S) wives including Umm Salama (r.a.); see G4.

[46.](#) Depictions of these events and the like are narrated in both Sunni and Shi'a sources, including in several commentary interpretations of the Holy Qur'an where historically related events are mentioned in Jami 'Al-Bayan' and ta'wil ayat Al-Qur'an volume 12 of 22 p.6; Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'adhim by Fakhr Razi volume 9 p. 3131 hadith 17673; Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'adhim by Ibn Athir volume 3 p. 494; Asbab an-Nozool by Neyshaboori p.295; ad-Durr Al-Manthoor fi at-tafsir Al-ma'hoor by Siyuti volume 6 p.604; Al-Mustadrak's ala as-Sahihayn volume 2 p.416; and Majma's Al-Bayan fiafsir Al-Qur'an volume 7 p.559 and volume 8 p.357; Usul Al-Kafi of Kulayni volume 1 p.286-287; Al-Khisal by Sheikh as-Sadoq p.403 hadith 113 and p.580 hadith 1; Al-Amaali by Sheikh Al-Tusi p.368 and p.783; Tafsir Al-Mizan of Allamah Tabatabai volume 16 p.312. Even Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, the leader of the Hanbali branch, one of the four Sunni branches, narrates this in his book Fadha'il as-Sahaba (1403 AD) volume 2 p.761, and states that the Prophet (S) repeated this act daily for six months.

[47.](#) This and similar ahadith are narrated in several sources including: Yanabi 'Al-Mawadda by Qandoozi (1416 AD) p.494. For more sources, refer to the book quoted and commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

[48.](#) This hadith and similar depictions are found in several sources, some of which are as follows; Kanz Al-Ummal p.614 hadith 32974 and 32977; Mustadrak Al-Hakim volume 3 p. 128; and Riyad Al-Nadira volume 3 p.110.

Chapter 4: Shi'a – Definition And Meaning

Questions addressed in this chapter:

What does [the word] Shi'a mean?

Who are the Shi'a and where does the term originate from?

Who are the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a)?

Who are the twelve Imams ('a)?

G. What does Shi'a mean? Where does the term originate from?

Terminology

The literal meaning of the Arabic term Shi'a is 'follower, supporter, successor' and/or 'companions'. It also means a group of people working together for a goal. Hence, a Shi'a is someone who follows something and is part of a specific group following the same thing. This means that the word Shi'a itself only indicates followership and [in itself] has no direction until it has been linked to whoever is being

followed.

Even The Holy Qur'an, defines the word Shi'a as 'follower' and 'successor'. God says in the Holy Qur'an:

"And verily was Abraham once of [the Prophet Noohs ('a)] Shi'a (followers). " (The Holy Qur'an, 37:83).

In this verse, 'his Shi'a' refers to Prophet Ibrahim's ('a) succession after Prophet Nooh ('a). This means that they followed one and the same belief, religion [monotheism], and path. Therefore, Prophet Ibrahim ('a) was a follower of Prophet Nooh ('a).

Another verse states:

"And [one day] he entered the city [at noon] when people were unaware [of him], and he found two fighting – one his Shi'a (follower) and the other adversary. His follower complained to Moses against his adversary..." (The Holy Qur'an, 28:15).

The verse speaks of an incident before Prophet Musa's ('a) calling, involving an individual from amongst his people as this individual was part of the followership, as in Bani Israil, who at that time was waiting for the coming of a prophet. Therefore, he is referred to as a Shi'a of Prophet Musa ('a).

There are also other verses where the term is used to refer to opposite kinds of groups and followers, including:

"Then shall We separate them from [(Shi'a) followers] groups, those who were most obedient to God, the Compassionate." (The Holy Qur'an, 19:69).

Hereby, one can clearly see that the word Shi'a in The Holy Qur'an, is used to point out some kind of follower. Whether this following is a good or bad following is determined by who or what it is that is followed.

G1. The Term Shi'a – Shi'a Of Ali ('A)

When did the Shi'a start getting called Shi'a? Who invented the term Shi'a and started using it to refer to Imam Ali's ('a) followers?

Shi'a [as in the Shi'a school and Shi'a Muslims] refers to the original term Shi'ah Ali, meaning, Imam Ali's ('a) followers. A Shi'a in the specific sense is the one who believes in Imam Ali's ('a) position and Imamah and follows him. This is in accordance with the will of the Prophet (S) and his summon [as found in many authentic traditions] to follow after him, as well as Ali ('a) and the Imams ('a) from his family Ahl Al-Bayt ('a).¹

The very term Shi'a of Ali trails back to the Prophet (S), whom on various occasions and in most ahadith called those who believed in Imam Ali's ('a) Wilayat and Imamah (divinely appointed leadership and guardianship) as Ali's Shi'a.² Shi'a, as a term for Imam Ali's ('a) followers, was therefore invented by Prophet Muhammad (S) himself and included both of the Prophet's (S) own followers who, at the time, obeyed the his commands to love and follow Imam Ali ('a), and those from future generations who would claim to be Imam Ali's ('a), followers.

Today, the term Shi'a generally refers to ithna 'ashari Shi'a. That is, Twelvers-Shi'a – those who follow the twelve Imams ('a), whom the Prophet (S) urged Muslims to follow. Shi'a also refers to followers of the Ja'fari School³, named after the sixth Imam ('a), Imam Ja'far Al-Sadiq ('a). Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) had a prominent role in both presenting and extending the Shi'a school's principles as well as sciences in many different fields, profoundly so. This is due to, amongst other things, the lively debates that were common under that particular period, flourishing with the then prevailing circumstances in society and the opportunity that had arisen during the shift in power between the two dynasties (Umayyads and Abbasids).

Today, there are two main definitions of the term Shi'a – a general and a specific one. Generally, the term Shi'a refers to the followers of the Shi'a school of thought. That is the school of Islam associated with the Prophet (S), Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), and those who love and invoke the followership of Imam Ali ('a), after that of the Prophet's (S). Imam Ali's ('a) position as the successor of the Prophet's (S) is, therefore, the main feature of Shi'a Muslim belief. Undoubtedly, many Muslims and believers of other religions are fond of Imam Ali ('a), although they do not call themselves Shi'a by definition.

Additionally, there is an even more specific definition of being a true Shi'a, according to Ahl Al-Bayt ('a). This definition significantly differentiates mere love from love entwined with following Ahl Al-Bayt ('a). It defines a true Shi'a to be a follower of the Imams ('a) of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) in both words and actions. In other words, living by their example in morals and way of life. According to the Prophet (S) and the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), it is impossible to be a Shi'a of Imam Ali ('a) [in the true sense of the word] and simultaneously love his enemies or follow their line, course, methods, and behaviours. Imam Ali's ('a) treatment and handling of Mu'awiya, who conspired and fought against the Imam ('a) by wily methods, murdering his companions, exemplifies this. Nevertheless, the Imam ('a) although aware of Mu'awiya's shrewdness, never utilised those very methods against him.⁴ This was due to the Imam's ('a) divinely chosen rank as an Imam and leader, carrying out a divine mission. The Imam's ('a) mission was to push humanity to perfection continuously and to set an example as such. What would be the difference between Imam Ali's ('a) line and that of his enemies' if he ('a) were to go about matters by such immoral methods?

With regards to this, Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) has said:

"He lies who claims to love us but does not renounce our enemies!"⁵

Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) had also spoken of how the followers of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) are to be recognized by their deeds and as such stressed the importance that their followers ought not only to preach but practice and live by their teachings:

“Call to God with other than your tongues [through your deeds].”⁶

G2. The Prophet’s (S) Words On The Shi'a Of Ali ('A)

The term Shi'a, referring to the followers of Imam Ali ('a), is no recent invention [of the term]. On the contrary, the Prophet (S) was the one to name Imam Ali's ('a) followers Shi'a. Consequently, Shi'a refers to a group, by the orders of God and through the summoning of the Prophet (S), following Imam Ali ('a) and the Imams ('a) of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a). Countless narrations, including the twenty or more so in the books of Sunni scholars, state the Prophet (S) calling the followers of Imam Ali ('a), 'Shi'a'.

The following is an example from one of the prominent Sunni scholars' commentary on the Holy Qur'an, Durr Al-Manthoor of Siyuti, regarding the verse:

“Verily, the faithful who acted righteously is the best of creation.” (The Holy Qur'an, 98:7).

In his commentary, Siyuti quotes a narration from one of the Prophet's (S) prominent companions, Jaber Ibn Abdullah Ansari (r.a.), who said:

“We were with the Prophet (S) when Ali ('a) came in. The Holy Prophet (S) said: By God who holds my life in his hand⁷, this Ali Ibn Abi-Talib and his Shi'a are the saviours on the Day of Judgment (qiyama); and then this verse was revealed in surah Al-Bayyena.” (The Holy Qur'an, 98:7).

Jaber continued saying:

“Since then, whenever Imam Ali ('a) was seen [from a distance] to be on his way, the Prophet's (S) companions said: Here comes the best of creations.”

Hence, this hadith was well-known and widespread among the Prophet's (S) companions, to the extent that when Imam Ali ('a) was seen from far, they pointed to him and said:

“God's foremost creation is coming!”⁸

Siyuti also quoted the following narration from the Prophet (S) who said:

“Ali's Shi'a are the true victors on the Day of Judgment!”⁹

Therefore, it is clear from contemporary narrations and depictions, within Sunni as well as Shi'a sources, that the Holy Prophet (S) had given the name Shi'a to the followers of Imam Ali ('a) and Ahl Al-Bayt ('a)!

In reality, the love, devotion, and support of the Shias to Imam Ali ('a) is based upon the command of God, proclaimed by the Prophet (S). This is done for the purpose of pursuing the Prophet's (S) guidance in order to be able to reach God. Consequently, if Shias are asked: what do you want to achieve through the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a)? Why do you actually turn to the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) and insist on following Imam Ali ('a) and the succeeding Imams ('a)? The answer will be that the Prophet (S) has commanded us that, after his demise, the way to him, and eventually, God, is through his Ahl Al-Bayt ('a). It is the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) who are the custodians of religion¹⁰, and they are divinely chosen to complete the realization of the Prophet's (S) path, by order of God.

Therefore, it is the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) who can show the way correctly and without risk of error. Obedience to Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) in reality means obedience to the Prophet (S) and obedience to the Prophet (S) in reality, means obedience to God. Following the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) and obedience to them is, therefore, obedience to God descending directly from God. Shi'a turns towards the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) to reach God through the path that God has shown. Moreover, they [the Shi'a] aim to obey God and His Prophet (S) in this pathway as well. Therefore, the whole point is to submit to God, and the goal is to reach God; that's the essence of it all. It all revolves around God and nothing else.

G3. Ahl Al-Bayt ('A) – The Prophet's (S) Household

What does Ahl Al-Bayt mean? Whom does the term refer to and whom does it include?

Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) usually translates into 'household' and literally means 'the family belonging to the prophetic home'. The term refers to the Prophet's (S) household and primarily refers to the Prophet (S) himself, Imam Ali ('a), Fatimah az-Zahra ('a), Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a) as well as the nine Imams ('a) from the progeny of Imam Al-Husayn ('a).

The position of Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) is a very high, God-given, position that in its specific sense, applies to specifically selected individuals. Note that belonging to the prophetic household is not based on a superficial and visible stay or relationship with the Prophet (S). Thus, belonging does not automatically include everyone who lived in the Prophet's (S) home or was related to him.¹¹ Rather, it is based on God's choice of specially selected personalities who belonged to the essence of the prophetic household, lived by its spirit, and realized it. This is in accordance with the Qur'an and authentic stories of both Sunni and Shi'a Muslims. On God's order, the Prophet (S) has commanded the people to follow in words and deeds the Imams ('a) from Ahl Al-Bayt ('a). They are the guarantee that the pure, true teachings of Islam will be protected, preserved and come to the people in part to lead them towards true happiness.

The Two Valuable Things And The Ark Of Salvation

Among many narrations in which the Prophet (S) described the high position of Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), there is a narration that is called hadith Thaqalayn. That is the narration of 'the two valuable things'.¹² The

Prophet (S) urged Muslims on many occasions to hold on to two valuable things in order to never be misled. The question arises: what are these two valuable things?

These two valuable things are according to the most truthful and most well-documented narrations of both Sunni and Shi'a: The Holy Qur'an, and Ahl Al-Bayt ('a). Over the course of history, opponents of Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) have tried to minimize the value of these narrations or [they have tried to] overshadow them by spreading various interpretations and ambiguous versions. However, there is no doubt today, with both the well-learned Sunni and Shi'a scholars, that the version with the Qur'an and Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) is the most authentic and well-documented version. A high number of companions have narrated this version, and it has been repeated on so many occasions that it is quite impossible to deny its authenticity and importance.

The Prophet (S) has said:

“O, People! Behold! It seems that the time is approaching when I will be called back [by God], and I will answer the call. Behold! I leave among you two valuable things. The first is God’s book in which there are light and guidance... And the second is my Ahl Al-Bayt. I remind you in God’s Name of my Ahl Al-Bayt. I remind you in God’s Name of my Ahl Al-Bayt. I remind you in God’s Name of my Ahl Al-Bayt [three times for emphasis].”[13](#)

And in another narration, the Prophet (S) said:

“I leave among you two valuable things; if you hold on to both, then you should not be misled after me. These are, the book of God and my kin, my Ahl Al-Bayt. The Merciful has informed me that these two should not be separated from each other until they come to me at the water source in Paradise.”[14](#)

On other occasions, the Prophet (S) has described the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) as the “Ark of Salvation” where those who board the ship are saved. The Prophet (S) said:

“Truly my Ahl Al-Bayt’s ('a) parable among you is as Nooh’s ark; the one who boards it is saved and the one who leaves it drowns.”[15](#)

In conclusion, it can be said that The Holy Qur'an, and the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) are the two valuable things that Prophet Muhammad (S) left behind for mankind's guidance. The Prophet (S) clearly stated that if the Muslims were to follow both of them together, they would not go astray after him, and they will be led to paradise. At the same time, the Prophet (S) has emphasized that those who neglect the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) will get lost.

Therefore, the Shi'a belief in the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) and their position, as well as their followership of them as the obvious leaders after the Prophet (S), is solely in pursuit of God's command in the matter. Since the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) have such an important and central role and are the guides and protectors of faith [as well as the rescuers from getting lost and drowning], it is important to know who the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a)

is in order to hold on to them and follow them. The Prophet's (S) teachings are the foundation that has given the Shi'a knowledge of who these leaders are.

G4. Ahl Al-Bayt ('A) In The Holy Qur'an

There are many divine verses that have been sent down in honour of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) that show their high status, some of which the following:

- The verse on Tathir
- The verse on Mubahala
- The verse on Abrar
- The verse on Mawadda

The Verse On Tathir

The verse on tathir can be translated to the 'verse of purification' and speaks of God's purifying and keeping away impurities and uncleanliness away from the Prophet (S) and his Ahl Al-Bayt ('a):

"God only desires to keep away the uncleanliness from you, O people of the House, and to purify you a thorough purifying."¹⁶ (*The Holy Qur'an, 33:33*).

All commentators and narrators of hadith agree that this verse is specifically about five people who together are referred to as *ashab Al-Kisa'* (The people of the Cloak). So, who were these? And how did they get that title?

It has been narrated from many authentic sources, which are well known in Islamic circles, that the five under the cloak are those whom the verse specifically talks about. This is clearly evidenced in the following narrations:

Umm Salama, the wife of the Prophet (S), narrates:

"This verse was revealed in my house when the Prophet, Ali, Fatimah az-Zahra', Hasan and Husayn were present. The Prophet covered himself and the other four under the cloak he wore and said: 'O God, these people who are under this mantle are my Ahl Al-Bayt ('a). Keep impurity and uncleanliness away from them and make their purity perfect. "I [Umm Salama] asked," Am I your Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), O God's Messenger?" And asked to join them under the cloak. The Prophet stopped me, kindly pulled towards him the cloak and said, 'You're good too.'"¹⁷

It has also been reported from Safiyya, the Prophet's wife, that Ja'far Ibn Abi Talib said:

"When the Messenger of God noted that a blessing from God would be sent down, he said to Safiyya

[one of his wives]: ‘Call on! Call on!’ Safiyya said, ‘Who shall I call on, O God’s Messenger?’ He said, ‘Call on my Ahl Al-Bayt who are Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husayn.’ So, we sent after them, and they came to him. Then the Prophet (S) spread his cloak over them and raised his hands [to the sky] and said, ‘O God! These are my family so bless Muhammad and his family’; and God, to whom all power and majesty belong, sent down [the verse]: ‘God only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House, and to purify you a thorough purifying.’”¹⁸

These and similar events in which the Prophet (S) has proclaimed this verse and made it clear in both words and deeds that it refers to these five are narrated by the majority of personalities. On several occasions, the Prophet (S) repeated this act and clearly demonstrated to both wives and companions who the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) are. The testimony of several of these wives and companions who witnessed the events themselves is portrayed in history and leaves no room for doubt. Who constituted ashab Al-Kisa was a well-known fact. The Prophet (S), Imam Ali (‘a), Fatimah az-Zahra (‘a), Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) and Imam Al-Husayn (‘a) became known in connection with the tathir verse as the Ahl Al-Bayt.

In addition, hadith Al-Kisa’ that is narrated from the Prophet’s (S) daughter, Fatimah az-Zahra (‘a), is her own solid testimony. Likewise, the following hadith from Imam Al-Hasan (‘a):

“I am from the Prophet’s household, for which the angel Jibrail (Gabriel) came down with the revelation. I am from the household that God keeps away from sin and impurity, and whose purity is made perfect.”¹⁹

There are additional narrations that show that the Prophet’s (S) household, Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a), only referred to these five and no one else in the Prophet’s (S) home. The narrations of the Prophet (S) have included the nine Imams (‘a) from Imam Al-Husayn’s (‘a) progeny to be included in the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a).²⁰

The Verse On Mubahala

The verse about mubahala refers to a historical event between the Prophet (S) and the Christians of Najran.

History tells us that the leaders of the Christians in Najran had come to the Prophet (S) to discuss Islam, and a long discussion went on about tawhid and the unity of God. Once this group had all their questions answered and ended up with no further questions and counter-arguments, they still found it difficult to accept the clear evidence presented to them. When the parties could not come to a conclusion, it was decided to leave the matter in God’s hands to determine who had the right on their side. They set a time and place for the implementation of the mubahala, that is, where both parties would meet and, before a gathering, ask God to condemn those who did not speak the truth and send His curse upon them. The following verses were revealed regarding this event:

“Should anyone argue with you concerning him, after the knowledge that has come to you, then

say: 'Come! Let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, our souls and your souls, then let us pray earnestly and call down God's curse upon the liars.' " (The Holy Qur'an, 3:61).

When this verse was revealed and the day of mubahala was decided, everyone waited with excitement to see who these individuals whom God refers to in the Qur'an as the Prophet's (S) sons, women and the Prophet's (S) own nafs (self) were. From the superficial meaning of the verse, it is clear that it speaks of the Prophet's (S) nearest, but who specifically does the verse refer to? In such a significant and decisive event of this magnitude and the historical effect is created, the choice of individuals says a lot and carries many strong messages. One of these messages is that the selected individuals have the highest and most crucial position. In other words, these must be the closest to having their invocation answered by God with immediate effect. This, in turn, indicates that they must be the most accepted and most loved by God; so, who did the Prophet (S) bring?

The day came, and the Christian leaders who had chosen the most prominent among them stood on one side of the gathering place while a large crowd had gathered to see the mubahala and on whom the curse of God was to be sent upon. All were awaiting the arrival of the Prophet (S) and whom he would bring with him for mubahala. Finally, the Prophet (S) came with his youngest grandson Husayn ('a) in his arms, holding his oldest grandson Hasan ('a) by his hand, followed by his daughter Fatimah ('a) and then by his cousin and son-in-law Ali ('a) whom the Prophet (S) himself had raised since childhood. The Christian leaders, amazed by sight, asked who these people were who were brought by the Prophet (S). When they found out that it was his two grandchildren, his daughter and his closest companion, they were mesmerized.

The fact that the Prophet (S) had brought his closest family with him and the nearest to him made them speechless and caused their opponents to lose their courage. Who else but one who is completely sure of his cause and is completely convinced that the truth is on his side can, with total peace and serenity, come to a mubahala concerning life and death and bring his most loved ones? It is stated that the leader among the Christian leaders swore that if the mubahala is fulfilled and these five raises their hands to the sky in prayer, it would have fatal consequences and therefore he immediately sent a message to the Prophet (S) to cancel the mubahala dispute.

All historians and scholars fully agree that the mubahala verse was sent down in connection with this historical event and only in honour of the Prophet (S) and his Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) who were allowed to accompany him for mubahala on the order of God. Therefore, in practice, the Prophet (S) also demonstrated the meaning of the verse's references where 'our sons' refer to Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a), 'our women' refers to Fatimah az-Zahra ('a) and 'ourselves' refer to The Prophet (S) and Imam Ali ('a), and it was only these who were brought along with the Prophet (S).

This event, along with the verse that was named after it (the event of mubahala) which eternalized it, came to be widely known in history. Then and now, this living verse continues to draw the attention of

Muslims, as well as other people, towards the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) and their central role in the God-sent message that the Prophet (S) was commissioned to convey and lead the people too.

The Verses On Abrar

The verses about Abrar (the devout, righteous benefactors) were revealed in Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) honour:

“Verily, the Abrar (righteous) drink of a cup; the mixture of which is [like] camphor” (The Holy Qur'an, 76:5).

“A fountain, where the servants of God drink, flows in abundance [wherever they wish] ” (The Holy Qur'an, 76:6).

“They fulfil [their] (nithr) vows and fear a Day, the chastisement of which is widespread” (The Holy Qur'an, 76:7).

“And they feed [in spite of their own needs], for the love of God, the indigent, the orphan, and the captive” (The Holy Qur'an, 76:8).

“[Saying]: ‘We feed you for the sake of Allah alone: no reward do we desire from you, nor thanks” (The Holy Qur'an, 76:9).

“We only fear from our Lord a Day, frowningly severe.” (The Holy Qur'an, 76:10).

These verses were sent down when Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a) fell ill at one point during their childhood. The Prophet (S) and his companions passed by their house and found out that the little boys had fallen ill and therefore asked Imam Ali ('a) to make a nithr – a kind of promise where he, in this case, committed himself to fast for three days for God's sake for the children's quicker recovery. As soon as the boys recovered, Imam Ali ('a) and Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) fulfilled the promise and began fasting.

After the first day of fasting, Imam Ali ('a), who during that period had a tough, difficult time financially, borrowed some money to buy food with which they could break the fast. The Imam ('a) bought barley grain that Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) could ground and from it she baked bread. Exactly when they were going to sit down and eat, a poor man knocked on their door and said he was hungry and had nothing to eat. Imam Ali ('a) gave his bread to him and everyone in the family followed his example. The poor man left joyfully from there, and Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a), Imam Ali ('a), Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a) broke the fast with only water.

The next day they started their fast on an empty stomach, and when it was time again to break the fast, an orphaned child knocked on the door and said he was hungry. Once again, they gave all their food to the child, and while the child walked away happily, the family once again went to bed on an empty stomach. The third day of fasting was even more difficult as they had not eaten for two days and only

had water to break the fast with. As the time for breaking the fast approached, Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) took the remaining portion of the barley grain, grounded them and baked bread from the flour. When this heavenly family sat down to break the fast, a prisoner knocked on the door and said he was hungry. Once again, they gave their food to the needy and went to bed hungry.

In connection with this event, God depicts the actions of these personalities, names them as abrar, reveals the introductory verses in their honour, and speaks of their reward in the next world in the following verses:

“Therefore, God will guard them against the evil of that Day and will grant over them a Light of Reality and a [blissful] joy” (The Holy Qur'an, 76:11).

“And God will reward them for their patience, with a garden and clothes of silk [in Heaven]” (The Holy Qur'an, 76:12).

“Reclining therein upon raised thrones, they will see (find) there neither the severe [heat of] the sun nor the bitter cold [of the moon].” (The Holy Qur'an, 76:13).

After a dozen blessings, God says:

“Verily, this is a reward for you, and your endeavour is accepted and appreciated.” (The Holy Qur'an, 76:22).

The Prophet (S) hurries towards them, recites the revealed verses, and a heavenly meal is sent to them.

The Verse On Mawadda

The verse about mawadda (mutual love [to the Prophet's (S) Ahl Al-Bayt ('a)]):

“Therefore, does God give tidings to His faithful creatures who have acted righteously. Say, “I do not ask any reward except attachment [(mawadda) divine love] to my Divine Lights (my rightful successors).” He who shall contribute his mite therein shall find it (to his credit) intensified.

Verily God is Forgiving and Appreciative.” (The Holy Qur'an, 42:23).

It is obvious that all the prophets ('a) and of course, the last Prophet (S) did everything for [the cause of] God. None of the prophets ('a) has demanded any worldly compensation or reward from the people for their efforts, and they have been commanded by God to be clear about this. For example, Prophet Nooh ('a) says:

“But if you turn back [and reject the message], I have not asked you for any recompense, my recompense is only upon God, and I am commanded to be of those (who) surrender (unto Him).” (The Holy Qur'an, 10:72).

Even the Prophet (S) did not want any worldly compensation or reward for the message, and all his sacrifices had been solely for the guidance of the people. But God sends His message clearly to the Prophet (S) that there is a requirement for having received this guidance: faithful love and devotion to the Prophet's (S) kin; whose good effect goes back to the people themselves!

[O Muhammad] Say: 'Whatever reward I have asked of you, it is for yourselves [and for your own benefit]; my reward is only with God, and He is witness over all things'. (The Holy Qur'an, 34:47).

What does this actually mean? After we have received the key to happiness and eternity by receiving the message and its guidance through the Prophet (S), a requirement in return is that people must show a devoted love and affection towards the Prophet's (S) household, Ahl Al-Bayt ('a); why? It should be mentioned that God is not in need of anything, and He can supply for His Prophet (S) as well. So what is the purpose of this love, and why is it so important that it is set as a requirement?

One aspect of the answer to these questions lies in the fact that man in his fitra (inner innate nature) is all the more inclined to emulate and obey the one it loves. Love is, therefore, a prerequisite for being a follower. Since the Prophet (S) and his Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) are the most prominent of God's servants and the guides to God and true happiness, following them means a practical realization of the message which is human salvation and guidance to God. In other words, this requirement is, in fact, a safety line that itself is connected to God and ensures that people are led all the way through guidance to Him. God says:

[O Muhammad] Say: 'I do not ask you a wage for it (my ministry) except for him who wishes to choose a way unto his Lord'. (The Holy Qur'an, 25:57).

The setting of this requirement also affirms an important principle that God who is Perfect is not in need of anything in return for all the blessings He bestows on human beings. Rather, His commands are in themselves blessings and bring benefits to man's own good. So, this requirement is also for our own sake and is the means that ensures our success and progress. God says:

"And you do not ask them for any reward for it; it (the Qur'an) is no other than a reminder for all mankind [the people and other creations]." (The Holy Qur'an, 12:104).

Who Then Constitutes The Prophet's (S) Family?

Ibn Abbas has re-narrated that the Prophet (S) was asked about what the stated mawadda verse speaks of. The Prophet (S) replied:

"They are Ali, Fatimah az-Zahra' and their two sons." [21](#)

Then the Prophet (S) continued:

"Indeed, God has bestowed the love of my Ahl Al-Bayt as my reward [for the Prophecy], and I will

question you all about it on the Day of Judgment.”[22](#)

It has also been narrated that Jabir Ibn Abdullah has said:

“One day, a Bedouin came to the Prophet (S) and said, ‘O Muhammad, tell me about Islam so that I may follow it.’ The Prophet (S) replied: ‘You must bear witness that there is no God besides God, who is One, Unique and without a partner and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. “The Bedouin asked the Prophet:” Do you ask anything of me for it? “The Prophet replied,” I ask nothing but love for my kin. “The Bedouin asked: ‘Which kin, yours or mine?’ The Prophet replied, ‘My kin’ The Bedouin said to the Prophet: ‘Give me your hand so that I can testify my alliance to you, and may God’s curse rest on the one who does not love you or your kin. ‘The Prophet answered,’ Amen “[23](#)

After all the sacrifices the Prophet (S) went through in order to guide people to complete happiness, nothing is expected in return except one thing: devotional, mutual love and affection for the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a). It is this special love which is referred to in the mawadda verse; a love towards Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) that is reflected back to us. This love only becomes complete by following the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) in word and deed in accordance with the command of God and that of the Prophet (S). Therefore, this also shows the essential and central role of the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a), since loving and following the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) leads to God and [according to the verse] becomes the reward of the Prophet (S), which is unlike other prophets (‘a) who are rewarded only through God. It is also beautiful that the Prophet (S), who is most attentive towards people’s guidance [in accordance with God’s testimony], receives precisely the guidance of men as a reward.

G5. ‘Twelve Imams (‘A) From My Offspring.’

There are several authentic narrations in both Sunni and Shi'a sources that the Prophet's (S) successors are twelve Imams (‘a) who succeed each other until the Day of Judgment.

The following has been narrated from the Prophet (S) who said:

“The Islamic religion will continue with twelve caliphs for you until the Day of Resurrection and all [of them] will be from Quraysh.”

“There will be twelve caliphs for this communion, and all are from Quraysh.”

“The affairs of men will continue to be carried out [well] as long as they are governed by the twelve men.”

“Islam will continue to be successful until there have been twelve caliphs.”[24](#)

It is also narrated by Jabir Ibn Samura that:

“I heard the Prophet (S) say, ‘There will be twelve commanders (Amir).’ Then he said a sentence I did

not hear. My father said that the Prophet (S) added: ‘They will all be from Quraysh.’[25](#)

In another formulation, God’s Messenger (S) uses the word “Imam” instead of “Caliph.” The Prophet (S) has said in this regard:

“The Imams are from Quraysh”

“They will all be from Bani Hashim.”[26](#)

As for knowing these Imams (‘a) and the importance of this knowledge, the Prophet (S) has also said:

“Whoever dies without knowing the Imam of his time is like the one who died during jahliyya (time of ignorance – pre-Islamic era)”

An important conclusion that can be drawn from these narrations, which are excluded from Sunni Muslim sources, is that the concept of twelve selected Imams (‘a) is a self-evident and that the Prophet (S) has emphasized this on in numerous occasions is widely known. It is therefore not only something that the Shi'a express, but it is undoubtedly an Islamic concept, while at the same time, previous prophets (‘a) had successors.

Who Are Those Twelve Imams (‘A)?

After examining these clear and authentic narrations whose authenticity all Muslims agree upon, the natural follow-up question becomes: who are these twelve Imams (‘a) after the Prophet (S) who will lead mankind all the way until the Day of Judgment?

If you look at the history of Islam, that description obviously does not fit into the first four caliphs since they were less than twelve. Although some have tried to add the next Umayyad caliphs to fill in the list and solve the problem, they have run into an even bigger problem as it is obvious that this high position cannot be applied to those caliphs because:

They would not be twelve anyhow

- They were tyrants and unjust
- Some of them sinned and went against the rules of Islam and violated its rules openly
- They were not from the Hashemites [Prophet’s (S) tribal branch mentioned in some ahadith]

Likewise, the indication cannot be applied to the Abbasid caliphs for similar reasons:

- They were more than twelve-numbered
- They persecuted and murdered a large number of people, not the least from the Prophet’s (S) family and many of the most righteous persons in society. Meaning, they did not obey the Prophet’s (S) orders

or the laws of the Qur'an.

To fill in the list and get the number to twelve imams, some have tried to include well-known tyrants such as Yazid Ibn Mu'awiya and Marwan Ibn Hakam. The indecency and injustice of these people, but above all their public oppression of the people, makes them in no way suitable as a role model, let alone as leaders for the guidance of people. They committed many crimes and ended up in all kinds of wrongdoing and mistakes, which history can testify to. Then you can ask the question; would God send His clear message [for people's guidance] with His chosen infallible Prophet (S) and then hand over people's destiny in the hands of such fallible people of lousy character? Some of whom have earned the notoriety of being even among history's worst tyrants, mass murderers and criminals?

The reason for this unacceptable list of unauthorized people is obvious; it is because of the lack of decent and honest leaders among the power elite in the history of Islam that these names emerge. It is noteworthy that, despite the acknowledgement by Bukhari, Muslim and other prominent Sunni scholars that the Imams are twelve in number, none of the Sunni schools can, of course, answer the question of who these Imams are.

The only ones who can answer the question and name twelve Imams ('a) as leaders, without any hesitancy and beyond all doubt, is the Shi'a ithna 'ashari school (Shi'a Twelvers). These Imams ('a) have, in words and deeds, repeatedly proved to be worthy of this divine position that God has chosen for them. By following the Prophet's (S) and Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) summoning, the Shi'a have been given clear instructions on who these twelve Imams ('a) of the Prophet's (S) kin are. Therefore, the Prophet (S) has given clear instructions in this regard, both in its entirety and more specifically, who the Imams ('a) after he is. Furthermore, his Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), one after the other, have provided clear instructions on whomever the next Imam ('a) would be.

Among them, it has been reported that the Prophet (S) was asked at one time about who would succeed him; the Prophet (S) said:

“After me, Ali Ibn Abi Talib and then my two sons Hasan and Husayn, and after Husayn, there are nine Imams from his offspring.”

Then the inquiring asked the Prophet (S) to name these, to which the Prophet (S) replied:

“When Husayn leaves this world, it is his son Ali, and after him, his son Muhammad and after Muhammad, his son Ja'far and after Ja'far, his son Musa and after Musa, his son Ali and after Ali, his son Muhammad and after Muhammad his son Ali, and after Ali his son Hasan and after Hasan his son Muhammad Al-Mahdi. These are the twelve Imams.”

The Prophet (S) also said:

“The Imams after me are twelve; the first is Ali Ibn Abi Talib, and the last is Al-Qa'im [Imam Al-Mahdi].

To obey them is to obey me and to show disobedience to them is to show disobedience to me. Whoever denies them has denied me.”

Abu Dharr has narrated the Prophet (S) saying:

“The Imams after me are twelve; nine of them are from Imam Al-Husayn’s (‘a) progeny and the ninth is Al-Qa’im [(the riser) Imam Al-Mahdi]. Be aware that the twelve Imams are among you as Noah’s ark, the one who goes aboard will be saved (salvaged) and the one who does not [aboard] will perish.”²⁷

Chapter 4 – Summary

G. The literal meaning of the Arabic word Shi'a is ‘followers’ or ‘supporters’. Originally it is Shi'a of Ali (‘a), or ‘Ali’s followers’ that is referred to when speaking of Shi'a Muslims.

The Holy Qur'an, defines the word Shi'a as ‘follower/supporter’, where two examples are how Ibrahim (‘a) is referred to as Nooh’s (‘a) Shi'a [see The Holy Qur'an, 37:83] and a believer is called Musa's (‘a) Shi'a [see The Holy Qur'an, 28:15].

G1-2. The Prophet (S) himself called Imam Ali's (‘a) followers Shi'a and called them the ‘true victors on the Day of Judgment’.

G3. Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) can be translated into “the household” and more specifically, it refers to the Prophet's (S) specifically chosen household. The Holy Qur'an, and Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) are the two valuable things that the Prophet Muhammad (S) left behind for human guidance, and he clearly stated that if the Muslims follow both of them together, then they will not get astray after him, and they will be led to paradise.

G4. Some Qur'anic verses that testify to the high position of Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) include the verses on Tathir, the verses on Mubahala, the verses on Abrar and the verses on Mawadda. These verses that relate to both historical events and narrations from the Prophet (S) clearly show the essential and central role that Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) have played in the completion of the message of God that the Prophet (S) declared.

G5. There are numerous authentic narrations in both Sunni and Shi'a sources that the Prophet's (S) successors from his kin are twelve. They succeed each other until the Day of Judgment. Through the Prophet (S) and also through the Imams (‘a) who reminded who their successor is, we know that these Imams (‘a) are in the following order: Imam Ali (‘a), Imam Al-Hasan (‘a), Imam Al-Husayn (‘a), Imam Al-Sajjad (‘a), Imam Al-Baqir (‘a), Imam Al-Sadiq (‘a), Imam Al-Kadhim (‘a), Imam Al-Ridha' (‘a), Imam Al-Jawad (‘a), Imam Al-Hadi (‘a), Imam Al-'Askari (‘a) and Imam Al-Mahdi (‘aj).

^{1.} The Prophet (S) declares and emphasizes the position of Imam Ali (‘a) in many contexts, already with the start of his prophecy to his last pilgrimage and more specifically his farewell sermon in Ghadir Khumm, to the last breath of his holy life; see I. What is quoted in the present book provides the reader with only a historical overview and wholeness, and in fact

constitutes only a fraction of the Prophet's (S) proclamations and, above all, the most historically known events. For the interested seeker, each of these events, and many more, are a starting point and a current that leads to the ocean.

2. The Prophet (S) uses the term consistently; see G2.

3. The Ja'fari school is named after Imam Ja'far Al-Sadiq ('a), the 6th Imam ('a). This is because many of the basic principles and positions of the Shi'a school were highlighted and clarified during Imam Al-Sadiq's ('a) time again. The transition period for the contemporary shift in political power had left a relatively open space for the emergence of in-depth discussions and various debates, not least on issues of faith and science, which had led to the emergence of different thought orientations and branches of faith. During this period, Imam Al-Baqir ('a) and Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) made sure to teach and educate many students in both religious and scientific fields; see W.

4. The examples are numerous, none of which can be seen in the Imam's ('a) actions during the wars waged against him, including in the "Battle of Siffin"; see R.

5. This is one among many ahadith with similar messages that Ahl Al-Bait ('a) educate their followers with. The following hadith is found in the book Bihar Al-Anwar volume 27 p.58.

6. This elementary message is evident from the majority of ahadith, including this hadith found in Usul Al-Kafi volume 2 p.78.

7. The term is used as a symbol of God's power and will, as hand in the Arabic language symbolizes power. So, it is not a question about a physical hand.

8. The Hadith is narrated in several sources, including: Tafsir Durr Al-Manthoor of Siyuti volume 6 p. 379; Al-Sawa'iq Al-Muhrqa by Ibn Hibr p. 96; Tafsir Rooh Al-Ma'ani by Aloosi volume 30 p. 207; Tafsir Jami 'Al-Bayan of Tabari volume 30 p. 265 et al.

9. For source see previous note; as well as Yanabi 'Al-Mawadda by Qundoozi Al-Hanafi's 62 et al.

10. A well-known ziyara (salutatory prayer) from Imam Al-Hadi ('a), called Ziyarat Jami'a Kabira, describes Ahl Al-Bait ('a) as the household of the prophetic message and the custodians of the religion and the sources of knowledge.

11. The issue has been dealt with in various parts of the book, including in connection with the "Tathir verse"; see F. Note that freedom of error is a condition for divinely chosen leadership as it is the question of the divine message that must be preserved and passed on to humanity. The Prophet's (S) wives and other companions were not infallibles of the Qur'an's rectifying views.

12. The Prophet (S) highlights this in a lengthy speech he held at Ghadir Khumm in connection with his farewell pilgrimage to Mecca, where he officially and publicly announced Imam Ali ('a) as his successor to the large crowd that had pilgrimaged with him. The meaning of the hadith, as well as the fact that Imam Ali ('a) was the Prophet's (S) caliph and successor, on several occasions and in connection with various events, the Prophet (S) had announced this in different forms, both in words and in action. Many examples have been cited throughout the book.

13. The Prophet's (S) annunciation is recorded in many sources including: Sahih Muslim (1980) Chapter of the Virtues of the Companions, Section of the Virtues of 'Ali, v4, p. 1286, Tradition # 5920 – English Edition Printed in Saudi Arabia and Arabic Edition Volume 4 p. 1873 hadith 36; and other collections such as Sahih Al-Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad.

14. Sahih Al-Tirmidhi volume 5 p. 662–663,328 – reported by 30+ companions with reference to several stages in the narrator chain; Al-Mustadrak of Al-Hakim chapter "Understanding (the virtues) of Companions" volume 3 p.

109,110,148,533 – Al-Hakim has stated that the hadith is authentic (Sahih) in agreement to the two Sheikhs (Al-Bukhari and Muslim) criteria; Sunan by Daarami volume 2 s 432; Musnad by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal volume 3 p. 14,17,26,59 and volume 4 p. 366,370–372 and volume 5 p. 182, 189, 350, 366, 419; Fadha'il Al-Sahaba by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal volume 2 p. 585 hadith 990; Al-Khasa'iis by Al-Nisa'i p. 21.30; Al-Sawa'iq Al-Muhrqa by Ibn Hajar Haythami Chapter 11 section 1 p. 230; Al-Kabir by Al-Tabarani volume 3 pp. 62–63,137 ; Kanz Al-Ummal by Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi chapter Al-Iti'sam bi Habl Allah volume 1 p. 44; Tafsir Ibn Kathir (complete version) volume 4 p. 113 on the commentary on verse 42:23 of the Qur'an (four ahadith) ; Tabaqat Al-Kubra by Ibn Sa'd volume 2 p. 194 published by Dar Isadder, Lebanon.

Al-Jami 'Al-Saghir by Al-Suyuti volume 1 p. 353 and also in volume 2; Majma' Al-Zawa'id by Al-Haythami volume 9 p. 163; Al-Fateh Al-Kabir by Al-Binhani volume 1 p. 451; Usdul Ghabah in Ma'rifat Al-Sahaba by Ibn Al-Athir volume 2 p. 12; Jami 'Al-Usul by Ibn Al-Athir volume 1 p. 187; History of Ibn Asakir volume 5 p. 436; Al-Taj Al-Jami's Lil Usul volume 3 p. 308; Al-Durr Al-Manthoor by Al-Hafidh Al-Suyuti volume 2 p. 60; Yanabi Al-Mawadda by Al-Qundoozi Al-Hanafi's 38,183;

Abaqat Al-Anwar volume 1 p. 16 et al. Most references are from English editions. Note, however, that some ahadith may have been moved or removed from later editions.

15. Yet another hadith which is narrated through about 50 different narrative chains and hence is counted to the acknowledged ahadith found in many sources including; Al-Mustadrak (1411 AD) by Hakum Neyshaboori volume 2 p. 273; Mafatih Al-Ghayb (1420 AD) by Fakherddin Razi volume 27 p. 596; Al-Sawa'iq Al-Muhriqa (1417 AD) by Ibn Hajar Haythami volume 2 pp. 445–446; Al-Manaqeb by Ibn Maghazeli's 148; Tarikh Baghdad (1417 AD) by Khatib Al-Baghdadi volume 12 p. 90; Jawahir Al-'eqdayn (1405 AD) volume 2 p. 126; Al-Amali (1414 AD) by Sheikh Al-Tusi's 633; Al-Ihtijaj (1403 AD) of Tabarsi Volume 1 p. 273 et al.

16. The entire verse and the specific and exclusive emphasis on Ahl Al-Bait ('a) in its last part, including from a linguistic perspective, have been extensively discussed earlier in the book; see F4.

17. This hadith is narrated and several similar ones are narrated in many sources, not least in several commentary interpretations of the Holy Qur'an, including Jami 'Al-Bayan fi tafsir Al-Qoran by Tabari volume 22 p. 5; and the book Sunan at- Tarmothi (published 1403 AD) volume 5 p. 699; Al-Fosool Al-Mukhtara by Sharif Al-Murtadha's 53 et al.

18. This hadith is narrated in several sources including Al-Mustadrak by Al-Hakim, the chapter on "Understanding the Virtues of Companions" volume 3 p. 148, where the author stated: "This hadith is authentic (Sahih) based on the criteria of the two sheikhs (Bukhari and Muslim)."; Talkhis Al-Mustadrak by Thahabi volume 3 p. 148; Asad Al-Ghaba by Ibn Athir volume 3 p. 33. Although the majority of the depictions show that the last part of verse 33:33 was revealed in Umm Salama's house, it does not exclude that it may also have been revealed in Safiyya's house. Based on the opinions of Sunni scholars, including Ibn Hajar, the revelation of the same verse on more than one occasion and the Prophet's (S) delivery of it several times are both completely possible and not uncommon.

19. This hadith and similar narrations are narrated in several sources, including in connection with commentary interpretations of the verses in commentary interpretation books available for the Holy Qur'an; inter alia Tafsir Al-Qur'an by Ibn Kathir (published 1419 AD) volume 6 p. 371 et al.

20. Some of these ahadith have been narrated later in the book; see G5.

21. This hadith and similar ahadith are narrated in most commentary interpretations of the Holy Qur'an in connection with comments on the verse, including Tafsir Noor ath-Thaqalayn volume 5 pp. 570–578. These ahadith are also narrated in other sources including in Shawahed at-Tanzil by Hakim Haskani volume 2 p. 189–196; Rawdhat Al-Kafi of Kulayni's 134 hadith 66 with Ahmad Ibn Hanbal's portrayal and others.

22. This hadith and a similar hadith are narrated in Thakhaer Al-Uqba by Tabari p. 26 et al.

23. Many narrations with the same meaning are narrated in the majority of prominent sources including Dorr Al-Manthoor of Suyuti volume 6 p. 7; Jami 'Al-Bayan of Tabari volume 25 p. 14; Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal volume 1 s 199 et al.; See also Note 105.

24. This hadith has been narrated, among other things, in Sahih Muslim (Arabic edition published 1980 AD) Kitab Al-Imara volume 3 p. 1453 hadith 6, 7, 10 and others; and Sahih Muslim (English edition) Chapter 754 entitled: "The People Are Subordinate to the Quraysh and the Caliphate is the Right of the Quraysh" volume 3 p. 1010 ahadith 4478, 4480, 4483m.fl.

25. This hadith and the like have been narrated, among other things in Sahih Al-Bukhari hadith 9329 et al.

26. This hadith and the like have been narrated, among other things in Al-Mustadrak of Al-Hakim volume 3 p 149; Al-Sawa'iq Al-Muhriqa by Ibn Hajar Al-Haithami Chapter 11 section 2 p 287; and in books such as Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, Sahih an- Nisa'i, Sunan Al-Beyhaqi et al.

27. These ahadith and the like with the same meaning are numerous in Islamic sources and hadith collections. Some of them are assembled in Yanabi 'Al-Mawadda's 431; Al-'Iqdat by Sheikh Sadooq p. 104; Al-Saduq, 'Uyoon Akhbar Al-Ridha volume 2 p. 62; Ghayat Al-Maram of Al-Bahrani volume 3 p. 22 et al.

Chapter 5: Prophethood

Questions addressed in this chapter:

– From Prophet Adam ('a) to Prophet Muhammad (S)

What is the connection between all prophets ('a)?

– The story of Prophet Muhammad (S)

Before the revelation of the Qur'an

Islam in Mecca

Islam in Medina

– Did the Prophet (S) prepare his followers for his successor?

H. From Adam ('A) To Muhammad (S) – One Line

Prophethood has been a continuous process; it started with Prophet Adam (S), the first man, and ended with the last of them, the seal of prophethood, Prophet Muhammad (S). All prophets ('a) have come with the same message, the message of One God and total submission to Him. They have come for the guidance of man and his eternal success.

“Muhammad is not the father of [any] one of your men, but [he is] the Messenger of God and last of the prophets. And ever is God, of all things, Knowing.” (The Holy Qur'an, 33:40).

“Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet, whom they find written in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel, who enjoins upon them what is right and forbids them what is wrong and makes lawful for them the good things and prohibits for them the evil and relieves them of their burden and the shackles which were upon them. So they who have believed in him honoured him, supported him and followed the light which was sent down with him – it is those who will be successful.” (The Holy Qur'an, 7: 157).

“Say, [O Muhammad], “O mankind, indeed I am the Messenger of God to you all, [from Him] to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. There is no deity except Him; He gives life and causes death.” So believe in God and His Messenger, the unlettered prophet, who believes in God and His words, and follow him that you may be guided.” (The Holy Qur'an, 7: 158).

The prophets ('a) were given the divine message in order to lead man towards perfection and therefore, nearness to God. Every prophet ('a), during his time on earth, was the perfect man, free of flaws and sin,

and therefore a role model for his people. God blessed His prophets ('a) with clear signs and miracles. They were fearless men who occasionally had to stand alone facing thousands of enemies and deniers. They had to endure great trials and tribulations. The prophets ('a) made great sacrifices in order to guide mankind.

"And certainly, were messengers denied before you, but they were patient over [the effects of] denial, and they were harmed until Our victory came to them. And none can alter the words of God. And there has certainly come to you some information about the [previous] messengers."
(The Holy Qur'an, 6:34).

Prophet Muhammad (S) is the prophet of Islam, the prophet to present the final message. He announced himself as a servant of God and God's Messenger. Similarly, he proclaimed that all prophets (S) before him were the servants of God and His messengers. One of the Prophet's (S) missions were, through the word of God in the Holy Qur'an, to clarify that neither he nor any prophet ('a) before him claimed to be God, a part-deity or an embodiment of God.

"It is not for a human [prophet] that God should give him the Scripture and authority and prophethood, and then he would say to the people, 'Be servants to me rather than God,' but [instead, he would say], 'Be pious scholars of the Lord because of what you have taught of the Scripture and because of what you have studied.'" (The Holy Qur'an, 3:79).

"And [beware the Day] when God will say, 'O Jesus, Son of Mary, did you say to the people, 'Take my mother and me as deities besides God?'" He will say, 'Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself. Indeed, it is You who is Knower of the unseen.'" (The Holy Qur'an, 5:116).

I said not to them except what You commanded me – to worship God, my Lord and your Lord. And I was a witness over them as long as I was among them; but when You took me up, You were the Observer over them, and You are, over all things, Witness'." (The Holy Qur'an, 5:117).1

Prophet Muhammad (S) encouraged Muslims to believe in the prophets (S) before him. In total, 124 000 prophets were sent from God. Many of them were sent to one or several villages, cities or areas simultaneously, others were sent to great tribes, and in some cases, a prophet ('a) was sent to one and one person only. Other prophets ('a) were sent to greater areas or to whole nations. Prophet Muhammad (S) was sent to all of mankind with a message valid until the end of time. Among the prophets ('a) who were sent before the time of the Holy Prophet (S) and who are mentioned in The Holy Qur'an, are the following prophets ('a) [Latin name in brackets]: Adam, Nooh [Noah], Hood [Hud], Salih [Saleh], Ibrahim [Abraham], Lut, Ismail [Ismael], Ishaq [Isak], Ya'qoob [Jakob], Yusof [Josef], Musa [Moses], Haroon [Aron], Dawood [David], Yunos [Jona], Yahya [Johannes] and Isa [Jesus]. Prophet Muhammad (S) would speak of earlier prophets ('a) in admiration, called them his brothers and

encouraged his followers to respect them. He mentioned their eminent god-fearing personalities in order for all to gain knowledge; he did this by using the depiction of them in the Holy Qur'an. Meanwhile, he underlined the common basic message that all prophets had been sent to mediate.

“Say, ‘O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you – that we will not worship except God and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of God.’ But if they turn away, then say, ‘Bear witness that we are Muslims [submitting to Him].” (The Holy Qur'an, 3:64).

“Say, ‘We have believed in God and in what was revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Descendants, and in what was given to Moses and Jesus and to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [submitting] to Him.” (The Holy Qur'an, 3:84).

“And We have already sent messengers before you. Among them are those [whose stories] We have related to you, and among them are those [whose stories] We have not related to you. And it was not for any messenger to bring a sign [or verse] except by permission of God. So when the command of God comes, it will be concluded in truth, and the falsifiers will thereupon lose [all].” (The Holy Qur'an, 40:78).

“Indeed, We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him. And we revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, the Descendants, Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon, and to David, We gave the book [of Psalms]” (The Holy Qur'an, 4: 163).

“And [We sent] messengers about whom We have related [their stories] to you before and messengers about whom We have not related to you. And God spoke to Moses with [direct] speech]” (The Holy Qur'an, 4: 164).

“[We sent] messengers as bringers of good tidings and warners so that mankind will have no argument against God after the messengers. And ever is God Exalted in Might and Wise” (The Holy Qur'an, 4: 165).

“And that was Our [conclusive] argument which We gave Abraham against his people. We raise by degrees whom We will. Indeed, your Lord is Wise and Knowing. And We gave to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” (The Holy Qur'an, 6:83).

“all [of them] We guided. And Noah, We guided before; and among his descendants, David and Solomon and Job and Joseph and Moses and Aaron. Therefore, do We reward the doers of good? And Zechariah and John and Jesus and Elias.” (The Holy Qur'an, 6:84).

“and all were of the righteous. And Ismael and Elisha and Jonah and Lot.” (The Holy Qur'an, 6:85).

“and all [of them] We preferred over the worlds. And [some] among their fathers and their descendants and their brothers.” (The Holy Qur'an, 6:86).

“and We chose them, and We guided them to a straight path.” (The Holy Qur'an, 6:87).

Prophets ('a) received, by the wisdom of God, decrees and regulations which were adapted to their specific time and people. As man's collective maturity and experience increased, succeeding prophets ('a) confirmed the message of the prophets ('a) before them and added new regulations from God. In some cases, again by the order of God, some regulations were annulled. Prophet Muhammad (S), as the seal of prophethood, received the final and complete message, the one that covered and tied up the message of all earlier prophets ('a) combined.

I. The Holy Prophet (S) [The First Ma'soom] – The Story Of The Prophet (S)

I1. Before The Revelation Of The Holy Qur'an

Birth And Early Childhood

Prophet Muhammad (S) was born, according to the Islamic calendar, on the 17th of Rabi' Al-awwal in the year 570 AD. Many signs could be seen at the time of his birth;² signs that followers of earlier prophets ('a) had awaited and recognized!³ Hence, in particular, the scholars among them knew that the last Prophet (S) was born.

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him as they know their own sons. But indeed, a party of them conceal the truth while they know [it].” (The Holy Qur'an, 2: 146).

The Holy Prophet (S) had to endure many difficulties, even in his childhood. His father Abdullah (r.a.), passed away just a few months before his blessed birth. At the age of six, his mother, Amina (r.a.), also passed away. After the heavy loss of his mother, he was looked after by his grandfather, Abd Al-Muttalib (r.a.). When the Prophet (S) was eight years of age, Abd Al-Muttalib (r.a.) passed away as well. After that his new care-takers became his uncle Abu Talib (r.a.) and his uncle's wife Fatimah bint Asad (r.a.). They both loved and were highly fond of the Holy Prophet (S) and taught their children to love and respect him as well.

In Society

To obtain a deeper knowledge of the Holy Prophet (S) and his unique character, it is of importance to understand the society of his time. The days preceding Islam were called Jahiliyyah (an era of ignorance – pre-Islamic time). Imam Ali ('a) described the era of ignorance as well as the Arabs combative way of life, their debauchery and their moral decay had reached a critical state:

“Indeed God – praised and free of sin He is – sent [Prophet] Muhammad – may the blessings of God be upon him and his family the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) – [as] a warner for the worlds and as a [safe] keeping of the down sent [revelation], and [this while] you, gathering [of] Arabs [were] in the worst of beliefs, and in the worst of abodes, living between hard stone. And deaf snakes, drinking musty [water], and eating distasteful [food], and spilling your blood, and cutting bloodlines, [while] the idol worshipers among you were exalted, and sins through you were consolidated.”⁴

In addition to this, infant girls were being buried alive. In the Holy Qur'an, God condemns this inhumane behaviour in powerful words:

“And when one of them is informed of [the birth of] a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief.” (The Holy Qur'an, 16:58).

He hides from the people because of the ill of which he has been informed. Should he keep it in humiliation or bury it in the ground? Unquestionably, evil is what they decide.” (The Holy Qur'an, 16:59).

In that society, a woman was similar to that of merchandise; she could be bought, sold or even be pillaged during bloody raids together with other bounties. Women and slaves had neither social rights nor rights to inheritance. When people feared famine, they could sacrifice their children for idols, decapitate their daughters, throw them off of high mountains and sometimes even drown them.

In the midst of this dark and decaying society came, miraculously, God's pearl of creation, and blossomed like a flower in the midst of the desert. Prophet Muhammad (S) was, from a young age onwards, known among the people for his character. Despite his tribe affiliation and the special status he held, being Abd Al-Muttalib's (r.a.) most loved grandchild, he lived a very simple life among the people.⁵ From a young age, the Holy Prophet's (S) uncle, Abu Talib (r.a.), used to take with him the Holy Prophet (S) on his business trips. His kind manners and behaviour towards everyone, his fine work ethic and his consideration and his benevolence, which he did not hold back from anyone, as well as his help of the needy and oppressed, made young Muhammad (S) more and more famous as the days went by.

The amplitude of his exemplary character was not limited to the caravans, but his beautiful morals were widely known in all of Mecca; so much that the inhabitants had started calling him Muhammad Al-Amin (the trustworthy one). In that way had the Holy Prophet (S) grown up to become a respected young man, whose magnanimity and generosity reached everyone. At the same time, his dislike of all forms of oppression and injustice was easy notable through his actions. In a society where the elites in power elevated their positions on the backs of slaves, he distanced himself from inaction and indolence and insisted on performing all his duties by himself and helping others in theirs. In all the gatherings, he was the hardest working one, relieving others, simultaneously donating most of his earnings to the needy. Even though he was of great character and did great deeds, he was never arrogant and always stayed humble.

He always had a smile and used to approach everyone with a good attitude. His harmonious personality and his peaceful soul attracted the people, leaving traces in his surroundings wherever he went. He used to speak clearly and with a tone of respect, and when others spoke, he was attentive. He would never use improper language. Among the people, he was known for his righteousness and his piety. He would always keep his word and would never lie. In an era where oppression was roaring and the rich and powerful were forcing obedience, his humility and frankness won the hearts of the people. Like a wise and loving father, he would walk through the city in order to find those who were in need and help them. He asked the sick how they were and looked out for them, helped and comforted the outcasts and the orphans and was generous towards the poor and destitute. The people who were abandoned, alone and oppressed, especially the orphans, got the most of his attention. If a human in need asked for his assistance, he would not turn him down. On many occasions, he would give his own food to the poor and stay hungry himself. His thoughtfulness for all creatures would appear in his attention and behaviour towards everything from plants to animals. His perspective and behaviour were impregnated with love, wisdom and mercy. These high morals and polite character made him respected and trusted by all in society long before prophethood. His good judgment and fair opinions made numerous people turn to him for advice, asked him to mediate during conflicts and sought his solutions for all kinds of affairs.[6](#)

It was in this manner that the Holy Prophet (S) was hired to lead the caravans of the most esteemed and wealthy in society. Khadija (r.a.), who came to be the Holy Prophet's (S) loving wife and faithful companion when he was twenty-five years of age. It was also Khadija (r.a.) who came to be the mother of the Holy Prophets (S) dear daughter Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a), the mother of the Imams ('a) of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a).

Before the start of the Holy Prophet's (S) calling, he used to spend many days and nights in solitude in the cave of Hira'. He spent many days in worship and seeking God's closeness. Imam Ali ('a), around nine of age at the time, used to bring food Khadija (r.a.) had prepared the Holy Prophet (S). During a period of drought and difficulties in Mecca, the Holy Prophet (S) had taken his cousin Ali ('a), the son of Abu Talib (r.a.), to his own home so he would be able to look after him. Hence, the Holy Prophet (S) raised Imam Ali ('a) from an early age. They had a strong and keen connection. The Holy Prophet (S) cared for Ali ('a) as his own son, just like Ali's ('a) father once had taken care of him. When the Holy Prophet (S), at the age of forty, on the night of 27th Rajab, in the year 610 AD, went to Hira' in order to worship his God, the angel Jibrail ('a) [Gabriel] approached him and asked the Holy Prophet (S) to recite:

"Recite in the name of your Lord who created." (The Holy Qur'an, 96:1).

"Created man from a clinging substance." (The Holy Qur'an, 96:2)

"Recite, and your Lord is the Most Generous." (The Holy Qur'an, 96:3).

"Who taught by the pen." (The Holy Qur'an, 96:4).

*“Taught man that which he knew not.” (The Holy Qur'an, 96:5)*⁷

The Holy Qur'an, The Revealed Word Of God And The Foremost Miracle Of The Holy Prophet (S)

The revelations of The Holy Qur'an, had now begun. In the Arabic community, rhetoric and poetry constituted both merits and a powerful and influential tool. The people of the time were therefore highly conversant in those fields and possessed linguistic abilities only a few people have today. They lived in an era where eloquence and language were of most important in society, so much so that the abilities of today cannot be compared to theirs. Therefore, they could not deny the superiority of The Holy Qur'an, regarding its linguistics and content.

“Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an? If it had been from [any] other than God, they would have found within it much contradiction.” (The Holy Qur'an, 4:82).

“Then let them produce a statement like it if they should be truthful.” (The Holy Qur'an, 52:34).

“And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our Servant [Muhammad], then produce a surah the like thereof and call upon your witnesses other than God, if you should be truthful.” (The Holy Qur'an, 2:23).

“But if you do not – and you will never be able to – then fear the Fire, whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the disbelievers.” (The Holy Qur'an, 2:24).

“Or do they say, ‘He invented it?’ Say, ‘Then bring ten surahs like it that have been invented and call upon [for assistance] whomever you can besides God, if you should be truthful.’” (The Holy Qur'an, 11:13).

“Say, ‘If mankind and the djinn gathered in order to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like of it, even if they were to each other assistants.’” (The Holy Qur'an, 17:88).

12. Islam In Mecca

The First To Accept Islam (Year 13 Bh/610 Ad)

After the revelation of the first verses of The Holy Qur'an, and that of the Prophet's ('a) homecoming – his wife, Khadija (r.a.), became the first person and the first woman to accept the prophethood of Muhammad (S) and the religion of Islam. Imam Ali ('a) who was aware of this revelation, did not hesitate for a moment, and he too accepted the message of the Holy Prophet (S). Therefore, Imam Ali ('a) became the first of men to accept Islam at the young age of ten.

With the first revelation – the mission to reform society had begun. The Holy Prophet (S) came with the

final message and to guide man so that he would be able to reach his full potential.

The state of matters in the communities at that time initially inhibited the Holy Prophet (S) from speaking publicly of his calling. During the first three years, he was instead ordered by God to invite people to Islam without causing too much of a commotion.

An Open Invitation To Islam Begins – An Invitation To The Nearest

After the first three years, conducted in secret, it was now time to announce the calling of Islam openly. God commanded the Holy Prophet (S) to begin with the ones closest to him in blood. The first invitation was announced in verse:

“And warn, [O Muhammad], your closest kindred.” (The Holy Qur'an, 26:214).

When the verse was sent down, and the command of God was issued, the Holy Prophet (S) asked Imam Ali ('a) to prepare a meal and invite his kinfolk. Even though the food was initially made to fill one belly, they all ended up eating quite the amount. Afterwards, the initial food portion was left, as if untouched. It was a surprise to everyone and while seeing this, Abu Lahab, the Holy Prophet's (S) uncle – later to be the arch-enemy of Islam – called out: “This is nothing but magic and sorcery.” The Holy Prophet (S) did not get the chance to speak as he was interrupted, and everyone left dinner.

Nonetheless, on the next day, the Holy Prophet (S) asked Imam Ali ('a) yet again to prepare a meal for everyone and sent out the invitations. Again, everyone ate themselves fully, but the food still would not decrease. Eventually, the Holy Prophet (S) got a chance to speak and said:

“O sons of Abd Al-Mutallib ('a), by God, there is no one among the Arabs who has brought his people better than what I am bringing you; I have brought you what is good in this world and what is good in the next, and God has commanded me to invite you towards him, so who among you will stand on my side in this mission? And will then be my brother, the implementor of my will and my successor among you.”

When the Holy Prophet (S) stopped speaking the crowd became silent, and no one moved. In the midst of the crowd, Imam Ali ('a) stood up and answered:

“I, O Messenger of God, will stand with you in this”

The Holy Prophet (S) asked Imam Ali ('a) to sit down and then repeated his question three times. Each time no one but Imam Ali ('a) answered affirmatively. The Holy Prophet (S) then placed his hand on the neck of Imam Ali ('a) and said:

“Surely, this is my brother, the implementor of my will and my successor among you; listen to him and obey him.”⁸

This event, on the one hand, shows the strong conviction and bravery of the young Imam Ali ('a), when

there were barely any other Muslims, and on the other, how the Holy Prophet (S) and his successors ('a) positions are strongly combined and linked together. On that same day – the Holy Prophet (S) declared his prophethood, and shortly after he also presents his successor.

The Open Invitation To Islam Continues

The Holy Prophet (S) continued with his mission. Before prophethood, the Holy Prophet (S) had lived among his people for forty years and was known as an honest and reliable man who had never spoken a lie, deceived anyone or broken a promise. He was therefore known as being a truthful and just man. When the Holy Prophet (S) one day climbed upon a mountain to demonstrate his trustworthiness, which was consolidated even more by people's testimony and faced those who had gathered upon his call and said:

“O, people! Will you believe me if I told you that your enemies are deployed on the other side of this mountain [Safa] and that they are planning to attack you and your possessions?”

Even with the likelihood of this actually being true, the people still confirmed that they believed it, seeing as the honesty of the Holy Prophet (S) had no parallel. They answered:

“We have never heard you tell any lie!”

The Holy Prophet (S) made the most of their testimony and continued:

“I am, indeed, today a warner of a firm punishment. I call you to testify that there is no god but God and that I am His messenger. And I call you to denounce idols.”

And as such, the Holy Prophet (S) declared the message God had sent him and announced that he was the final messenger of God. The Holy Prophet (S) called the people to believe in God and to perform good deeds, to help the poor and needy, to look after the sick and the orphans, and to defend justice and to resist tyranny. He called upon the people to abandon their idolatry and their customs opposing humanity and mercy and to instead return to pure faith so that they may acquire what is good of this world and the hereafter.⁹

Islam Starts To Expand, And The Elite Of Mecca Feels Threatened

As a result of the Holy Prophet's (S) invitation, his great patience and his hard efforts, Islam started to expand. This made the elite, among them the Quraysh, feel threatened. The Quraysh was the tribe in control of Mecca at the time. They were dependent on injustices taking place in the community and idolatry, only so to stay in power and keep their economic benefits. Therefore, they felt threatened by the advocator of monotheism, justice and equality.

The leaders of the Quraysh got together and decided to turn towards Abu Talib (r.a.), the tribe elder who had a distinguished position. They let him know they were not tolerating the message of the Holy

Prophet (S). Initially, the Quraysh requested Abu Talib (r.a.) to present their demands to his nephew and have him renounce his calling to God. In turn, they would reward the Holy Prophet (S) riches, power and possessions. The Holy Prophet (S) could have security and all that he could wish for if only he would stop preaching monotheism. At that time, the Muslim movement was in its initial phase, relatively small and subjected to many external threats. It was in this critical and hard condition that the Holy Prophet (S) answered:

“If you were to put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, and give me all the riches of the world, I would still refuse to denounce this call.”¹⁰

The Holy Prophet’s s (S) answer clarified his stand and his unwavering strength in the path of God, and at the same time dismantling every attempt made to spread rumours that his purpose was materialistic. His message was for a greater cause than that of worldly rewards and possessions.

Abu Talib (r.a.), who was aware of the Holy Prophet’s (S) truthfulness, firmly supported him. He presented the Holy Prophet’s (S) reply to the Quraysh and explained that he supported his nephew. The Quraysh knew that no harm would be done to the Prophet (S) as long as Abu Talib (r.a.) lived because none would cause a dispute with the Bani Hashim¹¹, a branch of the Quraysh tribe known for their courage. Like his father, Abd Al-Muttalib (r.a.), Abu Talib (r.a.) was also a true monotheist; he was a follower of Islam and a nobleman. He had a big heart, but he could not proclaim his faith in public in order to keep his role as the tribe leader and thereby continue his ‘neutral’ role to protect the Holy Prophet (S). However, as the Holy Prophet (S) could not be bribed, the Quraysh proceeded to another method. They had now started to pressure by discriminations, threats, sanctions, violence, torture and even murder.¹²

Migration To Abyssinia, Economic Sanctions And A Blockade

When the perseverance of the Muslims reached its height, the Holy Prophet (S) asked some of his followers to emigrate to Abyssinia, where a just Christian, by the name of Najashi, was king. This was the first migration ever embarked on in the history of Islam. It took place during the fifth year of the Islamic calling, year 615 AD. When the persecution of the Muslims in Mecca got more intense, the Holy Prophet (S) decided to send more Muslims to Abyssinia. Meanwhile, Quraysh also sent their representatives to Abyssinia. They brought with them gifts to the Christian king, hoping that he would hand over the Muslims and send them back to Mecca, where they would be persecuted. However, the king refused to accept their enquiry until hearing whatever the Muslims had to say. Ja’far Ibn Abu Talib (r.a.) who had led the Muslims to Abyssinia, by orders of the Holy Prophet (S), spoke before the king and told him the message that God had sent the Holy Prophet (S). The fellowship of the message of Islam and Christianity touched the king’s heart, and he refused to expel the Muslims from his land. He allowed them to stay under his protection while the representatives of Quraysh were expelled.

While Islam was progressing the leaders of the Quraysh grew more anxious. They were concerned as

they witnessed prominent characters, such as the Holy Prophet's (S) uncle, Hamza (r.a.), embrace Islam all while Muslims were living peacefully in Abyssinia. The Quraysh's plans failed; however, they continued scheming to hope to abuse Muslims and stop the expansion of Islam.

The Quraysh decided to implement more sanctions and eventually, a full economic blockade launched. They signed a treaty banning all trade, associations and marriages with the Bani Hashim. Assisting or aiding the Bani Hashim would be considered a crime. They sought to divide the Bani Hashim so that they may bicker among themselves and eventually compel the Holy Prophet (S) to capitulate. In this way, the Muslims have driven away from their homes in Mecca and banished to a valley between the mountains, on the outskirts of the city. This valley was known as the Valley of Abu Talib. The Holy Prophet (S) and his followers have strictly prohibited this area. The treaty was kept by the Quraysh in the Ka'ba. The blockade lasted for three years, and during this time, the Holy Prophet (S) and the Muslims were subjected to massive pressure, not least because of a shortage of food and water. During that time, they had been struck by famine, and the conditions were so difficult that they had to share dates (as nutrition) in order to survive.

After three strenuous years of boycott and tribulations, the Muslims' perseverance and patience resulted in God's promised help. It was revealed to the Holy Prophet (S) that God ordained a termite to eat up the signed treaty. Miraculously, leaving the name of God on top of the treaty. Abu Talib (r.a.) sent a message to Quraysh that they ought to confirm this. And thereby, the blockade ended.

The Year Of Sorrow And Migration To Medina

The blockade ended the tenth year of the Holy Prophet's (S) calling, year 619 AD. It was also during this year that two deeply tragic events took place. Two of the Holy Prophet's (S) dearest and greatest aiders tragically passed away. That is, the Holy Prophet's (S) supportive uncle and loving wife, Abu Talib ('a) and Khadija ('a). The Holy Prophet (S) named this year 'The Year of Sorrow', attributed to the great grief and hardships to follow after their demise. They had now lost two highly important individuals, as they were the ones not only to morally support the Prophet (S) but also offer their status and possessions to provide social and economic protection and support. Abu Talib ('a) and Khadija ('a) were both prominent personalities in Islam and had key roles during the first critical years. They had, in both words and actions, demonstrated their unfaltering acceptance of Islam.

Nonetheless, Islam continued to spread. When people of neighbouring cities pilgrimed to Mecca during the pilgrimage season, several highly-ranked men of an important tribe came in contact with the Holy Prophet (S) and accepted Islam. On their way back to their hometown of Yathrib, the Holy Prophet (S) sent a missionary with them. This led to huge amounts of people accepting Islam in Yathrib, and they returned the following year with representatives to Mecca, in order to pledge allegiance and obedience to the Holy Prophet (S).

The Quraysh found out and were very upset. The Holy Prophet's (S) calling had reached its thirteenth

year, and all of the attempts by the Quraysh to bribe, threaten, torture and pressure through economic and social means had completely failed. When Islam started to reach new tribes, Quraysh noticed an even greater danger posed against them and the social order, allowing them to stay in power. They were so desperate that an attempt to kill the Prophet (S) was planned. Due to old vengeance traditions in the Arabic communities, no one dared to carry out the plan and be blamed. Therefore, the leaders gathered and schemed a dark assassination-plan in which a member of every tribal branch would contribute. This assembly would come into the home the Prophet (S) during the night-time and kill him. In that way, no single tribe would be blamed and no one would be able to demand revenge on behalf of the Holy Prophet (S). The night of the plan had arrived, but through revelation, God warned His Prophet (S) of the planned attack and ordained him to leave Mecca that same night:

“And [remember, O Muhammad], when those who disbelieved plotted against you to restrain you or kill you or evict you [from Mecca]. But they plan, and God plans. And God is the best of planners.” (The Holy Qur'an, 8:30).

The Prophet (S) asked Imam Ali ('a) to sleep on his stead. Imam Ali ('a) wore the green cloak of the Holy Prophet (S) and crawled into bed, honoured to serve his holy mission, with no fear. God then revealed the following verse in Imam Ali's ('a) honour:

“And of the people is he who sells himself, seeking means to the approval of God. And God is kind to [His] servants.” (The Holy Qur'an, 2:207).

It was the first of Rabi' Al-awwal year 622 AD, and Imam Ali ('a) was sleeping calmly in the Holy Prophet's (S) bed until dawn. The Holy Prophet (S) had during this time, started his migration to Yathrib. At dawn, the enemy charged on the Prophet's (S) home with swords and arrows, only to find Imam Ali ('a) beneath the cloak. As Imam Ali ('a) would not inform them of the Prophet's (S) whereabouts, they left in a hurry in the hope of catching up with wherever he had gone.

They were assisted by a pathfinder who had tracked down the Prophet (S) to a cave. However, the entrance to the cave was coated with spiderwebs and blocked by a smaller nest of pigeons with no sign of the Prophet's (S) presence. They were unaware that God Almighty had saved His Messenger (S) with those uninhabitable signs.

The enemies lost hope in finding the Prophet (S) and left. The Prophet (S) continued onward towards Yathrib, where its natives were waiting for his arrival. On the 12th of Rabi' Al-awwal year 622 AD, the Holy Prophet (S) reached a place called Qoba¹³. Here the Holy Prophet (S) stopped to wait for Imam Ali ('a), so they would continue to Yathrib together.

Shortly thereafter, Imam Ali ('a) completed a couple of tasks the Holy Prophet (S) had left for him, and began his trip towards Yathrib. He had brought along the Holy Prophet's (S) daughter Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a), his own mother Fatimah bint Asad (r.a.) and his uncle's daughter. During the daytime, he would protect the women against enemy attacks and during night-time, they would continue their journey. After

several days on foot, they finally reached Qoba. Imam Ali's ('a) feet were swollen and bleed, so much so that he could barely walk anymore. Nonetheless, the Holy Prophet (S) rejoiced at Imam Ali's ('a) arrival, finally reunited.

Thereafter they all headed towards Yathrib together. They were greeted by the natives and their children's' songs, sung in their honour. From this day onward, the city of Yathrib would be known as Madinat an-Nabi (The city of the Prophet) – Medina (The city) – and its name was now eternally tied to the arrival of the Holy Prophet (S). The emigration from Mecca to Medina was called Hijra and was of such importance that it became the start of the Islamic calendar. Hence, the year 622 AD would correspond to the first year after Hijra [AH].

13. Islam In Medina

The Holy Prophet (S) could now speak openly about Islam in Medina, as opposed to Mecca, where the Muslims were being oppressed. The atmosphere of tolerance and goodwill among the Muslims made Medina a special city now shining because of the presence of the Holy Prophet (S) and was therefore called 'Medinat Al-Munawarra' (The enlightened Medina).

The Brotherhood Between The Muhajirin And Ansar

Creating love and unity among people as part of the Holy Prophet's (S) message, so among the first things he introduced in Medina was to build a brotherhood between the Muhajirin and the Ansar¹⁴. Every companion of the Muhajirin was paired up with a companion of the Ansar. When every person had a formed brotherhood-relation, Imam Ali ('a) was left without a match. With tears in his eyes, he wondered why the Holy Prophet (S) had not paired him up with another brother. The Holy Prophet (S) turned to Imam Ali ('a) and told him that he had saved him for himself and said:

"You are my brother in this world and the next"¹⁵

The brotherhood between the Holy Prophet (S) and Imam Ali ('a) had been confirmed yet again, this time as the first one to occur in Medina.

The Number Of Muslims Increase And The Enemies Join Forces

Medina was thriving and became the capital of the Islamic state. A spirit of brotherhood, justice, equality and love was filling the atmosphere in the city. All were competing be of help, and the Muslims' unity was strengthened, something which increased their economic and political influence.

Quraysh, witnessing a growing threat to their own interests, yet again were doing everything in their power to fight and try to stop the Muslims' developing. It was not enough that they had confiscated the properties and possessions of the Muslims back in Mecca and thereby caused them to migrate, they had now put the city of Medina under siege. They forbade caravans from bringing in food or other

merchandise to Medina, even though the city usually was a usual stop for caravans on their way to Mecca. This siege lasted so long that it aggravated the lives of the people in Medina and forced them to travel all the way to the coast of the Red Sea in order to carry out trade. During this period, Quraysh continued to terrorize the lives of the Muslims who were still living in Mecca.

Quraysh Plans To Attack The Muslims Militarily

The economic blockade was not enough for Quraysh; they had no intention of letting the Muslims live in peace. So far, for nearly fifteen years, the Muslims had not been allowed to fight back, they had been instructed to stand down and tolerate the oppression and persecution, and to treat it with perseverance and patience. They had to fight peacefully during setbacks, without confronting Quraysh. Finally, Quraysh planned for a war to destroy all Muslims. The Holy Prophet (S) was informed of their plans to attack and sent a squad to stop the Quraysh caravan. Abu Sufyan, the leader of the caravan, took a detour and sent a message to Mecca, telling them to head for the vicinity of Medina and to prepare for a battle. It was at that time that God sent a message through revelation, a message that is one of the most humane, fair and logical decrees: the right to self-defence.

“Permission [to fight] has been given to those who are being fought because they were wronged. And indeed, God is competent to give them victory.” (The Holy Qur'an, 22:39).

The Battle Of Badr (Year 2 Ah/624 Ad)

The battle of Badr took place outside Medina and was being fought between a superior army consisting of a thousand soldiers from Mecca and the scarce-of-equipment Muslims who were only 313-numbered. It was the first military battle, initiated by Quraysh with the goal of crushing the Muslims' peaceful lives in Medina. Several of the Quraysh leaders accompanied the army, led by Abu Jahl¹⁶.

On the Friday of the 17th of the month of Ramadan, year 2 AH/624 AD, a large, fully equipped, an army from Mecca, arrived to attack the Muslims. The Holy Prophet (S) could see how it was safer, not least for inhabitants of Medina, to confront the Quraysh in a location outside of the city. More specifically, in a location called Badr. It was in this location that the much smaller and much less armed Muslim force, consisting of 313 Muslim soldiers, met the army of Mecca, an army that was outnumbering them with a factor of three. The Muslims, who barely had any weapons to use, brought with them whatever they could use to defend themselves. The followers of the new faith were being put up to a serious test. A loss here could lead to a massacre of the Muslims and the end of a newly-founded era. This would become the first, as well as the most important battle ensuring the survival of Islam.

In accordance with the battle traditions of that time and before the full-scale war would begin, the battle started with a couple of duels. Three distinguished warriors and leaders among the Quraysh were chosen and were to each fight a rival chosen by the Muslims. The Holy Prophet's (S) uncle Hamza (r.a.), Ubayda (r.a.) and Imam Ali ('a) stepped forward to face Utba (the father-in-law of Abu Sufyan), Utba's

brother Shayba and Walid, son of Utba. Those three duels were fast and harsh. Hamza (r.a.) defeated Utba and Imam Ali ('a) defeated Walid. Ubayda (r.a.) also managed to defeat his opponent finally but was himself injured and became the first martyr of the battle. Thereafter, the battle in which Imam Ali ('a) had a prominent role¹⁷ and came to be a great victory for the Muslims, began. The verses of The Holy Qur'an, illustrate how angels participated with the Muslims and how fright was placed in the hearts of the enemies during this miraculous victory:

"And already had God given you victory at [the battle of] Badr while you were few in number. Then fear God; perhaps you will be grateful" (The Holy Qur'an, 3: 123).

"[Remember] when you said to the believers, 'Is it not sufficient for you that your Lord should reinforce you with three thousand angels sent down?'" (The Holy Qur'an, 3: 124).

"Yes, if you remain patient and conscious of God and the enemy come upon you [attacking] in rage, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand angels having marks [of distinction]." (The Holy Qur'an, 3: 125).

"And God made it not except as [a sign of] good tidings for you and to reassure your hearts thereby. And victory is not except God, the Exalted in Might, the Wise" (The Holy Qur'an, 3: 126).

The Battle Of Uhud (Year 3 AH/625 AD)

The following year Quraysh had once again prepared, in the name of vengeance, for a new war. They now had to defend and rebuild their reputation. On the 7th of Shawwal in the year 3 AH/625 AD, they met the Muslim army by a valley located below the mountain of Uhud, outside of Medina.

The Muslims had hoped that the defeat of the Quraysh in Badr would mean the end of the siege. Some even had hope for a dialogue with the Quraysh and wanted to convince them to stop terrorizing the Muslims in Mecca and to give up their plans on attacking Medina. But the Quraysh had other plans and firmly wanted to destroy Islam.

The Quraysh gathered an army four times the size of their previous one. They met the Muslims in Uhud, and the battle began with a duel. On the Quraysh side, Talha Ibn Abu Talha stood on the fronts and on the Muslim side, there was Imam Ali ('a). Imam Ali ('a) did not hesitate as he rushed forward and quickly eliminated Talha. The battle moral of the Muslims was strengthened by the success and the battle had begun. The gathered army of Quraysh was bleeding b'Adalah and was soon forced to drawback. Some Muslims who thought the battle was won, hurried to gather spoils of war; among them many of the Muslim archers that the Holy Prophet (S) had strategically placed on the mountain to stand guard and prevent an attack from behind. They had been given clear instructions and an order from the Holy Prophet (S) to not leave their posts no matter what. However, when they saw that the Quraysh started to retreat, they neglected the Holy Prophet's (S) orders and left their posts so that they would not miss the celebration.

This inattentiveness and disobedience gave one of the Quraysh warriors, Khalid Ibn Walid, the opportunity to hit the Muslims through the mountain and to attack them from behind. He collected some of his men and attacked them. The Muslims, who now were surrounded, had to fight two fronts at once. In the middle of the confusion, someone called out that the Holy Prophet (S) had been killed. This created an even greater mess among the Muslims and led to many Muslims drawing back and seeking protection in the mountains. The following verse of The Holy Qur'an, describes the event:

“And God had certainly fulfilled His promise to you when you were killing the enemy by His permission until [the time] when you lost courage and fell to disputing about the order [given by the Prophet] and disobeyed after He had shown you that which you love. Among you are some who desire this world, and among you are some who desire the Hereafter. Then he turned you back from them [defeated] that He might test you. And He has already forgiven you, and God is the possessor of bounty for the believers.” (The Holy Qur'an, 3: 152).

The Holy Prophet (S) was injured. While many ran away when hearing the rumour of his death, Imam Ali ('a) sought the Holy Prophet (S) and stayed by his side to defend him. The injuries of Imam Ali ('a) after the battle were of such extent that the bleeding could hardly be stopped. His whole body was covered in healing ointments dressings.

Even though victory was achievable for the Muslims, they suffered a great loss due to lack of obedience to the Holy Prophet's (S) commands, instead of letting themselves be tempted and fooled by rumours. In the rising confusion, the enemy managed to kill Hamza ('a), the Holy Prophet's (S) uncle. Hind, Abu Sufyan's wife and Mu'awiya's mother was the one who had hired an archer in order to avenge her father, her brother and her uncle who had been slain in the battle of Badr. She ordered the archer to kill Hamza ('a) specifically. The battle ended as a great tribulation and a lesson for many.

The Battle Of Ahzab [Also Known As Khandaq] (Year 5 Ah/627 Ad)

Islam had brought peace and correlation between the Muslims of Medina but not all were happy about it. The one whose status, power and own interests were not benefitted by the new order started to rise up. In that way, external opponents joined sides with internal opponents, and new plots schemed.

In and surrounding Medina, there were Jewish tribes who have had moved to Arabia in order to await the arrival of the promised and final prophet. They had a special reputation, as they were people with holy scripture. When the Holy Prophet (S) announced his calling, they searched for special signs and sent questions to be asked by idolaters, indicating his prophethood. Many Qur'anic verses were sent in connection with their questions, to answer and specifically address the 'People of the Book'. ¹⁸ Some of the Jews saw the sign of prophethood in the Holy Prophet (S) and accepted his call, but most denied it. The leaders among the deniers realised the genuine calling of the Holy Prophet (S) but did not want to accept it; they had their own interests to look after. In several Qur'anic verses, God sharply addresses their scholars and leaders who would see the signs but defied and hid them.

Now, when a religion, whose Prophet (S) and signs were confirmed by the Jew's own prophecies and books was spreading, some Jews in Medina felt that their religious ranks were not as elevated as before, seeing as several of the tribes of Medina had converted to Islam. They also realised that their financial dominance no longer was enough to control the political, social and economic connections in the city. The Holy Prophet (S) aspired mutual understanding between the followers of Islam and the followers of other religions, that is why, when he entered the city, he made a peace treaty with the Jewish tribes in Medina. However, these Jewish tribes made a secret alliance with the Quraysh in order to weaken and get rid of the Islamic governance in Medina. Their situation made it possible for them to attack from within the city itself and one of the tribes even planned on assassinating the Holy Prophet (S). However, their plans failed, and it all ended with the Jewish tribes exposed to have broken the treaty and left Medina on their own accord. After the betrayal and after leaving the city they again made an alliance with the Quraysh and urged other Jewish tribes to join in, in order to collect all their forces and attack the Muslims together. This battle was later to be known as the battle of the Ahzab (the battle of the plotters).

The Quraysh had many advantages in this deal. The Jewish tribes were surrounding the Islamic state and could provide military support from close. The Jewish tribe that had not broken their treaty with the Holy Prophet (S) was left in Medina and could assist by plotting an ambush. They were planning for a final war, a war that was believed to be the end of Islam. The Muslims, who in their previous battle, the battle of Uhud, had faced defeat, were now up against all of their enemies at once. A great army composed of more than ten thousand men, of which almost more than a hundred sat on horses. The Holy Prophet (S) decided on a battlefield, but some disagreed with him. Therefore, the battle was brought outside the city. This time, on the Holy Prophet's (S) command, Salman Farsi (r.a.) informed of the Persians who would anytime they were outnumbered, defend themselves against cavaliers by digging up a trench surrounding them. As Medina was surrounded by several mountains from all sides, this was a fitting suggestion. The Holy Prophet (S) accepted the idea and the majority of the Muslims, who had seen the result of defying the Holy Prophet (S) in Uhud, agreed. In that way, the Muslims prepared for this attack by digging a trench around Medina. This gave the battle its other name – The Battle of Khandaq (trench).

On the Holy Prophet's (S) order the Muslims guarded the trench, especially where it was narrower, in order to stop and potentially fight off any cavalier who would come over from the enemy side. In the midst of this, the leader of the second Jewish tribe who had not broken the pact and was still in Medina was tempted to attack the Muslims from behind.

The Holy Qur'an, describes the context and importance of this battle, the rough conditions surrounding it and the greatness of the trials of which the Muslims had to face in it:

“[Remember] when they came at you from above you and from below you, and when eyes shifted [in fear], and hearts reached the throats, and you assumed about God [various] assumptions.”
(The Holy Qur'an, 33: 10).

“There the believers were tested and shaken with a severe shaking.” (The Holy Qur'an, 33: 11). [19](#)

An army of ten thousand men, led by Abu Sufyan, was to face a pressured Muslim army of three thousand men, led by the Holy Prophet (S). During several raids, a handful of fighters managed to get past the trench. One of them was known as 'Amr Ibn Abd Wedd. He was the foremost fighter of the enemy and was known as the strongest among the Arabs. He challenged the Muslims to face him on the battlefield. As everyone knew who he was, no one stepped up, no one except Imam Ali ('a). The Holy Prophet (S) asked Imam Ali ('a) to wait but seeing as no one else was willing, the Holy Prophet (S) put his turban on the head of Imam Ali ('a), gave him his sword and his permission to enter the battlefield. When Imam Ali ('a) stepped forward to face 'Amr Ibn Abd Wedd, the Holy Prophet (S) proclaimed:

“All of Iman (faith) has stepped forward to confront all Kufr (disbelief).” [20](#)

Imam Ali ('a) was clearly being described by the Holy Prophet (S) as the one who represented 'all of the faith' and as the one who confronts 'all disbelief'. Yet again, the Holy Prophet (S) emphasized the importance and the decisive role that Imam Ali ('a) possessed. When 'Amr refused Imam Ali's ('a) invitation to Islam or to leave the battle with his life intact, there was nothing else to do but fight. 'Amr started with a powerful attack, but with one strike only, Imam Ali ('a) took him down. His body fell to the ground, and a bolt of shock pierced the hearts of the enemies. They could not believe their eyes. The following verse was revealed in connection with the event:

“Among the believers are men true to what they promised God. Among them is he who has fulfilled his vow [to the death], and among them is he who awaits [his chance]. And they did not alter [the terms of their commitment] by any alteration –” (The Holy Qur'an, 33:23).

The Holy Prophet (S) stated the following:

“Ali's strike on the day of Khandaq is worth more than the worship of djinns and humans.” [21](#)

The loss of their most powerful warrior shook the Quraysh from their core and spread a storm of despair among them and ended up with their camp collapsing from within. The cold, the lack of food, the defeat of their foremost fighter and the horror of losing a battle which they thought was an easy win, finally made the Quraysh and their allies pull back and leave the battlefield subdued. God says in the Holy Qur'an:

“O Prophet, indeed We have sent you as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner.”
(The Holy Qur'an, 33:25).

In ahadith, recognized among both Islamic schools of thought, Ibn Masood has said when reciting this verse:

“God spared the Muslims from fighting through Ali Ibn Abu Talib.”

Numerous ahadith emphasize this point. Among them, it should be mentioned, that Ibn Abbas²², in relation to the recitation of this verse, has said:

“God spared the believers from fighting through Ali Ibn Abu Talib when Imam Ali (‘a) killed ‘Amr Ibn Abd Wedd.”²³

When Imam Ali (‘a) came back to the Muslim camp victorious, the Holy Prophet (S) stepped forward, welcoming him and said:

“Good news, O Ali! If one was to add your accomplishment and actions on one side of the scale and the accomplishments and actions of the community of Muhammad (S) [all Muslims] on the other, your accomplishment would way heavier, and that is because there is not a [single] Muslim home who is not enshrouded in honour and glory, through your defeat of ‘Amr.”²⁴

With God’s help, through Imam Ali (‘a), this strike was a final blow to ensure the survival of Islam. Quraysh and their allies never again managed to come together and what had started as a covenant of a gathering force had now ended up in the division.

The Treaty Of Hudaybiyya (Year 6 Ah/628 Ad)

The treaty of Hudaybiyya was a peace treaty between the Quraysh and the Muslims.

One night, in a dream, the Holy Prophet (S) saw himself and the Muslims performing Hajj²⁵ (pilgrimage to Mecca). This was a sign for the Holy Prophet (S), so he decided to prepare for the pilgrimage. He started to move towards Mecca together with his followers composed of about fourteen hundred Muslims. As the Holy Prophet (S) only had the intention of Hajj and was not seeking an encounter with the Quraysh, the Muslims did not bring any battleworthy weapons, except for the ‘weapon of the traveller’, this being a sword in this case. They also brought a large number of animals to offer after the completion of Hajj, and as a sign of their peaceful intentions, these animals were in the front of the caravan. However, the Quraysh were feeling humiliated and mocked by the other Arabs after the defeat their latest defeat and did not want to allow the Muslims entrance into Mecca. They placed soldiers on the outskirts of Mecca and sent a troop to attack the Muslims. The Holy Prophet (S) who wished to avoid any clashes, changed the path of the caravan until the Muslims had reached a place called Hudaybiyya. They sent a message to Mecca declaring their peaceful intentions and unwillingness to fight. However, the Quraysh still would not allow the Muslims to enter the holy city. The Quraysh who had answered aggressively and kept the messenger of the Holy Prophet (S) in their custody, finally caved in and a peace treaty was signed. The Holy Prophet (S) had Imam Ali (‘a) sign the treaty, and the following could be seen in it:

In order for the people to live and have security and tranquillity and so that social safety and peace will have a chance to stabilize in Arabia, peace will be established between the parties for a period of ten years.

This year the Muslims will return back to Medina, without visiting the Holy Ka'ba, and will be allowed to return next year for the performance of Hajj and Umra (a recommended pilgrimage being performed during the months of the year where obligatory pilgrimage is not performed). They will then stay in Mecca for a period of three days while the Quraysh would leave the city and return at the completion of this period.

If anyone fled Mecca in order to go to Medina, the Muslims would have to return this person to the Meccans, but the Quraysh will have no obligation to return the favour if anyone would flee from Medina to Mecca.

Other tribes were free to enter treaties with either the Quraysh or the Muslims.

The Quraysh also demanded that the title of the Prophet (S) would be cancelled from the treaty and that only his name be written. The Holy Prophet (S) agreed to this. Even though many of the terms were seen as being to the advantage of the Quraysh, causing known companions of the Holy Prophet (S) to protest openly, however, he signed the treaty. The wisdom and knowledge of the Holy Prophet (S) on future advantages of the treaty, would be revealed in a given time. After several days stay in Hudaybiyya and when the treaty had been signed, the Holy Prophet (S) told his followers to offer the animals and shave their heads just as if they had performed Hajj. On their way back to Medina, the following verses were revealed:

"Indeed, We have given you, [O Muhammad], a clear conquest." (The Holy Qur'an, 48: 1).

It would not be long until the advantages of the treaty would reveal themselves. Their living standard had improved, and due to peace, many more were now acquainted with Islam and more joined the religion. After only a couple of years, the promised victory from God had now been fulfilled.

The Battle Of Khaybar (Year 7 Ah/629 Ad)

After their plot in the battle of Uhud and later their conspiracy with the Quraysh in the battle of Ahzab, some of the Jewish leaders involved had now affiliated themselves with other Jewish tribes, more specifically, Jewish tribes who were living in the fortress of Khaybar. Khaybar had, by the encouragement of other Arabian tribes, become a stronghold for more schemes against the Muslims. Money and resources were being spent under secret circumstances in order to encourage more wars with Muslims. After several events compromising the peace, the Holy Prophet (S) commanded a siege of Khaybar in order to stop the conspiracies from their roots.

Khaybar was a place of green valleys and had several villages located nearby. Surrounding it were tall, impenetrable walls, making the valleys hard to reach. The location was seen as both secure and self-reliant. Several thousand warriors were living there, outnumbering the Muslims who were around one thousand and four hundred. The population of Khaybar had locked themselves in the fortress as soon as they knew the Muslims were coming. They had not considered the idea that the Holy Prophet (S) would

confront them, seeing as their numbers in men, weapons, water and food supplies were nearly inexhaustible. They considered themselves resisting for several years if it had to be done.

After several days the Holy Prophet (S) gave his white flag to Abu Bakr, subsequently to Omar Ibn Al-Khattab and later to a man from the Ansar to enter the fortress of Khaybar. However, no one succeeded. In particular, a certain warrior was the most deterrent, Marhab Khaybari. He was the lord of the fortress and his brother Harith, was leading the warriors on the outside. Other commanders also stepped up to attack the fortress but turned back one after the other, causing the Muslims to start losing hope. The Holy Prophet (S) stated at that point:

“Tomorrow, I will give the flag to someone who God and His Holy Prophet loved, and who he himself loves God and His Holy Prophet. He is the one who always attacks and never turns his back to run away. He won’t turn back until God, through him, enters the fortress of Khaybar.”[26](#)

When the day arrived the Holy Prophet (S) asked: “Where is Ali?”

The people answered that Imam Ali ('a) was having problems with his eyes. The Holy Prophet (S) asked to call for him anyway. Imam Ali ('a) was having such headache and pain in his eyes that he could barely see, none the less, he got up with assistance hurried to meet the Holy Prophet (S). The Holy Prophet (S) embraced him and rubbed his hands against Imam Ali's ('a) eyes. Miraculously his pain disappeared. The Holy Prophet (S) then handed him the flag.

With the flag of the Holy Prophet (S) in his hand, Imam Ali ('a) bravely started marching towards the fortress. His first opponent of the mighty Khaybar warriors would be Harith; he would also be the first to fall. At this time, Marhab, known as the foremost fighter of Khaybar, finally left the fortress to go out and fight Imam Ali ('a). He called him reciting war poetry where he would glorify himself, just like 'Amr Ibn Abed Wedd had done in the battle of Ahzab. Imam Ali ('a) faced him as calmly as when he was facing 'Amr and quickly finished him off as well. After these heavy losses, the rest of the warriors closed the gate of the fortress and hid inside. Imam Ali ('a) approached the gate, took hold of it and tore its way to the astonishment of both camps. The Muslims were now free to capture and seize the most famous and secure Jewish fortress and reach a final victory.

The fighting of Imam Ali ('a) in the battle of Khaybar, is something no one had seen before and has since been eternalized in history due to the many narrations and poems recalling these events.

The Conquest Of Mecca (Year 8 Ah/630 Ad)

The conquest of Mecca is among the greatest and most astonishing events in the history of Islam. Barely two years after the treaty of Hudaybiyya had been signed, it was breached by the Meccans. A tribe, allied with the Quraysh, attacked another tribe that was allied with the Muslims. According to the treaty, such an attack would terminate the treaty, and therefore the Holy Prophet (S) decided to seize Mecca.

During the two years following the treaty, society had blossomed, and the message of Islam had reached more people, both in – and outside of Arabia. Therefore, the number of Muslims and consequently, their force had significantly increased. The Holy Prophet (S) planned the upcoming victory in a thoughtful manner. He wanted to avoid as much bloodshed as possible. He, therefore, led a great army up to the borders of Mecca and commanded them to set camp outside the city. Witnessing the number of Muslims, the Quraysh realised they were already defeated. Several of the remaining Quraysh characters and above all, Abu Sufyan, who had been a key figure in the animosity against the Muslims, now approached the Holy Prophet (S), admitting his defeat. The surrender of their leaders allowed the Holy Prophet (S) and his ten thousand followers to enter Mecca peacefully.

The ones who had persecuted, oppressed, wounded and killed the followers of the Holy Prophet (S) now found themselves under his rule. Many Meccans, and especially the Quraysh, were afraid that the Muslims were seeking vengeance after all those years in persecution and oppression. This was an inevitable response during the Jahiliyyah (the days of ignorance – pre-Islamic era). The call, ‘today is the day of vengeance’ was heard from the flagbearer. The Holy Prophet (S) immediately responded, ‘today is the day of mercy’ and handed Imam Ali (‘a) the flag.²⁷ The Holy Prophet (S) took down the idols of the Ka’ba, stood before the crowd and said:

“All praise belongs to God, who has fulfilled His promise and bestowed victory upon His servant and defeated the plotters alone.”

The Holy Prophet (S) then turned his focus towards the Quraysh, who were expecting the death penalty for their men and captivity for their women, this in accordance with their customs, and asked:

“What do you say and what do you think?”

The Quraysh who were familiar with the morals of the Holy Prophet (S), answered:

“We ask for benevolence, and we believe benevolence, you are a generous brother and a son of a generous brother, and now you are in power.”

The Holy Prophet (S) replied:

“There will be no blame upon you today, may God forgive you and He is the Most Merciful; go for you are tolaqa²⁸ (the liberated).”²⁹

In that way, the Holy Prophet (S) clarified that he had no intention of injuring anyone and that he would not treat anyone except with benevolence and kindness. Despite all their crimes, the Holy Prophet (S) forgave them and allowed them their freedom. The Holy Prophet (S) forbade any act of vengeance against the Quraysh or the Meccans and even issued a message saying that anyone entering the homes of the leaders of the Quraysh would be safe. So, the Holy Prophet (S) manifested, in practice, the true spirit of Islam and so Mecca was seized peacefully and with no resistance whatsoever.

Tranquillity was now spread over Mecca and time had come for the Holy Prophet (S) to show the meaning of his call, a call of guidance and compassion for mankind and for man to reach his full potential. The ethically broken-down society of Mecca, which had been embossed with oppression, injustice and racism was now to develop and grow under the rule of the Holy Prophet (S). In a speech, which the Holy Prophet (S) held by the Ka'ba, he clarified the following:

“O, people! God wanted to remove arrogance, selfishness and self-righteousness from you by giving you Islam. Truly you are all from the descendants of Adam and Adam was crafted from the mud. The best of you is the one with taqwa [piety]. O people, being Arab is no personal merit and is no integrated part of your character, it is only a language with which you speak. It will not do you any good in the next life if you abandon your duties. You will never reach any personal merits through conceit in regards to belonging to a special ancestor, but only through spreading justice among mankind. Men are like the teeth of the comb, and there is no superiority between an Arab and a non-Arab or between whites and blacks. The foundation of honour is piety and devotion. All men are equal before God, and the best one is, he who distances himself from the disobedience of God.”³⁰

The Holy Prophet (S) thereafter returned to Medina and continued to lead the Islamic society. The word of the Holy Prophets (S) morals was spreading further and further away and just hearing of his ways mad the people eager to meet him. No one had anticipated such behaviour after years of oppression and persecution. The message and way of life that the Holy Prophet (S) had preached and fought for during two decades had now been presented. Groups and groups were now pouring into Mecca and Medina in order for them to see the Holy Prophet (S) with their own eyes and to accept Islam.

The Last Pilgrimage (Year 10 Ah/632 Ad)

In the month of Thil-Hijja of the year 10 AH/632 AD, the Holy Prophet (S) performed his last pilgrimage to Mecca. As the pilgrimage was taking place during the last months of the Holy Prophet's (S) life, it has become known as 'The Pilgrimage of Farewell'.

After ten years in Medina and twenty-three years after the start of the Holy Prophet's (S) call, God revealed the following verse:

“And proclaim to the people the Hajj [pilgrimage]; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every distant pass” (The Holy Qur'an, 22:27).

With this verse, the Holy Prophet (S) announced that he would be performing Hajj. Many from Medina and other areas decided to join the Holy Prophet (S) and to perform the pilgrimage with him. Several groups joined on their way towards Mecca. The Holy Prophet (S) performed Hajj and the deeds associated with it, followed by the Muslims.

After finishing his last ever Hajj, the Holy Prophet (S) left Mecca and headed for Medina. There are reports saying up to a hundred thousand Muslims joined him for Hajj and had left the holy city to return

their homes The Holy Prophet (S) suddenly stopped at a crossroads on the outskirts of a city called Ghadir Khumm. From here, the pilgrims used to divide and turn towards their respective countries. Angel Jibrail ('a) was sent down to the Holy Prophet (S) and delivered an important message from God. He was to immediately pronounce it in order for him to complete the religion:

“O Messenger, announce that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. And God will protect you from the people. Indeed, God does not guide the disbelieving people.” (The Holy Qur'an, 5:67)³¹

As the Holy Prophet (S) received the revelation, he stopped at once and ordered everyone else to do so as well. He sent for the ones who had already gone ahead and awaited the ones who were still on their way.³² When all had gathered, the Holy Prophet (S) gave a long sermon before the tens of thousands who had now gathered at Ghadir Khumm. The Holy Prophet (S) announced that he soon would be departing this life and reminded them of important religious decrees.

He then called Imam Ali ('a) to join him and allowed him to step up onto the pile, on which he himself was standing. He raised the hand of Imam Ali ('a) and proclaimed what God had ordered him to. He commanded them, in order for their continued guidance, to hold on to two things, The Holy Qur'an, and the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) and that Imam Ali ('a) was their leader after him.

“...O people, this is the last standpoint that I will deliver from my position, so listen, take heed and obey the command of your God. Truly He, the Most Praiseworthy, is your God and under Him is His Messenger and Prophet (S), and after me, there is Ali, your custodian and Imam by the orders of God. And after him, the Imamah of my kin is through his sons until the day you will face God and His Messenger (S)...

O people, admire the Holy Qur'an, understand its verses and contemplate when reading its mohkamat (unambiguous verses) and do not pursue its motashabeh (ambiguous verses), because God will not explain its intrinsic content and will not clarify its interpretation except by the one whose hand I am holding. I am declaring to you that, truly, for whoever I am his mawla (leader and custodian), Ali is his mawla, and he is Ali Ibn Abi Talib, my brother and my confidant, and his following is from God, the glorified and praised, which he has sent upon me.

O people, truly Ali and the good of my sons from his offspring are theqal Al-asghar (the smaller matter), and The Holy Qur'an, is the thewal Al-Akbar (the greater matter). Each one of them announces about the other and correlates with it; they will not be separated until they reach me by the spring... ”³³

Thereafter the Holy Prophet (S) said:

“O people, who have more rights upon you than yourselves?³⁴”

The people answered:

“God and His Messenger!”

The Holy Prophet (S) answered:

“Then whoever I’m his mawla, then this Ali is his mawla; O God, befriend the one who befriends him and be hostile towards the one who’s hostile towards him and turn the one who helps him victorious and betray [abandon] the one who betrays [abandons] him.

O people, Ali is my brother and my wasi (the caretaker after me) and the safe keeper of my knowledge, and the caliph (successor) of my ummah (people and nation) and the one who believes in my and of the tafsir (interpretation) of Gods book – Glorified and Praised He is – and the caller to and performer of what pleases Him [satisfies God] and the fighter against His enemies and the mowali [companion, helper, subordinate and custodian] of His obedience and the avenger of His disobedience.

Truly he is the caliph of the Messenger of God and Amir Al-Mo’menin (the Master of the faithful) and the guiding Imam of God, and the killer [slayer] of the Nakethin (oath-breakers) and the Qasetin (the sneaky oppressors) and the Mareqin (the detached) with the amr (the command and decision) of God. God says: ‘The word does not change with Me.’

With Your amr, I say O Lord: O God, befriend the one who befriends him and be an enemy to the one who is an enemy to him and turn the one who helps him victorious and abandon the one who abandons him and curse [expel from your mercy] the one who denies him and be angry with the one who denies him his haqq (rights and truth). O God, truly You have revealed the verse of Ali with the announcement of it and your appointment of him on this day: ***‘today I have completed... (the Holy Qur'an, 5:3)***³⁵³⁶ O God, truly I take You as a witness that I have conveyed the truth.”³⁷

The Holy Messenger (S) exclaimed this, on the 18th of Thil-Hijja in the year 10 AH, before the great gathering of Muslims, where all the known companions were present and swore allegiance to Imam Ali (‘a)³⁸. The Holy Messenger (S) asked the attenders to hold a firm grip to his command in order to not get lost and to carry on the message to whoever was not present and for future generations from father to son. After the common pledge, he held a ceremony where everyone in the gathering got to approach Imam Ali (‘a) and pledge their allegiance.³⁹ After three days in Ghadir Khumm and after the witnessing of several miraculous events, among them the revelation of the first verses of surah Al-Ma’arej, they all started heading towards their homes.

After a short while back in Medina, the Holy Prophet’s (S) health started to deteriorate. His insight, his love for the people and his care for their guidance had him all the way to his deathbed emphasizing the importance of following Imam Ali (‘a). ⁴⁰ The Holy Prophet (S) passed away on the 28th of Safar in the year 11 AH (632 AD). By the time of his passing, he had his head in the bosom of Imam Ali (‘a).⁴¹ It was a day of great sadness for the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) and the beginning of severe hardships.

J. Preparing For The First Imam ('A)

As the closest kin had been invited to Islam from the very start, the Holy Prophets (S) preparations for the first Imam ('a) had always been there. Before all his close ones, the Holy Prophet (S) announced Imam Ali ('a) as his brother, successor and the executor of his will. Along the Holy Messengers (S) life and prophetic mission, these designations were continuously mentioned.[42](#)

And, as the Holy Prophet (S) never spoke by his own will or uttered his personal opinions, everything he announced was in accordance with the will and command of God.

“Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination.” (The Holy Qur'an, 53:3).

“It is not, but a revelation revealed.” (The Holy Qur'an, 53:4).

The Holy Prophet (S) stressed this fact in many ways. He emphasized the role and position of Imam Ali ('a) by comparing their relationship to the relation of Prophet Haroon ('a) [Aron] and Prophet Musa ('a) [Moses]. At the battle of Tabook, when Imam Ali ('a) had to stay in Medina, the Holy Prophet (S) told him:

“You are to me as Haroon was to Musa, except that there will be no prophet after me.”[43](#)

This saying confirmed all the positions which the Holy Prophet (S) had appointed for Imam Ali ('a). Prophet Haroon ('a) was the brother of Prophet Musa ('a), he was his successor and the one to execute his will. This announcement from the Holy Prophet (S) is acknowledged and recalled within all Islamic schools of thought, and the relation of Prophet Haroon ('a) to Prophet Musa ('a) is clearly described in the Holy Qur'an.[44](#)

The Holy Prophet (S) had at many times clearly stressed that Imam Ali ('a) to be his successor. The greatest and most noticeable is the event at Ghadir Khumm. The circumstances in which he did it are worth thinking about. He stopped his march and commanded everyone to join him. Thil-Hijja during that year occurred during the summer, and it has been told that it was an extraordinarily hot day. People were trying to shield themselves from the scorching sun and burning sand of the desert by sitting on their clothes and covering themselves with their cloaks.[45](#)

Some later tried to present secondary opinions and interpretations of this announcement in Ghadir. Interpretations such as the Holy Prophet (S) only encouraged the people to love Imam Ali ('a) and the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), that 'mawla' and 'wali' only meant that Imam Ali ('a) should be thought of as a friend of the Holy Prophet (S) and that Ghadir consequently was not a major event and did not imply a final command. What we know is that the Holy Prophet (S) was so caring, that he sometimes performed the prayers, which he valued highly, faster when he heard the cry of a child or when he had older persons praying behind him. The question that then arises is how the Holy Prophet (S) would allow the people who wait for several hours in the scorching sun to announce something that was not of great value? The

fact that the Holy Prophet (S) had everyone called back and awaited the ones who had fallen behind, and in that way gathered the largest crowd possible, certainly must mean that the Holy Prophet (S) had something of great importance to proclaim. Why else would he have a pile set up so that everyone could see and hear him? Could not he have shared his message later, or to just a few and let them carry the message onwards? Could it really have been anything else than an extraordinarily and essentially important message that the Holy Prophet (S) had to share with them all directly? Would he have held a long speech in the middle of the blazing desert, right after Hajj which they all had just performed; for something insignificant?

The Holy Prophet (S) was over explicit in his speech. He emphasized the position of Imam Ali ('a) several times, in a way that would not leave any doubts. He started by reminding the people of the merits of Imam Ali ('a). Onwards he repeated the name of Imam Ali ('a), stressing 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib', and referring to him with 'this Ali'. He even grabbed on to his hand, lifted it and said '... this Ali whose hand I am holding and whose arm I am lifting...'. The Holy Prophet (S) was using all means to get rid of anything that could be used as a means of doubt and excuses to deny what had been said. He would stress his words with Qur'anic verses and repeatedly emphasize that God had commanded him to do this. Everyone even had to, singlehandedly, perform a personal bay'a (pledging allegiance) to Imam Ali ('a).

The Holy Prophet (S) repeatedly had, in connection with different events, spoke of Imam Ali's ('a) prominent position and his precedence among other companions. Ghadir Khumm came to be the formal designation of is leadership. The Holy Prophet had fought long and hard to make sure that the Muslims saw and heard this ceremony. He clarified that the appointment of Imam Ali ('a) was the final piece of the puzzle that you complete and finalised his mission. Imam Ali ('a) was even congratulated, firstly by the known personalities among the Muslims.⁴⁶ Consequently, Ghadir Khumm, both as an event and as a message, was now a solid fact that no one could deny, they had all witnessed what had taken place. But how come, that just a couple months later, at the time of the passing of the Holy Prophet (S), the message of Ghadir Khumm, was kept in the dark? How was it possible that there were now alternative interpretations circling among the people? The event itself obviously could not be denied as it is mentioned in several sources and is told by acknowledged companions. The event is even ranked as authentic by all sources. So, what happened? And why?⁴⁷

K. Preparing For The Final Imam ('Aj) – His Signs And His Promised Arrival

The Holy Prophet (S) prepared coming generations for the arrival of the last of the twelve leaders, Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj), by clearly confirming:

- Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) will return at the end of the times.

- Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) is from the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) and is the last and twelfth successor of the Holy Prophet (S).[48](#)
- Detailed depictions of his ('aj) signs, among them his name and occultation, as well as his return being when the time is right and when the people are prepared for the great revolution who will allow true justice to enter the world.

The Holy Prophet (S) and the Imams ('a) have each one of them, in some aspect, prepared for the arrival of the final Imam ('aj). Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) will be present at the end of the time. After thousands of years and several generations of men have passed, he will be in control. This at a time when mankind has reached a turning point. We are witnessing more and more developed the further we get in time. During the end of times, people will have access to records of all of world history, experiences, knowledge of earlier men and civilizations. Humanity will possess a collective world heritage of lessons and will reach a maturity needed for it to work together in order to reach a just world under the leadership of the Imam ('aj). To prepare for the Imam ('aj), the Holy Prophet (S) and the Imams ('a) have illuminated different aspects of his future rule. This, in accordance with the wisdom of God, to help humanity's gradual development and to supply the increasing susceptibility with the awareness it takes to stand by the Imam ('aj).

Imam Al-Mahdi ('Aj) Will Arrive At The 'End Of Times'

Faith in a saviour fulfilling the promises of God, the promise of good overcoming bad and filling the world with justices is one of the most basic convictions of all monotheistic religions.[49](#) God says:

“And We have already written in the book [of Psalms] after the [previous] mention that the land [of Paradise] is inherited by My righteous servants.” (The Holy Qur'an, 21: 105).

Many narrations regarding the faith in Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) have reached us through both Shi'a and Sunni sources. The narrations testify that this faith was advocated for and widespread during the time of the Holy Prophet (S). Some of these narrations are so recurrent, with continuous and authentic chains of narration, that no one can discredit its authenticity. As an example, here is a narration, narrated by Abdollah Ibn Mas'ood, from the Holy Prophet (S), saying:

“The world will not reach its end until a man of my offspring [Ahl Al-Bayt], called Al-Mahdi, appears to lead my community.”[50](#)

The Holy Prophet (S) has also said:

“If there was just one day remaining of the existence of the world [before Judgment Day], God will prolong that day until the nation, by one of my Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), which is called [Muhammad] after me, is established. He will fill the world with peace and justice as it has been filled with injustice and tyranny.”[51](#)

Imam Al-Mahdi ('Aj) Is From The Ahl Al-Bayt ('A), And He Is The Twelfth And Final Successor

There are no differences in question, regarding the authenticity of the following narrations, where the Holy Prophet (S) had said:

“Al-Mahdi is one of us, Ahl Al-Bayt.”[52](#)

The Holy Prophet (S) has also said:

“Al-Mahdi will be of my family, among the descendants of Fatimah ('a) [the daughter of the Holy Prophet (S)][53](#)

“Al-Mahdi will be among my offspring, from the children of Fatimah.”[54](#)

It has also been narrated that the Holy Prophet (S) has said:

“The Imams after me will be of twelve in numbers, whereof nine will be from Imam Al-Husayn. The Mahdi of this nation will also be of us. Everyone holding on to them [Ahl Al-Bayt] after me will be holding on to the rope of God, and the one who abandons them has abandoned God.”[55](#)

Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) has also been mentioned in ahadith narrated by other ma'soomin (infallible). Among them it has been told that Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) told her son, Imam Al-Husayn ('a):

“When I gave birth to you, the Prophet came to see me. He took you in his arms and told me: ‘O Fatimah, take your Husayn, for you shall know that he is the father of nine Imams. From his descendants, the legitimate ruler will emerge, among which the ninth is our Qa'im[56](#) [Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj)].”[57](#)

The ahadith and similar to them have been narrated by several companions, among them Abu Hamza Ansari, who has said:

“I heard the Holy Prophet (S) say: ‘I am the leader of the prophets and Ali is the leader of the awsiyas (successors). My two grandchildren are the most premier among the descendants. The infallible Imams will come from us through Imam Al-Husayn ('a). This nation Mahdi is also from us’ At that time an Arab stood up and asked: ‘O Prophet of God, how many Imams are there after you?’ He answered: ‘The same number as the disciples of Isa [Jesus] and the chiefs of the children of Israel.’”[58](#)

These are just a few of the narrations concerning the descent of Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj).[59](#)

More Detailed Descriptions

The Holy Prophet (S) had prepared the coming generations for Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj), also by describing

the signs that will arise at his arrival and what he will do.

The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

“We [me and my family] are members of a household [Ahl Al-Bayt] for which God has the next life over this one; and the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) will suffer great afflictions, and they will be forced from their homes after my passing, thereafter there will be a people carrying black flags from the east, they will ask for kindness but will be refused assistance; they will then take up arms and be victorious, they will then be offered the assistance they were asking for, but they would not accept it until a man from my Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) will emerge to fill the world with justice as it had been filled with corruption. The one who when time till reaching them even if he needs to crawl over ice because among them is Khalifat-Allah (the viceregent of God) Al-Mahdi.”[60](#)

The Holy Prophet (S) has also said:

“God will highlight from occlusion Al-Mahdi from my Ahl Al-Bayt before the Day of Judgment, even if there was just one day remaining of this world, and he [Al-Mahdi (‘aj)] will spread justice and eradicate tyranny and injustice.”[61](#)

In another narration, from Umm Salama (r.a.), the wife of the Holy Prophet (S), it is reported that the Holy Prophet (S) has said:

“The day of resurrection will not take place until the true Al-Qa’im [Imam Al-Mahdi (‘aj)] emerges. This will happen when God allows him to do it. The one who follows him will be protected, and the one who contradicts him will perish. Observants of God, remember God and move towards him [Imam Al-Mahdi (‘aj)] even if means to cross the ice, for he is truly the viceregent [caliph] of God, the highest and Honoured, and my successor.”[62](#)

Another saying from the Holy Prophet (S):

“Al-Qa’im [Imam Al-Mahdi (‘aj)] will be from my descendants. His name will be my name, and his kunya (title) will be like mine. His character will be like mine. He will call all of mankind to my sunnah (way of living) and the book of God. Whoever obeys him, obeys me, and whoever turns away from him, turns away from me. The one who denies his existence during occultation me, and the one who rejects him, rejects me. Concerning the one who distorts my sayings about him, and therefore misguides my ummah (community), I will complain about them to God: ‘And the one who made themselves guilty of [these] unjustly attacks will [soon] see what twist their life will take!’[63](#)[64](#)

Why Is It Important To Know The Imam (Chosen Leader) Of One’s Time?

As the previous hadith showed, the Holy Prophet (S) described the denial of Imam Al-Mahdi (‘aj) as the denial of himself. The Holy Prophet (S) has also said:

“The one who refutes Al-Qa’im among my children will have refuted me.”[65](#)

The Holy Prophet (S) also said:

“The one who dies without knowing the Imam of his time will die the same death as the ones in Jahiliyyah (the era of ignorance – pre-Islamic era).”[66](#)

As well as emphasizing the meaning of actively waiting for Imam Al-Mahdi (‘aj) through the following hadith:

“The best act of worship is the waiting for faraj (the actualisation of the arrival of the Imam (‘aj)).”[67](#)

Furthermore, the Holy Prophet (S) also spoke of Prophet Isa [Jesus], and that he would accompany and support Imam Al-Mahdi (‘aj) at the time of his arrival. [68](#)

On the basis of all earlier accounts and the verses of the Holy Qur'an, these Imams and guides, are for all nations and people until the Day of Judgment and their clear mission is to bring mankind closer to God. Therefore, these narrations cover all future nations after the Holy Prophet (S), which are in need of recognizing the Imam of their time. How would this happen without the will and invitation of the Holy Prophet (S)? How would the message of God be preserved and brought down to mankind without reliable Imams (‘a)?

The message of God is preserved and passed on by the secure custody being the Imams (‘a). In other words, God's message is preserved and passed forward with the explanations and actions of the Imams (‘a). Their light and guidance are always available for the one wishing to use it. To follow an Imam (‘aj) is to have a clear goal in one's life and to submit oneself to the guidance and protection of the Imam (‘aj) in order to reach it. To follow the Imam (‘aj) is to actually follow the Holy Prophet (S) and the path that God has ordered us to follow. Ultimately, it is to be faithful to the message of God and to walk the path he has presented for the development, happiness and success of man.

Chapter 5 – Summary

H. Prophethood has been a continuous process, starting with Prophet Adam (‘a), the first man, and ending with the Holy Prophet (S).

I1. The Holy Prophet (S) was born on the 17th of Rabi' Al-awwal, 570 AD. The Holy Prophet (S) was known as Muhammad Al-Amin (the reliable Muhammad) and was respected and entrusted by all of society, long before his prophethood. The community in which he grew up was characterized by injustice and moral destruction. The Holy Prophet (S) married Khadija (‘a) while Imam Ali (‘a), being the Holy Prophets (S) cousin, was being brought up by him.

I2. At the age of forty, on the 27th of Rajab, 610 AD, in Mecca, the Holy Prophet (S) received his first

revelation. The first ones confessing the Holy Prophet's (S) calling and thereby becoming Muslims, were his wife Khadija ('a) and Imam Ali ('a). After a period of three years of secretly calling to Islam, by the command of God, the Holy Prophet (S) was told to spread the message publicly. He was told to start with his closest family members. Associated with the invitation of his closest and the following response, Imam Ali ('a) was named the brother, viceregent and successor of the Holy Prophet (S).

Thereafter a fierce resistance against the Holy Prophet (S) and his companions began. The Muslims were being tortured, killed and persecuted. Some Muslims had to emigrate to Abyssinia while the one who stayed behind were living under harsh economic sanctions for a duration of three years. The uncle of the Holy Prophet (S), Abu Talib ('a) and the wife of the Holy Prophet (S), Khadija ('a), who had supported him in every way possible, including with all her assets, passed away in the year 619 AD. This year was named 'The year of grief' by the Holy Prophet (S).

In the year 622 AD, the Muslims were to emigrate, by order of the Holy Prophet (S), to Yathrib, fleeing the attack of the Meccans. Yathrib was later to be known as Medina. On the night that the Holy Prophet (S) was ordered to leave Mecca, the Quraysh had planned to assassinate him. Imam Ali ('a) was to sleep in the Holy Prophets (S) bed and in that way protect him from the swords of the assassins. The Islamic era started in association with the Holy Prophets (S) hijra to Medina, and the years following it were to be known as "after Hijra" (AH).

13. In Medina, the Holy Prophet (S) established brotherhood among the Muslims and chose Imam Ali ('a) as his own brother. As the message of the Holy Prophet (S) was expanding, the Quraysh were planning a war in order to destroy the Muslims at the battles of Badr (624 AD), Uhud (625 AD) and Ahzab (627 AD).

The treaty of Hudaybiyya was written in the year 628 AD and would turn out to be a trial for the followers, which would reveal who were the most stable ones.

The battle of Khaybar took place in the year 629 AD, where the Muslims were forced to take the battle to the Jewish tribes who had supported the Quraysh and actively continued to plan for the demise of the Muslims. Imam Ali ('a) was once again the hero of the battle, as he had cleared the path towards victory where others had failed.

The Quraysh broke the treaty of Hudaybiyya in the year 630 AD and Mecca was thereafter taken peacefully by the Muslims. The Quraysh gave up without a fight at the call of the Holy Prophet (S), as he proclaimed that everyone was under the protection of Islam and that no one was to seek vengeance. The ones who had persecuted, oppressed and killed the Muslims during all those years were forgiven by the Holy Prophet (S) and were allowed to live in peace in Mecca.

The Holy Prophet (S) performed his last pilgrimage to Mecca in the year 13 AH, 632 AD, and officially proclaimed Imam Ali ('a) as his successor. He did it at Ghadir Khumm, with tens of thousands of Muslims who had performed Hajj with the Holy Prophet (S). The Holy Prophet (S) had the gathering stay

at Ghadir Khumm for three days where he made it into a ceremony and had everyone sign allegiance to Imam Ali ('a) in person.

J. The Holy Prophet (S) was preparing for the first Imam ('a) since his first official calling to Islam. On several occasions, Imam Alis ('a) position as the successor, was emphasized before the Muslims. It would in association with different events and also related to verses of the Holy Qur'an. The final call for it was made in Ghadir Khumm, where it was made official, ones and for all, that Imam Ali ('a) was the successor of the Holy Prophet (S).

K. There was a widespread belief in Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) during the time of the Holy Prophet (S). He prepared all coming generations for the final Imam ('aj). He told that he would emerge at the end of times and that he is the last of the Holy Prophets (S) twelve successors from the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a). Beyond this, he told several detailed depictions regarding the Imam ('aj) as a person and revealed the signs of his return.

1. The question prophet Jesus ('a) asked God and the answer God gives is in fact a final testimony, completing the hujja (argument and evidence) upon the men who alleged these things.
2. The Holy Prophet (S) was born during the year which had been known as the 'aam Al-fil (the year of the elephant). It was named after the Abyssian king Abraha's attempts to attack the house of God, the Holy Ka'ba, with his herd of elephants. His attempt failed as saving a flock of small birds saved the Ka'ba.
3. This was the main reason as to why several Jewish and Christian tribes had moved to the Arabian Peninsula, to cities such as Mecca and Yathrib (who, with the arrival of the Holy Prophet (S), came to be known as Medina), along with areas such as Khaybar.
4. Life in the Arabic peninsula before the arrival of Islam, it was permeated by the strong tribal, status and traditional bound spirit where rival tribes led bloody raids against each other and constantly lived under the shadow of subsequent, merciless revenge actions. With battles which would last up to centuries, the burial of live female children, seen as useless property which could be exchanged and seized, this era came to be called Jahiliyyah (the era of ignorance).

Despite this overall darkness there were some reasonable moral practices and good characteristics in the Arabs such as generosity, keeping promises and respect for holy places and punctuality. But with the arrival of Islam the Prophet (S) fought with the support of God's word, the Qur'an, strongly against the immoral practices and the injustices of class society, stood up for the oppressed and for the values of good morals and humanity. This is while the Prophet (S) confirmed and encouraged the good qualities and practices which already existed among the people. For further description, reference is made, et al, to the accompanying footnotes, sermon 26 in Nahjul Balagha et al. see sermon 2.

5. The grandfather of the Prophet (S), Abd Al-Muttalib (r.a.), was the head of the tribe of Quraysh and had a prominent position among the Arab. Quraysh as a tribe obtained a special status and was highly respected amongst the tribes of the Arabs. Quraysh ruled over Mecca and managed the keys of Gods house, the Ka'ba. Quraysh was also a very wealthy and powerful tribe. They conducted trade successfully with Sham and Yemen and had the benefit of being spared from fighting and raids, unlike other tribes, because the territory of Mecca was sacred ground.

Through a closed contract between all the tribes, Mecca was safe land for all to stay and no one had the right to avenge the blood of another within the borders of Mecca. With that, Mecca had become an economical blooming center and a relatively peaceful meeting place for people, with the exception of slaves, at the same time as the elite power of power applied according to customary use. After Abu Al-Muttalib (r.a.), his son Abu Talib (r.a.), who got the assignment to take care of and protect the Prophet Muhammad (S) after his father's demise, the head of Quraysh. Prophet Muhammad's (S) father Abdullah (r.a.) has been Abd Al-Muttalib's (r.a.) youngest and most loving son, which made the Prophet (S) Abd Al-

Mittalib's (RA most beloved, and he dearly loved both Abd Al-Muttalib (r.a.) and Abu Talib (r.a.).

6. It is widely known in history, that short after a flooding in Mecca, various tribe leaders rebuild damaged parts of the Ka'ba. However, a conflict occurred regarding the one to move Hajar Al-Aswad (the Black Stone) during reparations. As the conflict was escalating to a matter life or death, a proposal was made that the first to arrive as a judge would decide; that was none other than Muhammad Al-Amin (S). When the Prophet (S) witnessed this, he took off his cloak and spread it on the ground, asking every tribe leader to grab a corner of it and as such placed Hajar Al-Aswad on the cloak. Thereby, everyone participated in the act and were more than satisfied with the solution.

7. The first verses of the Holy Qur'an revealed to the Holy Prophet (S) in connection with the first revelation were the first verses of Surah Al-'Alaq.

8. This is a widely known event, admitted and narrated in both Sunni and Shi'a-sources; not the least in Qur'anic commentaries in relation to relevant verses. This hadith is known as "hadith yawm ad-dar" and the verse as "aya Al-Inthar". It is narrated in many sources, two examples are Tarikh Tabari volume 2 p.62; and Al-Ghadir by Allamah Amini (r.a.), a comprehensive and detailed collection of events and ahadith, with source referencing, related to the Prophet's (S) announcement of Imam Ali ('a).

9. Naturally, Prophet Muhammad's (S) message was not admitted by the opposition and he was mocked, accused and attacked on many occasions. God refers a lot to what the Prophet (S) had to endure in many Qur'anic verses, one of them being Surah Al-Masad relating the event of Abu Lahab.

10. This hadith is also narrated repeatedly and is mentioned through several sources, such as Bihar Al-Anwar volume 9 p. 143.

11. Bani Hashim was one of the branches of the great tribe of Quraysh and they were descendants of Hashim, the Holy Prophet's (S) great grandfather. The other branches of the Quraysh were also named after their ancestors.

12. The range of this book is limited to a general and overall mention of history. For more details the reader is referred to known historical books narrating Islam and the life of the Prophet (S), with Qur'anic commentary referring to historical events.

13. A place on the outskirts of Yathrib, Medina, where the Prophet (S) built the first mosque, called Masjid Qoba.

14. Muhajirin (emigrants) were the Muslims of Mecca, made to leave their city and migrate towards Medina. Ansar (Helpers) were the Muslims of Medina who had received the Prophet (S) and his Muhajirin.

15. This hadith, called hadith Mu'akhat (brotherhood), have been mentioned in both Sunni and Shi'a sources. Among those are Thakhair Al-'Uqba (published 1356 AH) by Tabari p.66; Fadha'el as-Sahaba (published 1403 AH) by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal volume 2, p.617, among others.

16. Abu Jahl was one of the main enemies of the Prophet (S), Islam and Muslims. When Muslims lived in Mecca, he supervised their persecutions and tortures and thereafter he led the battles against to Medina.

17. Imam Ali ('a) was later exposed to immense grudge from those whose family relations were killed in battle, referred to in the sermon of Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) and Duaa Nudba (which is in itself a hadith from a ma'soom (infallible) Imam ('a)), among others.

18. "People of the Book" is a Qur'anic term relating to, especially, followers of earlier religions (of heavenly scriptures). Verses initiated with "O people of the Book" and a few others starting with, "[O Muhammad] Say", are among those verses sent down as answers or particularly aimed messages to the followers of earlier religions, that is to say in addition to the general messages aimed to all people, in all times.

19. God sheds light on many aspects of importance on the battle of Ahzab, its backstory, its underlying causes and influential factors. But also the involved parties and their visible and hidden motives in surah Ahzab, [33:9-26] in the Holy Qur'an, among others.

20. Imam Ali's ('a) confrontation with 'Amr Ibn Abd Wadd is wellknown in historical accounts, and narrated both Sunni and Shi'a sources, among them Sharh Nahjul Balagha by Ibn Hadid volume 4, p.344; Bihar Al-Anwar by Allamah Al-Majlisi volume 2, p.215; Ihaqa Al-Haqq volume 6, p.9.

21. This is one of the known ahadith narrated in connection with this historical event and is found in several sources, among them Mustadrak Hakim volume 3, p.32; Ihaqa Al-Haqq volume 6 p.54-55 and volume 3 p.228.

22. One of the known ahadith narrators, recognized as reliable among both Sunni and Shi'a. This means ahadith traced

back to him, provided that the chain of narrations is secured, fulfil one of the main requirements authenticating a hadith.

23. Both these narrations are narrated in Dorr Al-Manthor by Suyuti and Shawahed at-Tanzil (published 1431) by Hakim Haskani volume 2, p.5.

24. This hadith is narrated in many known Sunni-sources, by Huthayfa. Among them Majma'Al-Bayan volume 9, p.252; Bihar Al-Anwar volume 20, p.216; Mustadrak by Haim Neyshabori volume 3, p.32.

25. The prophets' ('a) and Imams' ('a) dreams are akin to their awake state, based on reality, as they are ma'soomin (infallible) and have complete spiritual purity, making them constantly prepared to bear and protect the message of God. Therefore, the dreams of the Prophet (S) are messages from God, conveyed through dreams. Hence, it is reliable and reason to act. This does not apply to a fallible, whose dreams are of many kinds and often influenced by various factors – mainly the conditioning of the soul, as purity and wellbeing, but also the bodily condition – all affecting the reliability of the dream.

However, dreaming in itself makes a great potential for the soul, as its freer in the state of dreaming, in comparison to being awake – this applies to most people. As senses and bodily functions are less active, this also implies the soul's less attachment to the body, letting the soul journey without those limitations. And as the soul is not material, but has a metaphysical reality and has its origin and place in a higher immaterial world, it could during sleep and in dreams travel without being limited to time and space; limitations that are otherwise actual in the material world. Depending on how "light" the soul is it can travel to higher realities and it is also though the journeying of the soul true dreams and dreams about reality, occurring later on, are possible. The inclinations of the soul are also of importance to where the soul seeks to travel.

26. Another known hadith narrated in majority Sunni and Shi'a-sources, and in historical book such as Tarikh Ibn Hisham volume 3, p.349; Tarikh Bilathari volume 2, p.86 and 92–93; Tarikh Ibn Hazm p.213; Tarikh Al-Waqedi volume 2, p.648–649 and 652–654.

27. The events concerning the peaceful entries into Mecca, a big event and thereof well documented, is narrated in historical accounts, among them: Maghazi (1409 AH) by Waqedi volume 2, p.822, 835; Al-Irshad by Sheikh Al-Mufid volume 1, p.53 et al.

28. This expression referred to a group prominent personality, well known among people, taking determining roles in later events after the demise of the Prophet (S) and also later on in the course shift of Islamic history. The reference tolaqa' marks these people and their descendants who followed the same agenda in connection with many historical events.

29. This is narrated in, as-Sira an-Nabawiyya by Ibn Hisham volume 2, p.412; Al-Kamil fi at-Tarikh (1385 AH) by Ibn Athir volume 2, p.252; Qorb Al-asnad (1413 AH) by Humayri p.348; Imta'Al-asma' by Maqrizi volume 1 p.391 (1409 AH) by Waqedi volume 1, p.701 et al.

30. The sermon of the Prophet (S) is narrated in several sources. This translation is based on the English one in the book Imam 'Ali Sunshine of Civilized Islam by Tahmasebi.

31. The majority of Sunni and Shi'a scholars confirm this verse was sent down in connection with the last pilgrimage of the Prophet (S) and in Ghadir; among them, Suyuti i Dorr Al-Manthoor (1414 AH.) volume 2, p.298 and Aloosi in Rooh Al-Ma'ani (1405 AH.) volume 6, p.194 and 'Ayashi in Tafsir Al-'Ayashi (1380 AH.) volume 1, p.332 samt Qomi i Tafsir Qomi (1412 AH.) volume 1, p.179.

32. This is narrated in many known historical accounts by acknowledged Sunni scholars, among them in Sunan Al-Kubra (1411 AH) by Nisa'l volume 5, p.135.

33. This paragraph in the sermon of the Holy Prophet (S) in Ghadir, has come to be known as hadith Thaqlayn. It has been narrated both as part of this sermon but also as a hadith of its own, said by the Prophet (S) and emphasized on many occasions. The hadith and references are provided in section G3, note 81 and 82.

34. Referring to the beginning of the verse [33:6], where God puts forward the Prophet's (S) superiority in the rights over the believers than that they have over themselves.

35. Reference to the last part of the Verse:

"Forbidden to you is that which dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that on which any other name than that of Allah has been invoked, and the strangled (animal) and that beaten to death, and that killed by a fall and that killed by being smitten with the horn, and that which wild beasts have eaten, except what you slaughter, and what is sacrificed on stones set up (for idols) and that you divide by the arrows; that is a transgression. This day have those who disbelieve despaired of

your religion, so fear them not, and fear Me. This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favor on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion; but whoever is compelled by hunger, not inclining willfully to sin, then surely Allah is Forgive, Merciful." (the Holy Qur'an, 5:3).

36. Among prominent Sunni scholars, confirming this verse was revealed in connection with Ghadir Khumm, are Suyuti, Ibn Askari, Ibn Kathir and Abu Nuáym et al.

37. This sermon is narrated both as a whole and in part, also known as the hadith of Ghadir, in several Sunni sources, among them Sunan by Tarmothi, Musnad by Ibn Hanbal and Mustadrak by Neyshabori.

38. The book Al-Ghadir by Allamah Amini (r.a.) is one of the most comprehensive collections narrating this event, and everything regarding it, together with complete references to both Sunni and Shi'a sources. The seeker who wishes to study this event closer, is referred to mainly this book and also other historical ones. As the hadith of Ghadir is among the ahadith frequently narrated by more than a hundred companions and known personalities present, among them those who later became second and third caliphs, Omar Ibn Khattab and Utham Ibn 'Affan, the Prophet's (S) wife Aisha, Zubayr Ibn Awam and also Abu Dharr, Salman Al-Farsi, Jabir Ibn Abdullah Al-Ansari, Abbas Ibn Abd Al-Muttalib et al., in Al-Bidayah wa Al-Nihaya (1398 AH) by Ibn Kathir volume 7 p.349; Kitab Al-Wilaya (1424 AH) by Ibn Uqda Al-Kufi p.150,152, among others. Accordingly, this hadith is a narration frequency as such that the hadith and the event are widely known and recognized. Ghadir is so widely recognized, it makes up as one of the most prominent historical event in connection with where most poems have been said, by known poets throughout history, among them the known poem by the known Hassaan Ibn Thabet, recited on site, and was allowed by the Prophet (S) to read before all present. However, secondary interpretations of some terms in the hadith, such as "mawla" and "wali", are used to claim that the Prophet (S) only explained Imam Ali's ('a) friendship to everyone.

39. The Prophet (S) emphasized the position of Imam Ali ('a) before all in Ghadir Khumm and did this in several ways, besides the announcing, by having everyone, one by one, come forward and pledge allegiance to Imam Ali ('a). The first one to come forth and congratulate the Imam ('a), were the ones to later on occupy the position of first and second caliphs. Even this is historically known and has been narrated in several books, among them Tarikh Baghdad (1417 AH) by Khatib Baghdadi volume 8, p.284; Al-Irshad (1413 AH) by Skeikh Al-Mufid volume 1, p. 176–177.

40. Short after the Prophet (S) announcing the rank of Imam Ali ('a), a person approached the Prophet (S), narrated to be Nu'man Ibn Harith Fahri and with an accusing tone said: "You encouraged us to accept tawhid, your prophethood, struggle on the way of God, the pilgrimage, fasting, prayer and zakat (alms taxes) and we accepted, but you were to content with that and have now appointed a youngling and allowed him to be our wali (leader); is this announcement of wilaya (leadership) from you or God?" When the Prophet (S) clarified and pointed out that it was by the orders of God, this person prayed that God then drop down a stone on his head, as he could not tolerate this. At the same time, a stone fell from the sky and killed him on sight. The initiating verses of surah Al-Ma'arej refer to this event, narrated in both historical accounts and in known Qur'anic commentaries. Sources: Maj'ma' Al-Bayan av Tabarsi volume 10, p.530; Al-Jami' le ahkam Al-Qoran (published year 1364 AH) volume 19, p.278; Al-Kashf wa Al-Bayan 'an tafsir Al-Qoran (published year 1422 AH) volume 19, p.35, et al.

41. It is narrated the Prophet (S) asked for ink and skin to write down his last will, but was denied by a few. This is narrated in Tarikh Tabari by Tabari, Idhah by Neyshabori p.259, Al-Irshad by Sheikh Al-Mufid volume 1 p.184 and in Bihar Al-Anwar by Al-Majlisi volume 30 p.70–73 narrated from Sahihi Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, among many others.

42. This was by the Prophet's (S) own request, during his last moments in life, narrated in several sources, among them, Al-Irshad by Sheikh Al-Mufid volume 1, p. 185–186 and also by Imam Ali ('a) himself in Nahjul Balagha sermon 197.

43. A selection from the Prophet's (S) announcement, demonstrating the position and rank of Imam Ali ('a), is brought up in short in this section and makes up entries for the seeker to follow-up.

44. This hadith is known as Manzila and will be discussed in more details in section O and further. It makes up one of Prophet Muhammad's (S) most known ahadith, narrated in more than thousand sources according to Hakim Haskani and narrated by almost a hundred of the most known and recognized narrators of hadith. This hadith is one of the ahadith, whose narration frequency is so high and reliable, there is no doubt in its authenticity. Among Sunni sources, the hadith is found in, Sahih Bukhari by Bukhari volume 5, p. 129; Sahih Muslim by Muslim volume 2, p. 1870–1871; Sunan Tarmothi by Tarmothi volume 5, p.638, 640–641; Sunan Nisa'i by Nisa'i p.50–61; Musnad Ibn Hanbal by Ibn Hanbal volume 1, p. 277,

volume 3, p.417 volume 7, p.513 and 591; Mustadrak by Hakem Neysahbori volume 3 p. 133–134; ar-Riyadh an-Nadhera by Tabari volume 3 p.117–119; Al-Bidaya wa an-Nihaya by Ibn Kathir volume 5, p.807; Majma' az-Zawaed wa Manb' Al-Fawaed by Heythami volume 9, p.110; Tarikh Al-Khulafa' by Suyuti p.168; ad-Dorr Al-Manthoor by Suyuti volume 3, p.236, 291, et al.

45. The various aspects of Prophet Haroon's ('a) position in relation to Prophet Musa ('a) is mentioned in the Qur'an in several verses, among them in attributes of a brother and vezir, [19:53], [20:29–32] and [25:35] et al., representative and caliph, [7: 142]. This subject is discussed further in connection with hadith Manzila; see O and further.

46. This event, as earlier mentioned, is both well documented and ranked as authentic by Sunni and Shi'a a like. Among those who have documented and narrated this narration of Ghadir are prominent Sunni scholars in their most important books, among them Sahih Tirmidhi, Sunan Ibn Maja, Khasa'is an-Nisa'i, Mustadrak Al-Hakim, Musnad Ibn Hanbal, adha'il as-Sahaba by Ibn Hanbal, Tasfir Al-Kabir by Fakhr Razi, Al-Bidayah wa Nihaya by Ibn Kathir et al. All of which are among the most known and revered scholars of jurisprudence and scientists in the Sunni school of thought, Sunni Islam.

47. Another documented part of the event of Ghadir Khumm is narrated in Musnad by Ibn Hanbal volume 4, p. 281; Tafsir Al-Kabir by Fakhr Razi volume 12, p.49–50; Mishkat Al-Masabih by Khatib at-Tabrizi p.557; Habib Al-Siyar by Mir Khand volume 1, part 3 p.144, et al.

48. The answers to these questions will become clearer in relation to the historical accounts regarding the events of the Prophet's (S) demise; see P.

49. Ahadith regarding Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) are so many that during the time of the Prophet (S), people recognized him as the last savior. The Prophet (S) mentioned Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) as the twelfth of the descendants of the Prophet (S) and of his ('aj) arrival in his sermon in Ghadir Khumm.

50. The announcement of this awaited savior and his mission is mentioned in both the Torah [Prophet Ash'ya; section 11] and the Bible[old testament mazamir 37 and Lukas, Injil Luqa; section 12]. The references can vary depending on edition and translations. Observe that older editions in older languages have been less subjected to alternations through translations to various languages and hence make up more reliable sources to whoever seeks to delve deeper. There are studies made and could be found.

51. This hadith is narrated in both Sunni and Shi'a sources, among them Bihar Al-Anwar volume 51, p.75.

52. This hadith and the likes of it, are narrated in several sources, among them: Sahih Al-Tirmidhi volume 2, p.86, volume 9, p.74–75 and Sunan Tirmothi volume 4, p.438; Sunan Abu Dawud volume 2, p.7 and volume 4, p.106; Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal volume 1, p.84 and 376 and volume 3, p. 63; Al-Mustadrak ala Al-Sahihayn by Al-Hakim volume 4, p.557; Jami' Al-Saghir by Suyuti p.2 and 160; Al-Urful Wardi by Suyuti p.2; Al-Majma' by Tabarani s 217; Tahdhib Al-Tahdhib by Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani volume 9, p.144; Fat'h Al-Bari fi Sharh Sahih Al-Bukhari by Ibn Hajar Asqalani volume 7, p.305; Al-Sawa'iq Al-Muhriqah by Ibn Hajar Al-Haythami chapter 11, section 1, p.249; Al-Tathkira by Qurtubi p.617; Al-Hawi av Suyuti volume 2, p.165–166; Sharh Al-Mawahib Al-Ladunniyyah by Al-Zurqani volume 5, p.348; Fat'h Al-Mugheeth by Al-Sakhawi volume 3, p.41; Kanz Al-Ummal volume 7, p.186; Iqd Al-Durar Fi Akhbar Al-Mahdi Al-Muntadhar volume 12, chapter 1; Al-Bayan fi Akhbar Sahib Al-Zaman by Ganji Al-Shafi'i kapitel 12; Al-Fusool Al-Muhimmah by Ibn Sabbagh Al-Maliki chapter 12; Arjahul Matalib by Ubaidallah Hindi Al-Hanafi p.380; Muqaddimah by Ibn Khaldoon p.266; and also in books by Ibn Habban, Abu Nua'yim, Ibn Asakir, et al.

53. The reference Al-Mahdi, meaning the Guided, is the twelfth Imam's ('aj) known title, used to refer merely to him. One of the reasons behind this title could be that guidance and guiding make a characteristic and central feature in the mission of Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj).

54. This hadith and similar ones with same referencing are narrated in many Sunni and Shi'a sources. Among those are Sunan Ibn Majah by Ibn Majah, volume 2, p.1367 and hadith 4085; Kitab Al-Fitan by Na'im Ibn Hammad, section Khorooj Al-Mahdi, hadith 4085, et al.

55. This hadith is found narrated in Sunan Ibn Majah volume 2, hadith 4086; Kitab Al-Fitan by Na'im Ibn Hammad, p.1368, hadith 4086; also narrated by Nisa'i and Bayhaqi as mentioned in Al-Sawa'iq Al-Muhriqah by Ibn Hajar Al-Haythami chapter 11, section 1, p.249. The sam hadith has been narrated by the wife of the Prophet (S), Umm Salama and is narrated in Sunan Abu Dawud, Kitab Al-Mahdi hadith 4284 and in its English edition chapter 36, hadith 4171.

56. There are many ahadith with the same meaning and similar wording, said on various occasions and narrated by several

companions and are sourced back to various chain of narrations. This hadith is narrated in Bihar Al-Anwar by Allamah Al-Majlisi volume 51, p.75, among others.

[57.](#) This hadith is also narrated on many accounts and is mentioned in Ithbat Al-hudat volume 2, p.526, among others.

[58.](#) The term Qa'im is derived from qiyam, meaning to rise up [uprising], and Al-Qa'im, the most definite form of the term and used exclusively for one definite person, refers to the Imam Al-Mahdi ('a) and makes one of his titles, as he is the final Imam ('aj) whom will lead the awaited uprising, promised by prophets ('a) to mankind; the uprising to fill the world with justice and peace, after that it has been filled with oppression and tyranny.

[59.](#) This hadith is narrated in Ithbat Al-Hudat volume 2, p.552.

[60.](#) This hadith is narrated in Ithbat Al-Hudat volume 2, p.531.

[61.](#) The ahadith regarding Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) are many and are mentioned in many sources. This hadith makes only a selection for the reader to follow-up on.

[62.](#) This hadith is mentioned in Sunan by Ibn Majah volume 2, hadith 4082. Tarikh Tabari also narrates it, as well as Ibn Hajar in his Al-Sawa'iq Al-Muhriqah chapter 11, section 1, p.250-251.

[63.](#) This hadith is narrated in Musnad by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal volume 1, p.99, among others.

[64.](#) This hadith is mentioned in Bihar Al-Anwar volume 51, p.65, and Ithbat Al-Hudat volume 6, p.382. More sources are found in these books.

[65.](#) Referring to the Holy Qur'an 26:227.

[66.](#) This hadith is mentioned in Bihar Al-Anwar volume 51 p.73, among others.

[67.](#) This hadith is mentioned in Bihar Al-Anwar volume 51 p.73, among others.

[68.](#) The following is a widely known hadith and one of those ahadith subjected to many curious interpretations as some has opposed Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) as its allusion. Without the mentioned Imams ('a) of Ahl Al-Bait ('a), the consequences of these interpretations meant, among other things, obedience to tyrants and apparent oppressing despots is allowed and advocated by some scholars and has resulted in the Muslim ummah subdued by the illusion and excuse that whoever takes on the governorship is a leader and shall be obeyed; some has gone as far as to claim that the governance of a despot is willed and acted on by God. This hadith is mentioned in many sources, among them Sahih Muslim hadith 1, 851 and Musnad Ibn Hanbal hadith 16, 434, et al.

Chapter 6: Imamah

Questions addressed in this chapter:

- The meaning of Imamah

What does the position of Imamah mean?

Why is it a choice of God?

- The Prophet's (S) successor

Would the Prophet (S) leave his people to their fate after his departure?

- God has promised to preserve this religion

How does God protect this religion? By what means?

- Who were the infallible Imams ('a)?

How did they pass on the message and prepared for the last awaited Imam, Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj)?

L. The Significance And Meaning Of Imamah

Imamah can briefly be described as a divinely chosen leadership that guides and leads people to their creational purpose.¹

This means that there is a divinely chosen leadership that aims to guide people in all matters. Both worldly issues and issues concerning faith and the next life. This leadership leads the way in accordance with the Prophet's (S) approach and is, therefore, a continuation of the prophetic line.²

Imamah Is A Divine Rank In Accordance With The Holy Qur'an

It has been established by God, via the Prophet (S), that the leadership after the Prophet (S) is by God's decree. On closer reflection, it is not peculiar that the leadership whose aim is to protect the message and guide the people, is of a divine nature. Especially when bearing in mind the importance of the mission, its conditions and its purpose. This conclusion can be derived from the Qur'anic verse in which Prophet Ibrahim ('a) was granted the position of Imam.³ Ibrahim ('a), who was already a prophet, was named Imam subsequent to overcoming difficult trials successfully. God rewarded him by saying, 'I will make you Imam.'

This event clarifies and establishes three things:

- God appointed the rank of Imamah
- The rank of Imamah was appointed as an upgrade
- The rank of Imamah is not appointed to sinners

Imamah is a divinely appointed status, with the condition to possess the same 'isma (infallibility) that a prophet possesses.⁴ In a well-known narration of Imam Al-Ridha' ('a), you get a glimpse of Imamahs' high position, where Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) narrated in a long narration:

"Imamah is an equal position to prophecy [with the same course of action, but excluding the receiving of wahi (revelation)], and Imamah is the legacy of the prophets. Truly, Imamah is a representative of God and His Messenger. Indeed, Imamah is the leadership of religion, the Muslim's governorship, a system of order, the refinement of the world and the glory of the faithful people."⁵

L1. Why Is Imamah Needed?

Imamah is needed for the guidance and the message to be preserved and protected but above all, to be followed. There is a need for guides who continue to guide the people and protect the line of religion, even after the Prophet (S)⁶. There are clear and obvious examples for the need of guides in the course of history; not least in the preceding divine writings that have been subject to distortion. Islam is the final and most complete message. After Prophet Muhammad (S), no more prophets ('a) are sent. Previously, the revealed scriptures had been distorted after a while, whereby a new prophet ('a) was sent to re-emphasize the message of the former prophets ('a) and guide the people back to the right path. But now this was the definitive religion that would forever offer guidance of people back to God, back to the creational aim. Therefore, God appointed guides for all people after the Prophet (S) to protect the message and guidance that the Prophet (S) brought, of which the first is Imam Ali ('a) and the last is Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj). Imam Ali ('a) also said:

“Truly, the earth never ever becomes empty from one who stands up to God with divine proof, either while visible and striking, or scared and concealed so that God’s evidence and clear signs are not repealed.”⁷

The Prophet (S) was ordered to announce this notion to the people on several occasions and at different times. From the very first public call to religion up to the public announcement in Ghadir Khumm, in connection with the farewell pilgrimage.⁸ Evidently, Imamah is a precept of God. The importance of knowing and following the Imam of one’s time is emphasized in a hadith from/by the Prophet (S). The narration mentions that the lack of such knowledge/knowledge of one’s Imam at the point of death is equal to death in Jahiliyyah (the era of ignorance – the pre-Islamic era).⁹

If one understands the importance of Imamah and the purpose of this divine position, it is not difficult to understand why the one ignorant of the Imam ('a) of his time, that is his leader, is equal to those who lived during the era of ignorance. A clear reason is that one’s own knowledge of religion¹⁰ is incomplete, and with it, one’s faith stands without protection. A person’s faith can easily be harmed by misconceptions and faults. Imamah preserves the true doctrine of belief. Thus, an infallible Imam ('a), who holds a complete and protected faith, becomes a standard to conform to. They are our God-sent means to guidance.

Additionally, an Imam intends to guide and lead people to achieve their creational goals and actualize their highest potential. Without such guidance, people will get lost in the darkness of ignorance, unaware of either the goal, the direction or the approach needed to reach the goal.

We are therefore commanded to obtain guidance from the Imams ('a), whose obedience is equal to that of the Prophet (S) and God.¹¹ They are the perfect examples to follow and the true guides after the Prophet (S).¹²

L2. Why Does The Choice Of An Imam Have To Be In God's Hands?

God appoints an infallible leader to secure/protect the message and the guidance of people. There are numerous Qur'anic verses and prophetic narrations that accentuate the fact that the Imams are chosen and commanded to follow by God.¹³ The Prophet (S), on God's order, told the people on several occasions about the coming Imams ('a) and mentioned them by name.¹⁴

Who Else But God Is Justified In Appointing The Most Important Position That Will Guide People To The Creational Purpose?

The purpose of Islamic leadership is to guide people and protect religion. So that the truth always exists, regardless of the number of distortions and misguided paths that arise. Would then the choice of an absolute leader for people's guidance towards the goal of their existence be neglected or left unsaid? Would that choice be left to fallible people who can make mistakes in the choice they make? And who besides God is qualified to appoint such a leader?

There are many examples of choosing leaders in everyday life. Leaders are appointed to important missions on the basis of/according to a clear structured and well thought out plan. A current example is a way in which boards elect a CEO, i.e. a chief executive officer/managing director, to a company. It is considered the board's most important task to appoint a CEO. The person appointed will have an important role in the company, with a view to run it in the direction the management board has set as a goal. Hence, a CEO is selected with great care. The recruitment process is taken very seriously, and the applicant's skills, qualifications and previous record are carefully considered, which is both understandable and expected. Despite the rigorous process, it may occur that the wrong person gets chosen. The selected CEO can, in turn, causes a great deal of damage to the company.

Equivalent scenarios may occur in other people-elected contexts. How often have incorrect and inappropriate people been selected for major and important missions? How often have these elected leaders failed to complete the missions they have been assigned? How often has the person been wrong for the mission from the start, or was the right person but corrupted along the way? Even in cases where people succeed in their leadership, they, nevertheless, make several wrong decisions on the way.

Would God then give a board of people, with limited knowledge and insight, the responsibility to appoint the leader who will guide all of mankind to their creational aim? How will they know the core qualities of the various candidates? How will they be able to decide who is most suitable without any guarantee or insight into the future?

In addition, God equates the obedience to the appointed guide to His and his Prophets' (S) obedience. As a guide of this calibre and with such a worldwide mission needs to have guardianship over/of the

people. Would God demand total obedience and the following someone at risk of making mistakes or being corrupted on the way? And would God entrust the choice of such a leader to unversed people who themselves can make mistakes or be corrupt?

God is just and wise as He is merciful and completely free from defects and thus cannot be associated with such contradictions. And with the facts in hand, history bears a clear testimony of how the Islamic government and the people suffered enormous damage due to corrupt leaders.

How Else Should This Leader Be Appointed?

It is obvious that the Islamic denominations do not have a unified answer to this question. Let's take a look at history and how the choice of successors went about:

1. The choice of the first caliph was made at the time when Imam Ali ('a) was performing the burial rites of the Prophet (S) and while the people were in a state of shock after the Prophet's (S) passing. The first caliph was chosen from among a group of people who had gathered in a remote place. Many great personalities of the Prophet's (S) companions, especially Imam Ali ('a), were not present at the gathering. The election came after a dispute in which a follower claimed that the first caliph had a greater right to become a caliph because of his kinship with the Prophet (S). Despite the fact that Imam Ali ('a) was closest to the Prophet (S) in kinship and had been appointed successor by the Prophet (S) himself.
2. The second caliph was chosen by his predecessor, the first caliph.
3. The third caliph was chosen by a group of 6 people, all of whom were candidates for the caliphate. This was done in accordance with instructions from the second caliph, who himself selected these 6 candidates. These included Imam Ali ('a). The second caliph had denied Imam Ali's ('a) leadership a few years earlier as he argued that prophecy and leadership could not arise from the same household. Nevertheless, he chose Imam Ali ('a) among his candidates.[15](#)

Considering that the manners detailed above contradict the Prophet's (S) requests, the question arises: which manner is the right one?

By Following The Ahl Al-Bayt ('A) As The Prophet (S) Urged The Path Becomes Clear And All The Pieces Fall Into Place!

According to the caliphs, there were three different manners to appoint a leader. So, which is the right one? And how can it be obvious that the last Imam ('aj) will be chosen by God but not the first Imam ('a)?

Once again, there are puzzle pieces missing among today's Muslim denominations. In line with all ahadith, everyone acknowledges that there will be 12 leaders and the leader in the last era will be Imam

Al-Mahdi ('aj). While claiming that the leader is not appointed by God and they cannot list who the twelve leaders are, they acknowledge that Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) is from Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) and the last of these leaders. Who are the first 11 in that case? The only Islamic denomination with a clear theme and which can give a clear answer to this question is the Shi'a school, Ahl Al-Bayts ('a) followers who cling to the Qur'an and Ahl Al-Bayts' ('a) leadership and followers, such as the Prophet (S) commanded. The puzzle pieces that are missing are easy to find; via the Prophet (S) and his successors, the Imams ('a) of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a). Then everything falls into place; all parts linking Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) to the Prophet (S) fall into place and make the whole picture clear and obvious. The right path is one and the same, according to clear Qur'anic edicts and prophetic narrations, the successors and guides are the twelve selected Imams from the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a).¹⁶

The figure illustrates Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) tree with the fourteen ma'soomin (infallible) – Prophet Muhammad (S), Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) and the twelve Imams ('a).

1. This topic has been discussed earlier in the book; see D1.
2. In this part of the book, a summary of the topic of Imamah is given with references to more detailed discussions earlier in the book. Consequently, this part should primarily have the function of a look back, which provides the reader with an overall picture to carry with them for the next part of the book that deals with the Imams ('a) life more extensively.
3. The subject has been dealt with extensively earlier in the book where Qur'anic evidence for the position of Imamah was presented; see F.
4. The subject has been dealt with extensively earlier in the book; see F4.
5. This is narrated i.a. in Usul Al-Kafi volume 1 p. 200. The subject Imamah has been dealt with extensively in the book Imamah by Ayatullah Makarim Shirazi (HA)
6. The subject has been dealt with extensively, among other things, in connection with the question 'why are guides needed'; see F and on.
7. The following is part of a longer statement from Imam Ali ('a) to his faithful companion Kumayl Ibn Ziyad, which is narrated in Nahjul Balagha's Words of Wisdom 139.
8. The subject has been dealt with extensively earlier in the book in connection with the Prophet's (S) history; see I2 and further on.
9. In reference to the hadith mentioned in the previous chapter; see note 181.
10. Note that religion does not only refer to specific acts of worship but it also includes one's view of life. One's faith is thus the view of life that determines one's way of life. In other words, man lives by what one believes in, and in this way, religion encompasses everything that concerns humanity and all aspects of one's life.
11. In reference to the Holy Qur'an 4:59, which was dealt with extensively earlier in the book in connection with the account of the "Ul 'ul-amr verse"; see F4 onwards. This fact is also ascertained through many other verses and ahadith including in connection with the Prophet's (S) hadith that obedience to Imam Ali ('a) is obedience to the Prophet (S) and further obedience to God; see F4.
12. The Imams ('a), after the Prophet (S), are the best role models for people in all aspects and are, in fact, the living exemplification of the perfect man, the application of God's religion, the manifestation of His attributes and the realization of the statues. The khalifat-Allah (Deputy of God) on earth, for which God created man.
13. The topic has been dealt with extensively earlier in the book. in connection with the question of Islam (infallibility); see F4.
14. This has been presented both throughout the book, i.a. F3, and can be seen in several hadiths and depictions including in Prophet's (S) speech at Ghadir Khumm.
15. Imam Ali ('a) refers to these events in short and deep terms in the sermon of Shaqshaqiyah, sermon 3 in the book Nahjul Balagha. The historical narratives of the events follow later in the book; see P and further on.

16. Most hadiths are mentioned throughout the book; see G5, among others.

6.1 – 1st Imam [Second Ma’soom] – Imam Ali (‘A), The Guide Of The Prophet (S)

M. Would The Prophet (S) Leave His People To Their Own Fates?

The Prophet (S), as the last and foremost Messenger of God, bore the final and complete message that complemented the religion of God and the works of former Prophets (‘a) and [he] was thus the seal of the Prophets (‘a). The reach of his worldwide message is not limited by time nor space and is for the whole of humanity to flourish to its highest potential. It must, thus, be kept in safe hands. Simply put, the importance and magnitude of this message require protection.

How can it then be imaginable that God, who has constantly sent His prophets (‘a) for the guidance of men, would just leave everything to its fate now? How could it be conceivable that the Prophet (S) who was so concerned about man’s guidance and liberation and fought for this his entire life, would not be concerned with man’s destiny and how it would go after him? Logic cannot accept that such a large and vital mission would be left to its own fate upon the Prophet’s (S) passing. Nor is it in accordance with God to leave man without a guide. By virtue of His justice and wisdom and that the message has never been given without protectors [of the message]. Former prophets (‘a) have always passed the message on to their successors and next coming prophets (‘a).

One who has worked hard and strived for many years to achieve a long-term goal and succeeded in building the foundation for it will obviously be keen on its continued development and realization. This fact is logical and clearly seen within social structures. Neglection, in this context, would be irresponsible and unnatural. For example, imagine a manager, who for 20 years strived, and built up a large company, only to then leave it. Would it be feasible that he leaves without any plan, replacement or instructions to all the employees after him? In reality, such a thing would not happen especially when it is associated with an infallible Prophet (S) and a divine message.

Similarly, at the societal level, a company has a CEO and a Vice President while a government has ministers. Each position has its respective replacement. Likewise, a football team has a captain and a substitute ... The examples are many! All countries have a review system in their constitution that contains what action is taken in the event of the demise of a minister or head of state. If these leaders did not have substitutes to take over the rule when needed, chaos would prevail in their absence! More

than that; society requires this in order for stability to prevail.

In reality, the principle is not only applicable to top positions. In all areas of responsibility, there is, and needs to be, an official substitute in case the person responsible becomes absent. Most people agree that the person who leaves a job or responsibility without a substitute plan is irresponsible and not concerned about the continued development and success of the establishment at hand. This is true regardless of the size of the establishment but in particular in large ones. How, then, would it be for a divinely chosen Prophet (S) who is responsible for the final message that concerns all of humanity? Not to mention, how would it be possible for God, the Wise, not to have a plan for this?

The Prophet (S) had to go through many adversities in order to establish the first Islamic state that would help the development and advancement of humanity. As such, he was most concerned about the wellbeing of humanity and that the divine path would be pursued all the way to the finish, even after his passing. It was the Prophet's (S) personal affair to ensure the continued guidance and perfection of men. It goes against common sense that an infallible Prophet (S) would have ignored the question of succession.

Besides the divine command that the Prophet (S) received to announce his successor and the evidence and historical arguments that belong to this matter, there is a logical aspect to be considered. Would a Prophet (S) who fought and sacrificed for decades and then succeeded in transforming an entire society to leave everything just like that? When Prophet Musa ('a) [Moses] went to Mount Toor [Sinai] for the meeting of God, for a limited period of thirty days, he did not leave the people to their own destiny. He appointed his brother Haroon ('a) as his deputy and successor among the people. Is it then possible that the last Prophet (S) would leave the people to their own destiny for the coming future without deputies and successors?¹

In fact, the Prophet (S), as the foremost leader in history, with the greatest and most important mission to pull all of humanity to the dock, would of course never leave the people to their fate. Hence, on God's order, the Prophet (S) chose Imam Ali ('a) as his rightful successor to complete the path and reiterated this on several occasions. Thus, Imam Ali ('a) is the first Imam ('a) after the Prophet (S). On the basis of being the most qualified, which has repeatedly been proven throughout history.²

M1. What Were The Alternatives Of The Prophet (S)?

Some argue that the election of the Prophet's (S) successor was left to the people. They use God's command in the verse of 'consultation' to strengthen their claim.

If we examine this more closely, there are two aspects to be considered. Firstly, whether God's command to consult others is applicable in the appointment of the Prophet's (S) successor? Based on the nature of the mission and the conditions for its success, it is clear that the message could not be delivered except in the guardianship of an infallible prophet ('a) or Imam ('a) chosen by God. Since

Prophet Muhammad (S) was the last Prophet, it should have been a successor with the same qualities and qualifications that fulfilled the mission – namely an Imam ('a). In addition to the historical evidence for Imam Ali's ('a) qualification and selection, and in addition to the Prophet's (S) testimony of this [on God's order], was there anyone else who fulfilled these requirements?

Imam Ali ('a) was, according to companions' statements, the foremost among them and the one closest to the Prophet (S). How would it be acceptable for the foremost and most suitable to be put aside as a leader in favour of someone else who is not at that level? Is it not a given that a leader should be the one best qualified for the mission?

The second aspect to consider is the actions of the first caliphs in relation to the question at hand. As history testifies, the choice of the first caliph was made by a few. It took place in remoteness, while the public was in shock following the passing of the Prophet (S). This, while the second caliph was the choice of the first caliph and the selection of the third caliph, was decided by a closed council, under predetermined conditions, whose members had been chosen by the second caliph. The question then is how some claim that these elections were made through popular elections can? And the second question is: does the first and second caliph's actions, in choosing themselves, mean that they were more concerned about the fate of the people than God and the Prophet (S) himself?

There are some scholars, in other Islamic schools and denominations, who argue that the Prophet (S) left the choice of his successor to the people. However, according to the clear testimony in history, the first caliph appointed his successor himself, while the second caliph appointed a specific gathering to appoint his successor. Further questions arise in this context: which method is the right one? And if any of the latter methods are correct; did these caliphs know better than the Prophet (S)? Or were they more concerned about the continued success of the Islamic nation than the Prophet (S) was? Did they care more than the very Prophet (S) who, according to themselves, chose no successor? With his knowledge of society and its existing dangers, would the Prophet (S) leave the fate of Muslims to chance? And if the statement that the Prophet (S) did not choose a successor was true, why did the succeeding caliphs not follow their Prophet's (S) method?

In summary, according to these schools' arguments, there were three options for the Prophet (S):

1. Not appointing a successor and leave the nation to its fate
2. Appointing a gathering of people to appoint the successor
3. Appointing the successor himself

It has already been established that the first option is not logical.³ The second and third options, which the first and second caliphs acted upon, are neither a choice nor a popular vote. Historically, there was no election where the entire Muslim nation voted for its leader. In addition, the second and third options were also not in accordance with the Prophet's (S) alleged act of leaving the election to the people. So

how was it really done? And what did the Prophet's (S) preaching in Ghadir mean based on all this? Why did the Prophet (S) appoint Imam Ali ('a) as his successor right from the beginning of his calling and emphasized this several times in all possible contexts repeatedly, right up to his farewell pilgrimage where he declared it open to all Muslims?⁴

N. God Has Promised To Preserve Religion Forever – How?

God has said in the Holy Qur'an:

"Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an, and indeed, We will be its guardian." (The Holy Qur'an, 15:9).

The words and verses of The Holy Qur'an, are completely preserved in their original condition. They have not been subject to any change or distortion. There is absolutely no doubt about this fact. Nonetheless, the Holy Qur'an, like other sacred scripts, has been the subject of interpretation throughout history. Some individuals and groups have, at times, emphasized parts of its message at the expense of other parts. So as to further their own perceptions and interests. These self-interpretations have led to many distorted lines of thought that deviated from the true interpretation⁵ or ended in extremism that bears no resemblance to the Prophet's (S) merciful approach.⁶

Consequently, God's promise of the preservation of the Qur'an must involve not only the preservation of the scripture itself but also its message and interpretation. How? Could it have been for this purpose that God repeatedly emphasizes the Prophet (S) as the best example, and commands obedience to the Prophet (S) and equates obedience to His Prophet (S) with obedience to Himself?

In fact, the Prophet (S) can be described as a personification of the Qur'an's precepts and messages. The Prophet (S) and the Imams ('a) after him are a manifestation of the Qur'an in human form, as they have knowledge of all its messages and apply them in practice. This explains the reason the Prophet (S) emphasized that the Qur'an and his Ahlul Al-Bayt ('a) would never be separated. As the true interpretation of the Qur'an can never be obtained without the Prophet's (S) and [after him] his Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) guidance.

The Holy Qur'an, And The Ahl Al-Bayt ('A)

The Prophet said:

"I leave you two valuable things, if you hold on to BOTH you will not get lost after me. They are the book of God and my offspring, which is my Ahl Al-Bayt. The Merciful has informed me that these two should not be separated from each other until they come to me at the pool of paradise."⁷

The Qur'an is the revealed word of God, and the Imams ('a) are the ones who hold its complete message. No mankind will be without the guidance of one of these guides according to the testimony of

the Qur'an. This means that the people of all eras, until the Day of Judgment, are under the guidance and protection of one of these Imams ('a). Therefore, an obvious consequence is to search for and ask the question in every era: who is the Imam of our time?

How Does The Imam ('A) Protect Religion?

It is vital that an infallible person, holding complete knowledge of God's message, interprets the Qur'an for the people. In doing so, they save people from distorted interpretations.[8](#)

The Imams ('a) protect religion by doing, among other things, the following:

- Showing and shedding light on the truth and justice for the people in its perfected entirety. This is because man's aql (intellect) lacks knowledge, overview and an overall picture on many issues. In addition, human beings can make mistakes because of deficiencies in moral aspects or when the judgment is influenced by other factors such as incorrect knowledge, self-interest, etc.
- Protecting the Prophet's (S) message from distortion.
- Exposing the hypocrites, that is, the false individuals who appear in a religious garment and use lies and manipulation to spread corruption in the name of religion.[9](#)
- Resisting the ignorant interpretations of the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet (S). The motive behind distorted interpretations are not necessarily vicious; ignorant people can sometimes make defective interpretations based on ignorance.[10](#)

O. Imam Ali ('A), Raised By The Prophet (S)

Imam Ali's ('A) Miraculous Birth Inside The Ka'ba

Imam Ali ('a) was born on the 13th of the month of Rajab in Mecca in 600 AD. He was miraculously born inside the Holy Ka'ba. Symbolizing the high position he held with God, as no one else was ever born in Ka'ba, neither before nor after him. Prior to Imam Ali's ('a) birth, his mother Fatimah bint Asad (r.a.) went to towards the holy precinct of Ka'ba. Once there, she experienced labour pain while praying. As she lifted her head after prayer, she witnessed a miracle; one of the Ka'ba's walls opened up for her. People nearby were astonished as they saw Imam Ali's ('a) mother go into the Ka'ba and the wall was closed after her. Following the happening, nobody could enter the Ka'ba. All attempts to open the door to the Ka'ba were unsuccessful.

Soon the news of this miraculous event spread throughout Mecca. Fatimah bint Asad (r.a.) was inside the Ka'ba for three days. When the fourth day arrived, the Ka'ba's wall miraculously opened and she stepped out with her infant in her arms. Imam Ali ('a) had not yet opened his eyes. Prophet Muhammad (S) was eager to see and carry the newborn child. As Imam Ali ('a) came into the Prophet's (S) arms, he

opened his eyes for the first time. The first thing his eyes were blessed with was the sight of the Prophet's (S) blessed face. From that moment, Imam Ali ('a) was in the Prophet's (S) company. He grew from childhood with a strong and close relationship with the Prophet (S).

Imam Ali ('a) Moves Into The Home Of The Prophet (S) At The Age Of Six

The Prophet's (S) uncle and Imam Ali's ('a) father, Abu Talib (r.a.), had a large family in which the Prophet (S) himself had grown up in. Famine hit Mecca when Imam Ali ('a) was about six years of age. From that time, the Prophet (S) took Imam Ali ('a) to his own house. He took care of him and raised him as a loving father. The moral of the Prophet (S) was widely known, and he raised Imam Ali ('a) as well to hold deep fear of God, piousness and noble values.

Imam Ali ('a) has said in this regard:

“I was with him when he was at home or when travelling just like a young camel which follows his mother. Every day he taught me something new from his conduct to follow. Every year he went to the cave Hira, and only I could see him. At that time, there was no Muslim in any house except the Prophet's (S) and Khadija's (r.a.) house, and I was the third of them. I could see the light of revelation and feel the prophecy.” [11](#)

The First Man To Accept Islam

As a young man, Imam Ali ('a) worshipped God together with the Prophet (S). When the Prophet (S) received the first revelation, Imam Ali ('a) was the first man to believe in him and pay witness to the Prophet's (S) prophecy and message. Therefore, Imam Ali ('a) was the first of the Prophet's (S) companions to adopt Islam. He became a Muslim at the early age of 10.

Character

Imam Ali ('a) was a reflection of the Prophet (S) in his character, morality, justice, wisdom, patience, courage, kindness and eloquence. The Prophet (S) loved Imam Ali ('a), just as Imam Ali ('a) loved the Prophet (S). He was constantly ready to defend and protect the Prophet (S) from any harm and all aggressors. Imam Ali ('a) was also the companion who, at the command of the Prophet (S), was allowed to write down the revealed Qur'anic verses. Historical events, as well as the Prophet's (S) companions, testify that Imam Ali ('a) was the Prophet's (S) closest companion and one who had both great talent and excellent intelligence, and obeyed the Prophet (S) wholeheartedly.

The Prophet (S) has said in this regard:

“Whoever wants to see [Prophet] Adam ('a) in his knowledge, and [Prophet] Nooh ('a) in his taqwa (piety) and determination, and [Prophet] Ibrahim ('a) in his forbearance, and [Prophet] Musa ('a) in his worship and intelligence and [Prophet] Isa ('a) in his religious devotion should look at Ali ibn Abi Talib

(‘a).” [12](#)

Imam Ali’s (‘A) Position In Relation To The Prophet (S)

Historically, it is clear that Imam Ali’s (‘a) position in relation to the Prophet (S) is very special and unique. The support that Imam Ali (‘a) gave the Prophet (S) cannot be compared to anyone else’s. No words are sufficient enough to accurately describe Imam Ali’s (‘a) greatness and closeness to the Prophet (S).

What follows is a selection of narrations whereby the Prophet (S) himself testifies to Imam Ali’s (‘a) position. He describes it with speaking parables to obedient ears, waking hearts and truth-seeking souls.

Hadith Manzila (The Position)

Hadith Manzila (The Position) – Imam Ali’s (‘a) position in relation to the Prophet (S) is equated with the position of Prophet Haroon’s (‘a) to Prophet Musa (‘a)

In an authentic narration that has been quoted in most credible Sunni and Shi’i sources, the Prophet (S) equates Imam Ali’s (‘a) position in relation to himself, to Prophet Haroon’s (‘a) in relation to Prophet Musa (‘a). In connection with a battle in which the Prophet (S) commanded Imam Ali (‘a) to remain in Medina, the Prophet (S) said:

“Ali, are you not pleased to be to me as Haroon was to Musa, except that there is no prophet after me.”

To understand this hadith, it is necessary to answer the natural follow-up question: How was the position of Prophet Haroon (‘a) in relation to Prophet Musa (‘a)?

It is a historically known fact that Prophet Haroon (‘a) was Prophet Musa’s (‘a) brother, his closest companion, accomplice, and his deputy in his absence. Prophet Haroon (‘a) was the one whom God bestowed to Prophet Musa (‘a) in response to Musa’s (‘a) prayer for a supporter and a helper. The difference was that Prophet Haroon (‘a) was also chosen by God to be a prophet. In this narration, the Prophet (S) emphasizes that Imam Ali (‘a) has exactly the same position with the exception that he is not a prophet. This was when the Prophet (S) was the last Messenger who came with the final message, and there would be no more prophets after him who received wahy (revelation). On the other hand, there would be deputies and successors who would complete the Prophet’s (S) path as it continues after him. They carry on the mission in society until the goal is achieved. Therefore, Imam Ali (‘a) was for the Prophet (S) as Haroon (‘a) was for Prophet Musa (‘a), apart from the position of the prophecy. This meaning is clear in the Holy Qur’ān, which describes Haroon’s (‘a) position in relation to Prophet Musa (‘a):

“And appoint for me a minister from my family” (The Holy Qur’ān, 20:29).

“Aaron, my brother.” (The Holy Qur'an, 20:30).

“Increase through him my strength.” (The Holy Qur'an, 20:31).

“And let him share my task.” (The Holy Qur'an, 20:32).

“That we may exalt You much.” (The Holy Qur'an, 20:33).

“And remember You much.” (The Holy Qur'an, 20:34).

“Indeed, You are of us ever Seeing.” (The Holy Qur'an, 20:35).

“[God] said, ‘You have been granted your request, O Moses.’” (The Holy Qur'an, 20:36)

Furthermore, Haroon's ('a) [position as] a representative also is made clear by Prophet Musa ('a) in the following verses in the Qur'an:

“And We made an appointment with Moses for thirty nights and perfected them by [the addition of] ten; so the term of his Lord was completed as forty nights. And Moses said to his brother Aaron, “Take my place among my people, do right [by them], and do not follow the way of the corrupters.” (The Holy Qur'an, 7:142).

“[God] said, “We will strengthen your arm through your brother and grant you both supremacy so they will not reach you. [It will be] through Our signs; you and those who follow you will be predominant.” (The Holy Qur'an, 28:35).

Hadith Bab Madinat Al-'Ilm

Hadith bab madinat Al-'Ilm (The gate to the city of knowledge) – The Prophet (S) is the city of knowledge, and Imam Ali ('a) is its gate

The Prophet (S) has also equated Imam Ali ('a) as a gate that must be passed in order to gain the Prophet's (S) understanding and knowledge. In an authentic narration, the Prophet (S) has said:

“I am the city of knowledge and 'Ali is its gate.” [13](#)

The hadith shows that Imam Ali's ('a) knowledge derives from the Prophet's (S). It also shows that the Prophet (S) was Imam Ali's ('a) sole teacher and that Imam Ali ('a) was the Prophet's (S) most prominent disciple and follower. Furthermore, the hadith is a proof of Imam Ali's ('a) superior position in religious leadership.[14](#) It also attests to the high status of his knowledge. By stating that the road to the Prophet (S) goes via Imam Ali ('a), the Imam ('a) constitutes the link and entrance. As such, he holds the most knowledge of Islam, The Holy Qur'an, and the Prophet's (S) course of action.

Imam Ali's ('a) unique position can also be confirmed in the following narration where the Prophet (S)

clearly states that no one knows his reality except Imam Ali ('a) and God:

"No one knows God except Ali and me, no one knows Ali except God and me, and no one knows me except God and Ali." [15](#)

The narrations and the historical depictions of Imam Ali ('a) are many. Another one that can be mentioned regarding follow Imam Ali ('a), is the following narration where the Prophet (S) has said:

"Ali is the best and wisest of you, and he is the one with the best judgment among you. To reject what he says is to reject what I say, and to reject what I say means to deny God's command." [16](#)

O1. From The Verse 'Warn Your Closest Relatives' To Ghadir

The Prophet (S) appointed Imam Ali ('a) as his successor firstly in connection with the revelation of the verse 'warn your closest relatives'. Lastly, in the event of Ghadir Khumm, shortly before his passing. [17](#) Between these two events, the Prophet (S) has, on many occasions, repeated the appointment of Imam Ali ('a) as successor. The history is filled with the Prophet's (S) constant proclamation and determination of Imam Ali's ('a) position. The Prophet (S) used every opportunity he could to recall Imam Ali's ('a) position as a successor.

The major and critical events of Islam have one thing in common: Imam Ali ('a). He was the key person and the main support to the Prophet (S). There are many stories that confirm this. Below are some events no one denies had a crucial role in Islam. All are mentioned by prominent narrators in both Sunni and Shiite sources. Since some of these have already been mentioned in detail before, they are presented below in short lines. They are an overall overview of Imam Ali's ('a) role:

- Brought up by the Prophet (S)
- The first to answer the Prophet's (S) call and accept Islam
- The verse "warn your nearest family" (26:214) – Imam Ali ('a) is publicly appointed as the Prophet's (S) brother, deputy and successor at the first public call to Islam
- The first and foremost one who recorded God's revealed word to the Prophet (S)
- The sacrifice during the night for the Prophet's (S) hijra to Medina (2:207)
- The brotherhood between Muhajirin and Ansar – Imam Ali ('a) and prophets (S) brotherhood
- Tathir verses (33:33)
- All doors to the mosque are closed except Imam Ali's ('a) and Fatimah's ('a) door
- The Mubahala verse (3:61)

- The Ulo-l-amr verse (4:59)
- Battle of Badr – Imam Ali's ('a) prominent role and victory
- Battle of Uhud – Imam Ali ('a) stops and defends the Prophet (S)
- The Battle of Ahzab
- Battle of Khaybar – Imam Ali ('a) succeeds when no one else succeeds
- Battle of Tabouk – Imam Ali's ('a) position to Prophet (S) as Haroon ('a) to Musa ('a)
- The conveying of surah Al-Bara'at to the idol worshipers in Mecca
- Surah Al-Insan – the Abrar- verse (76: 5–9)
- Alms in rokoo' (5:55) [18](#)
- The hadith of Bab Madinat Al-'ilm (The gate to the city of knowledge)
- Fath (opening of) Mecca and bearing of Islam's banner
- Destroying the idols
- Ghadir Khumm (5:67) – Imam Ali ('a) officially announced as the Prophet's (S) successor
 - The verse about the completion of religion [5:3]
 - The person who asked for punishment for not being able to tolerate [70: 1] [19](#)
- The last will of the Prophet (S) and 'call upon my habib (beloved) and brother.' [20](#)
- The Prophet's (S) kafn (ritual washing and winding of the deceased) and burial

Did You Know?

Sunni and Shi'a Muslims acknowledge the speech in Ghadir as undeniably authentic. So, there is no doubt that the Prophet (S) stayed in Ghadir Khumm, had everyone gathered and held that sermon.

The difference, however, is how some Sunni scholars interpret the Arabic word "mawla" (master), where the Prophet (S) in his speech says 'God is my mawla, and I am the mawla of believers, and for whom I am mawla, Ali is also his mawla".

They claim that the meaning of the word mawla is a friend. Although tens of thousands of people waited for several hours under the hot sun, some Sunnis believe that the Prophet (S) only wanted to tell the public that Imam Ali ('a) was everyone's friend. The people also had to wait for everyone who had not

arrived and call back those who had passed on. They were also ordered to spread the message to all who were not present and to future generations. In addition, the whole event took place during the last pilgrimage of the Prophet (S) where he was commanded by God to proclaim something new. The question is: is it reasonable for the Prophet (S) to carry out all these preparations only to inform the people that Ali ('a) is their friend?

What, then, was the new thing to be proclaimed when everything else mentioned in the speech was already known to the Muslims? Did the Muslims not already know that Ali ('a) is the friend of the Prophet (S)? Then how is the subsequent ceremony explained, in which people pledged allegiance to Imam Ali ('a)? Or the narration of Thaqalayn (the two valuable things) that the Prophet (S) also mentions, and then emphasizes the importance of clinging to the Qur'an and Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) that must never be separated from each other?

P. After The Prophet (S)

Before The Passing Of The Prophet (S) – The Prophet (S) Asks To Write Down Something Important

Towards the end of his life, the Prophet (S) gathered a large army, under the leadership of Usama, to venture out to meet the threats of the Romans. The Prophet (S) commanded all companions, except for a few, to join the army. He was careful to emphasize that the leading [companions] among the Muhajirin and Ansar were also included in the order and had to leave Medina with the army. However, several of these personalities renounced and defied the Prophet's (S) order by staying in Medina or turned round from the journey. Among the excuses were that they could not follow Usama because of his young age and that the Prophet's (S) condition had deteriorated, so they needed to stay in order to help.

Consequently, several of them were present when the Prophet's (S) condition deteriorated and he, while lying in his sickbed, asked for a piece of skin and ink to write down something so that the people would never go astray after him. Then Omar Ibn Al-Khattab said:

“The disease has overwhelmed him, and he is delirious. The Holy Qur'an, is sufficient for us!”[21](#)

A quarrel arose among the people present. There was a division between two parties – those who wanted to give the Prophet (S) what he asked for and those who refused. The Prophet (S), who saw this became upset, refrained from writing and went to the mosque instead. Imam Ali ('a) and Fadhl Ibn Al-Abbas, who was the cousin of the Prophet (S), carried him there while his feet were dragging on the ground. In the mosque, the Prophet (S) gave a speech where he once again said:

“I leave two great and valuable things among you; The Holy Qur'an, and my Ahl Al-Bayt ('a). If you stick to them, you will never go astray.”

The Prophet (S) once again reminded the people of these words, which he had preached to them on so many occasions before. He warned the people time and time again to not be divided after him. It has also been reported that the Prophet (S) turned his face to his followers who had gathered around his bed and said:

“My death is approaching, and I leave two valuable things among you; the first is the Qur'an and the second is my Ahl Al-Bayt ('a).”

Then he raised Imam Ali's ('a) hand and said:

“Ali ('a) abides by the Qur'an, and the Qur'an will never be separated from him.”

Finally, the Prophet (S) called Imam Ali ('a) and whispered to him for a while until he passed away and his blessed soul left his blessed body while his blessed head was on the knees of Imam Ali ('a). Imam Ali ('a) was the one who performed the rituals for the Prophet (S) after his passing as the Prophet (S) had wished.[22](#)

Two Paths After The Prophet (S)

Saqifa

While Imam Ali ('a) performed the burial rituals of the Prophet (S), a crowd gathered in Saqifa and disputed the issue of the Prophet's (S) successor. Saqifa was a place that belonged to the Jewish tribe Bani Sa'eda in Medina. First, some of the Ansar had gathered there as they feared that the Muhajirin would not follow the Prophet's (S) choice of Imam Ali ('a). They wanted to stay ahead of possible events and secure themselves.

The Ansar's fear rose, not least, as a result of the events that preceded the Prophet's (S) departure. Including the apparent defiance of the Prophet's (S) orders regarding Usama's army. Statements of the kind; “Prophecy and leadership cannot be gathered in the same household [aimed at Bani Hashim and specifically Imam Ali ('a)]” were heard being said by prominent personalities of Muhajirin.

Additionally, the Ansar feared they would be afflicted by a revenge campaign. They were the first to support the Prophet (S) and fought against Quraysh, the tribe that many of the Muhajirin belonged to. Consequently, the majority of those killed in those battles were related to the Muhajirin. Ansar feared that pre-Islamic traditions of revenge would revive after the passing of the Prophet (S). Although the Prophet (S) had worked hard to eradicate blind fanatical traditions such as revenge campaigns and kinship feuds, they were deeply rooted in Jahiliyyah (the era of ignorance – the pre-Islamic era), and traces of them still remained with some.

When Ansar came to Saqifa, Saadat Ibn Ubada, the tribal leader of Al-Khazraj, who was one of the great tribes that made up Ansar, emphasized:

“The gathering of Ansar, you have had the advantage and privilege of responding to the Prophet Muhammad’s (S) calling and living with him. This is an advantage that not all Arabs have had. For ten years he invited the people to the path of the One God... **The Prophet (S) passed away while he was still pleased with you and your actions; therefore, you should hold onto it [the caliphate] since it belongs to you and not them...** “

The news of the gathering reached Abu Bakr and Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, who immediately rushed there and surprised Ansar while they were giving advice on who should be appointed to take over the governance. Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, who was known for his temper, wanted to attack Ansar physically but was calmed down by Abu Bakr who said:

“We, the Muhajirin, were the first to embrace Islam, **we have the noblest and chivalrous descent, and we are closest to the Messenger of God [in kinship]** ... We are emirs and you are viziers ...

Therefore, do not envy your brothers from Muhajirin who have been blessed with this position. That is why I appoint one of these two men [Omar Ibn Al-Khattab and Abu Ubayda] as leaders over you for the caliphate.”

Like Sa’d Abu Bakr ignored the Prophet’s (S) appointment of Imam Ali (‘a) as his successor. But Omar Ibn Al-Khattab instead proposed Abu Bakr as a leader, and after he himself pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr, he got the attending Ansar and Muhajirin to pledge allegiance to him. All this took place while the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) and most of the Prophets (S) prominent companions were occupied with the burial of the Prophet (S).

The question that arises here is whether the arguments presented by these few attending of Ansar and Muhajirin, to justify what they did in Saqifa, is legitimate? The speaker from Ansar said that their support for the Prophet (S) and his [the Prophets (S)] contentment with them qualified them for leadership. The speaker from Muhajirin instead had the Prophet’s (S) kinship as the main argument for qualifying for leadership. In addition to the obvious fact that the Prophet (S) already appointed the leader, if we instead assume that these two merits decided who would become the leader: was there someone other than Imam Ali (‘a) who, without any competition, surpassed everyone else in both the Prophet’s (S) contentment and close kinship with the Prophet (S)?

Did You Know?

The great achievement of the Prophet (S) in revolutionizing a nation in only twenty-three years is nothing more than a miracle. With his good morals and piety, he inspired the hearts and spread light and hope to the world. The Prophet (S) had managed to breathe new life into a society imprisoned by intolerant customs. It was a society characterized by idolatry, tribal feuds and revenge campaigns. Bloody wars took place, girls were buried alive, and the oppression of the rich and powerful had no limits. With the efforts of the Prophet (S) and trust in God, society was transformed into a place where monotheism, piety, justice and brotherhood had been highlighted. Help reached the poor and the

orphans. Women gained dignity in society and sacrifice in God's way became a habit for everyone. Despite this enormous achievement, not all the customs of ignorance had been eradicated. The traces of these customs remained among some of those who grew up and spent the majority of their lives in the pre-Islamic era.

The Islamic nation was yet another young plant that needed to be cared for to reach its goal. At the same time, since the beginning of the Prophet's (S) governance in Medina, there were internal enemies. The Holy Qur'an, called these enemies for munafqin (hypocrites). In their exterior, they appeared to be Muslims while in reality, they were conspiring against the Muslims. The Prophet (S) tried to prepare the people for his passing, but the event was still shocking to many. After his passing, the hypocrites saw the chance to sabotage, and the external enemies made society more fragile for internal turbulence. These events were predictable. That in itself is another reason why the Prophet (S) would impossibly have left the Muslim community without a leader who could steer [society] in the right direction.

Therefore, what would happen after the Prophet (S), was of great importance and crucial to the future of Islam. The foundation that the Prophet (S) had laid needed to be protected and continued to be built on. In order to pave the way to ultimate success while countering enemy attacks and supporting society not to fall back into its old ways. Who other than the most devout and closely related to the Prophet (S), that is, the most righteous and competent man, could fulfil this extremely important and decisive mission?

When Imam Ali ('a) was deprived of his proper position, the horrific tragedies that the Islamic nation would suffer in the future began, and which left its stains until this day. The Imams ('a) of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) ruled in accordance with the Prophet's (S) wisdom and true values. If they were given a chance to rule, the Islamic nation would have reached levels of justice which undoubtedly would have secured humanity until today. This justice was seen during Imam Ali's ('a) governance and stands as an exemplary model for all of humanity until today. Instead, a gradual decline began, which the Islamic world is still suffering from. The incident in Saqifa marked the beginning of divisions within the Muslim nation and became the basis for horrific consequences.

These events paved the way for future tyrannical rulers such as Mu'awiya and Yazid to reach the supreme stage of power. These tyrants committed massacres under the governance of Bani Umayya, which continued with Bani Marwan and Bani Abbas. The equivalents to these tyrants are today's monarchies who rule with extreme interpretations of religion. They are the ones who terrorist groups, like Da'esh, lean back on for support. Islamic leadership was hijacked and distorted into an inherited monarchy under the title of the 'caliphate'. The standards of Muslim society were distorted and weakened at the expense of the true Islamic values that the Prophet (S) had founded. This continued to the critical degree that Mu'awiya was able to appoint his drunkard and irresponsible son Yazid as the caliph of the Muslims without the majority of the Muslim community protesting!

It was from this beginning of unjustified leadership and unjust distribution of positions of power and wealth that one Yazid could come to power. He executed the massacre of Ashura in Karbala and

brutally murdered the Prophet's (S) grandson Imam Al-Husayn ('a), just fifty years after the passing of the Prophet (S). Moreover, all the tragedies, injustices and corruption that not only the Muslim nation but the whole world today continue to suffer from are a consequence of unjustified leadership.[23](#)

Ahl Al-Bayt ('A) And Several Other Prominent Companions Were Not Involved In Saqifa's Decision

The great personalities of Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) and other prominent followers were not involved in the decision that would affect the entire Islamic nation. When the news reached the Prophet's (S) uncle, Al-Abbas, he went to Imam Ali ('a) and said to him:

“My nephew, give me your hand so that I may pledge allegiance to you and so that people may see that the Prophet's (S) uncle has sworn allegiance to God's Messenger's cousin.”

Imam Ali ('a) asked his uncle:

“Who more desires the caliphate?”[24](#)

Imam Ali ('a) was occupied with washing and burying the Prophet (S) and was not aware of what had happened.

Imam Ali ('A) Refuses To Pledge Allegiance To Abu Bakr

Imam Ali ('a) did not pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr for the obvious reason that leadership was of God's decree. Leadership rightly belonged to the Imam ('a) as he was the one who could lead society and the people in the right direction. Otherwise, a position of power for worldly purposes was not of value to Imam Ali ('a), and the position in itself meant nothing to him.[25](#) This was demonstrated when Abu Sufyan went to Imam Ali ('a) and offered to pledge allegiance to him and support him militarily. Abu Sufyan had been an enemy of Islam and saw an opportunity to cause divisions and weaken Islamic rule. Imam Ali ('a) firmly refused because he knew about Abu Sufyan's intentions.[26](#)

The Attack On Imam Ali's ('A) House

One of the most astonishing events in the history of Islam is when it was decided that allegiance to Abu Bakr should be taken from Imam Ali ('a) forcibly. A crowd was sent to bring Imam Ali ('a), by any means, to pledge allegiance. It ended in Fatimah's ('a) and Imam Ali's ('a) house being attacked. This house was so deeply loved and respected by the Prophet (S) that he stopped daily at its door and greeted his household Ahl Al-Bayt ('a).[27](#)

When the threats escalated and the situation worsened, some of those who were in the lead escalated and threatened to burn down the house as if they did not know that Fatimah ('a) was inside the house?! This fact, which everyone already knew, caused some in the crowd to retreat, while the one leading the attack roared that it does not matter. The house would be burnt down regardless of who was in it unless

the oath of allegiance was given to Abu Bakr. Fatimah ('a) herself had walked to the door to answer the threatening crowd, and her voice was heard behind the door. Despite this, one of the men set fire to the door and kicked it in. Fatimah az-Zahra's ('a) cry for her father, the Prophet (S) echoed when she was crushed between the door and the wall. History witnessed how the Prophet's (S) daughter's house was mercilessly stormed in front of her son, Imam Al-Hasan ('a).²⁸

Imam Ali ('a), whose strength on the battlefield was known and frightened even the bravest Arabs, had, as the last point, been urged and commanded by the Prophet (S) to be patient about the events that would occur after the Prophet's (S) demise. Imam Ali ('a) was chained and removed from his house in front of Fatimah az-Zahra's ('a) eyes.

When Imam Ali ('a) was brought in front of Abu Bakr, and Omar Ibn Khattab told him to pledge allegiance, Imam Ali ('a) replied:

“Indeed, I am more worthy of the caliphate than you. I will not pledge allegiance to you; rather, it is you who will pledge allegiance to me. You took the Caliphate from Ansar and used the kinship with the Prophet (S) as an argument and claimed that you are more worthy of the Caliphate because in kinship you are closer to the Prophet (S). Yet you ignore Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) who are the closest to the Prophet (S). So, I argue with you with the same qualification and traits that you used against Ansar. If you fear God do justice to us and accept for us what Ansar accepted for you; otherwise, you will consciously oppress and wrong yourself.”²⁹

Imam Ali ('a) used kinship solely for the reason that Abu Bakr and Omar had used that argument in Saqifa, and no one could deny that Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) was closer to the Prophet (S) than anyone else; both in kinship and from all other aspects. But in the end, it was not kinship that made Imam Ali ('a) the worthy successor. It was the fact that he was chosen by God through the Prophet (S). He held the complete knowledge and qualification to shoulder this extremely vital responsibility.

Omar Ibn Khattab could not argue against Imam Ali's ('a) striking words and replied:

“You will not be left alone until you pledge allegiance.”

Imam Ali ('a) replied:

“Omar, milk the milk of which you get the half of; today you strengthen his cause so tomorrow he may give it back to you.”

Furthermore, arguments were put forth that Imam Ali ('a) was too young!³⁰ He was advised to hand over the caliphate to the elders now and, being closest to the Prophet (S) and had merited that no one else could measure up to or deny, regain governorship later if he was still alive. But the choice of leadership and governance was not Imam Ali's ('a) to give away. It was God's choice. Imam Ali ('a) could not negotiate something that God had chosen, nor close his eyes to the consequences that would befall the

people if such a thing were to be done. Therefore, Imam ('a) tried to awaken the people and speak to their rationality until the very last moment:

"O people of Muhajirin! Do not underestimate Prophet Muhammad's (S) right to authority among believers and do not move this right from his house and household to your own, and do not remove his household from his right and position among the people. By God, we are the Prophet's household that is most worthy of succeeding him. Is not among us the reader [and interpreter] of the Book of God and the confidant of His religion and the conversant of the Prophet's (S) sunnah and the one who can lead and carry this mission to its goal? By God, this person is from us. Do not follow the desire of the self because then you will be led away from haqq (right and truth) ..." [31](#)

The Imam ('a) spoke to deaf ears.

The questions regarded the events following the passing of the Prophet (S) and about the arguments that were made regarding the takeover of the caliphate. There is no doubt about the sincerity and exalted personality of Imam Ali ('a), nor his knowledge and wisdom, something that his friends as well as his enemies, then and now, agree upon. Nor is it possible to deny the historical fact that some chose to disregard the Prophet's (S) proclamations on numerous occasions such as Ghadir Khumm, where he is more than one way proclaimed God's will and ordained people to follow Imam Ali ('a). So, on what grounds was a blind-eye turned to Imam Ali's ('a) status as a chosen Imam? And his accomplishments depending on Islam and its Prophet (S) since the beginning? On what grounds was the choice made to disregard Imam Ali ('a) as the leading companion of Prophet (S), according to God's and Prophet's (S) own testimony, and the first to believe in him and the strongest in adhering to this belief? Why was the fact that Imam Ali ('a) was the most God-fearing believer and worthy among them, and the solution to all the impossible missions in which they themselves failed, ignored? How could you turn a blind eye to all the qualifications that distinguished Imam Ali ('a) and not even respect the fact that Imam Ali ('a) was the Prophet's (S) closest kinship, which according to them was decisive merit? Because if it was about kinship; who was closer to the Prophet (S) than Imam Ali ('a)? If it was about qualification and merit; who was more qualified and had more merits than Imam Ali ('a)? If it was about being a pioneer and having an early entrance to Islam; who was the one who believed the Prophet (S) first other than Imam Ali ('a)?

Who did it that had been raised by the Prophet (S) himself since childhood and most resemble the Prophet (S) in morals and lifestyle? Who had followed the Prophet (S) through thick and thin and was the one who believed the Prophet (S) in all situations during all difficult and decisive missions? Who had time and time again shown an example of steadfast devotion, morals, wisdom, strength and endurance? Who was it that, in the Prophet's (S) first open calling among his immediate family, had been the only one to stand in confession and support for the Prophet (S)? Who stood up in support of the Prophet (S) and God's message when all the other 'elders' denied? Who risked his life and slept in the Prophet's (S) bed at night when the enemies had planned to assassinate the Prophet (S)? Who had settled the battles of Badr, Khandaq and Khaybar and went all the way to death during the battle of Uhud in his defence of

the Prophet's (S) life when everyone else abandoned the Messenger of God and fled away to save their own lives, including the first caliphs? Who had the Prophet (S) brought with him to Mubahala and called his 'nafs' (me)? To whom had the Prophet (S) said 'you are to me as Haroon was to Musa'? About whom was the verses of Ulo-l-amr and alms in rokoo' sent down? Who had the Prophet (S) called 'the gate of the city of knowledge' and commanded all who wanted to reach the city to go through its gate? Who, on God's order, had the Prophet (S) sent alone to Mecca to announce God's distancing from the idolaters with the revelation of surah Bara'at? About whom had the Prophet (S) said: 'Ali is with the truth, and the truth is with Ali', and to companions who demanded never to go astray, 'if the whole world goes to one valley, and Ali ('a) to another, go after Ali ('a)'? About who the Prophet (S) had proclaimed in Ghadir Khumm 'verily he whom I am a leader over, Ali is his leader, and he is Ali, my brother and my confidant, and his following is from God the Honored the Praised which He sent over me'? And about the one which the Prophet (S) had stated of: 'God is my master, and I am the master of believers; O' people! Of whomsoever I am a master, Ali is his master; My Lord! Befriend anyone who befriends him and make enmity towards anyone who makes enmity towards him and love whoever loves him and abhor whoever abhors him and assist whoever assists him and abandon whoever abandons him **and turn haqq (right and truth) with him wherever he turns**'³²

Can something like age, outweigh all these qualifications? Can a few people's views on the caliphate weigh more than God's opinion? What happened to the Prophet's authority over the believers? Why did people reject the words of the Prophet (S) when they knew that he was not speaking out of his self-interest and that his will was that of God's?³³

Why Did Imam Ali ('A) Refuse To Pledge Allegiance?

The answer to this question goes back to the meaning of the word Imamah (divinely chosen leadership and guardianship) and the status of an Imam ('a) as a comprehensive leader for the people of his time but also as a leader and guiding light for humanity throughout the ages. In other words, an Imam is, by definition, an Imam regardless of circumstances, and therefore continues to bear the divine responsibility and continues to lead and bring humanity to their creational purpose even if it does not happen in the long run. An Imam always acts on the basis of bringing people to God and guiding them to salvation and taqwa (piety) with righteous behaviour as a tool. They also guide people by giving divine insight and knowledge. Since the goal is the evolving and happiness of the people, this leadership also means to highlight this development alongside the prevailing capacity and the will of the people. In other words, humanity's understanding of an Imam's position, and the will to then obey the Imam, is a condition that needs to be achieved.³⁴

Consequently, the leadership of an Imam is greater than just political power and far away from dictatorial terror. Rather, leadership is a responsibility chosen by God for the most suitable and should be fulfilled in God's way in the best possible way. The definition of a leader from an Islamic perspective is, therefore, completely different from today's general definition. In Islam, a leader is the one who, through his taqwa

(piety) and knowledge, is highly qualified to lead a group of people to the goal. In other words, this leader lacks a personal interest in power and sees governance only as a means of leading people to true happiness, to their creational purpose. Hence, an Imam seeks to bring man to life and evoke their inherent goodness³⁵ so that they, by their own will, bring forth the necessary conditions for each other at the individual and societal level.

That being said, the governorship was not a post that Imam Ali ('a) could give or renounce. Rather, the governorship was a means by which the Imam ('a) would perform his duty in following the Prophet's (S) path and leading the people after the Prophet (S). In order to fulfil this duty, it included, holding the governorship with its accompanying aids, including the associated reach and impact in society. The governorship is, therefore, a very important means of guiding society and the people towards their goal. This is apart from the fact that the entirety of society's sight is constantly focused on the leader's approach. The leader takes the lead as the leader of the community and in practice, directs and leads it. In other words, the leader becomes a standard for what applies in society, and is decisive for its values and future both through his personal behaviour and through the soft and hard tools of power, including the media and introduced laws. Leadership has such a central role in Islam that only one who is highly qualified from all aspects should be the leader. This not the least in terms of spiritual and moral purity as well as expertise; something whose weight and value is clearly evident today in the absence of righteous leaders and with today's corrupt rulers who are ravaging the world in pursuit of their own interests and who completely ignore the masses.

These consequences, and other aspects besides this, were evident to Imam Ali ('a) and as a divinely chosen leader, he was obliged to do everything he could to guide and warn the people. But when the will of the people broke, the Imam ('a) found himself in a position where he had two choices; either to make an uprising or to be patient and to fulfil the leadership's mission in other ways.³⁶ An uprising, along with a few followers who remained faithful to the Prophet's (S) demand to hold on to Imam Ali ('a) and the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), would risk the continuation of the prophetic line and weaken the Muslim community. This would give inner and external enemies a chance they have long been waiting for. With such a move, the lives of the remaining companions would be put at risk, especially the Prophet's (S) family and the subsequent leaders Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a). This would, at the critical and early-stage that Islam then found itself in, lead to true Islam being threatened, and the narrated versions of Islam to remain. Consequently, the protection and preservation of the prophetic line and the people, had the highest priority on the basis of the prevailing circumstances, even if it were to be achieved at the expense of the official governorship.

Therefore, Imam Ali ('a) was patient and chose the lesser of two evils. But this choice did not in any way imply negligence to the fate of men; on the contrary, the Imam ('a) continued on the Prophet's (S) line, but the battle took on a new form. Important to understand in this context is that leadership is a position that cannot be taken away from an Imam ('a) even if the governance is taken away from him, or if his leadership is not officially recognized. In other words, the Imam ('a) was not the governing caliph when

the caliphate was taken away from him, but he continued to hold the position of Imamah and with this, the leadership over humanity as his assigned responsibility by God. When the caliphate was removed from the Imam ('a), he continued to act with the same aim, however, taking into account what had occurred and on the basis of the prevailing conditions.

One question that may arise is why the Imam ('a) not just accepted the situation but instead refrained from pledging oaths of allegiance? The answer to this question becomes clear if one reflects on how such acceptance would have been interpreted by the people, and what the Imam's ('a) refusal instead led to and the traces it has left until today. Had the Imam ('a) accepted the outcome of Saqifa at that point and refrained from his refusal to pledge allegiance, stories of a popular majority election and elected leaders had been established as a reality. In addition, acceptance would be propagated as official support for what had happened in Saqifa. With his refusal to pledge allegiance, despite all the great sacrifices it entailed, the Imam ('a) separated his course from the course of the others for all eternity.

At the same time, the violations and reality of the others were exposed, as well as its willingness to go far in those violations to achieve its goals. In other words, Imam Ali's ('a) and a number of other companions' refusal to pledge allegiance, especially Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a), became a clear light that killed the myth that caliphs can be elected. Anyone searching for the truth, between the depicted lines of history, can witness this. Anyone who states that everything was peace and joy and that the transition of leadership from the Prophet (S) to the first caliph went smoothly denies all logic and historically confirmed facts.³⁷ Imam Ali's ('a) stance on this issue does not even have to be proved to those who have studied and been given an overview of history.

Why Did The Imam ('A) Not Take Up Arms?

Imam Ali ('a) had based on his position as Imam and leader, the responsibility to safeguard the Prophet's (S) message and the best interest of the people. In the prevailing circumstances, it was not for anyone's best to regain control with weapons. The last command of the Prophet (S) to the Imam ('a) was to undertake sabr (patience and endurance) and the fact that the foundation of Islam was in danger with the internal and external enemies on hand, were all contributing factors to the Imam's ('a) choice.

Given that the Muslim community was already shaken by the passing of the Prophet (S), the situation could not endure more pressure, especially in the form of an internal war. The hitherto hidden intentions that had found their chance to come to the surface had shown that they could go as far as to attack the Prophet's (S) daughter to get their will through. In addition, Imam Ali ('a) did not have enough companions to achieve a definite victory and could not take up arms for that reason. A civil war could have been the downfall of Islam as the enemies were eagerly waiting to attack and destroy the religion. The purpose of Imam Ali's ('a) leadership was to strengthen and protect Islam. It is therefore obvious that he would not perform anything that would weaken and possibly destroy Islam.

A state of ‘a thorn in the eye and a bone caught in the throat.’

The Imam (‘a) has later described the situation, in particular in the following words:

“... so [when the caliphate was taken over] [I] lowered [it] a curtain [disregarded it], and turned to it my back, and was immersed contemplating between advancing [assaulting] with a cut hand [in the absence of a companion], or undertaking sabr (patience and endurance) in the blinding darkness, [a situation] in which the grown-up is made feeble, and the young grow old, and grieves [endeavours] the true believer until he meets his Lord; so I certainly saw that sabr (patience and endurance) over this was wiser, so I adopted sabr although [it was like I had] a thorn in the eye, and suffocation in the throat [a bone stuck], my inheritance is robbed [plundered]... “[38](#)

Did You Know?

Imam Ali (‘a) has, in a logical and beautiful way, taught us how each situation and era require a certain strategy of action depending on the circumstances. He has also taught us that one should always have its goal in mind. In connection with the description of the circumstances of his time, the Imam (‘a) has spoken of how a battle without the support and faithful companions as well as favourable conditions had only caused misery for ordinary people, without the goal being achieved. During the prevailing situation, it became best for Islam and the people that the battle should be conducted in a different form than in an open war. But when circumstances allow and/or the chance to achieve the goal exists, then an uprising is a duty. This is the exact difference between Imam Ali’s (‘a) choice not to claim his right by engaging in a battle after the Prophet’s (S) passing and the fighting that came later under his governorship. This is also the difference in the conduct of the various Imams (‘a), for example, Imam Al-Husayn (‘a) made an uprising against Yazid (LA) while Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) eventually agreed to set up a peace agreement with Mu’awiya. The preservation of Islam and human guidance is the common denominator on which all Imams (‘a) different conducts were based on. In other words, they followed the same line. The fact that the outcome was different was due to what needed to be done at each time, taking into account the conditions and circumstances of that time, but with the same goal in mind.

These circumstances do not always have to be the number of followers or a complete military victory[39](#), but rather the purpose should be achieved by justified methods. Therefore, Imam Ali (‘a) emphasizes that reason and logic require that circumstances before an uprising are favourable in order to lead to success and that those who seek truth and fight for justice must not act according to fleeting emotions but must have patience and plan their moves well with thought and trust in God.

A Cut Off Caliphate After The Prophet (S) – Historical View

A new caliphate was decided on, doomed to be filled with mistakes and its harvest was an Umayyad lineage[40](#), whom only after twenty-seven years took over the rule. A rule-based on brutal murders and oppressing Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a). Among those murders was mainly the murder of Imam Al-Husayn (‘a), his

family members and companions. The Prophet (S) had warned about this earlier and God had revealed a Qur'anic verse, where the Umayyad lineage was named 'the cursed tree'. This was in connection with the Prophet's (S) dream where he saw them coming into power.[41](#)

In other words, the Prophet (S) had specifically warned about the dangers; however, the first caliphs still gave away power to the Umayyad lineage. [42](#) This corrupt seed watered in Saqifa had grown to a corrupt tree with rotten fruits, causing everything it makes in contact with to rot. The blood of Imam Al-Husayn ('a) stopped this ravage and became an eternally lit torch, distinguishing the lineage of Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) from that of the Umayyad's. The martyrdom of the Imams ('a) had such an effect that it shook the Umayyad dynasty and prevented them from continuing to rule officially. Later, when the Abbasids took over from the Umayyads, they continued a rule lasting hundreds of years. They were also brutal against Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), however below the surface, and assassinated the appointed Imams ('a) living during their reign; all except the twelfth and final Imam, Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj). Till this very day, the Islamic ummah is hurt due to the division and disunity. What was left behind was war, poverty, corruption and ignorance, but also Muslim countries invaded by superpowers.

Had the orders of the Holy Prophet (S) been followed, then Imam Ali ('a) would have been the first caliph and would have founded a society based on justice; something he tried to implement when he came to rule. However, a quarter of a century of corruption and abuse of the system had left deep wounds on the body of the Islamic nation. The Muslims were now far from the pure spirit that prevailed during the time of the Holy Prophet (S). According to the true nature of Islam, and under the leadership of the Holy Prophet (S), moral principles were the ones valued most high, and the majority of the Muslims had the pleasure of God the next, eternal, life insight. They were all simple living lives and used to share the little they had. While facing an enemy that was usually clearly visible and needed to be faced upfront on the battlefield, they had managed to cut their ties of worldly and material life. However, when the Holy Prophet (S) passed away, the events regarding the rule of the nation had overshadowed society with an aggressive and unreasonable spirit that steadily came to be coloured by materialistic values, this as a result of selfishness and corruption. Now, people were looking after themselves, many trying to get as close to the top as they could in order to gain riches and important positions of power. The people, equality and the brotherhood, had been forgotten, instead of a controlling elite, using traditional values from the time of Jahiliyyah, such as kinship and riches, was revived.

Imam Ali ('a) was to continue the line of the Holy Prophet (S) and continue his mission regarding the guidance of mankind, and thereafter the succeeding eleven Imams ('a) continued that path. Instead, Imam Ali ('a) got the chance to rule after three caliphs who had left behind a torn and weakened nation, with discord and divided groups around every corner. Instead of having the possibility of guiding resources for the betterment of society, the Imam ('a) had to spend his rule in civil war after the civil war.

Despite all this, God never abandoned the honest and truth-seeking souls, and His message is still intact. Through the struggle of the twelve Imams ('a), where they sacrificed all they had for the purpose

of maintaining God's message until the Day of Judgment, the light of the divine message kept glowing for the continued guidance of mankind.

Q. The First Three Caliphs

Following Saqifa, the three caliphs came to take charge of the caliphate until it reached Imam Ali ('a). Each one of them came to change the teachings of the Holy Prophet (S), leaving their prints on society. Time went on; the effects of this came to be more and more evident. By studying their personalities and actions, together with important events taking place during their time at power, one gets an overview of the Muslim societies' development during the subsequent years. As a matter of fact, this historical period of twenty-five years, counting from the passing of the Holy Prophet (S), has played a crucial role in the destiny of the Islamic nation until today. These twenty-five years constitute an important piece of the puzzle that would help the informed to understand the events that came to affect and haunt the history of Islam during the following years. Among them, the brutal murder of the grandson of the Holy Prophet (S), Imam Al-Husayn ('a).

Q1. Abu Bakr's Caliphate – The First Caliph

The events following the passing of the Holy Prophet (S) resulted in Abu Bakr emerging from Saqifa as the first caliph before the people. Some noticeable events occurring during his caliphate are:

- The murder of Malik Ibn Nuwaira
- Confiscation of the property "Fadak" from Fatimah ('a)
- The expedition of the army of Usama
- The attack on the house of Imam Ali ('a) and Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a)⁴³
- War and expansion – the war on Persia and Sham
- The appointment of Omar as his successor

The Murder Of Malik Ibn Nuwaira

Malik Ibn Nuwaira was one of the good companions of the Holy Prophet (S). He was his representative and had in the mission to collect the zakat (religious taxes) from his tribe, to distribute it among the needy and to send whatever was left to Madinah. After the Holy Prophets (S) passing Malik waited with sending the taxes back until he had received information about how the new rule had been established. This was seen as an act of resistance by Abu Bakr, so he sent a troop, led by Khalid Ibn Walid, to punish Malik.

Abu Bakr explained that anyone who did not intend on paying tax to the caliphate was an apostate, no matter if they were Muslims and practising their religious duties. History recalls Khalid Ibn Walid cold-bloodedly killing Malik due to his resistance. On the same day, Khalid Ibn Walid had intercourse with the widow of Malik. In that way, Khalid was not just guilty of killing an innocent man and a fellow Muslim; he also broke a clear prohibition when he fornicated with the widow of Malik.[44](#)

Abi Qatada had accompanied Khalid from Madinah. He was so shocked by this event that he refused to associate with the troop any further and immediately returned. Abi Qatada testified that he himself heard the call to prayer and how the tribe of Malik had exclaimed in being Muslim, but that Khalid and his troops, despite this, massacred them, pillaged their homes and took their women and children as prisoners of war. However, Abu Bakr protected Khalid, who according to him, had misjudged the situation and refused to punish him. The expression 'making a misjudgment' was coined and came to have disastrous consequences. Under this phrase, many bloody mistakes have been excused until today.[45](#)

Confiscation Of The Property Fadak From Fatimah ('A)

Fadak was a piece of land that the Holy Prophet (S) had left his daughter Fatimah ('a) as a gift, and which Abu Bakr confiscated.

One of the first things he did, already at the start of his caliphate, was to confiscate this piece of land called Fadak. According to historical facts, the Holy Prophet (S) had left this property to his daughter after the battle of Khaybar.[46](#) In other words, Fadak belonged to Fatimah ('a) and had been in her possession for a long time, way before the passing of the Holy Prophet (S). However, Abu Bakr ordered it to be seized and presented a narration that until this day, he is the only to have told. Abu Bakr said that he had heard the Holy Prophet say that prophets ('a) don't leave heritage and that which they own is for charity and belongs to the people. With this claim, he justified the seizing of Fadak.

Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) said that it was not even heritage but a gift that she had received, upon which Abu Bakr demanded that she should prove here ownership of Fadak by bringing witnesses. This, in spite of the law, clearly stating that he was the one who had to prove his claim. Fatimah ('a) had owned the property for many years and everyone knew she was the owner. Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) still brought Imam Ali ('a), Imam Al-Hasan ('a), Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and Umm Ayman[47](#) as witnesses. Abu Bakr dismissed their testimonies, despite their distinguished personalities, and would not accept them as witnesses. Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a), who had grown up in the prophetic household and possessed complete knowledge of the words of God and of the Holy Prophet (S), could through her insight clearly see the connection between the confiscation of Fadak and the caliphate, rose up and held an eloquent and powerful speech before the people of the mosque.[48](#) In her speech, she stood up for the rights of Imam Ali ('a) using powerful terms, among them many examples from the Holy Qur'an, and refuting the empty allegations regarding the claim that prophets don't leave an inheritance.[49](#)

S'Adalahy, Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) spoke to insusceptible hearts. After these events, Fatimah az-Zahra' refused to speak with Abu Bakr and Omar, who had assisted Abu Bakr in this act. She was angry with them until her martyrdom. She ('a) expressed here discontent and let them know that she would complain before the Holy Prophet (S) regarding their oppressive behaviour.

Aisha, the daughter of Abu Bakr, has narrated regarding the events of Fadak:

"Fatimah, the daughter of the Holy Prophet, sent someone to Abu Bakr asking for Fadak. But Abu Bakr refused to return anything to Fatimah who was angry with him and did not speak with him until her death. She lived a couple of months after the Prophet and when she died, her husband Ali, buried her at night, and Abu Bakr was not to attend." [50](#)

All this took place shortly after the passing of the Holy Prophet (S) despite the fact that Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) was his loving daughter, and reflected his high moral standards and his wisdom. He had always stressed her high standing. On several occasions, he had emphasized that Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) was a part of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) and that she was one of the five of the Ashab Al-Kisa'. He had also made it clear that she had a unique position. There are ahadith where she is described as the mistress of all the women of the world. This has been narrated numerous times, among them, Aisha has narrated that the Holy Prophet (S) has said to Fatimah ('a):

"Are you not pleased that you are the mistress of all the women of paradise and the mistress of all the believing women?" [51](#)

Aisha has also said:

"I have never seen someone more truth-telling than Fatimah, except her father." [52](#)

It has also been narrated that the Holy Prophet (S) has said:

"Fatimah is a part of me; whoever angers her angers me, and he who angers me angers God."

"God is angry when Fatimah is angry, and he is satisfied when she is satisfied." [53](#)

It is also clear that Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) left this life while being angry with these people. Fatimah ('a) also clarified it when she said:

"I take God and the angles as my witnesses that I am not pleased with you; on the contrary, you have angered me. When I face the Prophet, I will complain about you two [Abu Bakr and Omar]." [54](#)

Fatimah ('a) also made this clear in action as she refused to talk to them and forbade them from participating in her funeral. As her martyrdom, as a result of the attack on the home of Imam Ali ('a) leading to her injuries, was approaching, she asked Imam Ali ('a) to bury her, in secret, in the middle of the night. She ('a) did not want any of the oppressors to participate in her funeral, neither did she want

them of even knowing the location of her grave and it remains unknown until this day, serving as eternal proof of the oppression against her.

Why Insist On Fadak And Displease Fatimah ('A)?

Fadak was a piece of land with high agricultural output and would have given Imam Ali ('a) and Fatimah ('a) fine economic conditions, and would have helped them to resist the oppression and spread the truth. This would have been a danger for the outcome of Saqifa and the caliph and his associate's positions. An economic blockade would lower the risk of it and was one of the reasons behind the confiscation of Fadak. The risk of displeasing the daughter of the Holy Prophet (S), whose place among the Muslims was known, was also serious but if they would not have taken it if something greater was not on the line and the people involved did not feel threatened.

The question is why Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) insisted on regaining Fadak. Were a piece of land and its economic revenues that important to her? She, who had lived her life as the simplest of people and who hadn't used the revenues from Fadak for herself. Her ('a) and her husband's ('a) lives were simple even after the living conditions of the people had been raised during the rule and leadership of the Holy Prophet (S) in Madinah. They had always been role models in zuhd (asceticism) and in giving to the needy. Therefore, they had never been interested in Fadak for personal reasons. So, what made Fatimah ('a) take such a stand regarding Fadak?

Her insisting on Fadak was far more than an economic question. Fadak would have generated better economic conditions in order to spread the truth among the people. This, as the people who were in tight economic positions, would not have time for releasing their minds and to think about the most important questions in society. In other words, the one who continuously has to be concerned and occupied with economic solutions, won't have much time to spare for political involvement, nailing down corrupt leaders, fighting for justice and spending time and resources for the betterment of society, not to think about the development of the soul and spending interest in the destiny of mankind. Economic downfall has been used throughout history by the rich elite in order to create economic dependency and to force the majority of society to fold and stay quite before the injustices of the few.[55](#)

Furthermore, ownership of Fadak was the right of Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a), and when a right is being robbed from one, it is a duty to, in a wise and just way, to demand it be given back. Beyond the given, that you can't claim other's possessions, is that demanding of one's rights are necessary to stop oppressors and injustice. If not, one is paving the way for more and far worse atrocities in the society of the perpetrator, when consequences are lacking. The result of this action will be either of the two; the perpetrator will be slapped down and return the asset or he will refuse and continue the breaching of other's rights. In the second scenario, the demanding of the right itself will clear the oppression that had been committed and it will expose the true face of the oppressor, even if that right is not taken back. Man, inherently despises oppression and is willing to reject oppressors and at the same time, the mere knowledge of someone being oppressed has an innate awakening effect that compels man into wanting

to stand up for justice.

The matter of Fadak was far greater than Fadak itself and had several deeper and long-term aspects and consequences. Had the people acted on Fatimah's ('a) sermon on Fadak, the following right to reclaim would have been the rule and caliphate of Imam Ali ('a).

The Deployment Of Usama's Army

Usama's army was the one assembled by the Prophet (S), in his last days, to fight the Roman attacks in Sham. This took place barely a few months after Ghadir Khumm and close to the Prophet's (S) passing. History reveals that the Prophet (S) commanded all prominent personalities above all Muhajirin and even Ansar to accompany Usama's army immediately. The Prophet (S) insisted that the army should leave Medina as soon as possible. He did not accept anyone's excuse not to go with the army. Especially those who said they did not follow along because the Prophet's (S) health had deteriorated. The Prophet (S) cursed those who refused to obey this order. Nevertheless, there were some who continued to defy the Prophet (S).⁵⁶

Usama's army was never deployed during the Prophet's (S) lifetime. But after the events in Saqifa, and just over a month after the Prophet (S) passed away, the army moved towards Sham at Abu Bakr's order. In this way, the majority of Muhajirin and Ansar had to leave Medina. Abu Bakr asked Omar to stay and help him.⁵⁷

War And Expansion – War Against Persia And Sham

After the government's internal state was under control, attention turned to Sham, Iraq and on to Persia. The Roman Empire was a threat from the West. While the Persian Empire in the East, ruled by the Sasanians, was extremely weakened. Soon, an army was sent to Iraq and Persia under Khalid Ibn Walid's command, and the Sasanian governance and stronghold fell one by one. Several clashes also took place in Sham, and the Roman Empire's threats were eliminated.⁵⁸

Abu Bakr Appoints His Successor

After more than two years of governance, Abu Bakr fell ill and, on his deathbed, he appointed Omar as his successor. Abu Bakr is said to have become unconscious several times, but his will was still written down patiently by Uthman. Abu Bakr reasoned that he feared the fate of the Muslims and the unity of amic governance. It was, according to him, for this reason, he appointed Omar.⁵⁹

The question is, was the Prophet (S) not worried about the Muslims, the fate of humanity, the unity of the Islamic governance and the spread of the divine message to the people? Would the Prophet (S), who was most concerned about the continued guidance of men and sacrificed most for this purpose, neglect this question while others did not? Would he not have secured the message by appointing a successor? How can it be claimed that the Prophet (S) left the people to their fate without a further plan when the

aim of his mission had not yet been fully achieved?

Q2. Omar's Caliphate – The Second Caliph

The closest accomplice of the first caliph came to occupy the position of the second caliph. In a narrative depiction, Imam Ali ('a) describes Abu Bakr's transfer of the caliphate to Omar as follows:

“It is strange that during his lifetime he [the first caliph] declared himself unfit for the caliphate yet, he confirmed it for the other one after his death. No doubt, these two shared its udders strictly among themselves. This one [the second caliph] put the caliphate in a tough enclosure where the utterance was haughty and the touch was rough. Mistakes were in plenty and so also the excuses therefore. One [who was] in contact with it was like the rider of an unruly camel. If he pulled up its rein, the very nostril would be slit, but if he let it loose, he would be thrown. Consequently, by God, people got involved in recklessness, wickedness, unsteadiness and deviation [from the straight path].”⁶⁰

The caliphate of the second caliph continued the path of the first caliph in many aspects. Albeit some changes were introduced. Some notable events in connection to Omar's caliphate, are:

- War and expansion are continued
- The Umayyad family comes into governance
- Prominent personalities of the Prophet's (S) companions are kept at a distance from the office of the caliphate and are forbidden from narrating the Prophet's (S) ahadith and from leaving Medina without the permission of the caliph
- Insufficient knowledge of Islamic law and calling upon Imam Ali ('a) for advice on difficult issues
- Modification of the Prophet's (S) sunnah (the Prophet's (S) traditional customs and practices in both words and actions)
- The choice of a successor – a predetermined assembly council with given conditions

The Umayyad Family Comes Into Power

After the capture of Mecca, the Prophet (S) had taken into account the reputation of Abu Sufyan among the people and did not degrade it, despite everything Abu Sufyan had done to oppose Islam. The Prophet (S) had been keen to keep Abu Sufyan and the Umayyad family at a distance from the governance and warned of the danger they posed.⁶¹ In spite of the Prophet's (S) warnings, the second caliph Omar opened the door for the Umayyad family to enter the ranks of governance. He handed over the Sham Province to Abu Sufyan's elder son, Yazid Ibn Abu Sufyan, and made him the regent. To afterwards transfer rule over the province to Mu'awiya Ibn Abu Sufyan; this came to affect the entire future of the Islamic nation. Through this position, Mu'awiya gained a foothold in governance. He was

granted the opportunity to fulfil his power ambitions, and to exercise his inherited vindictiveness for his family's losses in their self-initiated war against the Prophet (S). Sham became the site from which he and his family would conduct conspiracies and wars against Imam Ali ('a) and the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a).

Omar was known to be very tough on all his regents and governors. He demanded that they live simply and was quick to punish them when they complained about their lifestyles. This was applied for everyone except one person – Mu'awiya. It was widely known that Mu'awiya lived with an imperial splendour in Damascus and surrounded himself with exaggerated luxuries and riches in a royal palace. It was a way of life that Omar did not tolerate for himself or any of his regents, with the exception of Mu'awiya who strangely enjoyed all freedom.[62](#)

The Prophet's (S) Companions – Kept In Tin The Distance From The Political Arena And Forbidden To Recite Ahadith Or Leave Medina Without The Permission Of The Caliph

With the empire's expansion, more offices were added to the governance. There was a need for commanders in the front end as well as regents across different areas. Many prominent personalities of the Prophet's (S) early companions, not the least among Muhajirin and Ansar, were commanded to remain in Medina. They were not allowed to leave the city without permission from the caliph. This approach was so conspicuous that the caliph was questioned regarding it by different people at different times. Among the reasons given by the caliph was that the companions had served sufficiently during the Prophet's (S) time and he did not want them to be entangled in the government offices. Thus, influential companions, who held differing standpoints were stopped from spreading to different cities. This also prevented the spread of the Prophet's (S) ahadith[63](#), which was justified by stating that it prevented the spread of insurgency and corruption. [64](#)

Insufficient Knowledge Of Islamic Law And Imam Ali's ('A) Advice On Difficult Issues

'If it was not for Ali, Omar would perish', is a well-known statement by the second caliph. It is said on numerous occasions, in various contexts, where he was faced with difficult issues and cases, not least regarding issuances of verdicts. Many of the cases are depicted in history. One of the best-known cases is of a woman accused of fornication. She was brought before Omar's court on the grounds that she had given birth to a child 6 months after she entered into marriage. She denied the accusation, and there was no evidence to support it. In spite of this, she was convicted. Imam Ali ('a) opposed the verdict with support from Qur'anic verses and a logical evaluation that could not be disputed.[65](#) This was one of the occasions whereby the caliph spoke the famous sentence.

It is also stated that the second caliph sought refuge with God from meeting a question or problem that Abu Al-Hasan, Imam Ali ('a), was not present to solve.[66](#)

Change In The Sunnah Of The Prophet (S)

According to God's testimony in the Holy Qur'an, the Prophet (S) never spoke out of self-interest. Everything he said and did was based on divine revelation. Thus, the acts and words of the Prophet (S), in addition to the words of God directly sent to him, were nonetheless a precept and edict to follow. God emphasized this point in the Qur'an by presenting the Prophet (S) as an example to emulate and follow. In addition, He equates obedience to His Prophet (S) with obedience to Himself.⁶⁷ Thus, the words and actions of the Prophet (S) came to be called the Prophet's (S) sunnah. It painted a practical exemplification of religion and its true implementation. In spite of this, it is historically known that during the second caliphate, Omar changed sunnah. He introduced changes or innovations on several issues where the Prophet's (S) sunnah had established something else, some of which are as follow:

- That only the utterance of the word 'divorce', three times at one and the same time, was sufficient for divorce.⁶⁸
- Praying the tarawih prayer⁶⁹
 - The Prophet (S) did not allow mustahab (recommended) prayers, unlike wajib (obligatory) daily prayers, to be offered as a congregational prayer, which the other caliph changed.
 - Praying mustahab (recommended) prayers in congregation. Omar himself acknowledged that this was an innovation on his part.
 - To pray with closed hands and to pronounce "amin" in prayer.⁷⁰
- Azan (call for prayer)⁷¹
 - Saying the phrase "prayer is better than sleep" in azan (call for prayer).
 - Not to utter 'hayya' ala kheir Al-'amal' (hurry to the best of action) in azan.
 - Changing the distribution of Bayt Al-Mal (Treasury House)

The Appointment Of A Successor

After more than ten years as a caliph, Omar found himself on his deathbed. He thus appointed a council of six people to choose the next caliph among themselves. These were Uthman, Abd ar-Rahman Ibn Owf, Talha, Zubayr, Saad Ibn Abi Waqqas and Imam Ali ('a). This council was accompanied by specific instructions on how to select the caliph and the consequences for the various alternatives.

Omar decided that if five people in the council agreed on a candidate, the sixth person who opposed their election would be killed. If four reached consensuses, the two on the opposite side would be killed. On the other hand, should there be three on each side, the side on which Abd ar-Rahman Ibn Owf was

on would have the decisive word. Subsequently, the candidate would finally be approved by Abd ar-Rahman Ibn Owf. This, while the other three on the opposite side, would be killed. The caliph would only be chosen from those people whom Omar himself had elected to the council and no other outsiders could be elected. In addition, the council had three days to come to an election and was not allowed to leave the council until the election was decided. The place where the council would gather had to be besieged, and if they failed to agree after three days, everyone would be killed!⁷²

By examining the conditions of this closed council, who were included in it and its binding instructions, it becomes clear that this assembly council was anything but a genuine election; let alone a popular vote. The choice of these personalities was in itself remarkable in that neither Talha, Zubayr, Abd ar-Rahman Ibn Owf nor Saadat Ibn Abi Waqqas was personalities that could hold the position of the next caliph. Neither did any of them distinguish themselves over the others so that they could easily agree who among them should become caliph. Their kinship and alliances with each other enabled them, at best, to come to terms two and two. In this way, none of these would get enough votes to be appointed as caliph. The choice was thus between Imam Ali ('a) and Uthman; and Abd ar-Rahman Ibn Owf, who had a crucial role, would never accept Imam Ali ('a) as a caliph. The only one left to choose and could be their escape from a given death was thus Uthman. It has been narrated that when Omar was asked who he considered to succeed him as a caliph, he had replied Uthman.⁷³

Abdullah Ibn Abbas Ibn Abdul-Muttalib, the cousin of both the Prophet (S) and Imam Ali ('a), realized the scheme at hand when he heard that Omar had given Abd ar-Rahman Ibn Owf the crucial role. He thus advised Imam Ali ('a) against participating. But Imam Ali ('a) considered it best to participate and, with logical reasoning, put forward his claim on his right as governor. Furthermore, the Imam ('a) did not want to leave room for anyone to claim later that his right would have been given to him if he had participated, nor be accused of division. In addition, Omar's placement of Imam Ali ('a) in the assembly council meant the appointment of the Imam ('a) as a candidate for the caliphate and the governorship; at least seemingly. This contradicted the claim that prophecy and leadership were not gathered in the same household, as the first and second caliph had alleged in connection with Saqifa. They used it as an argument against Imam Ali ('a) when he was forced to pledge allegiance

After three days of deliberation, it became Abd ar-Rahman Ibn Owf who would have the deciding vote. Abd ar-Rahman turned to Imam Ali ('a) and asked something he knew the Imam ('a) would never accept:

“If we give you governorship over the Muslims, can you promise to act in accordance with God’s book, the Prophet’s (S) sunnah and the previous caliphs, Abu Bakr’s and Omar’s approach?”

Of course, Imam Ali ('a) could not accept this because the previous caliphs had neither followed the Prophet’s (S) command nor fully ruled in accordance with the Prophet’s (S) sunnah. Therefore, Imam Ali's ('a) reply was incomplete honesty:

“I will act in accordance with the Book of God and the Prophet’s (S) sunnah. As for the previous caliphate of Abu Bakr and Omar, I have my own judgment that I will use.”

Then Abd ar-Rahman Ibn Owf turned to Uthman and asked the same question. Uthman accepted right away, and this is exactly what Abd ar-Rahman wanted to hear to declare that the caliph has been chosen.⁷⁴

After this, Imam Ali (‘a) said to Abd ar-Rahman:

“This is not the first time that you have deprived the heirs and children of the Prophet (S) their right through betrayal. For this, you will be held accountable by God. But as for me, it is better to rely on God who alone is fair and merciful.”⁷⁵

Did You Know?

Imam Ali (‘a) could have become a caliph if he had agreed to follow Abu Bakr and Omar’s sunnah. Some also suggested that the Imam (‘a) could seemingly have agreed to this in order to do what he thought was right after having been given the governorship. In other words, they suggested that the Imam (‘a) ought to have given an ‘innocent lie’ to break his promise then. Those did not understand the position of the Imamah and considered that it was all about the caliphate and the rule of the people. But the Imam’s (‘a) position and his honesty were yet again demonstrated when he lost the caliphate because he never compromised on what was right and truthful. He did not consider Abu Bakr and Omar to be righteous successors to the Prophet (S) and therefore refused to follow them. With this position, Imam Ali (‘a) showed that the leadership for which God had chosen him, was about upholding truth and justice, like the Prophet (S), did. The Imam (‘a) could therefore not go against these principles, which were the purpose of his leadership; This was a great lesson that showed that even a sacred goal must be achieved through truthful means and through its proper path. In other words, Islamic morality dictates that both the goal and the path to it, need to be truthful.

With his standpoint, the Imam (‘a) painted a clear line of Ahl Al-Bayt’s (‘a) morality and showed for all eternity that the goal is as important as the means used to reach it. The Imam (‘a) established for the followers of Ali’s (‘a) morality that a goal that is haqq (truth) could not be achieved at the expense of haqq. The goal, the means used, and the approach must be truthful. This was shown by the Imam (‘a) many times, even during his upcoming governorship. One example is when the enemy closed the Imam’s (‘a) and his soldiers’ way to water during a war. When Imam Ali (‘a) then took over the road leading to the water, he did not do the same, but the opponents were allowed to drink freely from the water and then continue to battle.

Q3. Uthman’s Caliphate – The Third Caliph

Imam Ali (‘a) has said the following about Uthman’s caliphate:

“Until the third man of these people stood up with heaving breasts between his dung and fodder. With him his children of his grand-father, (Umayyah) also stood up swallowing up God’s wealth like a camel devouring the foliage of spring, till his rope broke down, his actions finished him, and his gluttony brought him down prostrate.”

Some notable events in connection with Uthman’s caliphate are:

The Umayyad family spread in the governance; they get key positions in the governance and in practice took over the entire rule.

Widespread corruption and overindulgence in luxury among a newly formed elite[social class]; something that had not been seen before.

The Umayyad Family Are Becoming Powerful

Uthman, who was closely related to the Umayyad family, distributed many of the nation's key positions to his relatives, who thus gained great power and influence in the government. This paved the way for them to influence everything – from the most important decisions in the government to set the societal norm to aspire; not least in terms of lifestyle. This influence left serious traces in society and manifested itself in the existence of a wealthy power elite who ruled over great wealth and key positions. The people were reduced to a mass whose chances of success depended on kinship and contacts or what services they could assist the elite with. The moral principles, moderation in lifestyle, the spirit of brotherhood, and the pursuit of God's satisfaction, which had dominated during the Prophet's (S) time, were replaced by self-interest and the pursuit of wealth, power, and otherworldly pleasures.

The climate hardened and thus, animosity and poverty arose. Everyone was looking to take on more power and fortune. These changes steered society further and further away from Islamic values and counteracted the Prophet's (S) grounded vision of humanity based on human equality and piety. The corruption became so widespread that the people themselves became tired and turned to Imam Ali ('a).

Imam ('a) had then been kept away from governorship for 25 years. The damage was already done. The Umayyad influencers had mutated the elite with an illusion of ownership to power. They made them accustomed to the large share in the fortune of the government. So, when the Imam ('a) became caliph, they could not tolerate his justice. It was in this way that Mu'awiya Ibn Abu Sufyan, the one who on several occasions was openly cursed by the Prophet (S) and whose family was named as a threat, could stand up to Imam Ali ('a) and claim the right to the governorship. With sly deceit, he could take over the caliphate.

It is stated that when Uthman became caliph, the joy of the Umayyad family knew no boundaries. Their chief, Abu Sufyan, joined a crowd of Bani Umayya to congratulate Uthman. Upon arrival, Abu Sufyan, who at this point had lost his sight, asked if everyone on the spot was from Bani Umayya. When he received an affirmative answer, he said:

“O Umayya’s children; stick around and throw around the caliphate between you like a ball, because with the one that Abu Sufyan pledges by, I have always wanted it for you and henceforth it should be inherited by your children.”⁷⁶

The Umayyad Family Gets Key Positions

One of Uthman's doings was to dismiss the remaining followers of the Prophet's (S) companions, who were rulers and commanders during Abu Bakr's and Omar's caliphate. He replaced them with people from his own family. Under the rule of Uthman's family, ordinary people in various provinces of the Islamic nation lived under ever greater oppression, and dissatisfaction increased.

Many of the Prophet's (S) companions and prominent personalities made several attempts to make complaints about the current corruption of the third caliph but to no avail. Uthman, who had surrounded himself with his family, had handed over much of the decision-making to his son-in-law Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam. Marwan falsified news and judgments in accordance with his own insidious plans. In time, all the power was transferred to the Umayyad family, and corruption, of the like that had not been seen before, got a stronghold.⁷⁷

Who Was Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam?

Marwan and his father, Al-Hakam, were two individuals whom the Prophet (S) had expelled from Medina. This in itself, shows the danger Marwan and his father posed. Uthman ignored this incident when he became caliph. He opposed the Prophet's (S) decision and allowed Al-Hakam and Marwan to return to Medina. More than that, Uthman also assigned Marwan the most important position at that time; namely to be the secretary of the caliph. In this way, all commandments and decisions, to and from the caliph, went through none other than Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam.

Al-Hakam and Marwan had been cursed by the Prophet (S), who in a dream had seen Bani Umayya's offspring, including Al-Hakam, in the form of monkeys who took over the governance. Thereafter, the holy verse in the Qur'an, which called them the ‘cursed tree’ was revealed.⁷⁸

“And [remember, O Muhammad], when We told you, “Indeed, your Lord has encompassed the people.” And We did not make the sight which We showed you except as a trial for the people, as was the accursed tree [mentioned] in the Qur'an. And We threaten them, but it increases them not except in great transgression.” (The Holy Qur'an, 17:60).

Mu'awiya Is Strengthened Even More

Mu'awiya was appointed commander of Sham by Abu Bakr. He was then appointed regent of Sham by Omar. Under Uthman, Mu'awiya was given more control over the entire Sham. Palestine and Homs Province also fell into Mu'awiya's rule, giving him the increased command and total control over the entire region's army. With this, Mu'awiya was given all the conditions and powers needed to strengthen

his stronghold and consolidate his power.[79](#)

Widespread Corruption Not Previously Witnessed

The ruling elite's desire for power and their insatiable pursuit of wealth created a competition that made everyone, by whatever means, try to get a bigger share of the cake and get higher up the line of power. This initiated a corruption in the governance that spread and reached unimaginable levels. To such an extent that repression was widespread and the treasury's money was unjustly distributed among the ruling Umayyad family. It went so far that Zaid Ibn Arqam, one of the Prophet's (S) companions, who was in charge of the Treasury House, could neither tolerate what happened nor had the power to stop them and hence resigned from the role.[80](#)

The People No Longer Tolerated Corruption

The corruption in the higher ranks of society did not leave ordinary people in better condition. Many could not cope with seeing the corruption while they themselves were poor and fell victim to tyranny and oppression. Those who objected to the injustice were either silenced and played against each other. Or, if they had a strong family and could defend themselves, they were bribed with little wealth.

Several of the Prophet's (S) truthful companions, who could not tolerate what was happening to the Prophet's (S) ummah (community) and protested, suffered. They had to endure everything from denigration, false accusations, isolation to prison and exile.[81](#) In this way, most opponents were played out or kept away from the political arena. Eventually, dissatisfaction grew, and more voices were raised from different parts of the nation. Several groups, including Kufa and Yemen, decided to send delegations to Medina and submit their complaints to the caliph to demand action. But instead of listening to the complaints and trying to solve the problems, Uthman dismissed them. This caused the protests to escalate but to no avail. When the situation began to fall out of control, Uthman's action was to send a message to Mu'awiya, his governor in Syria, with the order to immediately send troops to Medina for the caliph's help.

Mu'awiya Does Not Aid Uthman

Mu'awiya, who was well aware of the situation, had no intention of getting into the line of fire to help Uthman. He preferred not to go against the Prophet's (S) companions openly because he knew they were united in their opposition to Uthman. So, when Mu'awiya received Uthman's letter, he decided to wait and review the situation despite the caliph's direct orders. Thus taking full advantage of the situation for his own benefit. Mu'awiya had previously received enough power and force from Uthman to help him easily but did nothing.[82](#)

Uthman Asks Imam Ali ('A) To Help

When Mu'awiya's help was delayed, and Uthman began to realize that Mu'awiya did not intend to come

to his rescue, he turned to Imam Ali ('a). In order for the Imam ('a) to mediate between him and the dissatisfied crowds. Imam Ali ('a) was the only one whom everyone had sufficient faith. All the groups in society trusted his words. With this, Uthman appealed for Imam Ali's ('a) assistance and stated that he would accept whatever demands that would be made. Imam Ali ('a), who never turned down anyone who asked for help, managed through hard efforts to hold back the groups that had prepared themselves to attack Uthman. He then worked on an agreement where Uthman would take action against corruption and punish the guilty and remove them from their positions.

The agreement that Uthman accepted became short-lived. Uthman broke all his promises as soon as the aggravated groups had left Medina. Imam Ali ('a) had emphasized and constantly reminded Uthman of Marwan's danger, but Uthman did not take it seriously. Not only did Uthman not plan to fulfil his obligations, but he also went so far as to send secret messengers to his regents and ordered them to capture and imprison the leaders of the protests as soon as they returned to their hometowns. Some of these groups, who had left Medina with Uthman's promises and hopes for change, came across Uthman's letter, found out about his plans and returned.

This caused the atmosphere to become even more rebellious and difficult to control. At this stage, it was not even possible to trust the promises of the caliph and Uthman's palace was besieged. Uthman, who was protecting his life and had no way out, again asked Imam Ali ('a) for help. Imam Ali ('a) was in no way satisfied with the prevailing situation, Uthman's exercise of power or the direction in which society had been driven. But at the same time, the Imam ('a) was looking for the people's and society's best interests. The Imam ('a) did not want Uthman to be killed in protests as this would neither solve the problems nor improve the situation. Rather, it would put society in a more difficult position. This would lead to more division as well as open paths for other threats to enter. The Imam ('a), as the Imam, was concerned with people's best interests. He had previously chosen to warn Uthman about the consequences of his actions and tried to urge him to change his way of governing before it was too late. But Uthman had repeatedly rejected the Imam's ('a) advice and did neither listen or accepted and later on, broke his promises. The strong influence that Uthman's family had on him, not least his son-in-law Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam, closed the road for rectification. Yet, Uthman knew that Imam Ali ('a) was fair and respected by all and that the Imam ('a) never refused to help and that he was the only one who could save him.

The Imam ('a), who had previously mediated, asked Uthman on what grounds he would help him this time. Uthman, who had been left alone by his family, despite all the benefits he had given them, promised that this time he would carry out what Imam Ali ('a) would advise him to do without failing to fulfil his promise. Imam Ali ('a) reminded Uthman of all the occasions where he warned Uthman and advised him to dismiss Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam, Saeed Ibn Al-Aas, Ibn Amir and Mu'awiya as they were the foremost that was responsible for the misery of Uthman. Uthman, on the contrary, had always listened to these individuals and went against Imam Ali ('a). Uthman promised that he would listen to Imam Ali ('a) this time and go against these people.

In this way, Imam Ali ('a) again spoke to the people and asked them to leave Uthman who had promised to correct his path, and dispelled the angry masses. Imam Ali ('a) then called on Uthman to give a speech himself and assure everyone of his good intentions to counter the injustices in society. Uthman gave a speech about his true desire to improve. The people felt sorry for him and decided to give him another chance. But once again, Marwan managed to persuade him to abandon this promise. Imam Ali ('a) again warned Uthman of Marwan's danger and told him that he could now do nothing more for him.

The Murder Of Uthman

This became the final straw for the dissatisfied rebels, and Uthman was killed in his palace after a siege lasting 49 days. He was abandoned by the Umayyads and, above all, by Mu'awiya. Mu'awiya had the opportunity to help him but chose to refrain. The only one who did what he could and tried to ward off the murder of Uthman was Imam Ali ('a). This, despite the fact that Uthman had taken his right to the governorship, always ignored his advice and failed to deliver on his promise to him and the people. Imam Ali ('a) even sent his sons, Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a), to bring water to Uthman when the rebels refused him water during the siege.⁸³

People Rush To Imam Ali ('A)

After the shocking events and the murder of Uthman, people rushed to Imam Ali's ('a) house and refused to leave the place. They pleaded him to accept the position of caliph. The Muslim people had grown tired of the corruption and the troubled and unjust condition that the community was in. The words of the Prophet (S) in Ghadir was recalled. Imam Ali ('a) was known for his righteousness, both during the time of the Prophet (S) and the three caliphs. He had eliminated dangers and prevented major injuries. The people saw Imam Ali ('a) as the only one who could bring society back to its original ideal. The people had grown tired and wanted to return to the Islamic spirit that prevailed during the Prophet's (S) time. They believed that only Imam Ali ('a) could put things right again.

For Imam Ali ('a), the caliphate itself was not worth anything, and he never wanted it for materialistic purposes. At the same time, society had deviated from the Islamic spirit and during a quarter of a century distanced itself further and further away from what the Prophet (S) had built. Morality and values were no longer the same. New generations had been brought up according to principles and teachings void of the true Islamic spirit. Imam Ali ('a) knew that the desire of the people was not matched with what they were prepared to do in their deeds and that the majority, especially the power elite, would not tolerate the Imam's ('a) justice. The Imam ('a) knew that the majority was looking for a caliph and was not mature for the rule of an Imam. In other words, the complete knowledge and belief in the position of Imamah was insufficient and therefore lacked the insight and conviction required to hold on to and follow an Imam.⁸⁴ Therefore, the Imam ('a) refused the crowds' request. But the people insisted, camped outside the Imam's ('a) house and refused to leave until the Imam ('a) agreed to their request. This went on for several days. In the end, based on the will of the people and his duty to God and his people,

Imam Ali ('a) agreed to govern the Muslim community. He himself has described the circumstances:

"At that moment, nothing took me by surprise, but the crowd of people rushing to me. It advanced towards me from every side like the mane of the hyena so much so that Hasan and Husayn were getting crushed and both the ends of my shoulder garment were torn. They collected around me like a herd of sheep and goats... Behold, by Him who split the grain (to grow) and created living beings, if people had not come to supporters and me had not exhausted the argument and if there had been no pledge of God with the learned to the effect that they should not acquiesce in the gluttony of the oppressor and the hunger of the oppressed I would have cast the rope of caliphate on its own shoulders and would have given the last one the same treatment as the first one [of the three caliphs]. Then you would have seen that in my view, this world of yours is no better than the sneezing of a goat."[85](#)

Imam Ali's ('A) Advice And Helping The Caliphs – Approval Of Their Caliphate?

History portrays Imam Ali's ('a) advice to the caliphs on some occasions, and this is used by some as an argument for Imam's ('a) acceptance and approval of their caliphate. At the same time, it is alleged that the caliphs consulted with Imam Ali ('a) on much, which indicates that everything was peaceful and joyful. However, a closer look at what these councils were about, in what contexts and under what circumstances they were given, as well as their frequency, make the reality clearer.

The advice requested from Imam Ali ('a) was in three fields:

- Scientific and religious issues that were difficult to solve and which they had no answers for.
- Military issues, especially in critical situations where measures are taken would be crucial at the national level.
- Legal issues and in the issuance of religious opinions or judgments.

The circumstances under which Imam Ali ('a) gave this advice:

- At the direct request of the caliphs, when they had been in difficult situations and positions or faced questions and concerns that they could not overcome.[86](#)
- When the Imam ('a) was allowed to attend the gathering and was indirectly consulted, as one among others, after other present personalities spoke about their opinions.[87](#)
- When the Imam ('a) witnessed a situation and had to intervene to correct a wrong judgment, prevent a right to be lost or that someone would be innocently punished.

The number of occasions that the Imam ('a), directly and indirectly, was asked for advice in relation to the number of years the caliphs took power:

- Abu Bakr, for over two years and three months in power, consulted the Imam ('a) circa fourteen times. Of which only four times was a direct inquiry, and on the remaining occasions either the Imam ('a) witnessed the situation, others called for the Imam ('a), or someone was sent to inquire indirectly.
- Omar, for over ten years and five months in power, consulted the Imam ('a) about 85 times, of which only twenty-seven times was a direct inquiry while on more than forty occasions the Imam ('a) witnessed the situation and had to intervene.
- Uthman, for over twelve years in power, consulted the Imam ('a) about 8 times, of which only three were a direct request and on at least four occasions the Imam ('a) witnessed the situation and had to intervene.⁸⁸

Note that the meaning of Islamic leadership is not the same as deciding on others or imposing your personal opinions. Rather, it is about the one who is in all possible ways the most suitable to hold the final say. That is the one who is least concerned about pursuing his own interests, the one who has the highest self-control and knowledge, and the one who safeguards the best for all people. The Imam's ('a) position in the capacity of an Imam, makes it one of his foremost duties to protect the message and to safeguard people's guidance.

Accordingly, the Imam ('a) acted on the basis of his duty and gave advice and intervened where required and helped to correct or prevent injustice, or hinder greater dangers and losses from the people, religion and society as a whole. Of course, the Imam ('a) was not always free to act on all issues that arose and was not given the space to advise in many regards. But wherever possible, he did not refrain from giving his advice, which was always for the good of humanity and society. Therefore, the question of leadership was never about a personal pursuit of power for Imam Ali ('a) who always looked for people's continued guidance in his dealings. In other words, Imam Ali ('a) was an Imam, either with or without the caliphate, and his duties were equally clear, whether he ruled over the caliphate or not. Imam Ali ('a) always acted in accordance with these principles.

This does not in any way mean that the Imam ('a) for that matter accepted the caliph's takeover of power or approved their approach or actions, and among the clear evidence for this is:

The Imam's ('a) refusal to pledge allegiance. His and Fatimah az-Zahra's ('a) attempts to awaken the Prophet's (S) companions. As well as, the fact that he brought his forth and spoke of his deprived right on numerous occasions, including in the second caliphate's assembly council, and found in khutba Shaqshaqiyah in Nahjul Balaghah.

The Imam's ('a) refusal to participate in the war of expansion despite his brilliant background on the battlefields and his famous bravery, which was shown both during the Prophet's (S) time and during his own caliphate.

The refusal of the Imam ('a) to agree to govern in accordance with the approach of the two previous

caliphs, which Abd ar-Rahman Ibn Owf set as conditions in the assembly council.

From this, it is obvious that the Imam's ('a) advice to the caliphs coincided with the position of Imamah and the fulfilment of his duty as God's chosen guide. This while the Imam's ('a) position on the previous caliphate was clear and obvious. And as such, his advice to the caliphs cannot, therefore, be interpreted as an approval of them.

1. This is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an verse 7:142.
2. Several events related to this have been dealt with in connection with the Prophet's (S) history; see I2 and further on. In connection with Imam Ali's ('a) history, more aspects will be further elucidated; see O and further on.
3. The discussion of why the choice of an ultimate guide with full mandate and powers, whose obedience is equated with God's obedience and subordinate, must be God's choice has been extensively discussed earlier in the book; see F and further on.
4. Several of the Prophet's (S) proclamations have been dealt with in connection with the Prophet's (S) history, see I, and more will follow in conjunction with Imam Ali's ('a) history, see O and further on.
5. There are plenty of examples of schools of thought in history that encountered this, not the least during Imam Al-Sadiq's ('a) era when discussions on religious issues formed a hot topic of debate in society.
6. A contemporary example of such distorted thoughts and the danger they pose, was clearly visible with the terrorist group Da'esh [ISIS] and similar extremist groups. These groups, based on precisely such distorted ideologies, were backed by some great powers – everything from politics to weapons and money, power and the media – to reach extreme non-human abysmal and commit crimes not only against people but against all of humanity.
7. The hadith, known as hadith Thaqalayn, forms part of the Prophet's (S) sermon in Ghadir Khumm but is also an own hadith based on the Prophet's (S) proclamations at other times. Hence the wording of the hadith may differ slightly, even if the message is the same in all narrated versions. The hadith has been discussed earlier in the book and references have been recorded, among other in Note 81, 82 and 142.
8. The importance of God's selection regarding the ultimate guides and their 'isma (infallibility) has been extensively discussed earlier in the book; see F-F4.
9. This can apply to everyone starting from the Umayyad and Abbasid tyrants, who took over the rule of the Islamic kingdom and committed many crimes using the title "Caliph of the Muslims". Today, the continuation of the same line can be seen in the royal families that have taken power in many Islamic countries. Even extremist groups and extremist individuals who throughout history have given the appearance of following the religion but in practice thwarted its true, are included in this category
10. For more information on the topic of Imamah and the question with regards to the missions and tasks of the Imams ('a), the seeker is referred to: lesson 4 of the book Imamah (2007) by Ayatullah Makarim Shirazi (HA); Swedish translation published by Den Väntades Vänner.
11. Imam Ali ('a) describes this in his speech which became known as Sermon Qase'a in Nahjul Balagha. This sermon's numbering order is 234 but may differ depending on different translation editions.
12. This hadith is quoted in many sources with similar wordings, including: Al-Manaqeb by Ibn Ahmad Al-Khawarizmi p. 83 hadith 70 and p. 311 hadith 309; Sharh Ibn Abil Hadid volume 2 p. 449; Tafsir Al-Kabir by Fakhr Razi where in the commentary interpretation of the Mubahala verse he confirms the authenticity of the hadith volume 2 p. 288; Fat'h Al-Mulk Al-'Ali bi Sihah Hadith-e-Bab-e-Madinat Al-Ilm by Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Siddeeq Al-Hasani Al-Maghribi where the hadith's narrative chain goes back to the well-known and recognized narrator Ibn Abbas's 34; Muhyiddin Al-Arabi from whom Al-Arif Al-Sha'rani has quoted in his book Al-Yawaqeet wa Al-Jawahir p. 172 heading 32. The Hadith is also quoted in Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and Sahih Al-Bayhaqi, as well as in Irshad Al-Qoloob (published 1412 AH) of Deylami volume 2 p. 363; Amali by Sheikh Al-Tusi (1416 AD) p. 416; Sharh Tajrid Al-templeteqad by Allamah Al-Hilli's 221 et al.
13. This is a well-known hadith that has been narrated by more than twenty of the recognized narrators among the Prophet (S) companions who are considered reliable even among Sunni Muslims. The Hadith is thus quoted in several sources including: Al-Mustadrak by Hakim Neyshaboori volume 3 p. 126; Al-Mustadrak's ala Al-Sahihayn volume s 3 p. 126; Al-

Manaqeb by Ibn Ahmad Al-Khawarizmi p.91 retelling 84; Ansab Al-Ashraf volume 2 p. 124; Manaqeb Seyyedona Ali p. 25; Al-Ferdow's volume 1 p. 44; Tarikh Baghdad volume 2 p. 277 and volume 4 p. 348; Al-Lai Al-masno'a by Suyuti volume 1 p. 329; Asad Al-Ghaba volume 4 p. 22; and a similar hadith that is quoted, among other things. in Al-Jami 'as-Sahih by Tarmothi volume 5 p. 637 and volume 2 p. 214. In the book Al-Ghadir by allamah Amini, all of the Prophet's (S) most prominent hadiths about Imam Ali ('a) are collected together with detailed source references which the seeker is referred to – this hadith is quoted in volume 6 p. 79.

14. Religious leadership as an essential basis for leadership and the necessity of it has been extensively discussed earlier in the book. in connection with the topic "Three aspects of leadership"; see F1 and further on.

15. One of the known ahadith indicating hidden depths. The Hadith has been quoted, among others, in Manaqeb Ibn Shar Ashoob volume 3 p. 268; Bihar Al-Anwar volume 40 p. 96; Rawdhat Al-Muttaqin by Al-Majlisi volume 13 p. 273; Mashareq Anwar Al-Yaqin by Hafedh Rajab's 112;

16. The number of similar ahadith with the same meaning is more than can be presented in this book.

17. These historical events have been extensively described earlier in the book; see I2 and on.

18. One of the known ahadith indicating hidden depths. The Hadith has been narrated, among others, in Manaqeb Ibn Shar Ashoob volume 3 p 268; Bihar Al-Anwar volume 40 s 96; Rawdhat Al-Muttaqin by Al-Majlisi volume 13 s 273; Mashareq Anwar Al-Yaqin by Hafedh Rajab's 112.

19. In Ghadir Khumm, after the Prophet (S) proclaimed the position of Imam Ali ('a), a person came to the Prophet (S) and questioned whether God had commanded this or if it was the Prophet (S) own opinion. When the Prophet (S) replied that it was God's order, the person replied that in such case he desires a penalty to be sent down on him instantly because he could not tolerate it. These verses were sent down in connection with this incident and the person's punishment.

20. In his last days, the Prophet (S) repeatedly asked that they presently call on his beloved and brother, whereupon a couple of his wives called their fathers. Their fathers had been ordered by the Prophet (S) to go to the border with Usama's army, but had defied command and returned to Medina; see P. At the sight of them, the Prophet (S) turned away his face disappointed and repeated his opinion until another of those attending called on Imam Ali ('a).

21. This event has been narrated in several well-known historical accounts including Tabari in Tarikh Tabari while Allamah Al-Majlisi has narrated it in Bihar Al-Anwar volume 30 p. 7073 from i.a. Bukhari and Muslim. It is also narrated in Idhah by Neyshaboori p. 259 and in Irshad by Sheikh Mufid volume 1 p. 184. Ibn Abi Hadid Al-Mu'tazeli in Sharh Nahjul Balaghah volume 12 p. 2021 also narrated a depiction from Tarikh Baghdad by Ahmad Ibn Abi Tahir Baghadi Khorasani narrated by acclaimed narrator Ibn Abbas where Omar himself talks about this in a conversation.

22. The events surrounding the passing of the Prophet (S) and his last days in life have been narrated in many historical books of narrations, some of which are: Tarikh Tabari volume 3 p. 196; Sahih Bukhari volume 6 p. 12; Sahih Muslim volume 4 p. 1904; Sahih Tirmithi volume 5 p. 361; and Irshad by Sheikh Mufid volume 1 p. 179–187; Amali by Sheikh Sadooq hadith 316 and p. 508–509 and p. 4547; Ihtijaj of Tabarsi volume 1 p. 89.

23. The Muslim nation's identity was hijacked and eroded to the extent that, although it had not passed long since the Prophet's (S) time and many still remembered the Prophet's (S) words and treatment of Imam Al-Husayn ('a), some became willing to cold-bloodedly murder the Prophet's (S) daughter's son even though they still called themselves Muslims and followers of the same Prophet (S) and religion. The values of the Muslim community had, through the government's values, been distorted to the extent that only an outer covering of religion remained in the form of religious appearances and actions. While the inner reality of faith, mercy for mankind and its spirit of highest morality was about to go in total loss; if not for Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and his sacrifices at Ashura in Karbala which instilled the spirit of Islam. Hence, Ashura, the annual commemoration of the massacre of Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and his followers and the capturing of the women and children accompanying the Imam ('a), has kept this movement of true Islam strongly alive until today. The subject is discussed in greater detail later in the book; see U and further on.

24. This is narrated in some sources including Bihar Al-Anwar by Allamah Al-Majlisi volume 28 p. 239.

25. This is evident in the Imam's ('a) actions and behaviour, not least during his governorship 25 years after being removed from him, and is also something that the Imam ('a) describes himself in i.a. khutba 3 in Nahjul Balaghah. The entire khutba can be read in the book Nahjul Balaghah – khutba 1–30 (2012); Swedish translation published by Den Väntades Vänner.

26. Imam Ali's ('a) answer is written in sermon 5 in the book Nahjul Balaghah.

27. Note that this event is historically documented in both Sunni and Shi'a sources, although both sides usually refrain from speaking openly about it for various reasons. In this case, the event is taken up as part of the historical portrayal and as reality-based facts that the truth-seeker needs to know and be aware of, and not to downplay someone's perception or split between Sunni and Shi'a brothers.

First and foremost, all Muslims, regardless of their faith and school of thought, need to know the history when honest research and respectful discussion about the course of events and reflection on consequences and exits are one of Islam's basic methods of leading man to the truth, no matter what personalities are involved – so as God urges us in Holy Qur'an 4:135 to do justice and testify of the truth for God's sake, even if it is against our loved ones. Consequently, it is perfectly possible to impartially and objectively conduct respectful and reasonable dialogues, free from narrow-mindedness and prejudice, and blindly adhering to perceptions, based on research and facts, to achieve good results and draw lessons that take us all closer to truth and God; which is our common goal and the primary purpose of our religion. As long as we all start from our common faith and the fact that we are all Muslims, and from a wider perspective, truth-seeking people, and wishing to reach God through the truth, this is fully possible, as many of our Sunni and Shi'a Muslim scholars have demonstrated throughout history through valuable dialogues.

In doing so, we should all also pay special attention to and distinguish external but also internal, insidious, extremist voices that smell of divisiveness and who, with disrespect and disdain for different prominent personalities in different schools of thought, intend to create discrepancies between Muslims; this is true regardless of whether they claim to be part of the Sunni or Shi'a Muslim side. Both of these extreme poles have one thing in common; namely, that they deviate from the true spirit of Islam, which is to submit to the truth and to stand for it in all situations. This is also true from the broader perspective of fellow human beings, where some who claim to belong to various different religions, movements, schools of thought, political directions or powers, in fact, blow the divide and the trumpet of inequality under the slogan of benevolence and intend to subjugate people and rule through the great mass disagreement and division.

28. Al-Majmuatul Kamilah Al-Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib by Abdul Fattah Abdul Maqsood (edition translated into Persian by Seyyed Mahmoud Taliqani) volume 1 p. 190–193, p. 326–328 (third edition, Haidery Offset Printing Press), volume 4 p. 274–277; and Siyar A'lam an-Nobala 'of Ath-Thabi volume 15, 578; as well as Al-Imama wa Al-Khilafa by Muqatil Ibn 'Atiyye p. 160–161; as well as Al-Wafi bel Wafiyat of Safadi volume 5 p. 347; and Lisan Al-Mizan of volume 1 p. 268; and Al-Milal wa Al-Nihal of Ash-Shahrestani volume 1 p. 56; and "three things Abu Bakr said regret" Tarikh at-Tabari volume 2 p. 619, Mizan Al-I notadal volume 2 p. 215, Kanzol Irfan volume 5 p. 631, Lisan Al-Mizan volume 4 p. 189 and others.

29. There are several historical narrations in which this event was narrated including in Tarikh Al-Ummah wa Al-Molook by Tabari; as well as Tarikh Tahliliye Islam by Shahidi et al.

30. Imam Ali ('a) was by this law with the smallest calculation between 34 and 37 years old. The same kind of argument used to degrade Imam Ali's ('a) belief in the Prophet (S) at the beginning of the Prophet's (S) call, was brought up to rob the Imam ('a) of his rightful position.

31. These are parts of the words of Imam Ali ('a) and the events that took place on this day and which have been narrated fragmented in many historical depictions including the Tarikh Al-Ummah wa Al-Molook by Tabari (published 1387 AD) volume 3 p. 202; Tarikh Ya'qobi by Ya'qobi (published 1379 AD) volume 2 p. 126; Al-Imama wa Al-Siyasa by Ibn Qutayba (published 1356 AD) volume 1 p. 11–14; Ansab Al-Ashraf by Bilathari (published 1959 AD) volume 1 p. 586; Al-'Eqd Al-Farid by Ibn Abd Rabbah (published 1402 AD) volume 4 p. 259–260; and Al-Ikhtisas by Sheikh Mufid p. 184–187 and Al-Ihtijaj by Sheikh Tabarsi volume 1 p. 95–96 and others.

While some historians have chosen to minimally touch upon these events, others have narrated fragments of the various eyewitness accounts. However, what is clear throughout history is the violation of the Prophet's (S) house and Ahl Al-Bait's ('a) position through the attack on Imam Ali's ('a) house despite the fact that the Prophet's (S) daughter Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) was there; and how Imam Ali ('a), whom the Prophet (S) has on many occasions highlighted for his uniquely distinguished merits and stated as the chosen successor after him, was chained to be forced into oaths of allegiance.

32. The present questions are based on historical events, the majority of which were described earlier in the book. Some of the most well-known historical depictions and narrative collections where these historical events occur are: Musnad Ibn Hanbal volume 1 p. 254; Tarikh Dameshq volume 42 p. 207–208, 448; Khasais an-Nisa'i s 181; Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir volume 17 p. 39; Sunan at-Tarmothi volume 5 p. 633; Al-Mustadrak ala as-Sahihayn volume 13 p. 135; Al-Mu'jam Al-Awsat volume 9 p. 95; Musnad Ibn Ya'li volume 1 p. 280; Al-Mahasen wa Al-Masawe's 41; Manaqeb Kharazmi p. 104; et al

33. Based on the Word of God in the Holy Qur'an 33:6, 53:3–4 and 4:59 and 24:54 et al. which the Prophet (S) relies on in sermon Ghadir.

34. For more information on this, see Imam Ali's ('a) documentary at

<https://vimeo.com/115925500> [12]

35. Therefore, it is the fitra of man that God's chosen guides – prophets ('a) and Imams ('a) – seek to reach and evoke. The issue of fitra has been dealt with extensively earlier in the book; see B3.

36. Imam Ali ('a) speaks of this in a few strong words including in khutba Shaqshaqiyah, sermon 3 in the book Nahjul Balagha. Online in English and Arabic at: <https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-1-sermons> [11]

37. Sahih Bukhari volume 8 chapter 82 no 817 describes how Imam Ali ('a) was against what happened in Saqifa and in Sahih Muslim chapter 19 no 4349 describes what Imam Ali ('a) thoughts about what happened were.

38. Khutba Shaqshaqiyah, sermon 3 in the book Nahjul Balagha. Online in English and Arabic at:

<https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-1-sermons> [11]

39. A clear example of this is the uprising of Imam Al-Husayn ('a), which apparently led to the martyrdom of the Imam ('a) and his companions and the imprisonment of women and children. However, at the same time, the uprising of Imam Al-Husayn ('a) became the basis for a movement that echoed throughout history and ensured the survival of true Islam in accordance with Ahl Al-Bait's ('a) line. In this way, Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) movement gave victory; not by the usual definition of victory but rather an eternal victory of the blood of the oppressed martyr over the sword of the oppressor.

40. The Umayyad lineage, also known as Bani Umayya, was of the tribes from the Quraysh branches and was called Bani Umayya (The descendants of Umayya) after their ancestor Umayya, uncle to Abu Sufyan. Abu Sufyan was in turn father of Mu'awiya, father of Yazid. Abu Sufyan, followed by his son Mu'awiya, led and was the brains of the enemies against Islam and the Prophet (S), during his lifetime. In connection with the Muslims' conquest and victory in Mecca, Abu Sufyan bridged over to Islam and became a so called tolaqa' (the spared ones), during the conquest.

There are many historical accounts implying that Abu Sufyan continued his previous path and continued to fight Islam, but now under the surface, continued by his son Mu'awiya against Imam Ali ('a). Mu'awiya, who was let into power already during the second caliph's reign, was leading corruption from his seat in Sham and spread a distorted version of faith with his propaganda and stronghold. This was continued even later against Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and as such paved the way for his son Yazid, to cause the events of Ashura and the martyrdom of Imam Al-Husayn ('a). This subject is discussed more in detail later in the book.

41. The Holy Qur'an 17:60.

42. While the province of Sham was assigned to Abu Sufyan's elder son Yazid during the first caliph's rule, after consulting with the second caliph, Abu Sufyan's second son, Mu'awiya took over the province after his brother, during the rule of the second caliph. This special treatment and room to do whatever by the second caliph (according to historical accounts and witnesses) made Mu'awiya take control of Sham as a whole and rule it as his own dominion. Sham, a huge province with many riches, becoming part of the Islamic state after the departure of the Prophet (S), was now entirely left to Mu'awiya's liking and the distorted Islam fed to people by Mu'awiya himself. During the rule of the third caliph, himself from the Umayyad lineage, secured Mu'awiya's hold further and so the upper hand of Bani Umayya was factual.

43. This event has been mentioned more explicitly earlier in the book under the he'Adalahine 'the attack on the house of Imam Ali ('a)' and will therefore not be further touched in this section; see P.

44. According to Islamic law there is a certain divorce period, called 'idda, after the husbands passing, where the joining in matrimony and intercourse are abstained from. Furthermore, the consent of the woman to enter matrimony is a condition for the ceremony and therefore also the wedlock itself. The event is narrated through sources such as Tarikh Al-Umam by tabarri volume 3 p. 249, 253–255 and 276–280; as well as Al-Maghazi by Waqedi p. 69–70 and 103–107; as well as Tarikh

Al-Ya'qobi by Ya'qobi volume 2 p. 139 among others.

45. This is narrated, in among others, Asad Al-Ghaba volume 4 p. 277; Al-Kamil fi at-Tarikh volume 2 p. 358; Tarikh Tabari volume 3 p. 280; Al-Bidaya wa Al-Nihaya volume 6 p. 323; Al-Isaba volume 5 p. 561; as well as Wafiyat Al-A'yam volume 6 p. 15.

46. Fadak, which was a part of a great area outside Medina, close to the fortress of Khaybar, involved a larger verdant area of land and several adjacent villages, and had been given over to the Holy Prophet (S) by the Jews living in the area, this in accordance with their agreement after the battle of Khaybar. The area had been donated to the Holy Prophet (S) by its citizens and did not involve any clashes, and hence was not a lot of war. In the Holy Qur'an 59:6-7, God has referred to these properties, 'Fay', which Fadak was a part of, and clarified that the control of these lands belongs to the Holy Prophet (S) and directed the action regarding them to the Holy Prophet (S). After the revelation of verse 17:16, the Holy Prophet (S) gave Fadak to Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) to be in possession of. Until the seizure of Fadak, Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) used the incomes from it, with no exception, to different purposes serving the community and helping the needy. This has been narrated through several known depictions and by known historians and scholars such as Suyuti in his book ad-Dorr Al-Manthoor volume 4 p. 177, Haskani in Shawahed at-Tanzil le Qawaed at-Tafdhil (printed in 1411 AH), volume 1 p. 438-439; as well as Sheikh Al-Tusi in at-Tebyan fi tafsir Al-Qur'an volume 6 p. 468 and Sheikh Tabarsi Majma' Al-Bayan volume 6 p. 633-634 among others.

47. Umm Ayman was a distinguished character and was of the faithful companions of the Holy Prophet (S). He had named to her to be one of the women of paradise. This highly respected woman had been among those taken to Mecca as slaves and thereafter been brought to the house of the father of the Holy Prophet (S), Abdullah (r.a.). After the passing of Amina (r.a.), the mother of the Holy Prophet (S), Umm Ayman had taken care of the Holy Prophet (S) during a time and later been liberated by the Holy Prophet (S). The Holy Prophet (S) had great love and admiration for her and sometimes used to call her 'mother'. She was among the first to accept Islam and supported the Holy Prophet (S) in all matters. She participated in the battles of Uhud and Khaybar, gave water to the soldiers and looking after the injured.

48. The speech came to be known as Sermon Fadakiyya and is narrated through both Sunni and Shi'a sources. This speech, in addition to its powerful words and delivery, was also challenging and uncovered many hidden truths.

49. Among them are the clear words of God in verse 27:16 regarding Prophet Sulayman ('a) [Salamo] who inherited from his father Prophet Daqwood ('a) [David] as well as verse 19:5-7 where Prophet Zakariyya ('a) [Zachary] asks God to bestow him a child and a successor to inherit him and the line of Prophet Ya'qob ('a) [Jakob], after which God bestows him with Prophet Yahya ('a) [John].

50. This and other depictions like it are narrated through several historical sources such as Sahih Al-Bukhari, in the chapter "The battle of Khaybar" (Arabic-English edition) volume 5 p. 381-383 hadith 546 and volume 4 hadith 325 among others.

51. This hadith is one the most frequent ahadith being told by the Holy Prophet (S) in similar words at several occasions in connection with different events. This hadith, and others like it, has also been narrated multiple times by many distinguished companions and narrators and has been narrated through both Sunni and Shi'a sources, among them Sahih Al-Bukhari volume 4 p. 248 hadith 4819; rooh Al-Ma'ani by Aloosi volume 3 p. 138; Al-Mustadrak by Hakim Neyshaboori volume 3 p. 156; Dorr Al-Manthoor by Suyuti volume 2 p. 194; Helyat Al-Awiya by Abi Na'im Esbahani volume 2 p. 42; Rawdh Al-Anaf volume 1 p. 178, 279; Fath Al-Qadir by Muhammad Showkani volume 1 p. 439; Faraed Al-Sametin volume 2 p. 35 among others. The authenticity of the hadith is confirmed by all the scholars, as well as the position of Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) being widely acknowledged.

52. Even if the life of Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) speaks for itself, as well as the words of the Holy Prophet (S) and his special way and respect towards her, which was higher than just a father's respect of his daughter, and rather showed her extraordinary position with God, the story also illuminates other characters testimonies. Among these is the present hadith which can be find among the following sources; Al-Asti'ab by Allamah Ibn Abdel-Barr, volume 2 p. 751; Mustadrak by Hakim Neyshaboori volume 3 p. 160 among others.

53. These ahadith are also among the most frequent ahadith whose authenticity is clarified by both Sunni and Shi'a scholars, narrated by several companions and recurrent through different chains of narration. There are also more ahadith, using similar words and with similar meaning, having been shared in different circumstances. Among the sources where these ahadith are narrated are Sahih Bukhari volume 1 p. 532 as well as volume 4 p. 210 and 212; Musnad Ahmad Ibn

Hanbal volume 4 p. 326–327; Sahih Muslim volume 7 p. 141; Sunan Thirmithi volume 5 p. 360 and p. 689 hadith 3967; Al-Mustadrak ala Al-Sahihayn volume 3 p. 158; Sunan Al-Kubra volume 10 p. 201; Beyhaqi volume 5 p. 147; Sharh Nahjul Balagha; by Ibn Abi Al-Hadid volume 4 p. 64; volume 13 p. 36, volume 16 p. 273 and 278; Manaqib Al-Kharazmi p. 353; Sobol Al-Hoda wa ar-Rashad volume 10 p. 237; Asad Al-Ghaba volume 5 p. 521–522 and volume 8 p. 159; Tathkerat Al-Khawas p. 279; Helyat Al-Awliya' volume 2 p. 40; Yanabi' Al-Mawadda volume 2 p. 52, 53 and 97; Khasais an-Nisai p. 35; Mustadrak Al-Hakim volume 3 p. 153; Mizan Al-l'tidal p. 525; Kanz Al-Ummal volume 6 p. 22 and 219; Al-Ghadir volume 2 p. 275, volume 3 p. 30 and 109, volume 7 p. 174 and 231, and volume 9 p. 378 among others.

54. This and narrations like it are narrated through several sources, such as Sahih Muslim volume 5 p. 154 hadith 4471; Sahih Bukhari volume 4 p. 42 hadith 3093, volume 5 p. 82, volume 8 p. 3 hadith 6726; Al-Imama wa as-Siyasa by Ibn Qutayba volume 1 p. 14 and 17; as-Saqifa wa Al-Fadak by Jawhari p. 104; Ansab Al-Ashraf by Bikathari volume 1 p. 79 among others.

55. This effect can clearly be seen even today, both in countries and layers of society who are struck by poverty as well as in places where the people are not poor but where the structure of society are built in a way where people are pressured in to working long days in order to sustain the economy need for a high-consuming standard of living one is propagated into mimic. The matter of economics is therefore a two-edged sword which is being used to keep the population constantly preoccupied with the search for the material and between working to live or willing to work, and thereby remaining detached from more important venues and life itself. Economy is a basic question that Islam emphasizes and has a system for. This due to a healthy economy being a prerequisite for man to strive for higher goals and purposes of life.

56. The event is discussed earlier in the book; see P.

57. These events are narrated in several prominent historical accounts, including Tarikh Tabari (year of publication 1967 AD) volume 3 p. 184, 186, 223; Tarikh Ya'qobi (year of publication 1379 AD) volume 2 p. 127; Al-Maghazi (year of publication 1966 AD) volume 3 p. 1117–1122; as-Sira an-Nabawiyya by Ibn Hisham volume 2 p. 642 and 650; Tabaqat Al-Kubra by Ibn Saad Volume 2 p. 145–146, 191; 'Oyoon Al-Athar by Ibn Seyyed an-Nas (published year 1414 AD) volume 2 p. 350; Emta' Al-Asma' by Maqrizi (year of publication 1420 AD) volume 14 p. 125, 485 and 519; and Al-Irshad by Sheikh Mufid (year of publication 1413 et seq.) volume 1 p. 169, 183 et al.

58. Towards the end of the Prophet's (S) life, a man named Musaylama had pretended to be sent from God and later married a woman who also claimed to be sent from God. These had gathered a crowd of supporters and clashed with a troop that Abu Bakr had sent to meet them. In this difficult battle that took place in the Yamama area and was named after it, it is stated that over a thousand Muslims have fallen martyrs, of which about 700 were Qur'an reciters as well as close to 60 prominent Muhajirin and Ansar, including thirteen companions who participated in the Battle of Badr. In other words, many of those who witnessed the Prophet (S) and the early history of Islam with their own eyes did not stay alive for long, and martyrs fell within the time of a few years after the Prophet (S). These events are narrated in the historical accounts including in Tarikh Khalifa Ibn Khayyat volume 1 p. 111–115; Al-Fotooh volume 1 p. 40 et al.

59. Several depictions have been narrated in connection with this event, including in Tarikh Al-Umam wa Al-Molook of Tabari (published 1387 AD) volume 3 p. 428–430; Al-Kamel fi at-Tarikh by Ibn Athir (published 1385 AD) volume 2 p. 425–427; Al-Imama wa as-Siyasa by Ibn Qutayba (published 1356 AD) volume 1 p. 19–20; Kitab ath- Thoqat by Ibn Habban (published 1393 AD) volume 2 p. 191–192; Tabaqat Al-Kubra by Ibn Saadat (published 1968 et al.) volume 3 p. 199–200 et al.

60. Excerpt from sermon 3 in Nahjul Balagha known as khutba Shaqshaqiyah; Nahjul Balagha – sermon 1–30 (2012); Swedish translation published by Den Väntades Vänner. Online in English and Arabic at:

<https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-1-sermons> [11]

61. The subject is discussed on several parts of the book.

62. These details are narrated in most historical accounts and other books in which events during the time of the caliphs are affected. Among these are Mokhtasar Tarikh Dameshq volume 25 p. 17–24; Rasael Al-Jahedh – ar-Rasael as-Siyasiyya p. 344; Tathbit Dalael an-Nobowwa p. 539; Eqd Al-Farid volume 1 p. 15 and volume 5 p. 114; Ansab Al-Ashraf volume 4 p. 550; Tarikh Ya'qobi volume 2 p. 86; Tarikh ar-Rosol wa Al-Molook volume 4 p. 444 et al.

63. Note that the Prophet (S) in hadith Thaqlayn makes it clear that the Qur'an and the Ahl Al-Bait ('a) are not separated from each other and together constitute the recipe for guidance, which is above the fact that religion is a package where

both the Qur'an and the Ahl Al-Bait ('a) are included and are both needed together to manage the road. In fact, the Qur'an has the function of a constitution while the Ahl Al-Bait ('a), with the Prophet (S) at the forefront, are the one who interpret its delicate meaning, explains its detailed details, executes a practical implementation of it and protects it from distortion. The necessity of both side by side is clear from examples such as the prayers. God commands in the Qur'an the performance of prayer and denotes its times but leaves the explanation of its practical execution and detailed steps to the Prophet (S).

In other words, the Qur'an speaks of and when the prayer is to be performed but not how it is to be prayed; this is told and explained by the Prophet (S) on God's order. Consequently, the cohesion of the Qur'an and the Prophet (S), and furthermore Ahl Al-Bait ('a), is of utmost necessity. Even in the versions of hadith Thaqaalayn where the designation of Ahl Al-Bait ('a) is narrated as "sunnah", that is, the Prophet's (S) traditional customs and practices in actions and words, this results in the same conclusion. With this, it goes without saying that fatal consequences will entail with the restriction or exclusion of the Prophet's (S) sunnah, not the least in opening the door to self-interpretations of the Holy Qur'an whose results have affected the world in the form of distorted, intrinsic and self-serving inventions of extreme fundamentalists.

64. These decisions and approaches are detailed in history and are depicted in most historical accounts, including Tarikh Tabari volume 4, p. 396; Tarikh Ya'qobi volume 2 p. 58; Tabaqat Al-Kubra volume 3 p. 499; Al- Kamil fi at-Tarikh volume 2 p. 361; Tarikh Al-Khulafa p. 106; Sharaf Ashab Al-Hadith p. 87–88; Sharh Najul Balaghah by Ibn Abil-Hadid Volume 9 p. 29–30 and Volume 20 p. 20; Al-Fitna Al-Kubra p. 80–81 et al.

65. In the Holy Qur'an verse 46:15, God states that a mother's bearing and separation from her child is a total of 30 months, while in verse 2:233 it is stated that a complete breastfeeding period lasts for two years, that is, 24 months. Subtracting the breastfeeding period from the total period, it clearly shows that a child can be born 6 months after birth.

66. These statements and the historical contexts and cases that led to them are narrated in several books including many historical accounts such as Sahih Muslim Book 3 hadith 718; Sahih Bukhari Volume 1 Book 7 No. 340; Al-Manaqeb by Kharazmi's 81; Asd Al-Ghaba by Ibn Athir volume 4 p. 23; Tahdhib at-Tahdhib by Ibn Hibr volume 7 p. 296; Yanabi 'Al-Mawadda by Qundoozi Hanafi volume 1 p. 216, volume 2 p. 172 and 405, volume 3 p. 147; Men Hayat Khalifa Omar Ibn Khattab by Ahmad Bakri's 320; Ta'wil Mokhtalaf Al-Hadith by Ibn Qutayba volume 1 p. 152 and 162; Al-Faeq fi Gharib Al-Hadith by Zamakhshari volume 2 p. 375; Tarikh Madinat Dameshq volume 25 p. 369; Tarikh Al-Islam by Thahabi volume 3 p. 638; Al-Bidaya wa Al-Nihaya by Ibn Kathir volume 7 p. 397; Tafsir as-Sam'ani volume 5 p. 154; Mawaqef Iji volume 3 p. 636; Tafsir Al-Kabir by Fakhr Razi volume 21 p. 22; Sharh Nahjul Balaghah by Ibn Abil Hadid volume 1 p. 18 and volume 12 p. 179; Man 'Al-Jalil by Muhammad' Ellish volume 9 p. 648; Dastoor Al-Ulama by Qadhi Abdenabi Nakri volume 1 p. 80; and Al-Ghadir volume 4 p. 64 and volume 8 p. 189; Kafi by Kulayni volume 7 p. 424; Man la yahthorho Al-Faqih by Sheikh Sadooq volume 4 p. 36; Sharh Al-Akhbar by Qadhi Nu'man volume 2 p. 319; Tahdhib Al-Ahkam by Sheikh Al-Tusi volume 6 p. 606; Menhaj Al-Karama by Allama Al-Hilli's 18; at-Taraef by Seyyed Ibn Tawoos p. 255 and 516 et al.

67. This is evident in most Qur'anic verses including [33:21], [3:32], [4:59], [47:33], [4:65] and others.

68. Sahih Muslim (English and Arabic edition, respectively) book 9 no 3493 and volume 2 p. 1099; Musnad Ibn Hanbal (published 1421 AD) volume 5 p. 61; Sunan as-Saghir by Beyhaqi (published 1410 AD) volume 3 p. 116; Al-Mustadrak 'ala as-Sahihayn by Hakim Neyshaboori (published 1411 AD) volume 2 p. 214; Tarikh Al-Islam by Thahabi (edition 2 published 1409 AD) volume 8 p. 410; Al-Mujtaba men as-Sunan – Sunan as-Soghra by Nisa'i (edition 2 published 1406 AD) volume 6 p. 142; Sharh Nahjul Balaghah by Ibn Abil Hadid volume 22 p. 5 et al.

69. Among the sources where this is narrated are Sahih Bukhari (English and Arabic edition published 1422 AD) book 73 no. 134 and volume 3 p. 45; Ershad as-Sari le Sharh Sahih Al-Bukhari by Qastalani (published 1323 AD) volume 3 p. 426 et al.

70. All Islamic law schools, both the four Sunni and the Shi'a, agree that the Prophet (S) prayed with his hands released at the sides of the body and that prayer with closed hands was introduced by the other caliph. Among Sunni scholars, within three of four Sunni schools, this act is performed along the second caliph as a form of recommended action, while the fourth school does not consider it recommended. This is clear both through historical depictions and through fiqh books (jurisprudence). In addition, there are detailed depictions of the Prophet's (S) prayer in which companions have described his prayer extensively and the authenticity of these narratives is clarified by scholars in all schools based on sources such as Sahih Bukhari volume 1 p. 201; Sunan at-Tarmothi volume 1 p. 188; Musnad Ahmad volume 5 p. 424; Sunan ad-

Daromi volume 1 p. 314; Sunan Al-Kubra by Beyhaqi volume 2 p. 72; Sunan Ibn Maje volume 1 p. 280; Sunan Abi Dawood volume 1 p. 170 Kitab as-Salat – bab Istiftah as-salad; Sahih Ibn Habban volume 5 p. 196; Umdat Al-Qari volume 6 p. 104; Al-Fiqh 'ala Al-Mathaheb Al-Khamsa by Moghniyye p. 109; and Mustanad Al-Urwa volume 4 p. 445; Jawahir volume 11 p. 19 et al.

71. Sunan Al-Kubra by Beyhaqi (edition 3 published 1424 AD) volume 1 p. 632; Sunan at-Tarmothi volume 2 p. 59; Mawta 'of Malik (published 1406 AD) book 3 no 3.1.8 and p. 72; Sharh as-Sunnah by Baghawi Shafe'i (edition 2 published 1403 AD) volume 2 p. 265; Sunan ad-Darqotni (published 1424 AD) volume 1 p. 454; Al-Musnad by Humayri (edition 2 published 1403 AD) volume 1 p. 473; Jami 'Al-Usul fi Ahadith ar-Rasool (published 1390 AD) volume 5 p. 286; Abkar Al-Afkar fi Usool ad-Din by Amudi (published 1423 et seq.) Volume 5 p. 258 et al.

72. Circumstances surrounding the council, the entire procedure and its outcome are described in detail, among other things. in footnote 15 of khutba Shaqshaqiyah, No. 3, in the book Nahjul Balaghah – sermon 1–30 (2012); Swedish translation published by Den Väntades Vänner. Online in English and Arabic at:

<https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balaghah-part-1-sermons> [11]

The historical account is also found in well-known books such as Tarikh Ya'qobi volume 2 p. 160–162; Ansab Al-Ashraf by Bilathari volume 2 p. 261; Tabaqat Al-Kubra volume 3 p. 344; Al-Musnad volume 5 p. 445 and 447; Tarikh Al-Umam wa Al-Molook volume 3 p. 296 and 302; Sharh Nahjul Balaghah by Ibn Abil Hadid volume 1 p. 194; at-Tanbih wa Al-Ashraf p. 252–253; Al-Bad 'wa at-Tarikh volume 5 p. 192; as-Saqifa wa Fadak p. 78 et al.

73. Uthman was kept close by the first caliph and consulted on matters. He was also the one who recorded the will of Abu Bakr who appointed Omar as the next caliph. The well-known historian Tabari also states that Uthman was known among the people as Omar's successor; Tarikh Tabari volume 3 p. 479 et al.

74. This is narrated in most historical accounts, including Tarikh Tabari (published 1387 AD) volume 3 p. 296 and volume 4 p. 230–233; Al-Kamil fi at-Tarikh by Ibn Athir volume 3 p. 66; Tarikh Ya'qobi volume 2 p. 162; Sharh Nahjul Balaghah by Ibn Abil Hadid volume 1 p. 188 and others.

75. While Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas was Abd ar-Rahman Ibn Owf's cousin and did not oppose him, Abd ar-Rahman was married to Uthman's sister, which made Uthman his brother-in-law. Imam Ali ('a) referred to the fact that Abd ar-Rahman intended to return the caliphate later after passing it on to Uthman, in addition to the support for previous caliphs and the benefits which have benefited him from this. The depiction of these events is narrated, among other things in Tarikh Tabari (published 1387 AD) volume 3 p. 296–302; Tarikh Ya'qobi volume 2 p. 162; Sharh Nahjul Balaghah by Ibn Abil Hadid volume 1 p. 194; as-Saqifa wa Al-Fadak by Jawhari Basri (published 1413 AD) p. 87; Al-Bed 'wa at-Tarikh volume 5 p. 192 et al.

76. This statement and similar words and documents from Abu Sufyan have been narrated in several sources including in Ansab Al-Ashraf by Bilathari (published 1400 AD) volume 4 p. 12 and 13 and (published 1959 AD) volume 5 p. 12; Morooj ath-Thahab by Mas'oodi volume 1 p. 351 and 440; Al-Aghani by Abu Al-Faraj Al-Isfahani volume 6 p. 356 and 529; Al-Asti'ab volume 2 p. 690; Al-Ghadir fi Al-Kitab wa as-Sunnah volume 18 p. 137 et al.

77. This can be seen through the course of history and is clearly pronounced by well-known Sunni scholars like Suyuti from, among other things Tarikh Al-Khulafa (English edition) p. 161–162 and others.

78. These depictions and the like have been narrated in several depictions, not least in various commentary interpretations of the Qur'an in connection with verse 17:60, including Tafsir Dorr Al-Manthoor volume 5 p. 309; Al-Mustadrak volume 4 p. 527 et al.

79. This is something that many well-known historians and experts in the political history of Islam have found, including Seyyed Qutb in his book Social Justice in Islam, p. 221–222.

80. The numbers presented in history show how enormous wealth, both in terms of money and land, and also governmental items were assigned to relatives who lacked both the skills and solicitude for the people. Some sums were also used to silence any opponents, but the corruption that prevailed and the incredible sums and powers given to especially some of Bani Umayya, not least Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam, also got those who stood close to the governance to protest. These details are widely known in history and are narrated in many sources including Tarikh Kamil by Ibn Athir volume 3 p. 46; Tarikh Baghdad volume 13 p. 286; Tarikh Ya'qobi volume 2 p. 164; Ansab Al-Ashraf by Bilathari volume 5 p. 128; Al-Ma'aref by Ibn Qutayba's 84; Tarikh Abu Al-Feda volume 1 p. 168; Social Justice in Islam p. 221–222 et al. as well as footnote 17 in

khutba Shaqshaqiyya, No. 3, in the book Nahjul Balagha – Swedish translation published by Den Väntades Vänner. Online in English and Arabic at: <https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-1-sermons> [11]

81. One of the Prophet's (S) closest companions about whom the Prophet (S) testified to his truth-telling, was Abu Dharr, who refused to be silent to the corruption and oppression that drowned society due to the injustices the third caliph allowed. Abu Dharr's refusal to receive a large sum as a "gift" and his criticism of Uthman, ended up being banished to Rabatha, at that time a remote uninhabited area of Sham, are narrated in many historical accounts including Tarikh Ya'qobi volume 2 p. 171 – 172; Tabaqat Ibn Saadat volume 4 p. 226–229; Tarikh Tabari (year of publication 1403 et seq.) Volume 3 p. 336 et al.

82. These historical events, including Uthman's offer to Mu'awiya, are narrated in several historical accounts, including Tarikh Tabari Tarikh Al-Umam wa Al-Molook (Second edition, published 1387 AD) volume 4 p. 368; Al-Imama wa as-Siyasa by Ibn Qutayba ad-Daynoori (published 1410 AD) volume 1 p. 54–55; Tarikh Ya'qobi of Ya'qobi volume 2 p. 175 et al.

83. The events surrounding the uprising in Uthman's last time and the circumstances surrounding his murder are detailed in historical accounts. Although the identity of the killer itself remains unclear to the public, the study of the course of events and the actions of the personalities involved in connection with the murder, and even thereafter, can give a thorough indication of their intentions and motives. The events are narrated in many sources including the aforementioned. A summary of the events is also given in footnote 19 in khutba Shaqshaqiyya, no. 3, in the book Nahjul Balagha – sermon 1–30 (2012); Swedish translation published by Den Väntades Vänner; alternatively online at <http://dvv.se/bok/Nahj1-30/> [13]. Online in English and Arabic at: <https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-1-sermons> [11]

84. The subject of Imamah and wilayat (divinely chosen leadership and patronage) has been dealt with throughout the book, including Chapter 6; see L and further on.

85. Khutba Shaqshaqiyya, No. 3, in the book Nahjul Balagha – sermon 1–30 (2012); Swedish translation published by Den Väntades Vänner; alternatively online at <http://dvv.se/bok/Nahj1-30/> [13]. Online in English and Arabic at:

<https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-1-sermons> [11]

86. At one point in the battle against the Persians, reports came to Omar that the Persian king had summoned soldiers from all Persian provinces and gathered an army of 150,000 to defeat the Muslim army and destroy the Madaen and Kufa along the way. This was shocking to the caliph who gathered the prominent personalities to think of a way out of this critical position. Most could only comfort and had no suggestions. Uthman who was among those present advised Omar to gather the soldiers from Sham and Yemen and together with soldiers from Mecca and Medina head to Kufa and join the army there and with all forces gathered go in battle with the Persians. Imam Ali ('a) who did not say anything until he was asked by Omar to which the Imam ('a) replied that the calling of soldiers from Sham and Yemen would leave them unprotected in the face of threats from the Roman Empire and Abyssinia, while Omar's presence on the front would indicate to the enemies that the caliph had arrived with all the forces and that the Muslim army lacks support which would encourage the enemy and strengthen their fighting spirit; Al-Fotooh by Amad Ibn A'tham volume 2 p. 293–294; Al-Kamil fi at-Tarikh volume 3 p 7 et al. In fact, the Imam ('a) advice was to protect the core of Islam from an external enemy as defeat would cost many lives and would not only stay at the borders of the nation. In addition, the second caliph was known for his tough attitude and actions and a victory with him on the front would have cost more human lives from the enemy front. Therefore, the Imam ('a) in the capacity of an Imam was after protecting the message and the people.

87. For example, at the time when a woman who gave birth after 6 months of marriage was accused of fornication.

88. These are collected and narrated in the book Ali wa Al-Khulafa by Najmeddin Askari p. 73–345 and others.

6.2 – The Caliphate

R. The Solution Of The Enemies: First Oppression And One War After Another

Imam Ali's ('A) Leadership And The Removal Of Former Regents

Now that Imam Ali ('a) had the governorship, he strived to return the Islamic society back to the prophetic path from which they had deviated and reinstate justice and equality in society; not least financially. This was no easy task as a society had changed a lot since the Prophet's (S) time and during the reign of the three previous caliphs. Not least through the unjust distribution of Bayt Al-Mal (Treasury House) and the emergence of a power elite who had not obtained their positions on the grounds of their merits. The removal of the positions of these elite and the repossession of Bayt Al-Mals (Treasury House) unfairly distributed wealth would not occur without resistance. The Imam ('a) would automatically get many powerful people against him. But the Imam ('a) made his standpoint clear from the outset, and he would rule in accordance with the law of God and the Prophet's (S) action, regardless of the opposition he would encounter.¹

Since corruption was widespread among the regents of Uthman, one of the Imam's ('a) first decisions was that they should be removed and replaced with upright and pious persons. Those who, during these years, was not engulfed in money and desire for power. Thus, Imam Ali ('a) removed the existing regents, first and foremost/ the first being Mu'awiya, with immediate effect. He sent the decision along with the honest and competent companions who would replace them. It is stated that a companion advised the Imam ('a) to leave these reagents in their posts in order to secure his governance and not have them oppose him. The Imam ('a) was well aware of the probable consequences but would never, in the capacity of being a divinely chosen Imam ('a), compromise with righteousness and justice to protect his governorship at the expense of the welfare and justice of the people. Thus, the Imam ('a) firmly denied and replied in one of these cases concerning Mu'awiya:

“By God, I will not let Mu'awiya be ruler over the life of the people even if it were for two days.”²

Those who, during the time of the former caliphs, especially under Uthman's rule, had accumulated all that they wanted from wealth and made themselves comfortable in their unjustified positions of power, now found all their self-benefits in danger. These knew that if Imam Ali ('a) had the opportunity, his rule would be the end to their self-interests and therefore had no intention of letting him rule in freedom. Accordingly, they did everything in their power to initially negotiate with the Imam ('a) and impose their demands for benefits. But when they realized that Imam Ali ('a) was not giving in to their pressure and did not accept injustice, all efforts were turned to oppose the Imam ('a) instead.

The Imam ('a) himself has described the circumstances as follows:

“When I took up the reins of government, one party broke away, and another turned disobedient while

the rest began acting wrongfully³ as if they had not heard the word of God saying: ‘That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.’⁴

It ended with the Imam ('a) having to endure war after war against three groups as the Prophet (S) had announced:

- Those who broke their oath of allegiance when they realized that they would not receive important positions in the governance.
- Mu'awiya who refused to leave his post when he was removed.
- A group of extremists who broke out of Imam Ali's ('a) army during the Battle of Siffin. This group came to be called 'khawarij'.

Imam Ali ('A) Is Accused Of Uthman's Murder

The confused state following the murder of Uthman and the fact that no specific person, among the rebels who had sieged his home, was the assured murderer, served as an immediate excuse to cause tumult and agitate the situation. Suddenly, Imam Ali ('a) was accused of being an opponent of Uthman and as such a participant in his murder. On the top of this wily invention was none other than Mu'awiya, whom himself abstained from sending troops aiding Uthman, on his appeal.⁵ However, with the bloody dress of Uthman on the spear, Mu'awiya now stood as the foremost to avenge Uthman's murder and refused to obey the orders of the Imam ('a), who had removed his regency. This way Mu'awiya broke his oath to the caliphate and its governing caliph and declared Sham as his own rule, and himself as to its caliph.

Talha, Zubayr & Aisha

But the first ones to openly declare war against the Imam ('a) were none other than the two well-known companions, Talha and Zubayr. Both of whom became known during the time of the Prophet (S), and Zubayr also being the cousin of Imam Ali ('a), who even defended him during the plot in Saqifa and when Fatimah az-Zahra's ('a) home was attacked. Hence, due to their fame and reputation, they were partly a threat. Even though they abstained from power during the rule of the first and second caliphate, they both were given a noticeable share of wealth and land, but also other forms of benefits. They did however not receive special ranks alongside the ruling elite.

When Imam Ali ('a) accepted governorship, Talha and Zubayr believed that they had an opportunity and hoped that Imam Ali ('a) would award them with high posts due to their reputation and prior positions. Imam Ali ('a) on the other hand, did not have any intention to assign anything to someone who was not justified and who would govern based on favours and personal interests. This was derived from the view and power of Imam Ali ('a); power was nothing but a means to be used to execute God's law, and the

ruler would be nothing but the servant of the people and the most vigilant of the well-being of people and development of society, in his view. This could be obtained through pious, righteous and just individuals who did not have any personal interests or greed for power but rather saw the positions of power as a heavy responsibility which they had to be accounted for before God.

It is narrated that Talha and Zubayr requested a meeting with the Imam ('a). As they entered the humble residence of the Imam ('a), he was seated and occupied with state affairs, Imam Ali ('a) asked them to be seated. As the Imam ('a) completed whatever occupied him, he put out the light only to light another. Talha and Zubayr were surprised and asked the Imam ('a) of the reason behind this act. The Imam ('a) explained that the first light was purchased with the money of Bayt Al-Mal (Treasury House) and used while he took care of state affairs, whilst the other light was purchased with his own livelihood and used when dealing with own personal errands. This was enough for Talha and Zubayr to realize that the Imam ('a) would not accept their request about elevated posts or in any way allow them to continue to receive benefits of which they were not entitled to. The message had reached them, and so they chose to leave the Imam ('a).

Talha and Zubayr then went alongside Aisha, daughter of Abu Bakr and the wife of the Prophet (S), and rose up against the governance of Imam Ali ('a). They went against his rule despite them being among the first one to pledge oaths of allegiance to Imam Ali ('a). The rebelling of Talha and Zubayr was therefore based on nothing but their own dissatisfaction in their greed not being answered. Therefore, they broke their oath and now had a reason to avenge the murder of Uthman.[6](#)

One War After Another

The Battle Of Jamal (36 Ah/656 Ad)

Talha and Zubayr left Mecca in secrecy and ventured towards Iraq, accompanied by Aisha. They proceeded towards Basra and gathered an army. Marwan Ibn Al-Hakim joined their travels and their slogan in avenging the blood of his murdered father-in-law Uthman, even though he had contributed both directly and indirectly to make it happen. Such by withholding messages sent to and from Uthman, convincing him to fight the rebels instead of keeping his promise to Imam Ali ('a) and the people. And also, through his secret plots and correspondence with Mu'awiya.[7](#) Now that he was not able to exploit Uthman alive, the death of Uthman was a good excuse to plot a war against Imam Ali ('a). The Prophet (S) had said regarding Imam Ali ('a): 'The one who is at war with Ali is at war with me and the one who is at war with me is at war with God.'[8](#)

Talha and Zubayr were well-known companions to the Prophet (S), and they had now joined Aisha to avenge the death of Uthman. Those combined roles captured the people's attention and so many decided on to follow along. Especially as rumours were spreading like wildfires and whoever had not witnessed the event themselves were easily deluded and so misguided and misinformed.

The state of things became increasingly turbid and worrisome even as the Imam ('a) tried to remind Talha and Zubayr of their oaths⁹ and make them aware of the path they were headed towards was leading to no good. Eventually, the Imam ('a) had to go head-to-head with their army on the outskirts of Basra. And as such the battle of Jamal (the camel) begun, led by Aisha, Talha, Zubayr and Marwan.

Did You Know?

In regards to the battle, Imam Ali ('a) clarified a principle, one that till this day help people in distinguishing truth from falsehood. In the midst of the battle, the Imam ('a) was asked a question by a person on how to know which side to be of truth. Imam Ali ('a) was standing on one end and companions such as Talha, Zubayr and Aisha, the wife of the Prophet (S), on the other?

Imam Ali ('a) then answered: 'Get acquainted with haqq (truth and justice) then, you will know its companion.'

The Imam ('a) – with this, provided a clear measurement of haqq, that is, the truth and what is right, should not be based on or identified by personalities, posts or various social statuses. This, due to the fact that people can make mistakes, be altered over time and during different circumstances. The words of the Imam ('a) demonstrate that haqq is a clear line on which human actions ought to be measured. Therefore, the recognition of haqq should not be based on personalities and who acts, but instead, be distinguished based on the action actually performed and how much it complies with haqq. The implication of this would be to not take a stand based on the individuals involved in one event, on the contrary, to let the perceiving eye, observe what had actually happened and based on the actions and the course of the event, decide who is standing on the right and truthful side.

Imam Ali ('a) tries to prevent war by all means possible

Imam Ali ('a) had no intention of fighting and so urged the rioters for three days to turn and leave the battle. Right before the battle, Imam Ali ('a) reminded Talha of The Prophet's (S) sermon in Ghadir. Imam Ali ('a) said to Talha:

"I ask you in the name of God! Did you not hear God messenger (S) in Ghadir when he said: 'Whoever I am his leader, Ali is his leader. O' God, love those who love him, and be hostile to those who are hostile to him.'"

Talha confirmed it to be true, whereupon Imam Ali ('a) asked why they still wanted to fight him but received no reply.¹⁰

"Why then do you want to fight me?"

Imam Ali ('a) reminded Talha and Zubayr of his right for the caliphate, the oath of allegiance pledged to him by the people and his innocence in Uthman's murder. Talha and Zubayr were not even righteous avengers and had additionally opposed the Qur'an by bringing the wife of the Prophet (S) and make her

a part of an uprising. Imam Ali ('a) also sent a message with a letter to Aisha as a reminder. No minds were changed despite the efforts. Imam Ali ('a) then sent representatives to negotiate with Talha, Zubayr and Aisha, but they could not come to an agreement. Even Muhammad, the son of Abu Bakr and the brother of Aisha, who was one of the companions of Imam Ali ('a) took permission to speak with his sister. Imam Ali ('a) allowed it, but even Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakr failed due to the impact of Abdullah Ibn Zubayr and Marwan Ibn Hakim.

Imam Ali ('a) even spoke privately with Talha and Zubayr. Nonetheless, Talha refuted all attempts. Although when the Imam ('a) reminded Zubayr of an event which had occurred between them and the Prophet (S), where the Prophet (S) had warned Zubayr of a day when he would stand against Imam Ali ('a) and would be the wrong side, Zubayr decided on leaving the battle.

The Battle Begins

The first civil war between the Muslims was given when Talha, Zubayr and Aisha's army commenced the attack. They shot arrows toward Imam Ali's ('a) army and several Muslims were killed. The men of Imam Ali's ('a) army wanted to defend themselves but were stopped by Imam Ali ('a), in order to attempt a final plead with the opposition to stop further bloodshed. A young man took it upon himself to embark on this endeavour; he was sent with The Holy Qur'an, to ask for a cease-fire. This unarmed emissary started reciting verses from The Holy Qur'an, and was killed by a rain of arrows. Imam Ali ('a) then ordered his soldiers to initiate their attack; the battle had begun, and rigorous fighting surrounded the camel that was carrying Aisha, the camel was considered a banner for the opposition as well as a beacon and driving force for its soldiers. Imam Ali ('a), being an Imam, sought after to save as many men as possible, he understood that the camel had to fall in order to stop the battle and the bloodshed.

The camel was finally struck down when the army of Imam Ali ('a) advanced on the battlefield after a great deal of fighting. Consequently, it weakened the opposition's motivation and their soldiers were fleeing the battlefield. Imam Ali ('a) ordered his soldiers not to prevent the fleeing as well as not to battle anyone who laid down their arms. The battle of Jamal had come to pass; it is considered to be the first battle amongst the Muslims with casualties amounting to thousands.

The Prophet's (S) Advance Warnings

Aisha

The Prophet's (S) Warning To Aisha About Going To War On A Red-Haired Camel Called Askar

It is said that when Aisha headed toward Basra to lead the battle against Imam Ali ('a), a red-haired camel called Askar was bought to transport her specifically. When Aisha laid eyes on the camel, she immediately asked for its name; she was very surprised to find out that the camel's name was Askar. When she was asked about the matter, she said that the Prophet (S) had warned her about going to war on a red-haired camel called Askar. Abdullah Ibn Zubayr was Aisha's nephew and was very close to her; he was the one most eager to wage war against Imam Ali ('a). Abdullah had enticed his father

Zubayr's fighting spirit to battle, but he was well aware that the flame that had been lit would not burn as brightly without his aunt Aisha. Hence, he tried to convince Aisha that she was misinformed about the name of the camel and that it only came about through hearsay. To ensure her, Abdullah had the camel removed and changed its clothes in order for it to not be recognized by Aisha. He brought the camelback to her and told her that this was another one and that the first camel that was brought had been sold; eventually, Aisha was persuaded by her nephew to venture on and climbed onto the camel. [11](#)

The Prophet's (S) Warning About Dogs Barking As Aisha Passes Through An Area Called Haw'ab

En route to Basra, Aisha and her company passed an area where all of a sudden dogs started barking loudly. Aisha instantly asked about the name of the area, and when she found out it was called Haw'ab, she was shaken, she immediately wanted to turn back and return to Mecca. She was reminded of the hadith of the Prophet (S) regarding dogs of Haw'ab barking towards a group of people; he had warned Aisha to take heed of being a part of this group. But Abdullah Ibn Zubayr, who kept instigating the hostility toward Imam Ali ('a) and had an immense influence on his father Zubayr and his aunt Aisha, quickly bribed 50 men to pledge to her that there had been a misunderstanding and that the area they were in was not Haw'ab at all. Aisha was convinced and changed her mind; they would continue their march toward Basra and the Battle of Jamal. [12](#)

Throughout And After The Battle

Throughout the battle, Aisha was on her red-haired camel positioned on the battlefield, in order to implement the soldiers' obedience and encourage them to fight for the Prophet's (S) wife. The camel, therefore, functioned as a banner and as long as it stood upright, the battle would carry on. Imam Ali ('a) consequently ordered his troops to aim their attacks toward the camel; in doing so, they would cut off the head of the opposition in the quickest way possible and avoid further bloodshed. When the camel fell, the army of the opposition dispersed, and the majority of the soldiers fled. Imam Ali ('a) ordered his troops to leave the fleeing soldiers; the opposition had lost the Battle of Jamal.

After the battle, Imam Ali ('a) sent the Prophet's (S) wife back to her home in Medina escorted by 50 riders. When the entourage arrived in Medina, Imam Ali ('a) was accused of having allowed men to escort the Prophet's (S) wife, which was considered unlawful. The fifty riders had until then covered their faces and had orders from Imam Ali ('a) to uncover them and identify themselves once this accusation would come to pass. It came as a great surprise once the riders uncovered their faces and verified that they were all women. [13](#) This demonstrated once again the divine wisdom of Imam Ali ('a) and the vast knowledge he had about the people he was dealing with. Imam Ali's ('a) opponents would take every chance they could to attack him, in any way possible. It became more obvious for people the animosity toward Imam Ali ('a). Furthermore, another attempt to create disunion was averted, and the momentum and drive of those who would oppose Imam Ali ('a) were exhausted. [14](#)

Zubayr – The Prophet's (S) Warning To Zubayr Concerning One Day Standing Against Imam Ali ('A)

It is said that the Prophet (S) one day met with Imam Ali ('a) and Zubayr, and he observed how Zubayr

expressed his devotedness toward Imam Ali ('a). The Prophet (S) then asked Zubayr if he loved Imam Ali ('a), whereupon Zubayr replied that he indeed loved Imam Ali ('a) immensely. Then the Prophet (S) warned Zubayr:

“Indeed, you will fight against him whilst being an oppressor towards him.”

Before the Battle of Jamal, when both sides had formed their troops in lines, Imam Ali ('a) spoke to the opposition himself – to the soldiers as well as their leaders. Imam Ali ('a) exhausted all opportunities to try to avert a war that was based on self-interest, a war that would cause bloodshed and increase disunity and antagonism in their community. Several of the Prophet's (S) loyal companions were on Imam Ali's ('a) side trying to remind the people of the Prophet's (S) word and the call to truth. At the end, when the battle seemed inevitable, Imam Ali ('a) made one last try and asked to speak to Zubayr alone. Imam Ali ('a) met with Zubayr in the middle of the battlefield and reminded him of the meeting with the Prophet (S) and what the Prophet (S) had warned him about. To Zubayr, this was a reminder that yanked him out of deep sleep. He replied:

“By God, had I remembered this hadith, I would not have waged war against you.”[15](#)

After this had occurred, Zubayr went back to Talha and refused to participate anymore. No matter how much Talha or Abdullah, Zubayr's son, tried to convince Zubayr to stay, there was no use. Abdullah even tried questioning his father's courage and entice him to battle by accusing him of cowing away. Zubayr replied by riding toward Imam Ali's ('a) army seeming to attack. Imam Ali ('a) who knew that Zubayr no longer had any intentions of fighting, ordered his troops to leave him be and not react. Through this act, Zubayr exhibited that it was not a matter of courage. Consequently, he left his army and rode off.

Zubayr's destiny thereafter was a tragic story. After Zubayr rode off, he arrived at a pond where he stepped down from his horse to pray and rest. A man that recognized Zubayr, or in other depictions had followed him, aware of the battle taking place nearby attacked Zubayr and killed him. He then took Zubayr's head and sword in a hurry to Imam Ali ('a) in hopes of compensation. When Imam Ali ('a) had heard about the matter, he repeated the Prophet's (S) words: ‘Zubayr's killer shall await his place in hell’. Imam Ali ('a) showed his discontent about what had transpired with Zubayr, he then saw his sword and remembered Zubayr's merits and his courage throughout the first battles in Islamic history by uttering the words: ‘How many times had this sword not cleared the sorrow of off the Prophet's (S) face?’[16](#)

Talha

Talha was among the companions who were well-known during the Prophet's (S) time for his accomplishments. After the Prophet (S) had passed away, Talha was actively participating in the expansion of the Islamic world during the time of the first and second caliphs. Later he was chosen by the second caliph to the council and contributed to the choosing of Uthman as the third caliph. Talha was one of the personalities that were not appointed any specific post in the government but instead

received a part of the wealth that was handed out during Uthman's time. Even so, it did not take long before discontent grew toward Uthman and his doings and soon Talha would be of those who intensely criticized the caliph. In the events during the siege of Uthman's house, Talha himself had been of those who instigated the siege and prevented water from reaching him.

After the murder of Uthman, Talha and Zubayr were the first to hasten toward Imam Ali ('a) to pledge an oath of allegiance to him hoping to obtain governmental positions. When Imam Ali ('a) expressed that he would not bargain regarding the caliphate and had no interest in appointing people based upon their relationships or desires, Talha was quick to break his oath and instead claimed he wanted revenge for Uthman's blood. Consequently, after these events, Talha became one of the three leaders of the opposing army in the Battle of Jamal, despite Imam Ali's s ('a) efforts to prevent war.

Toward the end of the battle; history depicts that when the camel's army started to flee, Talha was shot with an arrow by Marwan Ibn Hakam, which led to Talha's demise. It is narrated regarding this matter that Marwan had spoken about Talha's aggression toward Uthman and after the Battle of Jamal, he said that he no longer needed to avenge Uthman's blood.[17](#)

Marwan Ibn Hakam

After the defeat in the Battle of Jamal, Marwan fled directly to Mu'awiya in Sham in order to continue to devise plots against Imam Ali ('a). Mu'awiya, who had been following the JamAl-plot from a distance, welcomed his old ally Marwan with open arms since he was in need of all the means he could gather against Imam Ali ('a). Marwan's refuge, along with revenge for Uthman's blood, once again, would be used as motives to oppose Imam Ali's ('a) rule.

Mu'awiya

Even though Imam Ali ('a) was the one who tried to help Uthman more than anyone else, Mu'awiya had not answered the call for help from Uthman, Mu'awiya accused Imam Ali ('a) of the murder of Uthman. When the Battle of Jamal had not succeeded in accomplishing its objectives, Mu'awiya stepped forward and appointed himself to be the avenger of the murdered caliph. Mu'awiya displayed the bloody robe of Uthman on the pulpit in Sham's great mosque. Prior to this event, misleading propaganda had been preached in the mosque for years. He was able to gather an army that would fight against Imam Ali ('a).

Mu'awiya had been planning for many years to overtake the rule and was only waiting for Uthman to die to implement his plan. The murder of Uthman came to use, as he could now execute his plans sooner than expected. Imam Ali ('a) wrote in a letter to Mu'awiya:

"As regards your prolonging the question of Uthman's murder the position is that you helped Uthman when it was really your own help while you forsook him when he was in need of help."[18](#)

Throughout the years Mu'awiya had ruled Sham, he proclaimed to be a good Muslim and an advocate of

the religion. The people of Sham were neither of the companions of the Prophet (S) nor had they any contact with any of his companions; these companions were not allowed to leave Medina following the orders of the second caliph. Hence, Mu'awiya had introduced himself to the people of Sham as a close ally and devoted companion of the Prophet (S). Claiming to be a dedicated man toward Islam and the Muslims to the extent that he was known as 'the believers' uncle', whilst many other companions who had a closer kinship to the Prophet (S) were barely recognized in Sham. Through his propaganda, Mu'awiya had twisted the Prophet's (S) ahadith and ascribed the merits of Imam Ali ('a), mostly, to the second caliph. Then, he altered the ahadith of the Prophet (S) which had warned about and damned the Umayyads.

In his rule, Mu'awiya highlighted people like Abu Hurayra with false accolades and narrations in order to benefit himself and Bani Ummaya. Abu Hurayra became a Muslim and resided in Medina only in the final years of the Prophet's (S) life. Even so, his suggested ahadith were being spread in vast amounts compared to other companions who had spent far more time with the Prophet (S).¹⁹ At the same time, ahadith narrated by Imam Ali ('a), who was the first to accept Islam and had followed the Prophet (S) since the beginning, were nearly non-existent. While other companions who addressed the position of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) and specifically Imam Ali ('a), were systematically opposed and punished. By means of threats, imprisonment or banishment, the companions of the Prophet (S) were silenced; in this manner, a new unaware generation had been created by Mu'awiyah. By implementing his impactful propaganda, Mu'awiyah was even able to make the people of Sham believe that Imam Ali ('a), who was the closest companion to the Prophet (S) and chosen successor, did not perform prayer.

Mu'awiya had overshadowed Sham with what seemed to be Islam, but the real spirit of Islam was absent. What remained of Islam was an entirely hollow shell, consisting of religious acts without knowledge of their internal meaning or purpose. Even the title 'Caliph of the Muslims' had been altered to 'God's Caliph' in order to justify the ruler's decree, whether it was righteous or not. It reached the point where the caliph's statements were being considered law, Mu'awiya even accomplished in changing the Friday prayer to Wednesdays without any objections.²⁰

Did You Know?

Mu'awiya saw an opportunity to take control of the rule. Had Mu'awiya missed this opportunity, he would not be able to stand against Imam Ali ('a) in any other way. It began with him being a part of the rule at the time of Omar, which led to him having even more power at the time of Uthman. Eventually, his ambitions were to take control of the rule. All future events and tragedies that transpired within Islam on behalf of the Umayyads were essentially due to the power and authority given to Mu'awiya by Omar and Uthman. Mu'awiya displayed the bloody clothes of Uthman on a pulpit in Damascus, in order to rally the people to avenge Uthman's blood. Mu'awiya claimed that Imam Ali ('a) was responsible for the murder of Uthman.

After The Battle Of Jamal

Imam Ali ('a) went to Basra after the Battle of Jamal to speak to its people. Basra was known for being supportive of the army of Jamal, and many from the army had fled to Basra after the battle was over.²¹ Imam Ali ('a) had no plans of pursuing or punishing the fleeing participants in the battle. Imam Ali ('a) had stopped some of his followers from obtaining spoils of war and escorted Aisha back to Medina in a civil manner; he also forbade any retaliation toward the opposition in order to prevent further disunion amongst people.

During the month of Rajab, year 36 AH Imam Ali ('a) went to Kufa and moved the headquarters and the capital of the rule from Medina to Kufa. The reasons for this move could have been many; Imam Ali ('a) with his divine wisdom had concealed knowledge; the reasons for this move would be revealed in retrospect. Some of the contributing factors for this decision could have been Kufa's central position in the Islamic state, as well as originally being a military city. The diversity of the people and the gathering of different families with prominent accolades were a factor, as well as the city's distance to Sham.

The Battle Of Siffin (37 Ah/657 Ad)

The Battle of Siffin was the battle that was fought between Imam Ali ('a) and Mu'awiya. Imam Ali ('a) attempted to solve the conflict in a peaceful manner, but Mu'awiya clearly exhibited that he had no peaceful intentions. Imam Ali ('a) concluded that the only way to stop Mu'awiya was through war; therefore, he marched without delay toward Mu'awiya's army, and they faced each other in an area called Siffin.

When arriving in the area Mu'awiyah took control over all water sources nearby, the soldiers of Imam Ali's ('a) army who wanted to quench their thirst were killed when approaching any of the water sources. Imam Ali ('a) then ordered a troop to commence an attack in order to clear a pathway to the water sources, after the successful attack, they were able to secure the water sources for themselves. They had the advantage, and some among the army of Imam Ali ('a) suggested that they return the favour, cut off the water from the army of Mu'awiya and weaken them. Imam Ali ('a) refused to do so and explained that water is God's blessing that all people have a right to, regardless of who they are. Imam Ali ('a) sent the person who had suggested this act to Mu'awiya's camp, to inform them that the path to the water sources was open for them.²²

This occurrence and Imam Ali's ('a) approach sheds light on at least three significant aspects of his mission: to demonstrate Islamic morals, his stand as a role model for mankind and his educative role for his followers. On this occasion, Imam Ali ('a) displayed divine values and their advocated methods as well as their practical implementation. Imam Ali ('a) clearly separated the Islam upheld by the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) and the false Islam that had come to exist, which had to be fought. Through his actions, the Imam ('a) showed that the divine path of haqq (right and truth) which he fought for had the highest of moral values, which intends to nurture and elevate mankind's spiritual growth, even in situations such as

confronting enemies.

The battles fought at Siffin were limited in the beginning, going into the month of Muharram, which is one of four months when fighting is forbidden. Imam Ali ('a) tried to avoid any confrontations; his intentions were to spare the blood of the Muslims and sent several emissaries to Mu'awiya. Imam Ali ('a) proclaimed that he would punish the murderers of Uthman if Mu'awiya could point them out, stripping Mu'awiya of his false claims of him avenging the blood of Uthman. Mu'awiya saw revenge for Uthman's blood as his best chance to obtain the rule and power. He continued rallying and accusing Imam Ali ('a) of everything that had befallen their society.

The fighting continued in the month of Safar, and for a whole week, there were intense daylong fighting. The second week Imam Ali ('a) himself came to the battlefield, after several duels where he defeated his opponents there was none left willing to face him. The number of deaths increased each day, especially in Mu'awiya's ranks. But Imam Ali ('a) had also lost several of the Prophet's (S) great companions, such as Ammar Ibn Yasir (r.a.).

The Prophet's (S) Prediction That Ammar (R.A.) Would Be Killed By Enemies Of Islam

The Prophet (S) had a well-known saying: 'Ammar (r.a.) you will be killed by a group of transgressors.'²³ Ammar (r.a.) had at the beginning of the battle addressed the enemy and referred to the Holy Qur'an, the Prophet's (S) sayings and Imam Ali's ('a) right. When Ammar (r.a.) was martyred, there was a lot of commotion amongst the ranks of Mu'awiya's army, for they remembered the hadith of the Prophet (S) regarding Ammar's death. To save face Mu'awiya, who was a master of deception, gathered his shaken army and claimed that Imam Ali ('a) was to blame for the death of Ammar (r.a.). Imam Ali ('a) was the one who had allowed Ammar (r.a.) to follow him and fight by his side.

But Imam Ali ('a), whose wisdom originated from divine light, countered and destroyed Mu'awiya's argument with a simple notion. Imam Ali ('a) stated that if so, then Hamza ('a), who fought for the Prophet (S), was also killed because of the Prophet (S). This statement could not be accepted by those with any kind of common sense. Once again, it was confirmed that Mu'awiya through deception would distort reality as he wished, in order to deceive people.

Imam Ali's ('A) Army Approaching Victory

The same day Malik Al-Ashtar (r.a.), Imam Ali's ('a) army's commander, attacked the enemy fiercely and victory was within reach. Soon Malik Al-Ashtar (r.a.) and his troops were near the tent of Mu'awiya, his army had scattered and the end was near. 'Amr Ibn Al-'As, Mu'awiya's right hand who was infamously known for his canniness, proposed that Mu'awiya would raise several Qur'ans on spears and ask that the Qur'an would arbitrate and decide between the two sides. Both 'Amr Ibn Al-'As and Mu'awiya knew that defeating Imam Ali's ('a) army through fighting was impossible and that their only chance would be to weaken them through disunity. Mu'awiya's spies had reported that not everyone in Imam Ali's ('a) army saw him as an Imam, some had their own motives for fighting, some were weary of

the long-lasting battles and morale had weakened. Not everyone amid Imam Ali's ('a) army were steadfast followers. Consequently, when they saw The Holy Qur'an, on spears along with the utterance of a few well-chosen slogans, some of the soldiers in Imam Ali's ('a) were confused. While others took the opportunity to fall back and stop their attacks, it eventually shook the army of Imam Ali ('a). Therefore, those who had been deceived by the trick were now opposing the steadfast in Imam Ali's ('a) army.

Mu'awiya had his remaining soldiers raise The Holy Qur'an, on spears and saying: 'O people of Iraq, we call you towards the Qur'an, and we decide by virtue of what is contained in it', while others were saying: 'O Arabs; think of women and daughters if you perish who will fight tomorrow against the Romans, the Turks and the Persians?' Several of Imam Ali's ('a) soldiers fell for the trick, among them the well-known Ash'ath Al-Kindi who was already leaning toward stopping the fighting and refused to attack the tent of Mu'awiya. As much as Malik Al-Ashtar (r.a.) tried reminding the deceived soldiers that it was not the first time Mu'awiya and 'Amr Ibn Al-'As employed such devious schemes to save themselves from a crisis, there was no use.

As a result, a part of the troop carried on with Malik Al-Ashtar (r.a.), and another part was on their way to Imam Ali ('a) to make him change his orders. Imam Ali ('a) went out to the battlefield and urged the army to keep fighting and to ignore Mu'awiya's false deception. The group of reluctant soldiers being led by Ash'ath refused to abide Imam Ali's ('a) orders and kept insisting on their demands. Their objections and protests shook the army and splintered the opinions of the soldiers until the majority of the army became hesitant to fight. In addition, they even threatened to kill Imam Ali ('a) if he did not instantly send orders to Malik Al-Ashtar (r.a.) to call off the attack. Mu'awiya's treacherous arrow had reached its mark and the army of Imam Ali ('a) was torn apart. Imam Ali ('a) knew that if they continued to battle with a feeble army, it would only cost lives; therefore, he had no choice but to give in to their request. Imam Ali ('a) ordered Malik Al-Ashtar (r.a.) to fall back when he was only steps away from Mu'awiya's tent.

The battle was over. On Mu'awiya's demand and through Ah'asth's protest, it was decided that a representative from both sides would act as judges and determine the outcome through arbitration. The judges would confer among themselves and reach a common and final verdict regarding the caliphate. Imam Ali ('a), who was well aware of Mu'awiya's intentions and canniness, appointed Abdullah Ibn Abbas or Malik Al-Ashtar (r.a.) as representatives. Yet again another group, led by Ash'ath Al-Kindi, objected and insisted that Abu Musa Ash'ari would be sent instead. While Mu'awiya appointed 'Amr Ibn Al-'As as his representative – 'Amr Ibn Al-'As was well known as a "mastermind" for his abilities to lure his enemies. Imam Ali ('a) who knew that Abu Musa Ash'ari lacked the foresight to be able to perceive 'Amr Ibn Al-'As tricks and handle him, tried waking this group out of their daze. Once more, they refused to heed Imam Ali's ('a) words and forced their will upon him.²⁴

The Arbitrations Decision

Abu Musa Ash'ari and 'Amr Ibn Al-'As met with each other to reach an agreement and a final verdict

during the month of Ramadan, the year 37 AH. Imam Ali ('a) sent several people with Abu Musa, among them Abdullah Ibn Abbas, before the meeting. They warned Abu Musa about what 'Amr Ibn Al-'As could conjure up and emphasized that he had to be wary of 'Amr Ibn Al-'As's deceitful tricks, especially when the whole Islamic community's fate would be affected by hakamiyya (arbitration).

During their meeting, 'Amr Ibn Al-'As and Abu Musa conferred about the caliphate and who would be appointed caliph. Since Mu'awiya opposed Imam Ali's ('a) caliphate and had already appointed himself as caliph, they were unable to reach an agreement. Finally, 'Amr Ibn Al-'As suggested that both Imam Ali ('a) and Mu'awiya be dismissed of the appointment as caliph and to choose someone else through a council. In a witty manner, 'Amr Ibn Al-'As stressed that out of respect for Abu Musa's position and age, he should be first to stand on the pulpit and dismiss Imam Ali ('a) in public. That 'Amr Ibn Al-'As would stand on it after him; Abu Musa was persuaded to do so. Abu Musa climbed the pulpit and declared that an agreement had been reached; he stated that Imam Ali ('a) was to be dismissed and took his ring off of his finger as a gesture of breaking allegiance to Imam Ali ('a). 'Amr Ibn Al-'As whose plan was being implemented accordingly climbed the pulpit. 'Amr Ibn Al-'As stated that Abu Musa took his ring off of his finger to break allegiance to his caliph; 'Amr Ibn Al-'As kept his ring on his finger and appointed Mu'awiya as caliph. Everyone was stunned, and Abu Musa was shocked, just then had he realized that he had been deceived and objected loudly. Others attending realized that their fears had come to pass, 'Amr Ibn Al-'As took advantage of Abu Musa's lack of foresight and deceived him. Chaotic scenes played out, the hakamiyya (arbitration) was a disappointment, seeing that after several months of patience the army of Imam Ali ('a) would never face Mu'awiya again. Mu'awiya was able to avert a certain loss at the Battle of Siffin through treachery and deceit.

Mu'awiya could have been defeated, and divine light could have been spread through Imam Ali's ('a) rule. Instead, the Battle of Siffin leads to military and moral defeat as well as the birth of the group referred to as khawarij. [25](#)

The Battle Of Nahrawan (Year 38 AH/ 658 AD)

The Battle of Nahrawan took place in the year 38 AH, the 9th day of the month Safar. Imam Ali ('a) would then face the khawarij. [26](#) After the end of the Battle of Siffin and when the army of Imam Ali ('a) was near Kufa, a group averted from the army and set up camp in a village. They preached that all Muslims were alike and that none could rule over the other. Imam Ali ('a) sent some of his reliable companions first and then went over there himself, in order to clarify the misconception of their slogan 'no rule except God's', they were preaching. Imam Ali ('a) clarified that his having to accept the agreement in Siffin was mainly due to their objections and reluctance to fight, that he did not go against the teachings of The Holy Qur'an, since his decision was based upon saving lives. He explained that it was the only choice; otherwise, their army would have weakened further and could have unexpectedly been attacked by Mu'awiya. Imam Ali ('a) reminded them that in fact, it was they who had broken their bay'a (oath of allegiance) to him by laying down their arms, refusing to fight and threatening him to order

Malik Al-Ashtar (r.a.), who was close to victory, to fall back. As well as, they insisted upon sending Abu Musa Ash'ari as a representative to the hakamiyya (arbitration).

The Kharijites could not deny that they were the reason for failure, and they had sinned, but they declared that they had repented and suggested that Imam Ali ('a) do the same. In other words, once again, they wanted to force their will and judgment upon Imam Ali ('a). The Imam ('a) replied that he was faithful and had no reason to repent since no sin was committed on his behalf. The Kharijites refused to accept this and awaited the verdict of the arbitration.

The Reaction To The Verdict Of The Arbitration And Rebellion Of The Kharijites

The hakamiyya (arbitration) was neither based upon The Holy Qur'an, nor the sunnah, Imam Ali ('a) decided, therefore, to fight Mu'awiya in order to stop his rampage and called upon the Kharijites to do battle. But they claimed that Imam Ali ('a) had become an apostate of the religion when he agreed upon the arbitration in Siffin, furthermore, they demanded he should repent becoming a Muslim again. Imam Ali ('a) understood from their demands that their insubordination and misdirection had reached grave limits; to expect anything fruitful from them was now pointless. Still, Mu'awiya was the impending threat toward society and had to be faced.

Imam Ali ('a) had embarked on his journey toward Mu'awiya when news of the Kharijites reached him. They had revolted in Nahrawan and killed its governor and his pregnant wife in a brutal manner. The Kharijites with their harsh views and narrow-minded unreasonableness had transformed into an extremist group, which was a real threat to society and Islam. When Imam Ali ('a) sent a messenger to them to assess the situation, they replied by killing him as well as other people nearby. Anyone that did not agree to their version of Islam or resisted were killed, in the most brutal ways until then unheard of. They refused to reason with anyone and did not shy away from any methods to enforce their beliefs upon others. Imam Ali ('a) with the attributes of an Imam and guardian of the society could not allow the Kharijites' mischief since they started harming people. Therefore, Imam Ali ('a) and his army changed direction and set out to Nahrawan instead.

Imam Ali ('a) wanted to avoid any bloodshed, so he sent Abu Ayyub Al-Ansari who would give the Kharijites two choices: Either join the army of Imam Ali ('a) once again or disband the Kharijites. Imam Ali ('a) made it clear that he had no intention of persecuting those who would refrain from their deeds and brutal killings. As before, Imam Ali ('a) was keen to avoid a fight by any possible means necessary and was adamant that his army would not initiate battle. Imam Ali's ('a) methods had many hundreds of the Kharijites reconsider; as a result, many of them left the extremist group. The remaining two or three thousand Kharijites attacked Imam Ali's ('a) army high-spirited, but they had no chance in battle. Many Kharijites were killed and some wounded, they were handed over to their families. Only nine Kharijites managed to flee.[27](#)

These nine would continue spreading the poisonous ideas of the Kharijites. Traces of their bigotry,

injustice, brutality and literal interpretations have lived on in different extremist groups throughout history.

Loneliness And Lack Of Loyal Companions

After defeating the Kharijites' attempt of disunity in Nahrawan, Imam Ali ('a) resumed the march toward Sham. But his commanders in the army requested that the men would get some rest, prior to the long journey ahead. The army set up camp outside Kufa, and the soldiers were allowed a leave of absence for a day. The following day, barely any men had returned and the situation was so severe that Imam Ali ('a) had to address the people of Kufa. Even though all that had befallen the people was because of Mu'awiya's conspiracy and even though Imam Ali ('a) was still their caliph and an oath of allegiance was sworn to him, no one would heed his call. The Imam ('a) tried to emphasize the impending dangers if Mu'awiya was not faced once and for all, but no one would heed his call. The Imam ('a) tried reasoning with them and reminded them of past occurrences, and he stated that if Mu'awiya was given leeway, he would not satisfy himself with Sham but spread his corruption across the whole Islamic state. The Imam ('a) kept on speaking; still, no one would heed his call. At last, Imam Ali ('a) went away in disappointment and the battle preparations for Sham were abandoned never to be resumed again. Imam Ali ('a) described the occasion as follows:

"How strange! How strange! By God, my heart sinks to see the unity of these people on their wrong and your dispersion from your right. Woe and grief befall you. You have become the target at which arrows are shot. You are being killed and you do not kill. You are being attacked, but you do not attack. God is being disobeyed and you remain agreeable to it. When I ask you to move against them in summer, you say it is hot weather. Spare us till the heat subsides from us. When I order you to march in winter you say it is severely cold; give us time till cold clears from us. These are just excuses for evading heat and cold because if you run away from heat and cold, you would be, by God, running away (to a greater degree) from sword [war]. O you in appearance [brave] men but [in reality] not [brave] men, your intelligence is that of children and your wit is that of the occupants of the curtained canopies (women kept in seclusion from the outside world). I wish I had not seen you nor known you. By God, this acquaintance has brought about shame and resulted in repentance. May God fight you! You have filled my heart with pus and loaded my chest with rage. You made me drink a mouthful of grief one after the other. You shattered my counsel by disobeying and leaving me so much so that Quraysh started saying that the son of Abi Talib is brave but does not know (tactics of) war. God bless them! Is anyone of them fiercer in war and older in it than I am? I rose for it although yet within the twenties, and here I am, have crossed over sixty, but one who is not obeyed can have no opinion."[28](#)

Imam Ali's ('A) Martyrdom (21st Of The Month Of Ramadan, Year 40 AH/ 622 AD)

Finally, Imam Ali ('a) was martyred on the 21st of the month of Ramadan. As a result of being struck by a poisonous-coated sword on the head during his morning prayer at the mosque of Kufa on the 19th of the month of Ramadan.

Before dawn on the 19th of the month Ramadan, Imam Ali ('a) walked slowly toward the mosque to lead the Morning Prayer like any other day; but this day was unlike any other day! When it was time for the Morning Prayer to be performed, Imam Ali ('a) prepared for the meeting with his beloved Lord. He called out the azan (call to prayer) and stood on his mihrab (place of prayer). Ibn Muljim²⁹ stood behind Imam Ali ('a) in the prayer formation. Imam Ali ('a) began the prayer. When he reached sojood (placing your forehead onto the earth before God – one of the essentials of prayer), Ibn Muljim drew his poison-coated sword and with a powerful strike hit the head of Imam Ali ('a). The Imam's ('a) cry echoes between heaven and earth. He said:

“By the Lord of the Ka’ba, I am successful!”³⁰

Imam Ali ('a), the greatest combatant without equal, was carried home on the shoulders of Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a). Imam Ali's ('a) companions caught the assailant and brought him to the Imam ('a). When he saw that his attacker was in agony due to the ropes being too tight around his hands, Imam Ali ('a) immediately asked his son Imam Al-Hasan ('a) to loosen the ropes and not to allow any harm come to Ibn Muljim. Imam Ali ('a) also commanded that Ibn Muljim be served the same food being served to the Imam ('a).

Imam Ali's ('a) wound was deep, and his condition was worsening due to the poison that Ibn Muljim had been soaking his sword in for several days. A physician was brought to assess and remedy Imam Ali's ('a) wound, but when the physician saw the deep wound and the effect of the poison, there was nothing left to do. He advised Imam Ali ('a) to drink milk in order to suppress the effect of the poison possibly.

Soon enough, word spread about the ordeal. The poor and the orphans discovered the identity of the man who brought them food every night and listened to their grief. Imam Ali ('a) had for several years wandering through the streets of the city, handing out food and helping the needy in the community which had none to turn to except God. Doing this without ever revealing his true identity, but since the man had not been around for a few nights, people started to realize who he was. The orphans acquired milk, hoping it would help Amir Al-mo’menin (Imam Ali ('a)), who for years had filled the void of a loving father in their lives. But the damage that the people had brought about onto themselves through their ignorance and stubbornness could not be undone, consequently losing the Imam of their time.

Imam Ali ('a) called upon his family and declared to them his will. It was stated that Imam Al-Hasan ('a) would be the succeeding Imam and Imam Al-Husayn ('a) would succeed Imam Al-Hasan ('a), as proclaimed through the Prophet (S) by God's commands. Imam Ali ('a) asked Imam Al-Hasan ('a) to keep an eye on Ibn Muljim, so he would not be harmed or mistreated by the heated people's retaliation. Imam Ali ('a) stated that if he were to survive, he himself would decide whether to forgive Ibn Muljim or to punish him. He also stated that if he were to die, Ibn Muljim should only be struck with a sword in the same manner he struck Imam Ali ('a) and nothing else! The Imam ('a) instructed that if Ibn Muljim were to die, his body should not be defiled and his properties should not be destroyed as well as his family should not be persecuted. Imam Ali's ('a) God-fearing person, his justice, his mercifulness and

greatness reached the level of being reflected upon his killer. During his last moments, Imam Ali ('a) was keen on his killer being treated fairly. Even in his difficult state where he was in and out of consciousness, he was still concerned for the wellbeing of Ibn Muljim. It would not be mind-boggling to believe that if Imam Ali ('a) had survived, he might have forgiven Ibn Muljim. This was the character of Amir Al-mo'menin, the Master of the faithful, the one chosen by God!

It was time for Imam Ali ('a) to be reunited with his beloved brother in faith, the Prophet (S). To reunite with his beloved wife, the mistress of the women of paradise, Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a). On the 21st of the month of Ramadan, two days after the attack, Imam Ali's ('a) blessed soul left his body, and he was martyred at the age of 63.

R1. Preparing For The Final Imam ('A) – To Tolerate A Just Imam ('A) In Power

Imam Ali's ('a) rule lasted for a total of four years and a couple of months, between the years 35 and 40 AH. These five years depicted a palpable example of how a just rule, led by a divinely chosen Imam would look like. Imam Ali's ('a) rule, his leadership, his approach and the principles he upheld were in accordance with the Prophet's (S) guidelines. All of this led to the practical implementation of genuine Islamic governance, where corruption and injustice were fought and had no position. Imam Ali's ('a) way of life and actions spoke for themselves. Nonetheless, a saying of Imam Ali ('a) illustrates his views on governance:

“Was I given all seven heavens with all that they contain in order that I may disobey God by depriving an ant of the husk of a grain of barley, I would not do it.”³¹

During Imam Ali's ('a) rule, everyone was treated equally, regardless of being Arab or non-Arab, skin colour, kinship or wealth. They were all equal before the law and treated justly. It did not matter which family once belonged to, and the relationship one had to the Imam ('a) nor political views. The right was right, and people were treated as such. History is a witness of Imam Ali ('a) constantly aligning himself with truth and justice.

A Few Aspects Of The Imam's ('A) Justice

Right People In The Right Position – Skill-Based Recruitment And Carefully Following Up

The main principle of Imam Ali's ('a) rule was to appoint the right person for the right position, based on skills. Especially when selecting statesmen, regents and other positions of authority. It was this principle which made Imam Ali ('a) remove regents that spread corruption and oppression; these were appointed by earlier caliphs and had received their posts because of kinship and not merit. Imam Ali ('a) was careful with the choosing of his regents, as well as with those who would remain in their positions. Complaints against regents from the people were investigated instantly and followed up; the Imam ('a)

also demanded that his regents be close at hand to the people to attend to their concerns. The Imam ('a) kept a close eye over those who were entrusted with governmental duties and regularly supervised their work in order to counteract corruption. Essentially, authority and rule were only a means for serving God and aiding His servants; which was clearly reflected in the Imam's ('a) actions.

The Imam's ('a) justice was palpable to common people when it came to Bayt Al-Mal (Treasury House), and the distribution of wealth. When the Imam ('a) took over the rule, one of his first actions was to stop the wrong and unjust privileges that had been ascribed to certain people. The Imam ('a) also dismissed unjustly appointed people in positions of power who were incompetent. At the same time, he declared that unjustly allotted wealth and land would be reclaimed. Even though this would bring about displeasure and animosity among those who were affected negatively, he was advised to not go through with it. Still, the Imam's ('a) resolve in the matter remained unaffected. In summary:

Regents And Governors

- The appointment of regents during Imam Ali's ('a) rule was based upon piety and competence; never based on kinship or associations³²
- They were instantly dismissed if there was any corruption³³
- Were seriously warned when making mistakes
- Were forbidden to participate in exclusive invitations or events where people were treated unfairly and unequally, for instance where poor people were unwelcomed³⁴

Bayt Al-Mal (Treasury House) And Governmental Properties – Fair Distribution And Management With Great Care

- Thorough supervision regarding Bayt Al-Mal (Treasury House) and opposing economic violations firmly
- Imam Ali ('a) distributed the wealth from Bayt Al-Mal (Treasury House) according to the Prophet's (S) sunnah and gave equal shares to everyone, regardless of the recipient – no matter the family nor tribe, social class nor political views³⁵
- Imam Ali ('a) was meticulous to the point that he would put out the candle lights which had been purchased with taxing funds when someone visited him for private purposes and lit his candle lights purchased with his own money³⁶

Equal Before The Law

- There were no special privileges given in Imam Ali's ('a) rule; everyone was equal before the law. Therefore, it did not matter if a person was of Imam Ali's ('a) Shi'a or not. People were treated equally,

judged unbiased and punished according to their crimes.[37](#)

- This included the Imam ('a) himself even though he was caliph and the leader of the rule, as well as being a ma'soom and an infallible Imam.[38](#)

'Brothers In Faith Or Equals In Humanity.'

- When Imam Ali ('a) appointed Malik Al-Ashtar (r.a.) as governor of Egypt, he gave him a letter of advice and guidelines. In this letter the Imam ('a) stated that Malik Al-Ashtar (r.a.) should go about his job on the following basis: "People are of two kinds; either your brother in faith or equal in humanity".[39](#) It could be stated that this sentence reflects the Imam's ('a) views and principles, which shaped his way of treating people and ruling.[40](#)

The Regent Of The People Is Also The Servant Of The People

- Imam Ali's ('a) lifestyle was like the lifestyle of the poorest in the community[41](#)
- Imam Ali ('a) saw ruling only as a tool for carrying out the duty that God appointed man; to support the oppressed and stand against the oppressor
- To Imam Ali ('a) ruling was not of value, only if used for the right cause [42](#)
- Imam Ali ('a) was an Imam, which was far greater than a caliph whose only function was to overlook the community's political and economic matters and a tender father who cared for people as if they were his own children. Imam Ali ('a) held himself accountable and responsible regarding his authority over people.

Tolerating The Imam's ('Aj) Justice

Would I Accept Justice For Everyone?

The concept of justice according to Imam Ali's ('a) definition is to "give each thing/person its right" or in other words to "place each thing in its rightful place".[43](#) There are essential differences between his meaning and the "equality" preached on many occasions in modern times. To think that equality could be literally interpreted as "the same amount to everyone" without regarding existing circumstances and privileges in some aspects, could be an injustice in itself. For instance, it is unjust that two people who work under the exact same conditions and with equal abilities are paid an equal amount of money; while one of them works harder than the other. Furthermore, it is unjust to demand the same results from two people with different qualifications, opportunities, resources and circumstances as well as there are differences which are insignificant to the matter. As an example, men and women are alike in their humanity and from this point of view equals before the law and holy prescripts regarding human aspects. From another point of view, men and women have different physical and emotional qualities as well as other natural differences. These traits, in turn, become key factors that ascribe men and women to

different circumstances, needs, strengths and weaknesses, which complement one another. Based on the given definition of justice, the outcome depends on the matter at hand, and which aspects are concerned.

The concept of justice is an essential human need and a necessary requirement for societies and mankind's growth and prosperity. Justice has been a common slogan among politicians and freedom fighters, and the foremost demand by people who want a better society. Justice has been scarce throughout history with the exception of a few glimpses and instances in short periods of time and to a limited extent. Even in modern times, justice is forsaken and highly demanded, but is it desired in its true form as many think? Have we lived in a manner that would allow us to accept true justice, at the expense of our own interests? Would we tolerate the justice we are calling for?

While the fight for justice is coveted; it is essential to nature is often neglected by many. Obviously, if true justice were to be implemented, it would affect everyone indiscriminately. This demands both individual and societal preparations, to be able to tolerate and accept a justice that could impact their own self-interest. Furthermore, the aim should not only be to accept such a justice but to live by it as well.

The question that should be asked to oneself is: Would I accept not receiving any special benefits and be treated equally before the law? What if I had a position of power? Would I be able to handle being just toward those closest to me, even if it were not to my own benefit? Would I be able to give up certain benefits? These are questions that need truthful answers by individuals and society as a whole.

In relation to the final Imam ('aj) who would implement justice in its true form, the question is: Would I still follow the Imam ('aj) if justice required the discharge of self-interest? For instance, would I accept him removing me from a post, not choosing me for certain assignments or even punishing me for committing a crime?

True justice impacts the whole of society, and eventually oneself, in the same manner, the rule of Imam Ali ('a) was a manifestation of justice. Even though his rule was brief and opposed, it is a shining example that illustrates the difficulties that befall the leader, individuals and the different factions of society. Nonetheless, this era could function as a guideline to how different people reacted to true justice; different people in the sense of their authority, merits and capabilities. To create a foundation for everyone demanding justice today, to know what needs to be highlighted beforehand and work to make way for this justice to spread. It is time we examine our inner self, to know where we stand. Ask yourself: are there any traces of injustice within me? Am I a person who would discriminate against others and would I want special treatment for myself? Am I a person who could take advantage of riches and positions of power to my benefit? If yes, how can I get rid of this and open up the pathway for myself and society?

¹. Sermon 15 and 16 are among the Imam's ('a) first statements following the oath of allegiance in which he clarifies his position. These sermons can be found in the book Nahjul Balaghah – sermon 1–30 (2012); Swedish translation published by

Den Väntades Vänner; alternatively, online at <http://dvv.se/bok/Nahj1-30/> [13]. Online in English and Arabic at:

<https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-1-sermons> [11]

2. The collection of the Imam's ('a) words in Nahjul Balagha and his procedure throughout history makes clear the Imam's ('a) line and integrity, especially in matters pertaining to the rights of God, people and society. In many cases, prominent personalities such as Ibn Abbas, the Prophet's (S) and Imam's ('a) cousin and companions, and one of the foremost narrators accepted and respected by the Sunni and Shi'a, out of benevolence asked the Imam ('a) to overlook and close some things to avoid the consequences. This included allowing Mu'awiya to retain his position as regent in order to avoid his reaction and the turbulence he would create through his propaganda and the fact that he had the Sham people under control. But the Imam ('a) who, as Imam, is linked to the divine source of knowledge and knew everything better than anyone else, refused to fail in such situations at the expense of haqq (right and truth) and the right of God and man. This goes for example back to the position of Imamah as an infallible divine chosen leadership and the principle that the goals do not sanctify the funds. The Imam's ('a) opinion is narrated, among other things in Tarikh Tabari volume 5 p. 160–161 and Morooj ath- Thahab by Mas'oodi (published 1409 AD) p. 364–365 and others.

3. Imam Ali ('a) refers to the three groups of Nakethin (The Oathbreakers), Qasetin (The Evil Oppressors) and Mareqin (The secreted) who came to revolt under the caliphate of the Imam ('a) and whom the Prophet (S) had mentioned, among others in Sermon Ghadir. Parts of this sermon have appeared earlier in the book in connection with the Prophet's (S) last pilgrimage; see I3.

4. Sermon Shaqshaqiyia, 3, Nahjul Balagha. Online in English and Arabic at:

<https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-1-sermons> [11]

5. Imam Ali ('a) refers to Mu'awiya's roll in the uproar leading to the murder of Uthman, in his letters addressing Mu'awiya's accusations. Among them, in letter 28 in Nahjul Balagha, Imam Ali ('a) sheds light on Mu'awiya's role with striking words, solid reasoning pointing at the concealed hands behind the murder of Uthman.

6. These events are narrated in detail in historical accounts and are mentioned in several of the Imam's ('a) sermons in Nahjul Balagha, among them in sermon 8, 6, 9 and 13. Online in English and Arabic at:

<https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-1-sermons> [11]

7. Marwan, in regards of being the third closest to the caliph, the writer of the caliph's decree and his son-in-law – had insights and major control of everything regarding the caliph and his surroundings. In historical accounts, many letters and actions by Marwan are noted, as well as his advices to the caliph, all of which essentially were the reasons to cause the uproar leading to the murder of Uthman. This is narrated, among others, in Al-Isaba of Ibn Hibr Al-Asqalani (published 1415 AH) volume 6 p. 204; Al-Imama wa as- Siyasa by Ibn Qutayba a-Daynoori (published 1410 AH) volume 1 p.78–79 et al.

8. This hadith and many more with the same meaning are found narrated in both Sunni and Shi'a sources, both specific in regards to Imam Ali ('a) and Ahl Al-Bait ('a), in Sunan Ibn Maja volume 1 p 166; Al- Mustadrak' ala as-Sahihayn volume 3 p 149; Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal volume 2 p 442; Sahih Ibn Habban volume 15 p 434; Mu'jam Awsatby Tabarani volume 5 p 182; Mu'jam Kabir by Tabarani volume 3 p 40; Asad Al- Ghaba by Ibn Athir volume 4 p 522; Al-Bidaya wa an-Nihaya by Ibn Kathir volume 8 p 40; Ahkam Al-Qoran by Jassas volume 2 p. 508; also Bihar Al-Anwar volume 36 p. 346 hadith 213; Sermon Ghadir et al.

9. Several of the speeches and letters of the Imam ('a) touches on this in sermon 8, 22 and 30 et al.

10. Elaborate narrations on the course of events, conversations and letters on the battle of Jamal are well listed and narrated in the majority of historical sources in connection with the narration of this battle. Some of these sources are Mustadrak Al- Hakim volume 3 p 169 and 371; Murooj ath-Thahib by Mas'oodi volume 4 p 321; Majma' as-Zawa'id volume 9 p 107 et al.

11. Narrated in different historic narrations, such as Sharh Nahjul Balagha by Ibn Abil Hadid volume 3 p.239.

12. This occurrence is well known and has been narrated in different historic narrations and other sources, such as Musnad Ahmed Ibn Hanbal volume 6 p.52; Al-Imama wa as-Siyasa (published 1410 AH.) volume 1 p.82; Jomal men Ansab wa Al-Ashraf by Bilathari volume 3 p.24; Al-Kamil fi at-Taikh by Ibn Athir volume 3 p. 103; Al-Mahasen wa Al-Masawe' by Beyhaqi (published 1420 AH.) p.43; Al-Kitab Al-Musannaf fi Al-Ahadith wa Al-Athar (published 1409 AH.) volume 7 p.536; Al-Mustadrak 'ala as-Sahihayn by Hakim Neyshaboori (published 1411 AH.) volume 3 p. 129; Musnad Ibn Ya'li (published

1404 AH.) volume 8 p.282; Musnad Ishaq Ibn Rahooye Handhali (published 1412 AH.) volume 3 p.891; Al-Bidaya wa an-Nihaya (published 1398 AH.) volume 6 p.212; Majma' az-Zawaed wa Manba' Al-Fawaed (published 1407 AH.) volume 7 p.234; Fath Al-Bari by Ibn Hajar 'Asqalani volume 13 p.55, et al.

13. Narrated in different historic narrations in relation to the events that transpired during the Battle of Jamal, such as Morooj ath-Thahab by Mas'oodi (published 1421 AH.) volume 2 p.370, et al.

14. Meticulous studies of history show that the instigators in the Battle of Jamal had different motives to participate. Among other things the revenge for the death of Uthman was a factor. Different motives can be found, some have been noted from the participants own sayings in Tarikh Al-Umam wa Al-Molook by Tabari (published 1970 AD.) volume 4 p.544, et al.

15. Narrated in several sources, such as Tarikh Madinat Dameshq by Ibn Asaaker (published 1415 AH.) volume 18 p.409; Ansab Al-Ashraf by Bilathari (published 1417 AH.) volume 9 p.430; Sharh Nahjul Balagha by Ibn Abil Hadid volume 1 p.231; Bihar Al-Anwar by Allamah Al-Majlisi (published 1403 AH.) volume 18 p. 123. The events that took place are narrated in the footnotes in sermon 8 in Nahjul Balagha – sermon 1–30 (2012)

16. Narrated in several historic narrations, such as Tarikh Al-Umam wa Al-Molook by Tabari (published 1967 AD.) volume 4 p.511; Ansab Al-Ashraf by Bilathari (published 1417 AH.) volume 3 p.254; Tarikh Madinat Dameshq by Ibn Asaaker (published 1415 AH.) volume 18 p.421; Tabaqat Al-Kubra by Ibn Sa'd (published 1410 AH.) volume 3 p.78, et al.

17. History contains several depictions of these occurrences and display the hidden motives and agendas of the people involved. Talha's death and Marwan Ibn Hakam's involvement is narrated in among other Tarikh Khalifa by Ibn Khayyat (published 1415 AH.) p.108; Jomal men Ansab Al-Ashraf by Bilathari (published 1417 AH.) volume 2 p.246–247; Al-Isti'ab by Ibn abdelberr (published 1412 AH.) volume 2 p.768, et al.

18. Imam Ali's ('a) words in Nahjul Balagha, letter 37. Online in English and Arabic at:

<https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-2-letters-and-sayings/letter...> [14]

19. Abu Hurayra has been one of the most controversial narrators of hadith in history. Noteworthy about his questionable personality is the fact that he probably had reached Medina by the year 7 AH., became a Muslim and lived in the time of the Prophet (S) for barely 3 years; Sahih Bukhari volume 4 p.175. Yet he has narrated over 5000 ahadith, by far outnumbering all the companions who had lived with and followed the Prophet (S) for longer periods of time than Abu Hurayra; Suyuti volume 2 p.196. Among other 10% of Musnad Ibn Hanbal's collection of ahadith are from Abu Hurayra; Musnad Ibn Hanbal volume 2 p.228, et al. The question is how, and above all why, this person who barely had spent 4 years with the Prophet (S) came to be the most important and most reliable narrator of hadith during Mu'awiya's time?

Interestingly, both the amount of ahadith as well as their message were objected to by none other than Omar and Aisha as well as several of the Prophet's (S) companions; Sahih Bukhari volume 2 p.232 and Mawta' Malik volume 1 p.290. Even though knowledgeable Sunnis of that time had been careful to blatantly dispute and criticize all of his narrations, the contradicting and doubtful nature of many narrations could not be ignored. Because of the overall notion that all the Prophet's (S) companions should be truthful, the narrations logic and authenticity were debatable. The irregularities of Abu Hurayra's person and his ahadith led to many Sunni and Shi'a scholars questioning his authenticity in later eras, many books have been written analyzing his person and his ahadith. Among them Sheikh Al-Madhira by Mahmood Ibn Rabbah (published 1969 AD., Cairo) and Abu Hurayra fi Dhaw' Marwiyyateh by Muhammad Habib ar-Rahman A'dhami (published 1399 AH. and 1979 AD., Cairo and Beirut) as well as Abu Hurayra by AbdulHusayn Sharf-ad-Din (Najaf). The appointment of Abu Hurayra as a narrator of ahadith and the importance of his position was at the behest of Mu'awiyah, which raised question as to why that was.

20. This event is mentioned by well-known Sunni historians, such as Mas'oodi in Morooj ath-Thahab volume 2 p.72, 172. By studying Mu'awiya's deeds throughout history, it illustrates his canniness and calculable ways as ruler. He had managed to take control of the people of Sham, as is narrated in this event. Mu'awiya was able to implement an Umayyad government in Sham, solely appearing as an Islamic governance but with its true agenda of obliterating Islam from within. In other words, Mu'awiya attacked the true nature of Islam using an Umayyad Islamism which had no relation to the Prophet's (S) message, morals or approach. The Umayyad Islamism could be compared to an empty shell of religious rules that could be bent at the behest of the rulers, to appease themselves and their own self-interest. Up to date, this course of action can be observed in the Saudi kingdom which on the surface appears to implement a religious steadfastness. But at

the same time, its rulers openly lead a lavish lifestyle which opposes everything that Islam stands for.

21. Sermon 13 and 14 in Nahjul Balagha. Online in English and Arabic at:

<https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-1-sermons> [11]

22. This event is narrated in among other Al-Fotooh by Ibn A'tham (published 1411 AH) volume 3 p.5–13.

23. This hadith is narrated in several sources, such as at-Tabaqat Al-Kubra by Ibn Sa'd volume 3 p 251–253 and 259 and its authenticity has been confirmed in among other Al-Esti'ab fi Ma'rifat Al-Ashab by Ibn AbdelBerr (published 1415 AH.) volume 3 p.231, et al.

24. These events are narrated in several historic narrations and other sources that describe the Battle of Siffin in detail, such as Waq'at Siffin by Ibn Muzahim (published 1403AH.) p.475–490; Al-Akhbar at-Tewal by Daynoori (published 1960 AD.) p. 188–189; Tathkerat Al-Khawas by Sebt Ibn Joz (published 1418 AH.) p.92; Al-Fotooh by Ibn A'tham (published 1411 AH.) volume 4 p. 197–198, et al.

25. The following events near the end of the Battle of Siffin and the slow proceedings of hakamiyya turned many weary and the will to fight Mu'awiya diminished. Imam Ali ('a) warned about the consequences which would arise if Mu'awiya would not be stopped. Imam Ali ('a) managed to gather some of the army, as he set off to face Mu'awiya the Khawarij rebelled and faced the army instead. Mu'awiya's malicious deeds and raids could carry on; some of them narrated in sermon 25 and 29 in Nahjul Balagha – sermon 1–30 (2012). Online in English and Arabic at:

<https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-1-sermons> [11]

26. Khawirij, aka Kahrijites, emerged from the same group that had forced their will upon Imam Ali ('a) at the Battle of Siffin and urged stopping the fight against Mu'awiya after they raised the Holy Qur'an. After the fighting stopped, they discovered the hoax of Mu'awiya, this group opposed the agreement of hakamiyya. In their desperation, they wanted Imam Ali ('a) to refute the agreement. When Imam Ali ('a) refused to break his vow and the agreement, this group turned against Imam Ali ('a) and accused him of deviating from the religion. They demanded Imam Ali ('a) to repent and break off the agreement, when this did not happen, they left the army of Imam Ali ('a). The Khawarij were born, the group which the Prophet (S) had referred to as "mareqin", those who rebel against and avert from the religion.

27. The birth of the Kharijites, Imam Ali's ('a) plead to them, their deeds and the chain of events that led to the Battle of Nahrawan is narrated in several historic narrations, such as Tarikh Tabari volume 5 p.63, 72 and 78 and 80–92; Morooh ath-Thahab by Mas'oodi volume 3 p. 144; Ansab Al-Ashraf by Bilathari volume 2 p.350–352 and 366–375 as well as volume 3 p.114, 122; Waq'at Siffin by Ibn Mozahem p.513–514; Akhbar at-Tewal by Daynoori p.203–210, et al.

28. Sermon 27 in Nahjul Balagha. Online in English and Arabic at:

<https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-1-sermons> [11]

29. Ibn Muljim was one of the nine who were able to flee from the Battle of Nahrawan. He made a pact along with two other of the Kharijites who had fled, that they would murder Imam Ali ('a), Mu'awiya and 'Amr Ibn Al-'As. Both Mu'awiya and 'Amr Ibn Al-'As survived.

30. This has been narrated in among other Manaqib Aal Abi Talib by Ibn Shahr Ashoob (published 1379 AH.) volume 2 p.119; Asad Al-Ghaba by Ibn Athir (published 1409 AH.) volume 3 p.618; Ansab Al-Ashraf by Bilathari (published 1417 AH.) volume 2 p.488; Khasaes Al-Aimma by Seyyed Radhi (published 1406) p.63, et al.

31. Sermon 215 in Nahjul Balagha. Online in English and Arabic at:

<https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-1-sermons> [11]

32. The examples of this are many, such as the Imam ('a) rejecting Talha and Zubayr's requests for positions of authority. Even though they were well known, as well as Zubayr being Imam Ali's ('a) cousin and had defended him on occasion. The Imam's stand against Mu'awiya is another example. The Imam ('a) had a close relationship to Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakr who was the son of the first caliph Abu Bakr, even though the Imam ('a) was opposed to the unjust that had befallen the caliphate and Abu Bakr's part in it. Even so, Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakr was one of the Imam's ('a) closest companions and was appointed as regent of Egypt. Other well-known personalities such as Uthman Ibn Hunayf was known for his piety and moderation, he was not corrupt and engulfed with riches during the era of the third caliph; contrary to the likes of Talha and Zubayr, who were lucid examples of corruption.

33. An example is the story of Suda Hamdani, a brave and politically active woman. She objected to Mu'awiya regarding one of his regent's violations and bloodshed. When Mu'awiya dismissed Suda's complaints, she recited a poem which sent

blessings upon the person where justice resided. Mu'awiya asked her who she was referring to, she recalled to an occasion when she had complained about one of Imam Ali's ('a) regents. The Imam ('a) had listened to her and taken account of the evidence presented, then he wrote a letter of termination and gave it to her so she could hand it over to the accused regent. This incident and its details are narrated in several sources, such as 'Eqd Al-Farid by Muhammad Ibn AbdRabbah volume 1 p.345, et al.

34. Imam Ali's ('a) reproachful letter to his regent Uthman Ibn Hunayf is very well known. Uthman was a close companion of the Prophet (S) and the Imam ('a), he was also known for his piety. The letter was sent regarding Uthman's participation in an event where no poor people were invited. In the letter Imam Ali ('a) reminds Uthman of his position, and strongly conveys how his actions were not aligned with the approach and morals that his Imam stood for; Nahjul Balagha letter 45. Online in English and Arabic at: <https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-2-letters-and-sayings/letter-45> [15]

35. Well known personalities during the third caliph's time received a great amount of wealth, these turned against Imam Ali ('a) when less was given. Among those who opposed Imam Ali ('a) were Talha and Zubayr with Bani Umayya and Mu'awiya at the front line. Other than this, the Imam's ('a) reply to his brother Aqil's request of an extra share from Bayt Al-Mal is an example of Imam Ali's ('a) position. It is well known, and Aqil had no right to this. Imam Ali ('a) replied Aqil by putting a metal rod into a fire, when it heated up he moved it near Aqil's hand who pulled it away because of the burning sensation. The Imam ('a) asked Aqil how could he abhor that fire but risk exposing Imam Ali ('a) to the fire of the afterlife, by misusing Bayt Al-Mal and transgressing the law of God? The event and the Imam's words are narrated in Nahjul Balagha sermon 215. Online in English and Arabic at: <https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-1-sermons/sermon-215> [11]

36. This transpired during Talha's and Zubayr's meeting with Imam Ali ('a) after their pledge of allegiance, when they had come to ask for positions of authority.

37. An example of this is the punishment of Walid Ibn Uqba, the third caliph's half-brother and regent of Kufa. Walid had led the prayer whilst being drunk and this led to an uproar. People protested against Uthman and the evidence against Walid was undeniable, people were enraged and a punishment had to be carried out. But everybody was afraid to carry out the punishment because of Walid's position as regent, until Imam Ali ('a) stepped forward and implemented God's law. This event is narrated in several historic narrations and sources, such as Tarikh Ya'qobi volume 2 p.165; Al-Isti'ab by Ibn AbdBerr (published 1412 AH.) volume 4 p.1552; Al-Isaba by Ibn Hibr (published 1415 AH.) volume 6 p.481; as-Sira Al-Halabiyya by Halabi (published 1400 AH.) volume 2 p.539; Ansab Al-Ashraf by Bilathari volume 5 p.519-520; Manaqeb Aal Abi Talib by Ibn Shahr Ashoob (published 1376 AH.) volume 1 p.409; Tarikh Al-Madina by Ibn Shabe an-Nomayri (published 1410 AH.) volume 3 p.975, et al.

38. It is said that during the Imam's ('a) caliphate, he lost his shield which was later found by a man who had another religion. The Imam ('a) who had neither sold or given the shield away asked for it to be returned to him, the man denied him this so they took the matter to court. When Imam Ali ('a) entered the courtroom, the judge stood up out of respect and called to the Imam ('a) by his title as caliph. Imam Ali ('a) objected to this and asked of the judge to treat them equally, and call him by the same manner he would call to the other man. The Imam ('a) declared his claims to the shield which the man denied, the judge therefore asked the Imam ('a) to present evidence or witnesses as the law demanded. The Imam ('a) had no witnesses to present, hence the judge ruled in favor for the man that had found the shield which the Imam ('a) accepted. When the man had witnessed the Imam's ('a) sense of justice, even when it was not beneficial for the Imam ('a) and the fact that at the time he was ruling caliph, the man admitted that the shield did not belong to him. The man stated that "this way of ruling and conduct is not that of an ordinary man; it is the way of the Prophets ('a)", he then became a Muslim. This event is narrated in among other Imam Ali – Sawt Al-Adala Al-Insaniyya (English title: The Voice of Human Justice) by the Christian author George Jordac p.63; Bihar Al-Anwar volume 9 p.598, et al.

39. Nahjul Balagha – letter 53 (2012). Online in English and Arabic at:

<https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-2-letters-and-sayings/letter-53> [16]

40. An example of this is when the Imam ('a) runs into an old person begging and asks "what is this?" When the Imam ('a) found out that the beggar was Christian, he reproachfully said: "Did you use him [in the society while he had strength and was able to work] until he became older and disabled and now [when he cannot work and provide anymore] discard him? Endorse him from Bayt Al-Mal (Treasury House)!" There are many other similar examples such as this event, when the Imam ('a) intervened and preached equality for all. Some are narrated in historic narrations and other books, such as

Wasail as-Shi'a volume 15 p.66.

41. It is said that the Imam's ('a) clothes and shoes were of the humblest kind, but were always clean and he would repair them himself if they were torn and continue using them. The Imam ('a) barely ate meat; he used to say that one should not turn the stomach into a graveyard for animals. For 25 years after the Prophet's (S) untimely death when Imam Ali ('a) was removed from the rule, he cultivated farms of palm trees and dug out many wells that he officially assigned for public use. In other words, the Imam ('a) gave away a great amount of wealth that he had earned through hard work. The Imam's ('a) authority and access to the riches of the government as caliph were of no value to him.

The Imam ('a) lived an even more abstinent life as leader of the people; he lived in the same conditions as the poorest of them. He also encouraged his regents to live as humbly as possible, even if they could not do so to the extent of the Imam ('a). So that people of authority would not forget their mission, which was to constantly fight for the betterment of people's living conditions. As well as being a comfort for people with poor conditions, that people would see their leaders living in the same conditions they were.

The depictions of Imam Ali's ('a) actions and sayings are many regarding the matter, an example of this is when one of his companions visited him and saw his food wrapped up and sealed in a bundle. When the companion asked him about it, the Imam ('a) replied that it contained oat bread and that he kept it there so his children would not be able put any oil or butter on it out of care for him. This occurrence is narrated in among other Sharh Nahjul Balagha by Ibn Abil-Hadid volume 1 p. 16, et al.

42. Khutba Shaqshaqiyia, sermon 3 in Nahjul Balagha. Online in English and Arabic at:

<https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-1-sermons> [11]

43. Words of wisdom 429 in Nahjul Balagha

6.3 – The 3rd Ma'soom – Fatimah Az-Zahra' ('A)

S. The Link Between Prophethood And Imamah

Birth And Character

The Prophet Muhammad's (S) daughter Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a), was born the year 8 BH/615 AD. Her mother Khadija ('a) did not refrain from any of her support toward the Prophet (S) and the message of God until she passed away after a long period of sanctions when she and the Muslims were besieged in a valley in the outskirts of Mecca. Fatimah ('a) was barely four years of age when she bid farewell to her mother, at the same age as the Prophet (S) when he bid farewell to his mother, Amina. Therefore, Fatimah ('a) was raised in the loving hands of her father and was nurtured by his noble qualities and values.

Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) was very loving and considerate toward her father, to the degree that he called her 'her father's mother'. Similar to her father, Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) lived a humble life and was eager to help the needy.1 Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) prominent position, her morals and her knowledge were highlighted further by growing up in the house of revelations and being raised in a prophetic home.

Consequently, Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) had an active role in helping with the Prophet's (S) divine mission. She had a big responsibility in educating women in society and to highlight their qualities, as well as herself, being a role model for both women and men.

Fatimah's ('A) High Rank

Beloved By The Prophet (S) And Mistress Of The Women Of The Worlds

Fatimah ('a) was very loved by the Prophet (S), it is said that the Prophet's (S) mostly beloved was Fatimah ('a) and Ali ('a).² Love and affection toward Fatimah ('a), her husband and children have been ordained a command from God incumbent on all Muslims.³ Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) had such a high status that the Prophet (S) proclaimed in a very famous hadith that Fatimah ('a) is the mistress of all the women of paradise, the mistress of all the women of the worlds and mistress of the women of faith.⁴

It is evident that the Prophet (S) 'never spoke on own accords' according to God's statement⁵, his love for Fatimah ('a) was beyond the love of a father to his daughter. In fact, Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) had a high position by the grace of God, which the Prophet (S) illustrated to people through his actions and sayings. The Prophet Muhammad (S) was infallible, which is a necessary condition for being a role model for the faithful to follow.⁶ Hence, his mannerisms and standpoints were of prophetic traits. This applied to his treatment of Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a), the respect and love the Prophet (S) showed for her was of an infallible Godsend Prophet (S) to a Fatimah ('a) highlighted by God.

The One Who Upsets Fatimah ('A) Upsets The Prophet (S)

In a telling hadith, the Prophet (S) further shows the position of Fatimah ('a) as he equates Fatimah's ('a) contentment and wrath as his own, which in turn is the contentment and wrath of God.

“O Salman, the one who loves my daughter Fatimah ('a) is with me in paradise, and the one that incurs her wrath is of the people of hell. O Salman, the love of Fatimah ('a) assists a person in a hundred situations. The easiest of the situations, in which assistance is obtained, is at death, in the grave, at the weighing of deeds on the Day of Judgment, when all gather on the Day of Judgment, at the bridge over hell and at the reckoning. The person my daughter Fatimah ('a) is content with, I am also content with, and the one I am content with, God is content with. The person my daughter Fatimah ('a) is upset with, I will be upset with, and the one I am upset with, God will be upset with. O Salman, woe to the one who oppresses her and her husband Ali ('a), woe to the one who oppresses her offspring and followers.”⁷

Firstly, take notice that God's contentment and anger are not of the nature that follows someone's personal taste; rather, it is based on what is right and wrong. The Prophet's (S) contentment coincides with that which God is pleased with, while the wrath of the Prophet (S) coincides with that which deviates from the will of God. Therefore, the Prophet's (S) contentment and anger follow God's measure. By means of acceptance and rejection in accordance with God's provisions, which if abided by bring man closer to progress, happiness and prosperity and removes him from destruction and misery.⁸

Secondly, it follows that the Prophet's (S) contentment and wrath cannot be on a personal basis and cannot depart from God's will. It cannot be equated to an ordinary person's contentment and wrath as they are subject to personal inclination and can make mistakes. Therefore, in the aforementioned hadith, equating Fatimah az-Zahra's ('a) wrath to the Prophets demonstrates her lofty position as an infallible human being.⁹

The Central Role In Islam – Daughter Of The Prophet (S), Wife Of Imam Ali ('A) And Mother Of The Imams ('A)

Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) was the Prophet's (S) daughter, Imam Ali's ('a) wife and mother of the Imams ('a). Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) held a unique position among Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), she was the link between prophecy and Imamah. As previously stated, Prophet Muhammad (S) was the last prophet. The prophetic line continued with the leadership of Imam Ali ('a), Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a). It was through Fatimah ('a) that prophecy and Imamah were linked together and carried on the mission of human guidance.

Imam Al-Husayn ('a) narrates that his mother Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) told him:

“When I gave birth to you, the Prophet (S) came to see me. He took you in his arms and said to me: ‘O Fatimah, take your Husayn ('a), for you shall know that he is the father of nine Imams ('a). From his descendants will come forth righteous leaders, among whom the ninth is our Qa’im [Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj)].’”¹⁰

The position of Fatimah ('a) is unique and held by no other than her. Simply put, Fatimah's ('a) bond with prophethood through her father the Prophet (S) as well as bond with Imamah through her husband Imam Ali ('a) and the transfer of Imamah through her sons Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a), demonstrates Fatimah's ('a) high position in itself.

S1. Preparations For The Final Imam ('Aj) – Stand Up For Your Imam ('A)

There is a lot to be learnt from Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) and her stance in various contexts. One of her key stances was in relation to the event of Saqifa after the Prophets (S) departure and her role in defending Imam Ali's ('a) right. By way of not renouncing anything in the fight for haqq (right and truth), Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) was not only a shining example but also lit the path for all followers of haqq in all times. She demonstrated the importance and value of standing up for justice, and that it is worth all difficulties that come with it; even to stake your life to the cause if must, which she did.

Accordingly, Fatimah az-Zahra's ('a) stance and position is a guide that prepares us for the final Imam ('aj). She displayed how to stand up for your Imam, no matter what difficulties you face.

It is important to note that Fatimah az-Zahra's ('a) stance for Imam Ali ('a) was as that of a companion. Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) viewed Imam Ali ('a) as her Imam and leader. Consequently, she saw the support for the Imam ('a) as the fulfilment of the Prophet's (S) proclamation of God's will. The Prophet (S) had said that "the truth is with Ali and Ali is with the truth", and it was this truth that Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) had in view. Therefore, when Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) saw Imam Ali ('a) stand-alone while the Islamic leadership was seized, it was her duty as a believer and a human being, not to merely witness oppression in silence, like many tend to do.

A leader without followers is like a leader with a severed hand and to rise up without support is like flying without wings¹¹, and it is not adequate for a leader to assert his right by himself. Support is a premise for a leader and an imam. The Prophet (S) has said the following in this regard, "an Imam is like the Ka'ba, people ought to seek themselves to it, it ought not to seek itself to people".¹²

In actuality, it was not merely the case that Islamic leadership was the Imam's ('a) right, but the Imam ('a) was right for it, and humanity's right was to grow under the guidance of the Imam ('a).

At a time when the majority of people chose silence, a voice was needed to speak the truth. The light needed to be kindled in order for darkness not to take over. Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) was that voice and light. Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) knew that Imam Ali ('a) was the one who could continue the Prophet's (S) path and build a society based on justice. Therefore, she stood by Ali's ('a) side, and like her mother Khadija ('a), she did not renounce from anything needed to support the truth.

Fatimah az-Zahra's ('a) perceptiveness in recognizing the most important issue of her time, recognizing her duty and role in the matter, and acting after it wholeheartedly constitutes the foremost lesson that Fatimah ('a) left behind. By studying and learning how Fatimah ('a) stood up for her Imam ('a), we can learn how to stand up for our Imam ('aj).

Rises Up For Her Imam ('A) And Gives It Priority Over Herself - Despite The Grief After The Prophet (S)

Fatimah az-Zahra's ('a) tremendous grief over the Prophet's (S) passing did not prevent her from focusing on the most important duty of her time; namely to support the Imam ('a) of her time.

It is narrated that Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) sat at the Prophet's (S) grave after his passing and cried day and night, to such an extent that a message was sent to Imam Ali ('a) to plea Fatimah ('a) cry either day or night. Fatimah az-Zahra's ('a) grief over the Prophet (S) was not only in the form of grief held by a daughter for her father but the grief of a close companion. Not only that, but she also grieved over the oppression that was being committed against the Prophet's (S) successor. In fact, Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) wanted to awaken the community through her crying. She was actually calling out to the community to make them aware of their atrocities against what the Prophet (S) had left behind. She also wanted to keep the Prophet's (S) memory alive.

Rises Up For Her Imam ('A) With Her Word – Spreading The Word Of Truth

In the period following Saqifa, Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) asked Imam Ali ('a) to accompany her every night, along with Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a), to the Prophet's (S) prominent companions, especially among Ansar. Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) went to their home, knocked on their door and talked to them. She reminded them of the Prophet's (S) will in regard to Imam Ali ('a) and Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) position. The position that Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) herself and Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a) had as the Prophet's (S) household was, in fact, a strong argument that no one could deny. The Prophet's (S) ahadith about Fatimah ('a) as well as Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a) were known, coupled with the veneration and protection of the Prophet's (S) household being of importance to the Muslims.

It was clear to all that the love for the Prophet's (S) household was a divine injunction and Fatimah ('a) and her sons were the Prophet's ('a) kin, left behind in the custody of the Muslims to safeguard and protect. In addition, the people constantly witnessed the Prophet's (S) love for them with their own eyes and heard of his admonition regarding them with their own ears. Therefore, it gave a unique effect when Fatimah ('a) herself went to the doors of the companions with Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a), who were still children. It was a tangible way to awaken their memories and touch their emotions in the hope that their slumbering souls would come to life. Apart from reminding the people of her and her sons' positions, she also spoke of Imam Ali's ('a) right and the injustice that had been committed against him. Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) warned of the consequences of leaving God's command of the Imamah.

This was repeated every night, and many agreed with Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a). They vowed to stand for the Imam's ('a) defence but never showed up when it was needed.

Stands Up For Her Imam ('A) With Her Eminence – Demands Back The Seized Fadak

In connection with Saqifa, one of the caliphate's actions against Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) was an economic blockade that included seizing Fadak. Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) had received Fadak from the Prophet (S) by the command of God, in connection with the revelation of a verse. She used its harvest and revenue, particularly to help the needy.

When Fadak was seized by the caliphate, the argument was that prophets ('a) leave nothing in succession and that Fadak, therefore, belonged to the state. Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) refused to accept this and demanded her right back. She noticed that this injustice was merely the first step in transgressing boundaries and that more important issues directly related to Imam Ali ('a) were at stake.

When the caliphate refused to return Fadak, Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) gave a speech in the Prophet's (S) mosque directed at Abu Bakr and Omar where she expressed her displeasure over them. In addition to giving testimony that it was not an inheritance but a gift from the Prophet (S), she clarified with Qur'anic

evidence that prophets ('a) could also leave an inheritance. She remarked that God speaks of several prophets ('a) in the Qur'an, who left an inheritance, including Musa ('a). But the core issue in her speech concerned Imam Ali ('a) and his right to governance. For her, Fadak as the material property was not of great importance but Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) knew that it was used to weaken Imam Ali ('a) further and undermine the Prophet's (S) household. Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) highlighted a very powerful and elegant speech that is documented until today.[13](#)

Rises Up For Her Imam ('A) With Her Action – Meets The Perpetrators Who Came To Force The Imam ('A) To Give Bay'a

When the dominant people of Saqifa scared the tribal leaders that were present to pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr, and the news became official, the voices that questioned it was all silenced. False ahadith and loose arguments were used to convince the public.[14](#) Oaths of allegiance were taken from tribal leaders and well-known personalities of the community in order for ordinary people to follow the flow. Some of the prominent personalities who had been with the Prophet (S) were more informed and not as naive. Some let themselves be silenced by bribes; others via incoming threats. There were also some who wanted to take revenge on Imam Ali ('a) and therefore, did not resist.[15](#) Others chose not to take sides, but in practice, the effect of their choice strengthened those who had taken over the governance, as they could implement their will without facing much resistance.[16](#)

The way in which society's prominent and leading personalities chose to act in this critical situation led to the entire community, where the majority of people had a love for the Prophet (S) and Imam Ali ('a), to follow the newly formed movement. Only a few of the Prophet's (S) companions truly maintained their position and upheld the Prophet's (S) command[17](#) never to be separated from Imam Ali ('a) as "haqq accompanies him wherever he turns."[18](#)

The Prophet (S) had instructed Imam Ali ('a) to have patience over the events that would occur after his passing and at the same time prevent fragmentation in the community. This, of course, was not a piece of advice to be silent in the question of haqq (truth), but rather that the fragile circumstances following the Prophet's (S) departure could not endure internal strife. As such, an occurrence would pave the way for both internal hypocrites and external enemies to seize the opportunity and attack Islam. With the passing of the Prophet (S), the Prophet's (S) ummah (community) had already lost their leader who held them together and after the Prophet (S) many of those who had resentment, but could not show it, would see their chance to emerge. The Prophet (S) was fully aware of this, as was Imam Ali ('a).

Therefore, all of Islam was in direct threat and needed protection; and who else but the Imam ('a) could bear that responsibility and best fulfil such a task?

In this way, Imam Ali ('a) was not in a position to take up the sword, as he needed to prevent internal strife, and he did not have enough followers. Furthermore, such an act could have led to the assassination of the Imam ('a), and this would put the whole religion at risk. The internal and external

enemies who sat waiting for their chance to strike were not to be underestimated. These were the ones seeking internal strife within the Islamic empire. If their ambitions were met, the Prophet's (S) venture would have been crushed. It was only Imam Ali ('a) who could prevent this from happening.

Imam Ali ('a) had never been silent to batil (falsehood) and always stood up for haqq. There was a clear truth that was being trampled on. Therefore, on the one hand, Imam Ali ('a) was responsible for protecting Islam and the Prophet's (S) ummah (community) and on the other, protecting and maintaining haqq. For this, the Imam ('a) therefore had to avoid battle but stand for haqq with his stance. The Imam ('a) did this, among other things, by refusing to give allegiance to Abu Bakr. Since Imam Ali ('a) was known as the Prophet's (S) closest companion, this stance had a strong effect in explaining Saqifa and its results as illegitimate.

Under the prevailing circumstances, the Imam ('a) had limited opportunities to present his case. This is where Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) stepped forward to help her Imam ('a). Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) was held in high regard among the people, not least as the Prophet's (S) daughter but also for the high position she received from God. Therefore, there was a great signalling value in the fact that it was precisely Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) who spoke out the truth and defended the Imam ('a) of her time. In addition to Fatimah az-Zahra's ('a) crying, the speeches she held, her steadfast position in connection with Fadak and all that the seizure of Fadak led to, Fatimah ('a) went to her Imam's ('a) defence when the Imam's ('a) house was besieged.

Following the Imam's ('a) refusal to pledge allegiance, Abu Bakr and Omar sent a bunch of people to Imam Ali's ('a) house to force him to the mosque to pledge allegiance. They surrounded the house of the Imam ('a), collected firewood by the door and threatened to burn down the house and all who were in it. They were well aware that Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a), the Prophet's (S) daughter, and the Prophet's (S) grandsons, Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a), were also in the house. They showed that they had no boundaries and that they were even prepared to kill the Prophet's (S) households.

Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) went to the door to meet those who wanted to attack her Imam ('a). The fact that Fatimah ('a) herself went to the door made it clear to all people, to all of history and in all its future, that the Prophet's (S) daughter was in the house, signalling that it was the Prophet's (S) house that they wanted to attack. Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) knew her position and saw it as her duty to meet these perpetrators at the door so as to reveal the truth and leave no room for anyone to distort and angle the event in the future.

When it was called 'Fatimah is in there', some backed away and dispersed while others were determined to implement their plan, no matter the cost. The fire was lit, and the door was kicked in while Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) was behind it. Fatimah ('a) who was pregnant had her ribs broken and lost her child in that instant. Despite this, the perpetrators entered, tied the Imam ('a) and pulled him out of the house in front of Fatimah az-Zahra's ('a) sight.

Fatimah az-Zahra's ('a) injuries indicate not only the degree of violence used but also how hard-hearted these perpetrators were, to the extent that they, so heartlessly and determined, could trample on the Prophet's (S) most beloved treasure and heritage.[19](#)

Rises Up For Her Imam ('A) Until Her Last Breath – Despite Being Injured And On Her Deathbed

Fatimah az-Zahra's ('a) injuries were so extensive that she never recovered from them. When Ansar's wives greeted Fatimah ('a) during her last days when she was severely ill and asked her about her health, she replied:

"I am about to leave this life while bearing anger towards your men!"[20](#)

Fatimah ('a) knew that everyone was aware that her anger was the equivalent to the wrath of God, as the Prophet (S) had proclaimed this to everyone. She clearly stated that she was angry and dissatisfied with how the community had treated Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) and that she would complain to the Prophet (S) about this.

In this way, Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) conveyed her message to the women who in turn, could influence their men and move the whole community. Therefore, Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) spoke haqq up until her last moments and tried once again to awaken the Muslim community.

Rises For Her Imam ('A) Up Until Death – Will And Martyrdom (Year 11 Ah/632 Ad)

Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) did not survive from her injuries after the attack, which took place two to three months after the Prophet's (S) death.

But even Fatimah's ('a) martyrdom was an uprising for her Imam ('a) when she demanded to be buried in secret. In her last moments in this life, Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) asked Imam Ali ('a) to bury her at night, without those who oppressed her knowing, and to hide her grave so that no one would know its place. In order for all future generations to witness that Fatimah ('a), the daughter of Prophet Muhammad (S), died displeased and angry over the oppression to which Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) was subjected. Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) wanted her hidden tomb to constitute a banner that proved the Imam's ('a) deprived right for future generations. By preventing the oppressors and the silent people from attending her funeral, a clear indication and stance were taken that no one could use to distort reality for all time.

To Rise Up For One's Imam ('Aj)

Would I Have Risen Up For My Imam ('Aj) Despite Difficulties?

The victory of justice is for the benefit of all but those who stand on the side of injustice. Since each side wants something that goes against the wishes of the opponents, there will always be a fight between

them. In other words, justice and injustice can never go together because as long as one has followers, the other cannot fully reach its ambitions and goals. The struggle between them also requires energy and resources. If one wishes justice and stands for it, one should know that the victory of justice costs. The question is, how much are you as a follower prepared to pay?

Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) is an exemplary follower and a model who fought for justice until her very last moments despite the cost of her and her unborn child's life.

Am I prepared to rise up against injustice and fight for justice despite the difficulties it will entail? Do I believe in the fight for justice to the degree that I am willing to stand by it, no matter what it costs? And another higher step; would I rise up to justice even if I am in the middle of hardship and give preference to justice over my interests, my needs and myself? Would I defy my grief, illness, loss, comfort or other priorities and personal concerns for it?

Or would I hand the fight over to others and just settle for an illusion of justice inside of me? Or worse, will I have lots of excuses for taking the easy way out and neglecting my duty?

We always have to pick a side; it is inevitable! Either you are on the side of justice, or you are on the side of injustice. There is no third alternative or a so-called 'neutral' position because, in it, there is always a hidden affirmation.

Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) chose the path of justice and showed that no situation, obstacle or difficulty can stand in the way of standing up for one's Imam ('a). When a righteous leader is oppressed, in this case, an infallible Imam ('a), he cannot assert his right without being accused of seeking power or having personal motives.²¹ Under such circumstances, the followers need to rise, surround the righteous leader and assert his right to defend haqq. Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) demonstrated the awareness and correct judgment a follower needs to act in the right time, in the right way and in the right place. But first and foremost, Fatimah az-Zahra's ('a) acts was a test to her belief in the truthfulness of the road and her Imam ('a).

Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) demonstrated what obedience to an Imam means. She remains an example for the followers of the final Imam ('aj). The final Imam ('aj) must not be suppressed! Through his followers' steadfast faith and purity, the Imam ('aj) will be protected from oppression. His followers will have realized Fatimah az-Zahra's ('a) example within themselves, and therefore, they will be more like the Imam ('aj) they follow!

²¹. The examples are many. One of them depicts when Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) received a new garment for her wedding day from the Prophet (S), when a woman in need knocked on her door and asked for help. Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) remained in her old garment and gave away the new one to the woman, following the example of the verse 3:92 of the Holy Qur'an "You shall not attain righteousness until you spend out of what you love (in the way of God)." As well as following her father's example on another occasion. This event is narrated in among other Nuzhat Al-Majalis wa Muntakhab an-Nafaes by Safoori volume 2 p.175; Ihqaq Al-Haqq wa Izhaq Al-Batil by Shooshtari volume 10 p.401; Al-Waqaye' wa Al-Hawadeth by Malboobi volume 4 p.186; Rayahin ash-Shari'a volume 1 p.102 and 105; Al-Kawkab ad-Dorri volume 1 p.251-254; Al-

Kebrit Al-Ahmar p.283, et al.

2. This was displayed clearly through the Prophet's actions and sayings. This is narrated in among other Sahih Al-Tarmothi volume 13 p.247; Yanbi' Al-Mawadda by Allamah Al-Qondosi p.172, et al.

3. This is a given both in Sunni and Shi'a tradition, and connected to among other the "Mawadda verse"; see G4. Among other sources are Rawdh Al-Jinan wa Rooh Al-Jinan fi Tafsir Al-Qoran by Abu Al-Forooh Razi volume 17 p 122; Al-Borhan fi Tafsir Al-Qoran by Bahrani (published 1416 AH.) volume 4 p 815; ad-Dorr Al-Manthoor fi Tafsir bel Ma'thoor (published 1404 AH.) volume 6 p.7; Ershad Al-'Aql as-Salim ela Mazaya Al-Qoran Al-Karim by Abu Al-So'ood volume 8 p.30, et al.

4. This hadith is among those which are frequently narrated, and its authenticity is confirmed in among other Sahih Al-Bukhari volume 4 p. 183 and hadith 4819; Sahih Muslim volume 7 p.143–144; Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal volume 3 p.80; Dalail Al-Imama by Tabari Imami (published 1413 AH.) p.81; 'Ilal ash-Sharaye' by Sheikh Sadooq (published 1385 AH.) volume 2 p. 182, et al.

5. The Holy Qur'an 53:33.

6. The subject has been discussed thoroughly in the book; see F3.

7. This hadith is narrated in Maqta Al-Husayn av Abu Al-Mo'ed Ahmad Ibn Moufaq p.59; Yanabi' Al-Mawadda by Qondosi p.263 et al.

8. It is important to observe the fact that God's contentment and wrath are not like our joy and sorrow, nor are they based on lack of knowledge or temporary emotion and the like. This goes back to the fact that God's attributes are fundamentally different from those of His creation, which has been extensively discussed in connection with the topic of "God's attributes" earlier in the book; see C1 onwards. Consequently, God's satisfaction lies in following His message and approaching His Rahma (mercy) and to adhere to and realize His attributes within oneself. In other words, one perspective of God's satisfaction and wrath is regarding us humans and our salvation and transcends personal interests, agendas, feelings, gain or injuries.

9. This topic has been extensively discussed in previous sections of the book.

10. This and similar ahadith have been narrated in many sources including Yanabi 'Al-Mawadda p. 441–443 and Montakhab Al-Athar chapter 1 part 7–8 which includes more than seventy ahadith in this regard. In addition, there are other ahadith that include this meaning, including a longer hadith known as "hadith Al-Lawh" (narration of the frame) whereby God gifted to Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) through the Prophet (S). This hadith states, inter alia, all the names of the Imams ('a) and also that nine of them are of the family of Imam Al-Husayn ('a).

The Hadith is narrated in its entirety and in parts in many sources including A'lam Al-Wara be A'lam Al-Hoda by Sheikh Tabarsi p.258; Al-Kafi by Kulayni volume 1 p.527; Bihar Al-Anwar by Al-Majlisi volume 36 p.195, 202; Kamal ad-Din by Sheikh Sadooq volume 1 p.308; Ihtijaj p.41; Ikhtisas by Sheikh Al-Mufid p.210; Al-Ghayba by Sheikh Al-Tusi p.29; 'Oyoon Akhbar Al-Ridha by Sheikh Sadooq volume 1 p.41; Jame 'Al-Akhbar by Tajeddin Shueyri p.18 et al.

11. Inspired by Imam Ali's ('a) words in Nahjul Balagha sermon 3 and 5.

12. This hadith has been narrated by Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) and noted in Bihar Al-Anwar volume 36 p.353; Awalem Al-Ma'aref volume 11 p.228; Al-Ensaaf fi an-Nass 'ala Al-Aimma (persian translation) p.412 et al.

13. The question of Fadak has been elaborately discussed in the book: see Q1.

14. These include sayings such as "prophecy and caliphate cannot convene in the same household", was used for instance in connection with Saqifa; see P and onwards.

15. Some of these personalities' motives have emerged later in the history, by reviewing the positions and wealth they received and how they acted on various issues. Some of these people like for example, Abd ar-Rahman Ibn Owf, Talha and Uthman became prominent under the first caliph's caliphate, were elected to the second caliph's assembly council and then came to share the riches of the caliphate during the third caliphate reign.

16. The silent mass, who for various reasons refrained from taking a stance, essentially permitted the occurrences happening at the time. The importance of this group is evident throughout history.

17. Amongst these companions were the Prophet's (S) and Imam Ali's ('a) uncles Abbas, Salman, Abu Dharr, Miqdad and Ammar.

18. This hadith has been mentioned earlier in the book with its respective sources.
19. This event has been mentioned earlier in the book, in connection with the section “Attack on Imam Ali’s (‘a) house”; see P and onwards.
20. This hadith is narrated e.g. in the book *Dalail az-Zahra* p.87 et al. There are many other ahadith and events that clearly demonstrated Fatimah az-Zahra’s (‘a) standpoint on those who seized the caliphate and those who remained silent in assisting Imam Ali (‘a).
21. Imam Ali (‘a) refers to this fact in sermon 5 in *Nahjul Balaghah* in the following words: “... So if I utter [and demand my right] they [who seek division] say: ‘He is greedy [and seeking] power ‘and if I remain silent they say:’ He fears death! ‘Never; after one and the other. By God, [I] Abu Talib’s son is more attached to death than the [newborn] child at his mother’s breast; rather, I have been united [lodged] within with knowledge [though the hidden], [which] if I were to reveal, you would be gripped by concern by [the anxiety and fear that you would tremble like] a line in a deep well.” The whole sermon can be read in *Nahjul Balaghah*. Online in English and Arabic at:
<https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balaghah-part-1-sermons> [11]

6.4 – The 2nd Imam (Forth Ma’soom) – Imam Al-Hasan (‘A)

T. One Lonely Imam (‘A) And One Nation Afflicted By Indolence

Birth And Characteristic

Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) was born in Medina on the night of the 15th of the month of Ramadan, year 3 AH/624 AD.

Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) was the firstborn of Imam Ali (‘a) and Fatimah az-Zahra (‘a) in their holy marriage and the firstborn in the holy household of the Prophet (S), home of revelations. Imam Ali (‘a) and Fatimah az-Zahra (‘a) requested the Prophet Muhammad (S) to name the child, and so he asked God. God sent down the archangel Jibrail (‘a) with the name Hasan, originating from one of God’s names. Hasan means a good and handsome one.

Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) resembled the Prophet (S) in both character and appearance, which the Prophet (S) emphasized when he said to Imam Al-Hasan (‘a):

“O Hasan, you are like me in appearance and morals.”¹

The High Position Of Imam Al-Hasan (‘A)

The Prophet (S) Loved Imam Al-Hasan (‘A)

The Prophet (S) said:

“O God, I love him; You too love him.”

The Prophet (S) have had both Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a) on his lap and said:

“These are my daughter's sons. O God, I love them; so, YOU too love them, and love everyone who loves them.”²

Specific Events And Statements

Imam Al-Hasan ('a) was one of the Ashab Al-Kisa` (People of the Cloak) during which God sent down the verse of Tathir.³ Similarly, the Prophet (S) brought along Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a), in connection with the event of Mubahala in the capacity of ‘his sons’ as God commanded in the related Qur’anic verse.⁴

There are great amounts of events where the Prophet (S) demonstrated his love for Imam Ali's ('a) and Fatimah az-Zahra's ('a) children, Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a), and named them his sons, the continuation of his lineage and the surviving line of Imamah. Additionally, there are also plenty of ahadith where the Prophet (S) spoke of Imam Al-Hasan's ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) positions and emphasized them.

Among those the Prophet (S) has named Imam Al-Hasan and Imam Al-Husayn ('a) as:

“Hasan and Husayn are the two masters of the youths of paradise.”

“Indeed, my sons Hasan and Husayn are my two scented flowers in this world.”⁵

The Prophet (S) was clear and distinct in emphasizing the status of his Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), especially that of Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a), to all Muslims. Hence, the love of Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) was far and widely given to all Muslims and is to this day, among both Shi'a and Sunni Muslims.

Imam Al-Hasan ('A) Becomes An Imam

During his lifetime, the Prophet (S) had mentioned on several occasions the names of all coming Imams ('a).⁶ Imam Ali ('a) obeyed the Prophet's (S) command and in connection with his martyrdom, handed over the banner of Imamah to Imam Al-Hasan ('a).

The Prophet (S) has also said:

“Hasan and Husayn are imams; whether they rise or sit [whether they make an uprising or make peace].”⁷

On his deathbed, Imam Ali ('a) asked his closest relations to gather around him, as he mentioned Imam Al-Hasan ('a) taking on Imamah after him, and requested all present to witness;

“My son! The Noble Prophet (S) ordered me to appoint you as my successor and to entrust you with my books and sword, the same way the Prophet (S) appointed me as his successor and entrusted me with his Holy Qur'an and sword, and asked me to pass it on to you so that you may entrust it to your brother Imam Al-Husayn ('a) when your departure approaches.”⁸

Receives The Governorship Of A Divided And Weary Nation

Shortly after the martyrdom of Imam Ali ('a), Imam Al-Hasan ('a) was to govern a divided nation, suffering moral decays by the deceiving hand of Mu'awiya's treacherous tricks and attacks. Those are the same people to surround Imam Ali ('a) and urge him to take over governance, only to, later on, surround him again but with stubbornness and ignorance. The Islamic state was affected by indolence and disunity, rooted in the previous caliphates, prevented them from submitting to Imam Ali ('a), even though they had pledged allegiance to him. When Imam Ali ('a) was martyred, the nation was left somehow shocked, and people knew, albeit short-lasting, whom they had in actuality lost. The threat of Mu'awiya was also evident. Hence, people turned to Imam Al-Hasan ('a) – now in the highest rank after that of his late father.

People Pledge Allegiance To Imam Al-Hasan ('A)

After the passing and burial of Imam Ali ('a), people turned to Imam Al-Hasan ('a). Imam Al-Hasan ('a) gave a sermon in which he declared his position as an Imam and the rightful successor after Imam Ali ('a):

“Last night a man passed away, unique to all of earlier age and those of the future, known for his knowledge, piety, behaviour and character. He participated in battles together with Prophet Muhammad (S) and fought hard to defend Islam. A person who was a needle in the eyes to his enemies and a fruit of life to his friends. He did not collect any of this world's wealth for himself...”

At this moment, Imam Al-Hasan ('a) cried bitterly, and so the people wept alongside him, he then explained:

“I am the son of Prophet Muhammad (S), Imam Ali ('a) and Fatimah az-Zahra ('a). I am the flame to the lantern of prophethood. The household from which God banished filth, impurities and stains...”

Then, Abdullah Ibn Abbas stood up and said:

“O people, this is the son of the Prophet (S) and your Imam ('a), be aware, for he is the rightful successor and heir of Imam Ali ('a). Therefore, pledge allegiance and loyalty to him.”

People pledged their oaths of allegiance to Imam Al-Hasan ('a), on the condition that; they would fight against all those he fought against, and if he found that peace was necessary, they will also accept it. All accepted.⁹

A Nation Afflicted With Indolence

The difficult and unstable state had worsened towards the end of Imam Ali's s ('a) lifetime and as such people were afflicted with indolence and lack of motivation, caused by the inflicted war-making society aggravated.

The battles of Jamal, Siffin and Nahrawan took place one after the other; people had not yet taken down arms only to lift take up weapons again. These wars were not waged against clear enemies, such as during the time of the Prophet (S), now Muslims were fighting Muslims, and only worsening situations. Society perceived those who wished to reveal the truth as suspicions. No one trusted the other. The least of consequences were people's indolence and refusal to fight batil and disarm it for once. As Imam Ali ('a) was martyred, and people pledged allegiance Imam Al-Hasan ('a), this became clearer. When Imam Al-Hasan ('a) ordered people to mobilize against the force of Mu'awiya, people were weaker than during the time of Imam Ali ('a). The response was slow, and it was with great effort that Imam Al-Hasan ('a) could gather the rest of his father's shattered and untrustworthy army.

Did You Know?

This indolence had its foundation in a two centuries-long period of corruption and was nothing but a result of people's shortcomings in obeying Imam Ali ('a). Had they followed Imam Ali's ('a) commands in Siffin, they would have ended the threats of Mu'awiya and as such lived with dignity, stability, prosperity and peace in many generations to come. Yet again, this points to one important principle; those who do not take responsibility due to a short-termed time of comfort and unwillingness to sacrifice will be afflicted with long-termed grief shortly afterwards. As well as many other situations in life, both for an individual and the entirety of society, it requires that one stands up for justice and sacrifice whatever they must, or instead pay the consequences of one's own shortcomings, both during their lifetimes and for generations to come.

Mu'awiya Wages War

When Mu'awiya heard of the allegiances pledged by the people to Imam Al-Hasan ('a), he immediately mobilized a large army to head towards Iraq and fight Imam Al-Hasan ('a).¹⁰ In turn, Imam Al-Hasan ('a) commanded the people to mobilize in order for them to go head-to-head with the army of Mu'awiya.

Imam Al-Hasan ('a) ventured towards an area by the name of Sabat, near the city of Madain and stayed there with an army of thousands; he then sent off twelve-thousand men with commander-in-chief Ubayduallah Ibn Abbas and his vice-commander Qais Ibn Aa`d to stop Mu'awiya on the front-lines. They were to meet up with the army of Mu'awiya, many times larger than their own.

T1. The Enemy's Solution – Feeble Friends & Treacherous Enemies

Feeble Friends

The contradictions characterizing society at the time of Imam Al-Hasan ('a) were mirrored even on the ranks of the Imam's ('a) army. Deployments with their so-called leaders followed different lines, their intentions to join the battle against Mu'awiya as well as their view of Imam Al-Hasan and the acceptance of Imamah, differed. For some, the fight against Mu'awiya was based on avenging their dead, who had fallen in earlier battles. Others joined to gain status and receive spoils of war. Additional groups were present to sow division out of personal gains and assignments were given by Mu'awiya.

It was only a few who truly believed the Imamah Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and were his Shi'a, and perceptive enough to see through the tricks and deceptions of the enemy. The majority of the people who harboured a love for Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and the Prophet's (S) Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), did lack the perceptivity and decisiveness required not to be swept with or confused by all different the movements and groups joining from all directions. In addition, the remaining Khawarij who admittedly saw Mu'awiya as their enemy, but had the same number of problems with Imam Ali ('a) and his lineage, continued spreading rage and narrowmindedness against Imam Al-Hasan ('a).

The already weak army was additionally weakened when Mu'awiya sends out his spies, causing divisions. His spies spread rumours, flaring up the differences between the different groups. The deceitful rumours initiated by the enemy spread wide and far until they came to play a crucial role. Different groups went against each other, creating chaos, plotting, and treason spread swiftly through the entire army. The state of matters intensified as Mu'awiya succeeded in bribing commanders and prominent personalities in Imam Al-Hasan's ('a) army. Some of which left the army with groups or tribes, as their betrayal weakened the morality of the soldiers left behind. The scattered army was no force to rely on and without faith in what they were doing, they were no match to Mu'awiya's deceit, already winning the war in its first stages.

Before Assembling The Army – Tribal Leaders And Other Companions Betray

When Imam Al-Hasan ('a) was assembling the army, a tribal leader had been bribed and joined Mu'awiya. Several others of Imam Al-Hasan's ('a) army were also bribed and joined Mu'awiya by leaving the Imam ('a) during nightfall. The Imam ('a) taken aback by their deceit, gathered the army himself and his close companions.

During Battle – Commander-In-Chief Ubaydullah Ibn Abbas Betrays

Already on the front line, Mu'awiya succeeded in bribing the commander of Imam Al-Hasan's ('a) army, who joined Mu'awiya along with two-thirds of the army. Thereon, Mu'awiya spread rumours that Qais

Ibn Sa'd, Imam Al-Hasan's ('a) deputy commander, had been murdered and that the army that accompanied him suffered defeat in the battles against Mu'awiya's army. In reality, Qais had fought bravely and gained the upper hand against Mu'awiya. Qais was well known for his faith, strength and courage. He did not fall for the tricks and insidious rumours of Mu'awiya. But when the news of Ubaydullah's betrayal and the rumour of Qai's alleged death reached the army at Madain, despair and discouragement spread, causing many to lose hope of victory.

This was a major hardship and caused more people to follow suit and leave Imam Al-Hasan ('a). At that time, the reduction in Imam Al-Hasan's ('a) army became visible. One by one, the commanders and officers began to leave the Imam's ('a) army. Mu'awiya sent his spies continuously to Madain in order to further weaken and by whatever means disperse people from Imam Al-Hasan's ('a) side. The army, already divided by then, became weaker and disagreements as well as the loss of confidence in defeating Mu'awiya increased. Finally, the remaining ones were very few and the Imam's ('a) companions even fewer.

On account of Mu'awiya's deceitful rumours within the Imam's ('a) army, riots arose, and some stormed Imam Al-Hasan's ('a) tent and even pulled the prayer mat from under his feet. The existing khawarij bore resentment against Imam Ali ('a) and saw an opportunity for revenge. They attacked Imam Al-Hasan ('a). In a treacherous ambush, the Imam ('a) got a dagger in the thigh by one of the khawarij. The Imam ('a) suffered a severe injury and lost a lot of blood. Some of his faithful companions took the Imam ('a) on his order to Madain's governor, Sa'ad Ibn Mas'ood Al-Al-Thaqafi, for treatment.[11](#)

The tragedy that had begun with Ubaydullah's betrayal ended with the majority of officers on Mu'awiya's side. Imam Al-Hasan ('a) was alone and attacked by his own army. Like his father, he was now oppressed and had been betrayed by his own people. With a few companions and without an army, he had to accept defeat.

Insidious Enemies

Mu'awiya's treachery and betrayal knew no limits. There were no moral ground rules that limited him, and he did everything in his power to achieve his goals. Money from the Treasury House, belonging to the people, was freely used to bribe, hire spies who spread lies and on anything else that was needed to put his deceitful schemes into action. Lies, deceit and unethical tricks were all devices of Mu'awiya, and he was far from being reliable or keeping his word. Imam Ali ('a) has said in this regard:

“By God, Mu'awiya is no more cunning than me, but he deceives and commits evil acts, and had not fraud been a reprehensible act, I would have been the most cunning of people ...”[12](#)

Imam Al-Hasan ('a), as other Imams ('a), did not lack knowledge nor cunningness, but his piety did not allow him to act if not in a moral and honest manner, even against enemies. The Imam ('a), through his wisdom and his connection with God, who is the source of knowledge and wisdom, had complete

oversight and clarity of the whole situation. Exemplified, not least, in the agreement, the Imam ('a) signed. His actions were in unison with the meaning of the titles of Imam, leader and role model. He acted on the basis of the means available. Had people trusted Imam Al-Hasan ('a), and Imam Ali ('a) before him, and followed them wholeheartedly, they would have triumphed over Mu'awiya without any doubt, despite the treacheries and deceitfulness that Mu'awiya possessed.

In the end, the real victory is the preservation of the true message that can guide people. An ambition the Imams ('a) constantly achieved with their actions, regardless of the outcome of a war.

Mu'awiya's Real Objective

Throughout the war, Mu'awiya exposed that his goal was far greater than merely becoming a caliph. Not only did Mu'awiya accuse Imam Ali ('a) on false grounds for Uthman's murder while he himself was the one that refused to help Uthman, he initiated a war against Imam Ali ('a). Mu'awiya continued in the same manner against Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and deceived people with rumours and insidious plans.

But what demonstrates M'awiya's real agenda was the fabricated prophetic narrations that he let spread throughout the kingdom.¹³ Mu'awiya started a huge system of propaganda. He hired people and made them pretend they had been close to the Prophet (S) and thereby spread distorted or even counterfeit ahadith in support of his power.¹⁴ Meanwhile, companions who were still alive and opposed to this system were overthrown, expelled, imprisoned or removed in all possible ways and forms.¹⁵

The propagandist narrations mainly deteriorated of the position and reputation of the Prophet's (S) household, Ahl Al-Bayt ('a). At the same time as they disguised the Prophet's (S) ahadith against Mu'awiya and Abu Sufyan's lineage and embellished them.¹⁶ The caliphate was only part of Mu'awiya's plan; he was, in fact, looking to erase all traces of the Prophet ('a) and Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), which his son Yazid explicitly tried to do.¹⁷

Mu'awiya's resentment at Islam, the Prophet (S) and his family, which he had partly inherited from his father Abu Sufyan, was enhanced by the revenge for his grandfather, uncle and brother's death at the battle of Badr.¹⁸ In other words, he followed the same course his father and mother, Hind, followed before him. Abu Sufyan repeatedly had, not least when Uthman took over the caliphate, shown his true face and true faith regarding the Prophet (S) and Islam.¹⁹ Hind herself showed her true conviction when she hired a slave to murder the Prophet's (S) uncle Hamza ('a). She went so far in her revenge that she desecrated Hamza's ('a) lifeless body.

Abu Sufyan, Hind and Mu'awiya fought against the Prophet (S) and Islam up until the end. However, Mu'awiya pretended to accept Islam. He did this only after the conquest of Mecca. Mu'awiya's goal was that no one from Bani Hashim, the Prophet's (S) lineage, would remain alive and that everyone would forget the name of the family of revelation. It was, among other things, with these underlying motives that Mu'awiya systematically ascended the line of power during the time of the third caliph to eventually take over and transform the caliphate into an asset in the Umayyad dynasty's hand. There is plenty of

evidence in history that shows that none of these people ever stopped their hostility to Islam and the Prophet (S) but rather continued to follow up their agenda, albeit under the surface actively.

Mu'awiya is narrated saying:

"Nevertheless, the name of this Hashimite man [Prophet Muhammad (S)] is mentioned at least five times a day in the Islamic world [from the top of the minarets in connection with azan (prayer call)], and he is remembered with greatness. By God! I will not rest until I have buried this name."²⁰

All of these accounts elucidate the complicated conspiracy that Imam Al-Hasan ('a) had to resist alone. As well as the length to which his arch-enemy was willing to go to eliminate religion, by primarily removing its custodians. In other words, Imam Al-Hasan ('a) was dealing with an opponent who wanted to destroy Islam, but in the hidden scene, and therefore pretended on the outside to be a devout Muslim to deceive the people. Mu'awiya's method was to implement his plan systematically and softly, through the means of propaganda; a method his son Yazid did not live by.

Truce

Imam Al-Hasan ('a) was part of a truce with Mu'awiya in year 41 AH as it was the only thing that could save Islam. When the Imam ('a) saw the low morale of his scattered army and found them unwilling to fight, he accepted the peace treaty. The Imam ('a) clarified his position and the people's unwillingness to complete the fight against Mu'awiya in his speech where he said:

"Be aware that Mu'awiya has given us an offer [of peace settlement] that is neither respectful nor based on justice. Therefore, if you choose to fight to the death, then we will attack Mu'awiya again and with the taking of the sword takes him to the straight path as God commanded. But if you choose a worldly life, then we will accept his offer and give you security."

Then from all directions, it was called 'life, life' as an affirmation to join the peace settlement.²¹

In these difficult circumstances, Imam Al-Hasan ('a) had two choices:

1. To fight Mu'awiya despite the lack of followers and bad circumstances. Doing so would mean a loss where many people's blood would be spilled. Mu'awiya would then also have a reason to terminate the Prophet's (S) household, Ahl Al-Bayt ('a).
2. To sign a peace agreement to prevent the direct threat posed by Mu'awiya while revealing Mu'awiya's real intentions to the ummah.

Mu'awiya was very deceitful and insidious; apparently, he had not violated the religion laws and carried out his plans tactically and discreetly using all sorts of tricks. Therefore, many ordinary people fell for his outward religiosity, while leading front figures were bribed or eliminated in other ways. It was not possible to show one's real self when not everyone looked beyond the exterior, and when many of the

leading figures were put out of play. In other words, Imam Al-Hasan ('a) had even fewer loyal companions who understood him and stood firmly by his side.

In addition, the people, in general, had developed indolence that was brought about by the changed conditions of society, not least the more materialistic and worldly-minded values and living conditions. People had relapsed into fanatical traditions that they followed blindly, such as tribal affiliation. This led to the people changing their priorities and putting the Imam's ('a) obedience aside. A fundamental factor in this context was even that a few had a real understanding of the meaning of Imamah and Wilayat (divinely appointed leadership and guardianship) and therefore lacked strong faith in the Imam ('a). All this, along with the full-scale propaganda war Mu'awiya brought, were factors that affected and made the people in their acts weak in the fight against Mu'awiya.

Imam Al-Hasan ('a), did what was required in order to preserve the true spirit of Islam for people's continued guidance. Based on the circumstances that prevailed at the time of the Imam ('a), it was not possible to start a fight against batil (falsehood and injustice) through battle. Rather, the entire message and the Prophet's (S) family were risked as its protectors. This when batil was not visible and obvious to all, but had put on the clothes of religion and claimed to follow it. Therefore, Imam Al-Hasan ('a) entered into a peace treaty to conduct the battle in a different way and in the longer term.

The oppression against Imam Al-Hasan ('a) took another form when a large majority of his own followers did not understand the Imam's ('a) decision and objected to it. They saw Mu'awiya as an enemy and wanted to fight against him, but they lacked the understanding and belief in the Imam ('a) as one chosen by God with far more insight than themselves. Some went so far that they turned to Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and asked him to lead them instead. But Imam Al-Husayn ('a) rejected them as a true companion who did not deviate from the will of the Imam ('a) of his time.²² Unlike them, Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and the few faithful companions who remained with Imam Al-Hasan ('a) believed that the Imam ('a) was in his infallibility linked to the divine source of wisdom and was the one who could make the best decision. To his own followers who criticized the peace treaty, the Imam ('a) declared that it was the right course of action in the prevailing circumstances and compared it to the Hudaybiyya treaty which the Prophet (S) wrote with the non-believers in Mecca.²³ However, Imam Al-Hasan ('a) remains one of the most oppressed Imams ('a) of both friends and enemies.

A Peace Treaty – Continued Battle In Another Form

The peace treaty was a way for Imam Al-Hasan ('a) to continue the battle in another form. Mu'awiya had now strengthened its fort and dominated over the situation in the Islamic state. The Umayyad dynasty that Abu Sufyan dreamed of, and intended to eliminate the traces of the Prophet (S) and the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), was about to become a reality. This would mean the destruction of the religion and its message from within, in such a way that it over time had left nothing but a superficial shell with a distorted content. Already during the time that Mu'awiya had been in control of Sham, he had done great damage and brought forth a generation of Muslims who knew only about Islam the way it was advocated by

Mu'awiya. The people were deceived to the extent, that when the news of the sword blow against Imam Ali ('a) in the mosque during prayer reached Sham, people were completely surprised because they believed that Imam Ali ('a) did not visit the mosque or performed the prayer! Through their boundless propaganda war, Mu'awiya had spoken to and conveyed such a distorted image of Imam Ali ('a) to the people that in their conception they did not even believe that the Imam ('a) prayed. They did not know that the Imam ('a) was the first to accept the Prophet (S) and profess Islam; the even lesser the people knew about the Imam's ('a) position as Imam, and as the Prophet's (S) successor. The hatred against Imam Ali ('a) that Mu'awiya implanted and propagated in order to get the people of Sham to fight against the Imam ('a) showed not the least during the time of Imam Al-Hasan ('a). In this way, Mu'awiya was aiming to lead religion, softly, towards a definite downfall. He did this by distorting religious concepts, falsifying ahadith and introducing many inventive rules.

Imam Al-Hasan ('a) was fully aware of the dangers and did not accept the peace settlement except under special conditions. The Imam ('a) made a clear settlement and recorded a number of requirements on which the peace treaty was based on and which Mu'awiya had to commit to. Some of these conditions were:

- Mu'awiya would act according to the Book of God, the Qur'an, and the Prophet's (S) sunnah.
- Mu'awiya could not appoint a successor; the choice of the next caliph would be left to the people.
- All people would be safe from Mu'awiya regardless of their background and on which side they stood during the battle against Mu'awiya.
- The cursing of Imam Ali ('a) on the pulpits, which Mu'awiya had introduced, would be forbidden.
- Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and his companions would be safe, and Mu'awiya would not attack or conspire against them.

Imam Al-Hasan ('a) knew that the peace treaty was nothing more than another means for Mu'awiya to achieve his goals and that he did not intend to fulfil the treaty. But under these conditions, Imam Al-Hasan ('a) primarily limited Mu'awiya's influence and at the same time, the Imam ('a), marked clear border whose overriding would show the people's real face.

It did not pass a long time before Mu'awiya violated all the terms of the peace treaty one after one. Mu'awiya who, upon entering Kufa, announced his fight was about power, stepped up the systematic hunt of all that was associated with Imam Ali ('a). It was sufficient with only testimony that someone was his follower in order to be convicted, get their wealth seized, and a person's family and one's own life would be at risk.²⁴ Mu'awiya did not stop the persecution of Bani Hashim and Imam Al-Hasan's ('a) companion, and one large number of the Prophet's (S) relatives were hunted and murdered. Eventually, Mu'awiya progressed with his plans by appointing his son Yazid as heir and by planning the assassination of Imam Al-Hasan ('a).²⁵

However, the result of the peace treaty meant that:

- The people realized that Mu'awiya was a hypocrite and liar who did not even maintain the peace treaty he had signed.
- Mu'awiya's plan and his opposition against Islam became clear when he despite the terms of the peace treaty, appointed his son Yazid as successor and the caliph of the Muslims although Yazid openly violated Islam with morally objectionable acts.
- Imam Al-Hasan ('a) devoted his time, after the peace treaty, to educate faithful companions and spread the true spirit of religion. Later, this gave Imam Al-Husayn ('a) the opportunity to rise up against Yazid since his apparent unbelief and breaking of the laws of religion got the people to lose their confidence in the Umayyad autocracy.
- Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) revolution led to the fall of the Umayyad dynasty, even though Mu'awiya had done everything to secure its survival for many generations to come. Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) revolution still lives on today as the clearest voice for justice and against oppression.

Martyrdom (Year 50ah/670ad)

The oppression against Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and his loneliness even emerged in his martyrdom when he was poisoned by his own wife, Ja'da, who was bribed by Mu'awiya. Mu'awiya had promised, among other things, Ja'da's marriage to his son Yazid in return for poisoning Imam Al-Hasan ('a). Ja'da who was the daughter of Ash'ath Kindi – the same person who has been a leading figure in threatening and forcing Imam Ali ('a) to withdraw the attack against Mu'awiya in Seffin and later became one of Khawarij's leaders – let herself to be persuaded through her father and poisoned the Imam ('a) who reached martyrdom on the 28th of the month of Safar in the year 50AH.

T2. Preparations For The Final Imam ('Aj) – An Imam ('A) Must Have Companions

Imam Al-Hasan's ('a) governorship was a clear example of why an Imam ('a) must have devoted companions and have the people on his side as a prerequisite for being able to control, defeat enemies and drive the development of society. Unlike tyrants, who admittedly also need to have followers, but who rule with an iron grip and use all means to retain power, the Imam's ('a) goals and purpose with ruling differs. For an Imam ('a), governing is just one of several means that can be used to pave the way for society's progress and development and therefore, people's guidance. An Imam ('a) never uses power for anything but its purpose and acts only on the basis of God's rules. It is therefore required that the companions realize the position of the Imam ('a) and stand with him in all situations.

Without faithful companions, the Imam ('a) will eventually stand-alone, like Imam Al-Hasan ('a) who saw

his army shaken and shattered by rumours. In order to preserve the essence of the message and in order to not give the enemy the reason it sought to eliminate all its followers, Imam Al-Hasan ('a) chose to pursue the battle on another level with a strategic move. This is a splendid example and a fundamental reason why other Imams ('a) also did not start any uprising but continued the battle through other means and methods, based on the circumstances and possibilities of their time.

From a historical perspective, it can be stated that while the people of Imam Ali's ('a) time had gotten enough of the injustice, they were still not ready to do what was required to implement justice. And while the people of Imam Al-Hasan's ('a) time had seen what the enemy is capable of, they lacked insight and belief in the Imam's ('a) position. This made them unstable as a follower and repeatedly made them fall for enemy tricks, they trembled because of division and indolence and abandoned the Imam ('a) instead of sticking with him. On the other hand, Imam Al-Husayn ('a) came to have faithful companions, many of whom had been brought up by Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and consequently, at the request of the people, fulfilled the conditions for an uprising. But the public's will to stand up, hold on, and sacrifice for justice ended because the Imam ('a) was not the highest priority when push comes to shove. The enemy took advantage of this to their own advantage and murdered Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and his companions.

Consequently, just like the few faithful companions came to be distinguished for Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) revolution, later on, this illustrates why Imam Al-Hasan ('a) had to enter into peace treaties when he lacked faithful companions. Likewise, this illustrates why the Imam of our time, Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj), needs to have enough strong and stable companions before his arrival that have established a real longing and will for justice. Rumours and propaganda were perhaps Mu'awiya's most powerful weapons to deceive the general public in order to carry out his plans. Today, misinformation and propaganda that aims to create disparaging and divisive people in today's world is an extremely important factor to watch out for.

1. The hadith is known and stated in several sources including *Khasf Al-Ghumma* by Ali Ibn Isa Al-Irbili volume 2 p. 290; *Bihar Al-Anwar* by Majlisi volume 43 p. 294 et al.

2. These ahadith and similar versions where the Prophet (S) expresses his love for Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and with an Arabic expression asked God to protect them with His love, are plenty and narrated, among other, in *Sahih Al-Bukhari* obyBukhari volume 2 p. 432; *Tarikh Al-khulafa* by Suyuti p. 207-207; *Sahih Muslim* by Muslim volume 4 p. 1883 et

3. This term was used by the Prophet (S) for this company of the five nearest to him and God, and this historical event causing the term to be, have been extensively narrated in previous books in connection with the verse of Tathir; see F5 and further.

4. This event is mentioned in detail in connection with the verse of Mubahala; see G4 and further.

5. These ahadith are wellknown and frequently narrated by many companions who have heard this proclamation by the Prophet (S) himself in various states and many situations. Suyuti, one of the prominent Sunni scholars, both accepted historian and narrator of hadith, have mentioned this hadith from six chains of narrations in his book *Akbar Al-Mutawatira* p 286. Among other sources narrating these ahadith and many others are *Tarikh Al-Khulafa* by Suyuti p. 207; *Sahih Tarmothi* by Tarmothi volume 5 p. 657; *Tarikh Madinat Dameshq* by Ibn Askar volume 13 p. 212; *Al-Isti'abfi ma'rifat Al-Ashab* volume 1 p. 385; *as-Swa'eq Al- Muhriga* by Ibn Hibr volume 2 p. 403, 560-561,573; *Amali* by Sheikh Sadooq p. 333 et al.

6. Several ahadith are mentioned in connection with the section 'Twelve Imams ('a) of my offspring'; see G5 and further.

7. This hadith is narrated in several sources, among them: *'Ilal Al-shara'a'i* volume 1 p. 211; *Irshid* by Sheikh Mufid volume

2 p. 27; Bihar Al-Anwar by Al-Majlisi volume 43p. 291; Rwdhat Al- Wa'edhin volume 1 p. 159; 'Awali Al-Lai volume 4 p. 93; Manaqib volume 3 p. 394 et .al. Worth noting that the Prophet (S) declared this while Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a) were children and in fact, provided people with a guideline for the future; both for Imam Al-Hasan ('a) peace treaty and Imam Al-Husayn's (S) uprising, of which both were headed by a few.

8. This is narrated in Kafi by Kulayni volume 1 p.297, et al.

9. The fact that people, forty thousand in number, were present pledged bay'a and allegiance to Imam Al-Hasan ('a) is an evident historical encounter, stated clearly in many well-known history books, among them, Tarikh Ya'qobi volume 2 p. 214; Tarikh Tabari (published 1387 AH) volume 5 p. 158; Morooj ath-Thahab by Mas'oodi (published 1409 AH) volume 2 p. 426; Ansab Al-ashraf by Bilathari (published 1417 AH) volume 3 p. 28; Al-isti'ab fi Ma'rifat Al-Ashab (published 1412 AH) volume 1 p. 385; Amta' Al-Asma' by Moqrizi (published 1420 AH) volume 5 p. 385; Nihayat Al-Arb by Nuwayri (published 1413 AH) volume 20 p. 229; Tarikh Al- Khamis by Diar Bakri volume 2 p. 289; and Irshad by Sheikh Al-Mufid (published 1413 AH) volume 2 p. 7-9; Maqatil Al-Talebin by Abu Faraj Isfahani p. 62 et .al.

10. It is narrated in several history books, among them Al-Fotooh by Ibn A'tham (published 1411 AH) volume 4 p. 286; Irshad by Sheikh Al-Mufid (published 1413 AH) volume 2 p. 11 et .al.

11. These historical events have been portrayed in the majority of historical accounts, albeit with minor variations but those do not amount to much difference in the subject matter. Narrated amongst others in Tarikh Ya'qobi volume 2 p.214; Ansab Al-Ashraf by Bilathari (published 1417 AH) volume 3 p.35; Al-Akhbar at-Tiwal by Daynoori p.217; and Irshad by Sheikh Al-Mufid volume 2 p.11-12 et al.

12. Nahjul Balagha sermon 200. Online in English and Arabic at: <https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-1-sermons> [11]

13. The writing and narration of prophetic ahadith had been banned, above all, by the second caliph and many of the Prophet's (S) companions were not allowed to leave Medina without permission. Therefore, leaving a great void among the people regarding many issues on which the Prophet's (S) sunnah constituted a basis. In addition, with the expansion of the kingdom and the passage of time, many new people and generations had been formed who had not met the Prophet (S) or experience that time and hence lacked experience-based background and knowledge.

Therefore, on the one hand, these new people and generations had not themselves seen or heard the Prophet (S), nor, on the other hand, had they gained access to the companions who had been with the Prophet (S) and were able to recount narrations. After a number of years, many of the early companions began to pass away, and since the recording of ahadith had been banned, access to recorded sources was also lacking. Therefore, these new generations became the subject of Mu'awiya's propaganda relatively easily. These historical developmental processes have been narrated in connection with the depiction of some of these events in connection with the caliphate of the second caliph; see Q2 and on.

14. One of these personalities that was magnified during Mu'awiya's time and was very active in spreading many dubious and disputed statements which he referred to as prophetic hadith, is Abu Hurayra. Some facts about this personality and what has elicited many remarks and question marks about his stories have been presented earlier in the book; see note 312.

15. One of these companions was Ammar Yasir (r.a.) who became a martyr during the battle of Siffin during the battles against Mu'awiya; see R onwards. Other prominent companions such as Hibr Ibn 'Adi (r.a.), Abu Bakr's son Muhammad (r.a.) and Malik Al-Ashtar (r.a.) were also killed on Mu'awiya's orders. Mu'awiya also had a hand in Imam Al-Hasan's ('a) poisoning which led to his martyrdom and it was none other than Mu'wiya's son who later ordered the massacre of Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and his companion.

16. Mu'awiya, through his bought companions, saw to that most of the ahadith in which the Prophet (S) cursed Mu'awiya or warned the people of Bani Umayya's takeover of power were systematically wholly or purely distorted and was instead to be interpreted as a merit or regarding others. For example, the Prophet (S) cursed Mu'awiya on one occasion when he defied the Prophet (S) despite several orders, that Mu'awiya should not become full. Mu'awiya's insatiable ferocity and great belly is a well-known fact in history but to avoid this being a curse, Mu'awiya let a forged hadith spread that the Prophet (S) prayed that his curse be a blessing and approach for the damned!

In this way, it was alleged that Mu'awiya had, in fact, gained merit and come closer to God through the curse of the Prophet (S); Sahih Bukhari – research by Muhammad Zuheyr Ibn Naser (published 1422 AH) volume 8 p.77 and Al-Bidya wa an-Nihaya by Ibn Kathir (published 1407 AH) volume 8 p.119–120 and Sahih Muslim volume 4 p.2007 et al.

On the other hand, Mu'awiya ordered the introduction of a tradition that all regents or persons allowed to speak would curse Imam Ali ('a) in the sermon before the people. For over 60 years this was an established phenomenon in Sham. To the extent that the people of Sham were surprised by the news that Imam Ali ('a) was beaten with a sword while he prayed, because, due to all the defamation, they did not believe that the Imam ('a) did not even pray; Tarikh Tabari (published 1387 AH) volume 5 p.253; Tarikh Al-Islam by Thahabi (published 1409 AH) volume 5 p.231; Maqatil at-Talebin by AbulFaraj Al-Isfahani (published 1419 AH) p.78 Morooj ath-Thahab – research by Muhammad Mohyee Al-Din volume 3 p.28 chapter "The days of Mu'awiyah"; Sharh Nahjul Balagha by Ibn Abil Hadid volume 1 p.436 et al.

17. This is clearly seen in Yazid's behaviour and the massacre against Imam Al-Husayn ('a) as well as uttered in a poem which he composed before Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) and Sayyida Zaynab ('a) when taken in chains before his court – translation: 'Bani Hashim played with power, neither; otherwise, there was neither a commandment nor a dispatch!

18. The battle of Badr has been mentioned earlier in the book; see I3 and onwards.

19. One of these cases has been described earlier in the book from Abu Sufyan's own words; see Q3 onwards.

20. This statement is portrayed by Mutraf Ibn Moghira whose father Moghira was a close relative of Mu'awiya and used to live in his court. Mutraf says that his father came home with a troubled expression at one point after being with Mu'awiya and on the question of what had happened narrated the following: "I said to Mu'awiya: 'Now that you have reached your wish [taken over power], why not spread kindness and justice when you have also come of age, and show mercy to Bani Hashim for they have nothing left anymore.' When Mu'awiya heard this he said: 'Woe, woe, Abu Bakr ruled and went, and although he did well, after his death, his name also died. Omar took power and went and Uthman took power and went. None of them remained, but Muhammad's name is remembered five times daily on minarets. With that calculation, what's left for us? No, I will never settle until this name is buried.'" This incident and Moghira's depiction of the narration is narrated by his son Mutraf are recounted in several historical accounts and other sources including as-Sahih but Sirat an-Nabi volume 1 p.24; Sharh Nahjul Balagha by Ibn Abil Hadid volume 5 p. 129–130; Morooj ath-Thahab volume 3 p.454; Al-Mowaffaqiyat p.577; Kashf Al-Ghomma volume 2 p.44; Qamoos ar-Rejal volume 9 p.20; as well as Tatemmat Al-Muntaha p.52 et al.

21. This is narrated in most historical accounts including Tarikh Ibn Khaldoon volume 2 p.187; Tarikh Al-Islam by Thahabi p.6; Tarikh Ibn Asaker p. 178–179; Tahthib Tarikh Dameshq by Abdul Qadir Badran vol 4 p.225; Al-Kamil fi at-Tarikh by Ibn Athir volume 2 p.447; and Hayat Al-Imam Al-Hasan Ibn Ali by Baqer Qarashi volume 2 p. 109 et al.

22. As there is an Imam ('a) for every time, the subsequent Imams ('a) also submitted to their Imam ('a). Therefore, Imam Ali ('a) was Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) Imam, and Imam Al-Hasan ('a) was Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) Imam.

23. The Hudaybiyya treaty has been described earlier in the book; see I3 and further on.

24. History testifies to these abuses that were committed where many people lost their lives simply because they loved Imam Ali ('a). Affection to Imam Ali ('a) or bearing the name Ali could therefore be their only crime that led to them being persecuted and murdered cold-blooded. Among these sources is Al-Kamil fi at-Tarikh by Ibn Athir volume 3 p. 229 and Tahthib at-Tahthib volume 7 p. 281 et al. Ibn Abil-Hadid describes the horror of the prevailing situation as such that many preferred to be called polytheists than to be associated with Alis Shi'a; Sharh Nahjul Balagha by Ibn Abil-Hadid volume 11 p. 44.

25. Historical depictions are narrated in several sources including Al-Isti'ab fi Ma'rifat Al-Ashab by Ibn Abedberr volume 1 p. 389; Ansab Al-Ashraf by Bilathari volume 3 p. 295; Imta 'Al-Asma' volume 5 p. 361; and Al-Irshad by Sheikh Al-Mufid volume 2 p. 16; Al-Ihtijaj by Tabarsi volume 2 p. 13 et al.

6.5 – The 3rd Imam [Fifth Ma'soom] – Imam Al-Husayn ('A)

U. An Imam ('A) With Few But Faithful Companions And An Unprepared Public

Birth And Characteristics

Imam Al-Husayn ('a) was born on the 3rd Sha'ban in 4 AH/626 AD, in Medina and was the second fruit of the blessed marriage of Imam Ali ('a) and Fatimah az-Zahra ('a).

When Imam Al-Husayn ('a) was born, he, like his brother Imam Al-Hasan ('a), was named by his grandfather the Prophet (S) with the name God chose for him and sent to the Prophet (S) via the angel Jibrail ('a) [Gabril].¹

Imam Al-Husayn ('a) was known by the people for his greatness, generosity, knowledge, wisdom and for his love for helping his fellow human beings. Although this applied to the Prophet (S) and all the Imams ('a), Imam Al-Husayn ('a) held an extra special status with the people, not least from the Prophet's (S) special and incredible love for him and the Imam's ('a) status with God. In addition, Imam Al-Husayn ('a) has been described in historical accounts as humble and loving (especially towards the poor, orphans, the sick and the needy). He is described as a generally beloved personality.

Imam Al-Husayn's ('A) High Status

Prophet Muhammad (S) Loved Imam Al-Husayn ('A)

As for Imam Al-Hasan ('a), the Prophet (S) expressed his deep love for Imam Al-Husayn ('a) on many occasions and therefore also highlighted Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) status. Among these, the Prophet (S) has said:

“Husayn is from me, and I am from Husayn; O God loved the one that loves Husayn!”²

Specific Events And Statements

It has also been reported from Salman (r.a.) that the Prophet (S) put Imam Al-Husayn ('a) on his knee, kissed him and said:

“You are noble, the son of a noble person and [will be] the father of the noble, you are the Imam and the son of the Imam and the father of the Imams, you are the proof of God and the son of the proof of God

and the father of the proof of God which are nine and the last of them is their Al-Qa'im. “

Furthermore, Imam Al-Husayn ('a) as the fifth of Ashab Al-Kisa and the Prophet's (S) Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) was included in the Tathi, Abrar and Mawadda verses as well as events like Mubahala.[3](#)

Imam Al-Husayn ('A) Becomes Imam

Prior to his martyrdom, Imam Al-Hasan ('a) handed the banner of Imamah to his brother Imam Al-Husayn ('a), as the Prophet (S) had commanded.

Governance During Imam Al-Husayn's ('A) Time

With Mu'awiya's upper-hand and initiation of the Umayyad dynasty's official era in power, the state's governance transformed into an officially hereditary caliphate. Consequently, the following names governed during Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) time:

- Mu'awiya Ibn Aby Sufyan (41 AH/661 AD– 60 AH/680 AD.)
- Yazid Ibn Mu'awiya (60 AH/680 AD – 64 AH/684 AD.)

U1. The Circumstances Leading To Imam Al-Husayn's ('A) Revolution

When Imam Al-Husayn ('a) became Imam officially, that after the martyrdom of Imam Al-Hasan ('a), he held to Imam Al-Hasan's ('a) peace treaty.[4](#) Mu'awiya violated the treaty multiple times and so slowly, but surely people started realizing truths behind Mu'awiya's intentions. Many were displeased and expressed so to Imam Al-Husayn ('a), urging his uprising. On a number of occasions, Imam Al-Husayn ('a) objected to the doings of Mu'awiya, albeit while Mu'awiya murdered some of Imam Ali's ('a) companions, among them Hijr Ibn 'Adi (r.a.), and while collecting oaths of allegiance to his son Yazid.[5](#) Only, Imam Al-Husayn ('a), acquainted with the people as well as with his enemies, was well-aware of an uprising to be unfavourable in the prevailing circumstances. Such raising would not only end like during Imam Ali's ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) time but also advantage Mu'awiya's propaganda to confuse people, eventually ending the Prophet's ('a) Ahl Al-Bayt ('a).

Mu'awiya decided to pass down his power and influence to his son, Yazid. Yazid, well-known to be loose and unethical, wasting his days in slumber. He used to play with his ape, drink alcohol and watchdog and cockfights. [6](#) In such a way, Mu'awiya's earlier intentions were exposed before all and people could no longer accept Yazid's caliphate while he consciously overstepped simple religious laws. The decision to make Yazid, a successor, exposed Mu'awiya's hypocrisy more clearly and so the danger of his continuous governance was seen. Many started protesting, especially in Kufa.

Yazid's Ultimatum To Imam Al-Husayn ('A) – Oath Of Allegiance Or Death

Before his death, Mu'awiya had warned Yazid of a number of personalities posing a possible threat to his governance and so instructed him on the way to handle each one of them. When Yazid rose to power, he sent commands to the governor of Medina, Walid Ibn Utba, to make Imam Al-Husayn ('a) pledge an oath of allegiance to Yazid. Would Imam Al-Husayn ('a) refuse, he would be instantly murdered?⁷

This fight was no longer against a hypocrite like Mu'awiya, pretending to follow religious laws, but against a visible sinner. Instead, the fight was between the evident truth and the evident unrighteousness. If Imam Al-Husayn ('a), highly positioned in society, had sworn an oath of allegiance to Yazid, it would have been an acceptance of his corruption and the end to the prophetic message.

Thereby, an oath of allegiance to Yazid was not on the map for someone like Imam Al-Husayn ('a). Imam Al-Husayn ('a) witnessed the critical state of things and did not want his blood spilled in the city of the Holy Prophet (S). He gathered his family and closest relations and headed towards Mecca, to the protection of the Ka'ba, along with women and children. However, Yazid would not give in and sent commands to the governor of Mecca to again require an oath of allegiance by Imam Al-Husayn ('a) or otherwise spill his blood, albeit near the Ka'ba and on the holy and sacred land of God. This further proved Yazid's disbelief in divine instructions, and also his disrespect to holy sanctuaries. Imam Al-Husayn ('a) willed not for the holiness of Mecca to be violated in bloodshed.⁸

The Caravan Of Imam Al-Husayn ('A) – Bani Hashim And The Companions

Imam Al-Husayn ('a), along with his caravan of eighty people, left Medina heading towards Mecca. The majority of Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) accompaniers were from Bani Hashim, as in the closest family to the Imam, half of which were women and children. The number of companions not of the Bani Hashim is said to be around twenty.⁹

Before departing Medina, and even Mecca, there were those who discouraged the Imam ('a) from leaving to Kufa, as the kufans were considered unpredictable and fighting Bani Umayya useless. Imam Al-Husayn ('a) saw another horizon and had another vision. He made it clear in his statements that an oath to someone like Yazid was an impossibility for an Imam. So, when the Imam ('a) signalled the departure, those same people did not follow. Despite their love and stance with Imam Al-Husayn ('a), they took their own personal standpoint, independent of the Imam ('a).¹⁰

Likewise, on the journey towards Kufa, some joined the caravan¹¹ whilst others separated themselves from it and left the Imam ('a), or refrained from joining him concurrently with the incoming news of Ibn Ziyad's mobilization, troubled conditions in Kufa and eventually the martyrdom of Muslim ('a).¹²

Among the kufans calling for the Imam ('a), the majority left his representative Muslim Ibn Aqil (r.a.) alone after the intervention of Ibn Ziyad. Of whom many stayed in Kufa. They never joined the Imam ('a)

and did not realize what had happened until after Ashura.[13](#)

There were also those who had separated from the Imam ('a) joined him after his caravan was stopped by Yazid's army, heading towards Kufa. Some of those were kufans, who fled Kufa's siege with great difficulty to join the Imam ('a)[14](#) whilst others were imprisoned[15](#) or killed by Ibn Ziyad in Kufa.[16](#)

A few others joined the Imam ('a).[17](#) Some left him on the Day of Ashura, during the battle.[18](#)

There were also those who arrived in Karbala late, after the martyrdom of Imam Al-Husayn ('a), but followed his footsteps and reached martyrdom[19](#) or became those who spread the news of that which took place in Ashura.

Imam Al-Husayn ('A) Leaves Mecca – Destination Kufa

Already during the first days of Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) visit in Mecca, a stream of messengers with invitation letters followed. The kufans had sent them, asking Imam Al-Husayn ('a) to head towards Kufa and end Yazid's oppression, and lead an uprising against the Umayyad dynasty, that had corrupted the Islamic state enough. The kufans were a part of the same people to betray Imam Ali ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a) earlier, but now there were many prominent followers of Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) gathered and promised to support him. They sent letters upon letters, filled with signatures, insisting on standing with Imam Al-Husayn ('a) in an uprising against Yazid.

Imam Al-Husayn ('a) sent his representative and cousin, Muslim Ibn Aqil ('a) to Kufa in order to look at the conditions and be assured the kufans loyalty, so to call the Imam ('a) to Kufa. While in Kufa, the kufans' representatives gathered around Muslim ('a) and swore an oath of allegiance to Imam Al-Husayn ('a), through him. When Muslim ('a) saw this, he sent for Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and informed him about the kufans bay'a (oath of allegiance). Imam Al-Husayn ('a), spending his days in Mecca and fearing bloodshed, gathered his caravan and left for Kufa.

Meanwhile, the news of Kufa's moves was reported to Yazid, and so he sent his governor Ibn Ziyad to Kufa. Ibn Ziyad, known for his shrewdness and who had also just succeeded in turning the people of Basra against each other with his tricks and subdued the whole city with barely any means. Instead of heading to Kufa with his whole force, as any other person in power would have done, Ibn Ziyad headed towards Kufa with only a few horsemen and entered Kufa disguised as Imam Al-Husayn ('a). In such a way, Ibn Ziyad avoided the opposition and reached the palace. There he gathered remaining Umayyad supporters and those who supported due to personal interests. First, he bribed this inner circle with riches and promises of fortune and advantages by Yazid. He was simultaneously threatening all opponents with executions. In this way, Ibn Ziyad made sure they were kept in check and acted as his long arms. Ibn Ziyad divided them into groups, ordered them to spread among people and execute his instructions in various missions. The aim was to, above all, strike terror into people to remove any support to Imam Al-Husayn ('a).

Thereafter, Ibn Ziyad held a speech in Kufa's mosque and with its niceties and fabricated ahadith, he advertised Yazid as the rightful caliph while the opposition was accused as defectors from religion.²⁰ Then Ibn Ziyad threatened to attack Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) sympathizers, all whilst those who left the opposition would be spared.²¹ Tribe leaders who had family members among Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) companions, were ordered to bring them back, by all means necessary, to not risk punishment upon their tribes or themselves. Ibn Ziyad threatened that were any tribe member to support Muslim (r.a.), their tribe leaders would be paying. So, they were threatened to surrender themselves.

Ibn Ziyad, after his arrival at Kufa, made sure to identify the leaders of the opposition, attacked. Hani Ibn Urwa (r.a.), one of the foremost leaders among Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) Shi'a, was arrested in his home and brought to Ibn Ziyad's palace. Even though Hani (r.a.) was a great tribe leader and that his tribe demanded his release by gathering on the outskirts of the palace, Ibn Ziyad still convinced them that Hani (r.a.) was no prisoner, but a guest and so dispersed them.²² Muslim (r.a.), believing Hani's (r.a.) release to be a duty, gathered all prominent leaders who had given an oath of allegiance and clarified a need of an uprising for Hani's (r.a.) release and to recover Kufa from Ibn Ziyad, while Imam Al-Husayn ('a) was approaching. However, some of them doubted whether an uprising before the Imam's ('a) arrival was right, and without his direct orders and so they refrained. Despite their refusal, thousands of people came out on the streets of Kufa in support of Muslim (r.a.) and Ibn Ziyad's palace was sieged.

Now, Ibn Ziyad would try to bribe the opponents. He ordered that all gold and silver in Bayt Al-Mal's (public treasury) safe would be brought forth. He distributed some to the weaker front figures, which could influence others and spread rumours that whoever left the opposition and joined him would be rewarded. Only Ibn Ziyad's foremost trick was to spread rumors in the city that Sham's army was headed to Kufa and that they would not spare anyone who had opposed Yazid's caliphate. To conform to those rumours and make the public believe them, secret spies lied to people that they had seen that great army marching towards them. Fright spread among the credulous and naïve when there was, in fact, no army on the way or any truth in those exaggerated stories. Consequently, panic and despair spread and people, in their worry, started to get cold feet.²³ Ibn Ziyad went as far as to command his troops to raid near the homes of Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) followers. This caused more fright among the women, who hurried to withdraw their husbands and sons from supporting Muslim (r.a.).

Promised riches, threats to punish and rumours on Sham's army being on their way worked. Wordly temptations, hard to leave, like riches, together with fearing for their own lives, was the decisive hit to cause the kufans' downfall. Those whose support to Imam Al-Husayn ('a) was based on false reasons and who saw the Imam's ('a) governance as a means to reach their own motives, staggered and gave in. They had not understood the position of Imamah and considered themselves to know better than his representative, Muslim ('a). Muslim Ibn Aqil ('a) who prayed dhohr-prayers with thousands²⁴ of followers, all who had sworn an oath to Imam Al-Husayn ('a) through him, stood alone with barely ten people at maghrib-prayers. The siege was broken, and the Muslim's (r.a.) army was dispersed and dissolved.

Muslim Ibn Aqil (R.A.) Alone In Kufa

Muslim Ibn Aqil (r.a.) was now alone and abandoned in Kufa without any possibility to warn Imam Al-Husayn ('a). The few supporters who stayed with him left him in the darkness of the night. Some faithful companions, who were distanced from Muslim ('a) in this chaos, found hard ways to sneak out of the highly guarded Kufa, and routed through the Euphrates. Habib Ibn Madhahir (r.a.), Muslim Ibn 'Awsaja (r.a.) and Abdullah Ibn Umayr, with his wife, eventually reached Imam Al-Husayn ('a); however, Muslim's (r.a.) journey was to end in Kufa.

In the darkness of the night, Muslim Ibn Aqil (r.a.) walked through the foreign alleys of Kufa, with neither followers nor support. Thirsty and tired, he sat down close to a door to catch a breath. An older woman, named Taw'a, lived in that house with her son. When she saw Muslim's (r.a.) condition, she offered him a bowl of water and asked him to head home, unnoticed by soldiers. But when Muslim (r.a.) did not move and said he was a stranger in Kufa, wanted and abandoned, she came to realize who actually sat next to her door. Even though Taw'a was afraid of what her corrupt son would do, her love for the Prophet's (S) Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) made her help Muslim (r.a.) by offering him a place to stay the night and be protected. Still and all, her son discovered Muslim's (r.a.) presence and hurried to inform Ibn Ziyad's soldiers, in the hope of reward. And so they sieged the house of Taw'a, even so, Muslim (r.a.) fought the army bravely until the leader of the troop, Muhammad Ibn Ash'ath promised security if he would stop fighting. Still, Muslim (r.a.) refused and did he was taken captive to Ibn Ziyad, who ordered Muslim (r.a.) to be thrown down from atop the palace and for his dead body to be cut.[25](#)

When the news of Muslim's (r.a.) death reached Imam Al-Husayn ('a), he held a speech to his companions, telling those who wished to leave to do so, as he was headed to an assured death.

Karbala

The second day of the month of Muharram, year 61 AH. Imam Al-Husayn ('a), along with his women and children, and a small number of his sons, brothers and companions, arrived in a place called Karbala. In the distance from Kufa, Yazid, through his governor Ibn Ziyad, gave orders to place a troop lead by Al-Hurr Riyahi (r.a.) in the way of Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) caravan, and so block their path, in order for them to pitch their camp. Al-Hurr had received strict orders not to allow the Imam ('a) to move from that place. And he would not accept anything Imam Al-Husayn ('a) suggested, and would neither let the Imam ('a) continue towards Kufa, return to Mecca or Medina, go to close-by villages nor pitch their camp near the Euphrates. Notwithstanding that the Imam ('a) made sure to water Al-Hurr's troops and horses when arriving during the heat of Karbala's desert. Even the letters sent by kufans did nothing to change Al-Hurr's mind.

Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and his small caravan pitched their camp in Karbala, besieged by troops, soon followed by an army; an army consisting of the kufans who had sent letters themselves.

U2. What Did Imam Al-Husayn ('A) Do?

As an oath to Yazid would be alike accepting his caliphate, and everything it stood by, and as such an end to religion, Imam Al-Husayn ('a) never doubted the right decision. Between martyrdom for Islam's survival or living with degradation, the choice was clear to Imam Al-Husayn ('a). He would never choose to keep his life at the expanse of his duty to God and the people. Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) answer in words, was also what he acted on:

“Surely, I have not risen up to make mischief, neither as an adventurer nor to cause corruption or oppression; surely, I have risen up solely to seek the reform the ummah (nation and people) of my grandfathers (S); I want to command virtue and prevent vice, and (in this) I follow the conduct of my grandfather and my father, Ali Ibn Abi Talib.”

“Indeed, death with dignity is better than a life of abasement [disgrace]”

“How easy death is on the way to honour and reviving haqq (truth and right).”

“Death for the sake of decency is nothing but eternal life, and a life with disgrace is nothing but death, in which there is no life.”²⁶

The Night Of Ashura

When it was clear Imam Al-Husayn ('a) could not leave Karbala, there was no other way to say NO to oppression than by his blood!

The final night before the 10th of Muharram, Imam Al-Husayn ('a) gathered his companions and spoke to them, and he said the enemy was after him and at the end of this path was an assured death. Then he dismissed the duty of their oaths and told them they were no longer bound by it. Thereafter, the Imam ('a) ordered the torches to be put out so that whoever wished to leave would do so without anyone seeing them.

Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) steadfast followers and family, who had accompanied him the entirety of the trip or joined on the way, and who still stood by the Imam ('a) through all adversities, took a stand. They were fully aware of the de'Adalahy consequence of following the path of Imam Al-Husayn ('a). Their thirst had not been quenched for three days and they were well aware of far worse was yet to come. The first to rise was the brother of Imam Al-Husayn ('a), Abbas ('a), who said:

“Should we go away to live after you? We pray to God that the time may not come when you may be killed, and we remain alive!”

More companions followed custom and exclaimed their belief and devotion to Imam Al-Husayn ('a). Zuhayr Ibn Qain (r.a.), who joined the Imam ('a) a bit later, nonetheless wholeheartedly, said:

“If I were to be killed, then burned, then brought to life and then again be killed, and burned, and brought back to life again; and so, a thousand times again, and this becomes the means to protect you and your family from dying, I would do it!”

In the end, Imam Al-Husayn ('a) invoked divine blessings for them and said, by God's witnessing, that there were no better companions on earth than his. The serene group devoted their last loving night in worshipping God, I prayers and by reciting the Holy Qur'an, whilst their peaceful souls were barely left in this world.[27](#)

The Battle Of Karbala

Imam Al-Husayn ('A) Attempts To Save Those Who Intend To Kill Him

The 10th of Muharram, also called Ashura, was initiated by the battle of Karbala. Imam Al-Husayn ('a), particular about peoples' happiness and guidance, could not stand to see so many amongst the opposition go astray. They had broken their oaths, caused the death of Muslim ('a), joined the enemy and turned against him. Nonetheless, the Imam ('a) was concerned about their destinies. Imam Al-Husayn ('a) did not want to leave the smallest chance to undo a fate to which they were becoming his killers. Hence, he tried to, repeatedly, till the very end, to talk them out of it and awake them from slumber. Among other things, the Imam ('a) said:

“O people of Iraq! Heed me and do not make haste to kill me so that I may tell you what I must, and appraise you of the reasons for my coming to Iraq. If you accept my explanation, believe in what I say and behave towards being fairly, and you will level for yourselves the path of prosperity, and have no reason to kill me. And even if you do not accept my excuse and deviate from the path of justice, you must ponder over the pros and cons of the matter before you kill me, and should not undertake such a delicate task rashly and without deliberation.

My support is the Almighty God Who has revealed the Qur'an. God guards His deserving servants.[28](#)

O, people! Identify me and see who I am. Then you will come to your senses and reproach yourselves. You should reflect carefully on whether it is permissible for you to kill me and to disregard the reverence due to me.

Am I not the son of your Prophet's (S) daughter? Is the wasi (vicegerent) of your Prophet (S) and his cousin and the first person, who expressed belief in God and confirmed what was brought by His Prophet, not my father [Imam Ali ('a)]? Is the Doyen of Martyrs Hamza Ibn Abdul Muttalib not the uncle of my father? Is the martyr Jafar Ibn Abu Talib who has two wings and flies with God's angels, not my uncle?

Have you not heard that the Holy Prophet (S) has said about my brother and me: ‘These two sons of mine are the chiefs of the young men of Paradise.’?

If you think that whatever I am saying is true so much the better. I pledge by God that I know God hates the liars, and I have never told a lie. And even if you do not believe in my words and refute me, there are still some companions of the Holy Prophet (S) amongst you who, when asked, will apprise you of the facts.

Ask Jabir bin Abdullah Ansari, Abu Sa'id Khudari, Nahl Ibn Sadi, Zayd Ibn Arqam or Anas Ibn Malik, so that they may tell you that they have heard these words from the Holy Prophet (S) about my brother and me. Is this tradition itself not sufficient to restrain you from killing me? If you are doubtful about this tradition, can you doubt even this that I am the son of your Prophet's (S) daughter? I pledge by God that between East and West, there is no son of the daughter of a Prophet (S) except me either amongst you or amongst others.

You should tell honestly whether I have killed anyone from amongst you so that you may take revenge! Is it that I have appropriated your wealth and you are claiming it? Have I injured you for which you have risen to compensate?"

None of them came forward to answer, and so Imam Al-Husayn ('a) called some of them by name:

"O Shabath Ibn Rabie, Hajjar Ibn Abjar, Qays Ibn Ashath and Yazid Ibn Harith! Did you yourselves not write letters to me saying that the fruits have become ripe and the lands are green and fresh, and the soldiers of Iraq are ready to sacrifice their lives for you, and therefore, you should proceed to Iraq as early as possible?"

The Imam ('a) was speaking to deaf ears.

Nonetheless, the Imam ('a) kept trying to speak to the people on multiple occasions, and with various amounts of arguments, he tried reasoning with them so that they be reminded, awakened and refrain from causing unjust bloodshed. Even though all knew the Imam ('a) and his kinship to the Holy Prophet (S), who ordered this grandson to be respected and revered by the people, the Imam ('a) still announced himself and his origin. The Imam ('a) reminded them of that which they already knew, of his position and personality, all in detail. However, the opposition drowned his voice by attacks.

The Army Of Yazid Start The Battle

The opposition consisted of tens of thousands of soldiers. They started the battle against Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) small company, including the Hashemites (from Bani Hashim), of only 72 people. Nonetheless, Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) soldiers fought bravely and became martyrs, one after the other. And still, the enemy showed no honour, overpowering each warrior with many soldiers attacking from all angles and with swords and spears.

As the time for prayers came, Imam Al-Husayn ('a) asked the fighting to stop so that they might pray. But even then, the enemy would not withdraw their attacks and shot spears on Imam Al-Husayn ('a),

and his companions whilst they were praying. Some companions of the Imam ('a), stood bravely to receive spears whilst protecting the gathering with their bodies. Soon, they also became martyrs.

After the resumption of the fighting, the companions of the Imam ('a) continued to speak to the people, but their voices were drowned and they attacked by troops. Al-Hurr (r.a.), Habib (r.a.) and forty-numbered others became martyrs, one after the other. The companions had asked the Imam ('a) not to allow the Hashemites to join the battle, so long they lived. And as such, when all had become martyrs, the Hashemites were the only ones left to fight for the Imam ('a). They asked for permission, and so joined the battleground, one after the other. Ali Akbar ('a), Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) eldest son, joined first. He fought bravely until the enemy's hate overpowered him and left him in pieces. One after the other, longing souls of Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) household painted great scenes and rose to heaven; that until Qasim ('a), the young son of Imam Al-Hasan ('a), and eventually the beloved brother and biggest support of Imam Al-Husayn ('a), Abbas ('a).

In the end, Imam Al-Husayn ('a) stood alone against tens of thousands of soldiers; however, his determination never faltered. He had now seen his companions, sons and brothers murdered, cold-bloodedly, and knew no hope remained for the evil enemies.

The Imam ('a) started bidding farewell to his sister, Sayyida Zaynab ('a), and left the women and children in her care. As the Imam ('a) held Ali Asghar ('a), his youngest son of six months, to his chest, the infant was nearly lifeless out of thirst. A last attempt to save someone from committing the unforgivable, the Imam ('a) spoke to their humanity and asked to quench the infant's thirst, saying:

"If you consider the adults to be liable, what is the fault of the child? If you do not believe in the punishment of God and the hereafter, be at least honourable in this life." [29](#)

Seeing the infant, and the echo of Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) call, caused noise among the opposition, between those who felt sorry for the child and called to quench his thirst, and those who considered the child to be from the same lineage as the adults and ought to be punished as well. When Omar Ibn Sa'd saw this commotion, he signalled Harmala to silence the disagreement. Harmala, the known archer, shot Ali Asghar's ('a) throat with a three-edged spear. And so, Ali Asghar ('a) died in his father's arms.

Now, nothing was left of the caravan except women and children, and the Imam's ('a) son Imam Al-Sajjad ('a), confined to his bed, unable to move. All companions, men from Bani Hashim and some women and children had been killed.

Imam Al-Husayn ('a) stood facing thousands upon thousands of soldiers, alone. He was tired, thirsty and b'Adalahy injured. Still, he was determined to stand firm against injustice. He called out a phrase for everyone there to heed, but also for all coming generation:

"Is there not any helper to help me? Is there not anyone who can protect the household of the Prophet (S)?"

With this last call, Imam Al-Husayn ('a) fulfilled the argument and left no room for anyone not to see and rise against the clear, brutal oppression carried out. The last attempt to awake people, Imam Al-Husayn ('a) demonstrated yet another contradiction in killing the son of the Prophet (S), they claimed to follow and spilling an innocent's blood who had journeyed to them in their own request. They brutally murdered the Prophet's (S) household and refused to quench the children. They slaughtered and desecrated bodies and imprisoned the women and children.

In the end, Imam Al-Husayn ('a) became a martyr on the 10th of Muharram, year 61AH/680AD. Imam Al-Husayn ('a) fell to the ground, all while his call rose to the heavens and so echoes forever. This was the battle of a few steadfast followers. They fought bravely, till the last man and breath. This was a fight in which innocent blood defeated the sword.

The rise of Imam Al-Husayn ('a) was the start of upcoming revolutions causing the end of the Umayyad dynasty. The fight and revolutionary spirit became inspirational in fighting every oppressor throughout history, as Imam Al-Husayn ('a) remembrance prepares for his descendant Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj)!

U3. In What Way Did Imam Al-Husayn's ('A) Movement Save The Religion?

The worst consequence of leaving Imam Ali ('a) had shown itself in Karbala. It was not enough that the Prophet (S) was refused to write down his last will, or attacking Fatimah az-Zahra ('a) in her own home, or the isolation and fighting against Imam Ali ('a), or the abandonment and poising of Imam Al-Hasan ('a). The brutal massacre in Karbala had reached the ultimate level of oppression.

Alongside Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) martyrdom, the Umayyads' hypocrisy fell, and people realized that the Islamic state was run by those who actually fought Islam. The sacrifice of Imam Al-Husayn ('a) confirmed and marked the awakening and rise of the people. The slogan, "The avenging of Imam Al-Husayn ('a)", was used by the following revolutions, and so a consequence of the Imam's ('a) revolution. Ashura sparked embers within the Muslims' hearts, leading to the fall of the Umayyad dynasty year 750 AD. A dynasty meant to last hundreds of years, a dynasty that corrupted religion thoroughly during its active years. The Umayyads could not govern peacefully as the revolutions following the martyrdom of Imam Al-Husayn ('a), was one after the other, so until the dynasty crumbled.

Eternal Message

Imam Al-Husayn ('a) lived the words, "rather die free than live in tyranny" in Karbala and became a historical freedom figure, inspiring every freedom fighter.[30](#)

What makes Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) movement alive and burning till this day, is that he showed that even a small numbered group can stand against the most powerful oppressors and still achieve victory. Imam Al-Husayn ('a) held the banner of truth and justice and with his and his companions' blood

exposed an earlier disguised line of lies and tyranny. It is a timeless message to all mankind.

U4. Solution By The Enemy: A Silenced Massacre Turned To A High Echo

When Yazid realized his governorship would not be accepted and legitimatized by Imam Al-Husayn ('a), he decided on killing him and his followers. Yazid, alongside his subjects, among them Ibn Ziyad, thought they could silence Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and his call for haqq (justice and truth) with this massacre. By branding the Imam ('a) as a rebel, desecrating corpses and treating his women and children as captives, they tried to firstly win over the public opinion so that the whole event would be forgotten. Little did they know that the remaining caravan, of women and children, would be the greatest witness to this gruesome crime and the frontrunner voices to retell the event of Karbala and so eternalize Ashura.

A Never Silenced Echo – Imam Al-Sajjad ('A) And Sayyida Zaynab ('A)

Yazid thought he had shaken off any possible threat and so could silence the event, which instead turned to a high echo, never to be silenced. At that time, whoever was in power could easily rouse public opinion to their own favour and steer people's thoughts and opinions whichever direction they liked; not least through the propaganda machinery of Mu'awiya's creation. Yazid's government was in control of news and everything the public could know. However, they could not silence the massacre. Parading through cities with the remaining caravan of Imam Al-Husayn ('a), in order to humiliate the household of the Prophet (S) and condemn the Imam's ('a) movement, turned out to be the greatest proof against Yazid himself and the Umayyads.

Thanks to Sayyida Zaynab ('a), Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) sister, the daughter of Imam Ali ('a) and Fatimah az-Zahra ('a), and her veracious speech that spread Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) message. She was taken captive alongside other women and children.

Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) was the only remaining adult male to survive the battle, due to his serious sickness, immobilizing him and preventing him from joining the battle. This caravan was led from one city to another until Sham. They were chained, and the heads of the martyrs were held up on spears. In every village and city, they were presented as faithless rebels. In the beginning, they were received by cheers, and people were celebrating the caliphate defeating rebels. However, every speech Sayyida Zaynab ('a) gave, people came to realize the truth of their tragedy. Acknowledging that the caravan included the household of the Prophet (S), shook the people.

Lastly, when the caravan arrived in Sham, Damascus, Sayyida Zaynab ('a) held a speech in the palace of Yazid, trembling a whole lot of the palace. Even Yazid's court was startled and paralyzed in her great presence. Her courage and eloquence echoed truth as if her father Imam Ali ('a) himself had emerged.

As Yazid tried to kill Imam Al-Sajjad ('a), he was met by Sayyida Zaynab's ('a) fearless protection of him. Her strong stand made Yazid refrain from killing the Imam ('a). The news of this spread fast, and people were astonished as they had thought that Yazid won a war against faithless rebels. Hence when the truth was revealed, people started worrying. And so, Yazid found himself trapped, unable to deny what had happened or kill the Imam ('a) and so regain control. Fearing people would make a commotion, Yazid had to eventually release them and have them brought back to Medina, through Karbala, with Imam Al-Sajjad's ('a) request.

The caravan of Imam Al-Husayn ('a) continued to spread the truth of what had happened in Karbala, and so Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) voice echoes forever in every corner of the world. The stand of Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and his sacrifice in Ashura, have birthed the greatest revolutionary movement in the world, which millions of people remember and commemorate every year. Until this day, millions gather to be inspired and collect strength from Ashura and renew their oath to Imam Al-Husayn ('a). The fact that we know of Islam and Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) true line, is enough proof that Imam Al-Husayn ('a) was victorious in Karbala!

U5. Preparing For The Final Imam ('A) – My Son Is Coming

Why Does Shi'a Emphasize Imam Al-Husayn ('A) So Much?

How Did Imam Al-Husayn ('A) Save Religion With His Revolution And The Movement Which He Initiated?

Why are there yearly commemorations during Muharram? Why is Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) fight remembered? To get a clear idea of why Imam Al-Husayn ('a) has such a prominent role in Islam, his role in saving the religion must be given attention.

To begin with, the era in which Imam Al-Husayn ('a) lived, with its circumstances, is central. As the question of why Imam Al-Husayn ('a) took a stand whilst other Imams ('a) did not come up. All Imams ('a) follow the same line and path and are all the same light. In other words, any other Imam ('a) who would find himself in the same situation as that of Imam Al-Husayn's ('a), would have gone about things just the same. However, every era requires its special treatment and the requirements for an uprising were fulfilled with the conditions of Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) time. While other Imams ('a), living in other conditions, followed the same path and fulfilled their duties during that time's state of things. To look closely at historical events is of importance in order to understand the ways in which the Imam's acted. The time of Imam Al-Husayn ('a) required a special kind of sacrifice to save religion, its core and respect. This includes the key points of the brutal transgressions against the Prophet's (S) grandson, Imam Al-Husayn ('a), is the result of the wrong path made when the first distortion and attack after the departure of the Holy Prophet (S). With his martyrdom, Imam Al-Husayn ('a) blocked this course changing into the main path, and so redirected people to the right path; which all Imams ('a) strived for

with their stands.

In actuality, the Imam's ('a) uprising and martyrdom happened in one of the most critical times in Islamic history. As earlier explained, Yazid no longer hid behind a religious façade, unlike his father Mu'awiya, but he committed unmoral acts and broke religious laws, openly. All while he was in a position and title of a Muslim caliph. In that high appointment, he ruled over the military and cultural forces and also controlled the Muslim state's resources. With those means in the hands of such a person in power, society can be entirely led astray. However, the hypocrisy in which Mu'awiya governed was exposed, and the Umayyad's hidden agenda had surfaced. Now, it was a question of Islam's and the Muslim community's survival. In other words, it was a fight about a line; manifested in Yazid, who openly violated Islam and at the same time ruled the Islamic state and pronounced himself the caliph. Whoever led this fight needed to once more manifest Islam and again reveal the path of truth, piety and justice. The leader to this resistance was no other than the grandson of the Prophet (S), himself a manifestation is the true spirit of Islam.

Furthermore, Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) stand was completely decisive in the question of the legitimacy of Yazid's caliphate. The Imam ('a) had a crucial role in society, that would he accept Yazid's caliphate it would be as if accepting a tyrannical leader. This would mean that the Islamic state would, maybe forever, be deprived of the right to object and rise against oppressors and tyrants acting against Islam. Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) refusal to accept oppression initiated a movement in which Islam's spirit fought a distorted Islam. This movement revealed the hypocrites. In this way, Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) revolution turned the tide, saving Islam and rendered its survival. Mu'awiya had destroyed so much that merely an empty shell of Islam remained if not Imam Al-Husayn ('a) had revolutionized it. His revolution differed the Islam of Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) from other versions.

In such a way, Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) movement became a fight of its own time but also one to remain forever. The distorted path, violating Islam's spirit throughout the years, and that would have eventually wiped it out, was fought. Imam Al-Husayn ('a) fulfilled with this fight an Imam's purpose to guide people to God by shedding an eternal light on the reality of the Prophet's (S) message and path, and manifest in wholly. With the Imam's ('a) revolution, the line of the Prophet (S), already under attack but slowly reducing, was brought back to its original track. If the distortion had continued, people would not have had any frame of reference for Islam, other than that which the people in power had presented. Imam Al-Husayn ('a) sacrificed everything to restore Islam's image, as the Prophet (S) originally presented it, as left behind a practical manifestation of it. The Imam ('a) did this for his people and for all generations to follow. The effects of Karbala have influenced people, throughout generations, and is nothing short of a miracle. Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and his companions might have in appearance been brutally killed, lost their lives and suffered defeat on the battleground, but with their devoted sacrifices and their martyrdom they are immortalized and eternalized the fight for justice. Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) Ashura became the clearest form of fight between haqq and batil, at the same time concluding the future of the Prophet's (S) guiding message so that you and I would be able to grow as people and reach the highest spiritual and

human levels.

Another important aspect is that when the final Imam, Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj), returns he will introduce himself to the world by saying he is the grandson of Imam Al-Husayn ('a). In other words, it is above all through Imam Al-Husayn ('a) Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) will be known and accepted; by the banner, Imam Al-Husayn ('a) had raised and the spirit and path which he has illuminated and lived by. This whilst Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) is the final Imam to mainly fill the earth with justice and remove oppression, to make a path in which mankind prospers and evolves. The final Imam ('aj) will fulfil that which all prophets ('a) and their successors ('a) path and missions, accomplished the purpose of the divine message and lead it to its finish line. Even here, the movement Imam Al-Husayn ('a) led provides a driving force and source of inspiration in the fight against oppression and injustice and so preparation for Imam Al-Mahdi's ('aj) final victory.

With all this being said, the intellectual aspect of Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) revolution varies gradually from one person to another and so develops over time. Accordingly, the depths of his eternalized revolution are revealed concurrently with mankind's maturity. With the yearly commemorations of Imam Al-Husayn ('a), by retelling his story and reflecting on Ashura, this understanding is developed and matured. The spiritual aspect and connecting to the Imam ('a), is included and also strengthened concurrently with deeper insights and knowledge.

A prominent indescribable aspect is grief itself and love for Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and the attraction force crossing all boundaries. This work of art, named Ashura, painted by Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and his followers, makes a compilation of the fairest human virtues and relations. Imam Al-Husayn ('a) is a burning, loving force touching hearts and making Ashura a meeting-point for all people to find themselves in. Consequently, Imam Al-Husayn ('a) speaks directly to every human heart through Ashura, irrespective of era, age and nationality and beyond cultural and religious beliefs; a fact manifesting itself more and more throughout the years in Arbain.

Arbain – A Step Towards Zohoor (The Arrival Of Imam Al-Mahdi ('Aj))

Arbain is the human ocean flooded with people from every corner of the world and from every nationality, with various thoughts and beliefs, all united in answering Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) call.

The yearly occurrence of Arbain, literal meaning is “forty” and marks the fortieth day of Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) martyrdom, which is the yearly commemoration forty days after Ashura. People go, often in groups, from far and near, to Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) shrine in Karbala. The roads leading to Karbala, mainly the one starting in Najaf near Imam Ali's ('a) shrine, are packed with people. People journey by foot and along the way tents with food, drinks, berths and medical necessities, are found. The locals offer all of this free of charge and out of their generosity and hospitality, without state or organizational interference, but of their own will. People want to join this stream out of their love of Imam Al-Husayn ('a). The spirit of Arbain and its spiritual impression on people is indescribable and is a must-have

experience. People's sacrifice and love during this period make them offer all their belongings to the pilgrims. This conveys a human brotherhood of the highest level and is said to mirror the companions of the final Imam, Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj).

Imam Al-Husayn ('a) paved the way for Imam Al-Mahdi's ('aj) revolution. Arbain gives a glimpse of this revolution; what it stands for, how it is led, and what it is meant to accomplish. As a matter of fact, Arbain represents a movement in which Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) spirit manifests more evidently for those who wish to walk on this path and promote the spirit of haqq (truth), all needed in order to be prepared for the awaited Imam's ('aj) arrival.

Am I Prepared For A Time Of Justice Actualized By A Leader – Will I Let Something Stand Between The Imam ('Aj) And I?

The known quote by Imam Al-Sadiq ('a), "every day is Ashura and every land is Karbala", illuminate the necessity to a continued fight against injustice and oppression at all times. This fight ought to be on the path of Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) revolution, continuing to each day inspire people. The struggle of the self, and also in society, will eventually lead to the revolution of Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj). Every human, in every time and era, has special roles that ought to be rightly acted on in regard to time and place. This will eventually lead to the maturity and evolvement of mankind.

In such a way, the uprising of Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and the devotion of his companions are filled with lessons preparing us for the arrival of Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj), mainly teaching a true companions way of being.

The fate of Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) companions – their deviation or connection with the Imam's ('a) journey, bear lots of revelations in itself. History accounts that Imam Al-Husayn ('a) was joined by many when leaving Medina, and left with a small number in Karbala. Some followed along with the hope of overtaking Kufa and without mention of death or defeat, whilst others stood by the Imam ('a) till death. Some advised him, with no regard to his complete knowledge of all things, while others aided with their mere belongings, which the Imam ('a) dismissed. Several others left the Imam ('a) at the last moment, while others joined him by then. A fraction took their leave to finish their personal matters, to later come back again, however never made it. And a small number stood by until the very last minute. Those were the awake and loving souls, preventing anything from coming between them and their Imam ('a). Imam Al-Husayn ('a) urged them to leave him without blame, yet they stuck by refusing to leave him alone. Reflecting on these people's fates, their backgrounds and earlier life choices, is like holding the answers for a personal action plan and evaluation.

Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj), who is for all people and who shall lead the whole world with justice and truth, will not come until the world is prepared for him and for the realization of mankind's utopia. There must be a fundamental susceptibility in people at large, as longing for justice must transform from mere words and slogans to inner yearning. Moreover, there must be devout companions to the Imam ('aj). Those who

live by these principles and have prepared themselves to answer to the Imam ('aj). They will not allow anything standing in the way for their commitment or alter their perception, unlike that which befell the kufans.

1. This is narrated, among others, in sources like Kafi by Kulayni volume 6 p.33–34; *Ilal ash-Shara'i* by Sheikh Sadooq volume 1 p. 137–138; Misbah Al-Mujtahid by Sheikh Al-Tusi p.367; *Manaqib Aal Abi Talib* by Ibn Shahrashub volume 3 p.397; *Kashf Al-Ghumma* by Arbili volume 1 p.525 et al.
2. This and many other similar ahadith have been narrated in most Sunni and Shi'a sources, including in *Ansab Al-Ashraf* volume 3 p. 142; *at-Tabaqat Al-Kubra* volume 10 p.385 et al.
3. These verses and their related events have been described in detail earlier in the book; see G4.
4. This is made clear in the history and is narrated, among other things in sources such as *Manaqib Aal Ali Ibn Abi Talib* by Ibn Shahrashub volume 4 p. 87 and *Al-Irshad* by Sheikh Mufid volume 2 p. 32 et al.
5. This is mentioned, in *Al-Imama wa as-Siyasa* by Ibn Qutayba (published 1410 AD) volume 1 p. 202–204 and 208–211; *Al-Akhbar Al-Tiwal* by Al-Dinawari p. 224–225; *Ansab Al-Ashraf* by Bilathari volume 5 p. 120–121; *Tabaqat Al-Kubra* by Ibn Saad volume 10 p. 440; *Tarikh Al-Islam* by Thahabi (published 1409 AD) volume 5 p. 6; *Tarikh Madinat Dameshq* by Ibn Asakir (published 1415 AD) volume 14 p. 206 et al.
6. Yazid's personality traits and lifestyle were known to the people and have been narrated in several historical accounts including *Tarikh Madinat Dameshq* by Ibn Asakir (published 1415 AD) volume 65 p. 397; *Al-Kamil fi at-Tarikh* by Ibn Athir volume 4 p. 127; *Tarikh Ya'qobi* volume 2 p. 160; *Ansab Al-Ashraf* by Bilathari (published 1417 AD) volume 5 p. 297; and *Bani Umayya dar Tarikh* by Faqih (published 1413 AD) p. 33–34 et al.
7. This is narrated, among other, in *Tarikh Ya'qobi* volume 2 p. 177; *Al-Kamil fi at-Tarikh* by Ibn Athir volume 4 p. 14; *Maqtal Al-Husayn ('a)* by Azodi p. 3 et al.
8. The course of events in connection with Imam Al-Husayn's ('a), with his family, leaving Medina for Mecca and then towards Kufa and the surrounding events are narrated in the majority of historical accounts including *Ansab Al-Ashraf* by Bilathari volume 3 p. 160; *Al-Fotooh* by Ibn A'tham (published 1991 AD) volume 5 p. 27–28; and *Al-Irshad* volume 2 p. 36–37 et al.
9. Although there are some differences in the exact number of people accompanying Imam Al-Husayn ('a), the number is around eighty in the majority of historical accounts, including *Tarikh Al-Umam wa Al-Molook* by Tabari (published 1967 AD) volume 5 p. 341; *Ansab Al-Ashraf* by Bilathari volume 3 p. 160; *Al-Fotooh* by Ibn A'tham volume 5 p. 228; and *Al-Irshad* by Sheikh Mufid (published 1399 AD) volume 2 p. 34; *Amali* by Sheikh Sadooq p. 152–153 et al
10. The Imam's ('a) half-brother Muhammad Al-Hanafiyya and the Imam's ('a) cousins Abdullah Ibn Ja'far and Abdullah Ibn Abbas were among those who dissuaded the Imam ('a) and remained in Medina.
11. Zuhayr Ibn Qayn (r.a.) was one of Kufa's prominent personalities who sympathized with Uthman and was not very kind to Imam Ali ('a). For a while, his journey with his caravan coincided with Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) caravan. However, Zuhayr (r.a.) stayed away from the Imam ('a) and initially refrained from meeting Imam Al-Husayn ('a) when the Imam ('a) sent after him. But at the urging of his wife, Dulham, Zuhayr (r.a.) finally went to meet the Imam ('a). No one knows more about the meeting between Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and Zuhayr (r.a.) but when Zuhayr (r.a.) returned he was determined to accompany Imam Al-Husayn ('a) even if it cost him his life. He left all his wealth to his wife, who also joined Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) caravan.
12. Ubaydullah Ibn Al-Hurr Jo'fi was one of Kufa's leading personalities and a sympathizer with Uthman, whose path coincided with Imam Al-Husayn ('a) at a point along the road to Kufa. Imam Al-Husayn ('a) went to meet Ibn Al-Hurr and offered him to join the Imam ('a).
13. Sulayman Ibn Sorad was one of Kufa's prominent personalities and one of the leading persons who called Imam Al-Husayn ('a) to Kufa in the letters sent to the Imam ('a). However, he became one of those who left Muslim Ibn Aqil (r.a.) alone at the critical stage when Ibn Ziyad took over Kufa. After Ashura, he and many who had followed him came to realize and regret his mistake and started the movement of Tawwabin (the repenters).
14. Habib Ibn Madhaher (r.a.), Muslim Ibn 'Awsaja (r.a.) and Abdullah Ibn Umayr (r.a.) and his wife Umm Wahab bint Abd (r.a.) joined the Imam ('a) in Karbala after escaping Kufa's siege. These were among the Prophet's (S) companions and

Habib (r.a.) and Muslim (r.a.) had also fought alongside Imam Ali ('a).

15. Maytham Al-Tammar (r.a.) and Mukhtar Ibn Ubaydullah Al-Thaqafi (r.a.) were among those whom Ibn Ziyad had imprisoned in Kufa. While Maytham (r.a.) was executed and reached martyrdom in connection with the uprising he started in prison when the news of Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) martyrdom reached him, Mukhtar managed to be released and revenged in the coming years after Ashura. Many of these historical events and the entire course of events surrounding Ashura and Mukhtar's revenge are narrated in the series Mukhtarnameh, which is subtitled in Swedish

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WPaBkIYyuMO> [17]

16. Both Muslim Ibn Aqil (r.a.), Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) cousin and emissary to Kufa, and Hani Ibn 'Urwa (r.a.) were among the Prophet's (S) companions who were captured and murdered by Ibn Ziyad when he captured Kufa, and reached martyrdom before Ashura.

17. Al-Hurr Ibn Yazid Riyahi (r.a.) was the commander of Yazid's dispatched army and had stopped Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and his caravan from continuing their journey towards Kufa, or in any other direction. On the Day of Ashura, after seeing himself in a fork where one road would lead to paradise and the other to hell, Al-Hurr (r.a.) joined Imam Al-Husayn ('a) who received him with open arms. Al-Hurr (r.a.) was one of the first to reach martyrdom on the Day of Ashura.

18. Dhahhak Ibn Abdullah was a person who joined the Imam ('a) with the condition to fight alongside him until they reach hope or victory. In the middle of the Day of Ashura when most of the Imam's ('a) companions had reached martyrdom and the Imam ('a) stood alone, Dhahhak left the Imam ('a) and rode away.

19. Haffhaf Ibn Muhammud (r.a.) made his way from Basra to Kufa to join the Imam ('a) but arrived late on the Day of Ashura after Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) martyrdom. Nevertheless, this did not stop him from attacking the enemies and fought against them until he reached martyrdom and joined his Imam ('a).

20. Among the arguments that have been used extensively throughout history to subjugate people and prevent them from rising to tyrannical rule are sayings referred to the Prophet (S) where protest and rebellion against the ruler would have been banned and classified as unfaithful.

21. Ibn Ziyad was known for his insidiousness and shrewdness and had been appointed regent earlier to knock down any resistance movements and protests in Basra. His entry into Kufa, his tactical divide between the people and the way he played them against each other, and the course of events in Kufa are detailed in history including in Tarikh Tabari (published 1387 AD) volume 7 p. 229; Moqatil at-Talibin by Abu Al-Faraj Al-Isfahani (published 1368 AD) volume 1 p. 97 et al.

22. These events are narrated in several historical accounts, including Tarikh Tabari (published 1387 AD) volume 7 p. 229–231 and 270 et al.

23. The events surrounding the siege of Kufa's palace and Ibn Ziyad's trick to frighten and divide people and disperse them from around Muslim Ibn Aqil are detailed in history including in Tarikh Al-Umam wa Al-Molook by Tabari (published 1387 AD) volume 5 p. 368– 371; Ansab Al-Ashraf by Bilathari (published 1974 AD) volume 2 p. 80–81 et al.

24. The numbers given in historical accounts regarding the number of people who swore allegiance to Muslim Ibn Aqil ('a) and therefore Imam Al-Husayn ('a), vary between 12000, 18000 and 30000; Tarikh Al-Umam wa Al-Molook by Tabari volume 5 p. 348; Al-Akhbar at-Tiwal (published 1330 AD) p. 235; Al-Imama wa as-Siyasa by Ibn Qutayba ad-Daynoori (published 1413 AD) volume 2 p. 8 et al. Since Kufa was originally a military city with over 60000 soldiers, it means that about a third of the city had sworn allegiance and were willing to rise against Bani Umayya. This while the majority of the remaining were neither the opponent of the Imam ('a) nor the supporters of Bani Umayya and took a "neutral" position which Ibn Ziyad came to exploit later. Those who rose with Muslim Ibn Aqil after Ibn Ziyad imprisoned Hani Ibn Urwa, are said to have been around 4,000; Ansab Al-Ashraf by Bilathari (published 1974 AD) volume 2 p. 80; Tarikh Al-Umam wa Al-Molook by Tabari p. 368–371 et al.

25. The fate of Muslim Ibn Aqil ('a) in Kufa is narrated in the majority of historical accounts including Tarikh Al-Umam wa Al- Molook by Tabari volume 5 p. 350 and 374; Ansab Al-Ashraf by Bilathari volume 2 p. 81; Morooj ath-Thahab by Mas'oodi volume 3 p. 65; Al-Fotooh by Ibn A'tham Al-Kofi (published 1411 AD) volume 5 p. 62; and Al-Irshad by Sheikh Mufid (published 1414 AD) p. 53–63 et al.

26. These and similar statements by Imam Al-Husayn ('a), which from one aspect summed the Imam's ('a) vision and core of his movement, have been portrayed in several sources, including Bihar Al-Anwar volume 44 p. 329; Ihqaq Al-Haqq

volume 11 p. 60 et al.

27. The course of events during the night to Ashura and Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) statements as well as his companions' statements of faithfulness have been extensively narrated in many sources with minor word variation but with the same message; Al-Irshad by Sheikh Mufid volume 2 p. 91–94 and volume 3 p. 93–95; A'lam Al-Wara by Tabarsi (published 1390 AD) volume 1 p. 239 et al. While Imam Al-Husayn ('a) claimed their duty in upholding the pledge of allegiance they swore to him, the Imam's ('a) companions declared their faithful persistence to the Imam ('a) until death; and this may be one of the secrets behind their greatness and perpetuation.

28. Reference to The Holy Qur'an 7:196.

29. The course of events under Ashura as well as Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) statements, including the present one, have been narrated in several sources including Ansab Al-Ashraf by Bilathari volume 3 p. 407; Tarikh Tabari volume 5 p. 450; Tabaqat Al-Kubra by Ibn Saad volume 6 p. 440; Moqatil at-Talibin by Abu Al-Faraj Al-Isfahani p. 118 et al. In the present text, only a summary of some of Ashura's most important events and key phrases have been narrated in a compilation that will provide the reader with only an overview. For more on the entire course of events, the reader is referred to existing historical depictions where more details can be found. Note that some details in the historical depictions may be partly different or narrated in different order, which is because they have been narrated by a number of eyewitnesses and narrators, but the entirety of all versions is largely the same.

30. Gandhi has been among those who cited Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and his revolution as a source of inspiration for his battle, saying "I learned from Al-Husayn how to be wronged and be a winner, I learnt from Al-Husayn how to attain victory while being oppressed."

6.6 – The 4th Imam [Sixth Ma'soom] – Imam Al-Sajjad ('A)

Birth And Qualities

Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) was born the fifth of Sha'ban, year 38 AH/ 659 AD. His father was Imam Al-Hasan ('a), and his mother was Shahrbanu (also called Shahzanan, daughter of the Persian king Yazdgerd, son of Shahriyar). In his enunciations, The Holy Prophet (S) had named him Ali, and given him the title Al-Sajjad. This was due to his worship and endless prostration before God in sojood.

Imam Al-Sajjad ('a), like the Imams ('a) preceding him, was of honourable character and knowledgeably superior and best implementer of Islam in his time.

Becomes Imam

At 23 years of age, Imam Al-Sajjad ('a), in connection with the martyrdom of Imam Al-Husayn ('a), became the Imam of his time officially. Prior to the martyrdom of Imam Al-Husayn ('a), close relations to the Imam ('a) were notified of Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) succession, in accordance with the Prophet's (S) enunciations.¹

Governance During The Imamah Of Imam Al-Sajjad ('A)

The rulers during the time of Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) were:

- 1) Yazid Ibn Mu'awiya (60 AH/680 AD – 64 AH/684 AD)
- 2) Abdullah Ibn Zubayr (61 AH/681 AD – 73 AH/692 AD) – independent governance in Mecca
- 3) Mu'awiya Ibn Yazid (64 AH/684 AD)²
- 4) Marwan Ibn Hakam (64 AH/684 AD – 65 AH/685 AD [a duration of nine months]³
- 5) 'Abd Al-Malik Ibn Marwan (65 AH/685 AD – 86 AH/705 AD)
- 6) Walid Ibn 'Abd Al-Malik (86 AH/705 AD – 96 AH/715 AD)

V. After Ashura

During the battle of Karbala, Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) had befallen severely ill and was the sole male in the company of Imam Al-Husayn ('a) to miraculously survive the many attempts carried out by the enemy to kill him. During some of those occasions, the illness of the Imam ('a) was meant to his survival as the enemy presumed his near demise. But on many other occasions, Sayyida Zaynab ('a) intervened to protect the Imam of her time. After the massacre in Karbala, Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) was captivated alongside the surviving women and children of the Prophet's (S) offspring and brought to Damascus as a prisoner of war.

The prominent role of Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) as an Imam was initiated as such. Following the atrocious murder of Imam Al-Sajjad's ('a) father and Imam, Imam Al-Husayn ('a), and his faithful companions, the events of Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) revolution were to be spread far and wide. Were it not for Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) and Sayyida Zaynab ('a), the truth of what had happened and the reality of Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) uprising would be left in Karbala.

Kufa

The day following Ashura, the family of the Prophet (S) was brought to Kufa as prisoners of war. Ubaydullah Ibn Ziyad, who had made the kufans betray and turn away from Imam Al-Husayn ('a), was ordered by Yazid to suffocate the Imam's ('a) revolution by all means possible. All of Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) were to be killed and so the lineage of the Prophet (S) extinguished. At the sight of Imam Al-Sajjad ('a), Ibn Ziyad was surprised as he was informed Ali Ibn Husayn ('a) was killed and cut into pieces in Karbala. Even the infant of Imam Al-Husayn ('a) was heartlessly shot with an arrow and slaughtered while being in the arms of Imam Al-Husayn ('a). When a confused Ubaydullah beheld Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) and was filled in that Imam ('a) was ill and that his brothers were killed, he immediately ordered for

him to follow his brothers' fates. But in an instant, Sayyida Zaynab ('a) shielded her Imam, just as she had in Karbala when Shimr had attacked. She told them to kill her first. However, her striking power and determination had Ibn Ziyad knowing better than that and so stepped back.

Damascus

At the end of their difficult journey, Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) survivors arrived at Damascus only to be welcomed by an adorned city, filled with jubilating residents celebrating the victory of defeating faithless rebels.

Imam Al-Sajjad ('A) Spreading Truth – The Elderly Syrian Man

In Damascus, an elderly male, of Sham's origin, who believed the rumours closed into the caravan and said:

“Glory be to God who has willed the caliph's victory over you.”

Imam Al-Sajjad ('a), knowing the elderly man's perception to be based on Yazid's propaganda, answered:

“O Sheikh [title of respect], have you read the Qur'an?”

“Yes, how so?” – the man answered

The Imam ('a) asked:

“Have you read the verses: ‘O’ (Muhammad), say, I do not ask you for any payment for my preaching to you, except [your] love of family.”

“Yes, I have.” – the man replied

Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) said:

“By God, we are the family of the Prophet (S).”

And so, the Imam ('a) asked:

“Have you not read the verse: ‘God intends only to remove from you the impurity [of sin], O people of the [Prophet's] household (Ahl Al-Bayt), and to purify you with [extensive] purification.’”? ”

“Yes, I have” – he replied

Then, the Imam ('a) announced:

“We are the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) whom God has extensively purified!”

The older man was astonished and went quiet as he regretted his prior sayings. He turned to the Imam ('a) once again and asked:

"By God, are you them?"

So, the Imam ('a) replied:

"By God, we surely are them. By our grandfather, the Prophet's (S) right, we are."

When the elder male realized this was the household of the Prophet (S) indeed, in shackles, led through the city in such conditions, he fell and kissed the hands of Imam Al-Sajjad ('a), crying. He asked for forgiveness and denounced Yazid and all those who were complicit in the oppression of the Prophet's (S) household, and exclaimed:

"O God, I seek refuge in You from the enemies to Your Prophet's (S) household, from among djinn and men. O the son of the Prophet (S), is the path of tawba (sincere repent and ask God's forgiveness) open for me?"

Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) answered confirming so and said:

"If you make tawba, you are with us."

The man did so, and according to historical accounts, he called to the people and informed them this to be the household of the Prophet (S) and urged them to repent and protect them, until he was assaulted and killed by the orders of Yazid.⁴

Imam Al-Sajjad ('A) Spreads The Truth – In The Palace Of Yazid

When the caravan of Imam Al-Husayn ('a) was taken to the palace, Yazid had ordered a huge assembly to show off his victory and so humiliate the household of the Prophet (S). In spite of Yazid's constant tries to humiliate and dishonour the survivors of Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) caravan by mocking and disrespecting them and the head of Imam Al-Husayn ('a), he was met by strong opposition.

Some of the conversations taking place, Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) asked Yazid before the assembly:

"In what way do you imagine our grandfather, God's Messenger (S), would react to our condition?"

Yazid mockingly tried to blame Ubaydullah for taking the army to Karbala, and asked Imam Al-Sajjad ('a):

"Inform me, how did you feel by God's doing to your father, Husayn ('a)?"

Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) replied with a Qur'anic verse:

"No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register before We

bring it into being – indeed that, for God, is easy” (57:22).

“In order that you do not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you. And God does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful.” (57:23).

That ended the pride of Yazid, and so he angrily attempted to recite the following verse as a reply:

“Whatever hardship befalls you is the result of your own deeds.”

So, the Imam ('a) said:

“This verse applies to those who have wronged, not those who have been wronged.”

As Yazid could not reply to that, he ordered a speaker to go rise to the pulpit and humiliate Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and his father, Imam Ali ('a), something accustomed by Mu'awiya in the reign of the Umayyads. And so, the speaker spoke ill Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) and mentioned Yazid and his father, Mu'awiya, good qualities until he reached the epitome of lies and was cut off by Imam Al-Sajjad ('a), who said:

“O you who preach! Woe be to you! You have bought the wrath of the Creator in lieu of the pleasure of the creatures, while your place is hell.”

Shortly after, the Imam ('a) asked permission to speak in the presence of the attendants. Although Yazid refused, the people insisted until Yazid gave in.

Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) mounted the pulpit and gave the following sermon:

“O people, we were given six things and favoured by seven. We were given knowledge, gentleness, mercy, courage and the ability to influence and love for us in the hearts of the believers. We were favoured with the chosen Prophet Muhammad (S); one of us is Siddiq (the truthful) and Tayyar [Jafar Ibn Abu Talib]; from us is God’s and His Messenger’s (S) Lion [Imam Ali ('a)], and from us are the two masters of this nation [the masters of the youth of paradise, Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a)], and from us is the Awaited [Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj)].

He looked around and continued:

“Whoever recognizes me, do you know who I am and for those who do not recognize me, let me inform you of who I am and to what family I belong.

I am the son of Mecca and Mina; I am the son of Zamzam and Safa; I am the son of the one who held the black stone with the ends of his mantle; I am the son of the best man who ever put on sandals and wanders barefoot; I am son the best man ever to make Tawaf and Sa'i (ceremony of running seven times between Safa and Marwa); I am the son of the best man who ever offered the Hajj and pronounced Talbiya[Here I am at Your (Lord) service]; I am the son of the one who was raised on Buraq; I am the son of the one who was made to travel from the Sacred Mosque [in Mecca] to the

‘Aqsa-mosque [in Jerusalem]; I am the son of the one who was taken by the angel Gabriel (‘a) to Sidrat Al-Muntaha; I am the son of the one ‘who drew near [his Lord] and suspended, so he was the measure of two bows or closer still’; I am the son of the one whom the heavenly angels sends blessings upon.

I am the son of the one to whom the Almighty revealed what He revealed; I am the son of Muhammad Al-Mustafa (S) [The Prophet (S)]. I am the son of Ali Al-Murtada [Imam Ali (‘a)]; I am the son of the one who fought against the enemies till they confessed; ‘There is no god but God’. I am the son the of the one who struck the enemies with a double-bladed sword before the Apostle of God (S) and stabbed [them] with two spears, emigrated twice, pledged twice [to the Prophet], prayed towards the two qiblas, fought [against the unbelieving Arabs] at Badr and Hunain and never disbelieved God, not even as much as the twinkling of an eye.

I am the son of the best of the believers, the heir of the Prophet’s (S), the destroyer of the unbelievers, the commander of the Muslims, the light of the Mujahedin [the holy warriors], the ornament of the worshippers, the crown of the weepers, the most patient of the patient and the best of the steadfast from among the family of Yasin and the Messenger of God (S) of the world’s inhabitants. I am the son of the one who was backed by Gabriel (‘a) and supported by Mikael (‘a).

I am the son of the one who defended the Muslims sanctity and put down the arrogant, transgressors and those who broke their oaths of allegiance to God and [the son of the one who] struggled against his stubborn enemies, the first to respond to God’s call from among the believers, the prior to all the previous ones; the destroyer of the polytheists; the arrow from among the archers of God against the hypocrites; the tongue of wisdom of worshippers; the supporter of the religion of God, the protector of the affairs of God, the garden of the wisdom of God, the container of the knowledge of God; forgiving and wise; generous and benevolent; noble and satisfied with God; courageous; the scatterer of ties to unjust relations; divider of tribes; the most resolute, the venerated and the firmest in determination; the boldest of them in tongue; a brave lion; the one who destroyed them at the battles and dispersed them in the wind, the lion of Hijaz; the ram of Iraq; one from Mecca, Madina, Badr, Hunain and Sahajar; Muhajir (emigrant); from the Arabs – their lord; the lion of war; the inheritor of the holy scriptures (Mash’arayn), the father of the two grandsons of the Prophet (S), Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) and Imam Al-Husayn (‘a); the one who manifested miracles; the one who scattered the phalanxes; the piercing meteor; the following light; the victorious Lion of God; the request of every seeker; the victorious over every victorious – such is my grandfather, Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (‘a). I am the son of Fatimah az-Zahra’ (‘a), the pious; I am the son of the mistress of all women; I am the son of the purified lady; I am the son of the apples of the Prophet’s (S) eyes. I am the son of the one smeared in blood. I am the son of the one slaughtered on the plains of Karbala. I am the son of the one who was lamented upon by the djinn in the darkness of the night and the one who was mourned upon by the birds in the sky.”

The Imam (‘a) continued saying ‘I am’ until people cried out and loudly wept, so much that Yazid feared it might end in a revolt. He called out to the prayer-caller to interrupt with azan, even when prayers had

not occurred.

However, when the prayer-caller recited ‘Allah-o-Akbar’ (God is the greatest), the Imam (‘a) said:

“Verily God is Great!”

With ‘la ilaha illa Allah’ (I bear witness that there is no other deity except Allah), the Imam (‘a) said:

“My hair, my skin, my flesh and my blood bear witness that there is no other deity except God.”

When the prayer-caller came to: ‘Ashhad-o anna Muhammad –an Rasoul-Allah’ (I bear witness that Muhammad (S) is the Messenger of God), Imam Al-Sajjad (‘a) turned to Yazid and said:

“Yazid! Is Prophet Muhammad (S) your [great] grandfather or mine? If you say that he is your grandfather, you speak a lie, and if you say he is my grandfather, then why did you kill his family?”

Yazid could not answer the Imam (‘a), and the truth was now evident. So he ordered the prayer-caller to continue before matters got out of hand and became chaotic among the attendants who started questioning the origin of the prisoners.⁵

Yazid Is Forced To Release Everyone

The public sentiment was no longer the same as when the caravan of Imam Al-Husayn (‘a) had arrived in Sham. As the people of Sham started to realize who had been massacred and witnessed the treatment of the Prophet’s (S) household as captives, they became anxious and worried. Yazid feared lest people revolt and dared not spill more blood. Accordingly, he was forced to release Imam Al-Sajjad (‘a) and his company, who left for Medina.⁶

Until then, the people of Sham had only heard the lies and false claims against the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) from the Umayyad regime. However, the sermon of Imam Al-Sajjad (‘a) showed the attendants another reality and made them realize the truth, kept away from them.

Medina

When the people of Medina heard of the coming of Imam Al-Sajjad (‘a), they gathered at the mosque of the Prophet (S) weeping and mourning the martyrdom of Imam Al-Husayn (‘a). The news of the massacre had spread wholly, to the whole of the Islamic state, by then. Imam Al-Sajjad (‘a) was received by the people and told them of that which had taken place. Sayyida Zaynab (‘a) had an active role in spreading the truth of Karbala.

It is told by Imam Al-Sadiq (‘a) that Imam Al-Sajjad (‘a) mourned his father for all the remaining years after the tragedy Ashura. Imam Al-Sajjad (‘a) and Sayyida Zaynab (‘a) laid the foundation of the first commemorations held by weeping for Imam Al-Husayn (‘a) and encouraged others who mourned him.

The son of Imam Al-Sajjad ('a), Imam Al-Baqir ('a), only three years of age during the event of Ashura, relates that his father was never given water or food except that his tears would blend with them. This shows the level of Imam Al-Sajjad's ('a) grief, which he lived with daily and was mirrored in his actions, also the way in which the Imam ('a) kept the memory of Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and Ashura alive.

The grief of Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) over Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and his companions was greater than the sorrow of a son over his father. It was rather the sorrow of an Imam ('a) over the oppression committed against God's chosen ones and the Prophet's (S) household, but also over the error committed by the people. The fact that Imam Al-Husayn ('a) was the Prophet's (S) only living grandson, despite everything the Prophet (S) had said and done urging people to protect and follow the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), did not stop the guilty from committing the abhorrent oppression. Barely fifty years after the demise of the Prophet (S) and by a people who seemingly followed the Prophet (S), were capable of slaughtering the noblest personality from the descendants of the Prophet (S). The nation of the Prophet (S) had in less than a century diverged from the teachings of the Prophet (S) to such a level they were able to murder his grandchild and remain silent during the massacre.

Nonetheless, by his blood Imam Al-Husayn ('a) had awoken and reset the course. Now, Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) was responsible as an Imam to keep the message alive and convey the banner of true Islam. This was no simple task as the Imam ('a) was on probation, his position among the people feared by Yazid and his successors. The remaining 35 years of his blessed life were spent in Medina, and he usually did not leave unless going on a pilgrimage to Mecca, or visiting the shrines of the Imams ('a).

V1. The Enemy's Solution: Close Surveillance

Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) was under close government surveillance, attempting to limit his possibilities of spreading the message and knowledge.

The Rulers' Tactics

The Umayyads worked hard to destroy Islam, from within. After disallowing notes to be taken of, especially, the Prophet's (S) ahadith during the rule of the first and the second caliph, Mu'awiya imposed fabricated and distorted narrations instead. Many narrations and historical facts, influencing the teachings of Islam, were falsified. This mix of haqq and batil left people in a state of confusion, and so divisive opinions among various personalities and personal opinions were found here and there. The height of this was prominent in Kufa, among kufans. This whilst the propaganda machinery of the Umayyads progressed to prevent actual news from spreading, and if they did so anyway, they were distorted with disinformation.

Consequently, the public was either kept in the shadows of what occurred or held at bay with fright and bribes, or busying themselves in search of livelihoods and amusements. Only a few personalities and groups kept themselves well-informed and knew of the state of events. As such, they were determined

in holding onto the household of the Prophet (S), uninterrupted line of religion. Except for those, the majority of people lacked deep insight into state affairs and were either apathetic or had other priorities. This happened whilst leading personalities joined the ruling body out of self-interest or, if they opposed the methods of Umayyads, held a distance.

Following the news of the Umayyad's crimes came out, or the events such as the sermon of Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) took place, many short-lived (except a few) uprisings were held, however, blew out before having any lasting effects. Alongside this, the Umayyads worked hard on spreading ruin all the way to Mecca and Medina, prior to Mu'awiya's time were known to be the centre of religion and spirituality. Hence, these two cities were a greater target to attack and corrupt. Immorality spread in every possible way, notably by slowly familiarizing party spaces with music, dance and drinks and promoting prostitution and games. Those who could be subjected to those means were so whilst those in religious paths were provided with distorted forms of religiousness. The status of Imam Ali ('a) and Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) was reduced among people, as they also could not reach Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) during his close surveilled house-arrest.

The Umayyad rule of terror aggravated the situation further and the common displeasure among people, who despite the fright, tried to protest and rise up, but were mercilessly brought down. One of the most known cases in history is the event of Harra, where among ten thousand people, among them pregnant women, were brutally killed in Medina. During a period of three days, Yazid allowed the army of Sham to act; however, they wished with people's lives, belongings and honour. Crimes as murder and rapes were committed.⁷ Even bloodthirsty personalities as Hajjaj Ibn Yousof Al-Thaqafi, allowed to spill blood in the Umayyad dominion freely, contributed to the spread fright. As a result, many stopped following religious lifestyles other than shallowly, a serious religious and moral decay spread.

The Imam's ('A) Tactic

The time after Ashura was a very difficult period for Imam Al-Sajjad ('a). The Imam ('a) could neither speak freely nor have open contact with the people. Fearing an uprising led by Imam Al-Sajjad ('a), or the Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) companions at the Imam's ('a) request, pushed the Umayyads for intensive and secret surveillance of the Imam ('a) and his contact with the outside world. However, the state of the nation did not yet tolerate a direct and open intervention against the Prophet's (S) household, nor did Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) do anything that could serve as a reason for such action.

Many people, especially in Kufa, had realized their shortcomings in not having helped Imam Al-Husayn ('a). Full of remorse, they intended to avenge Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) killer who was from the same city. Kufa was a major city that was geographically central. The residents were of all kinds of tribes and groupings. The city was therefore important to the Islamic nation, and the unrest there was dangerous for Yazid. Yazid could, therefore, do nothing but blame everything on Ibn Ziyad and even pretended to have respect for the Prophet's (S) household.

On the other hand, Abdullah Ibn Zubayr had seized the opportunity and revolted in Mecca under the slogan of taking action against Yazid's unbelief and taking revenge for the blood of Imam Al-Husayn ('a). Therefore, the situation in Hijaz was no longer completely under Yazid's control, and the Umayyads no longer had a popular opinion with them. Abdullah Ibn Zubayr's false battle for the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) put Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) under further surveillance. Abdullah Ibn Zubayr was the one who had the leading role against Imam Ali ('a) in the battle of Jamal.

It was under these circumstances, with limited communication and tightly guarded connections with the outside world, that Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) needed to preserve the religion and pass on its true message. Imam Al-Sajjad's ('a) constant grief for Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) tragedy and the referencing of religious concepts through invocations became among the Imam's ('a) way to perform his duty.

Once again, the story witnessed how an Imam ('a) navigated through the most difficult of circumstances and managed to preserve and pass on God's message to the people in the best way possible, taking into consideration the circumstances of his time and the prevailing conditions. Admittedly, Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) uprising and martyrdom had shaken the community and rocked the Umayyad's supremacy, but the divide among people and their self-interests prevented a full turning. Despite this, there were attempts and several popular movements, including the revolution in Kufa led by Mukhtar Ibn Abu Ubayd Al-Thaqafi, who managed to avenge Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) killer. Nevertheless, Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) had to assume a publicly withdrawn role and was not directly associated with the uprisings that followed. Since Imam Al-Sajjad's ('a) connection with these resurrections would give the enemies reason to kill the Imam ('a) and end the Prophet's (S) lineage.

Consequently, Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) revolution continued to live through other methods since he was under close surveillance. In addition, there were very few loyal followers of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) left and even fewer who openly had the opportunity to seek the Imam ('a). The Imam ('a) spread the teachings of religion and the prophetic spirit through the most beautiful of invocations that united the deep meaning of the Qur'an with the teachings of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a). This was possible because no one could blame the Imam ('a) for worshipping God and through this path, the Imam ('a) could generate religious consciousness for contemporary people, but above all, for the people of the future. Several of these beautiful invocations are available today and demonstrate Imam Al-Sajjad's ('a) extremely important role in the preservation of religion based on the prevailing conditions and despite the extremely difficult circumstances of his time.⁸

While the Umayyads tried to distort and erase the Ashura tragedy from history, Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) did the opposite. By keeping the grief of Imam Al-Husayn ('a) alive, the truth and the revolutionary spirit could live on and spread out. Not infrequently, it happened that the Imam ('a) saw an everyday event that revived Ashura's scenes of oppression and tragedy for him. Everything from the cry of an infant and the play of a little girl to the slaughter of a lamb, or something as simple as food or water being put before him, caused the Imam ('a) to burst into tears. Imam Al-Sajjad's ('a) crying was so heartbreaking

that his cry made others cry. The recounting of what had happened in Karbala and Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) standpoint in connection with the crying of the Imam ('a), spread the story and its lessons. The Umayyads could not stand in the way of the Imam's ('a) crying and mourning for his father. In this way, Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) lived daily with Ashura and cried continuously for his father Imam Al-Husayn ('a), and through this grief, the truth about Imam Al-Husayn ('a) revolution spread.

When Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) was asked why he cried so much, and if it was not enough, the Imam ('a) explained that Prophet Ya'qoob's ('a) grief and crying over his son Prophet Yousef ('a) never ended. From the word of God in the Qur'an, Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) recounted how Prophet Ya'qoob ('a) cried even though he had eleven other sons, one of whom was absent, and that while Prophet Ya'qoob ('a) knew that Prophet Yousef ('a) was alive. Yet Prophet Ya'qoob ('a) cried in the absence of his son until his vision disappeared. Whilst the Imam ('a) had seen the Prophet's (S) daughter's son and the best of God's servants been slaughtered in the most brutal way. The Imam ('a) demonstrated the foundation of his grief through the logic of the Qur'an, and therefore understanding and awareness of the grief spread alongside the grief itself. Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) also urged the people to constantly visit Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) shrine which also helped draw attention to Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) message and keep the spirit of Ashura alive.

Although Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) did not speak about himself and his position as Imam openly, he spoke of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) and emphasized the position of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), not least in his invocations. This when Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) knowledge constituted the very essence of the invocations. Therefore, Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) sought to preserve the line of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) so that this line would not be lost with the death of the Imam ('a).

Of the greatest achievements of Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) was a deep love, respect and trust of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) that the Imam ('a) revived, nourished, fortified and allowed to grow in the hearts of people through his actions. Although throughout Mecca and Medina, according to the Imam's ('a) testimony, there were not even twenty who devotedly loved the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a)⁹ enough to stand by their side, Imam Al-Sajjad's ('a) love and care included all people regardless of their belief. Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) was keen on all the creations of God and helped all people. It is stated that the Imam ('a) bought and released about one hundred thousand slaves during his life, but only after giving many of them shelter and education for a maximum of one year so that they would later manage on their own.¹⁰ The Imam ('a) treated these slaves so fatherly that many of them became one of the Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) most devoted companions. The respect and compassion that Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) did treat these people with gave them back their suffocated worthiness and their deprived human dignity. When Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) eventually freed these enslaved people, he had not only freed their bodies but also their souls through the education they had received through the Imam's ('a) treatment. While some of them could not tolerate leaving the Imam ('a), some of them returned to their home countries and then brought with them the Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) teachings.

History shows that the corruption and oppression that was revived after Imam Ali's ('a) time left many poor and needy. Many people suffered and encountered difficulties. But in Medina and Mecca, the needy got visits from someone who gave them exactly what they needed. The needy got used to spending the night waiting for the anonymous helper. One night, hundreds of people awaited the arrival of the unknown nightwalker; but no one came! Since this had never happened for many years, they realized that something serious must have happened. As the news of Imam Al-Sajjad's ('a) martyrdom spread that night, people realized who the anonymous helper had been. In the 34 years that the Imam ('a) had lived in Medina, he had been wandering around the city anonymously every night, helping people regardless of their beliefs or opinions about the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a).

The people had seen much goodness from Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) and knew of his outstanding greatness, morals and knowledge. The good way of life and the charisma of the Imam ('a) caused people to show obeisance for Imam Al-Sajjad ('a), even though they did not accept him as Imam.¹¹ But when they realized that the Imam ('a) had for so many years helped them, everyone rushed to the door of Imam Al-Baqir ('a). It turned out that Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) also helped those who were not among his followers and also those who showed disapproval towards him. He had done this without revealing his identity or calling them to himself. Imam Al-Sajjad ('a), with his Islamic morality, had planted the seeds of devotion for the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) in the hearts of people. It made the people turn to Imam Al-Baqir ('a) to a greater extent.

Martyrdom

Finally, the Imam's ('a) position among the people could not be tolerated by the Umayyads and the contemporary caliph, Walid Ibn Abdul Malik. The Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) had not been obliterated with the Karbala massacre. Rather, deeper love and devotion for the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) had emerged among the people. Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) had managed to preserve and spread the message that called for justice for all people. He bestowed on the people the spirit of resistance against oppression and preserved the aglow in people's hearts.

At last, Walid Ibn Abdul Malik ordered to poison Imam Al-Sajjad ('a), who became a martyr on the 25th of the month Muharram in 95AD.

It is stated that when Imam Al-Baqir ('a) performed the funeral rituals for Imam Al-Sajjad ('a), he stopped and cried several times while washing and wrapping the blessed body of Imam Al-Sajjad ('a). When asked about the cause, the Imam ('a) told him of all the wounds that remained on Imam Al-Sajjad's ('a) body following the chains he had carried all the way from Karbala, Iraq, to Damascus, Sham. But there were additional wounds on the shoulders and back of the Imam ('a), like his grandfather Imam Ali ('a), from carrying bags of supplies to needy people night after night for 34 years.

V2. Preparing For The Final Imam ('Aj) – Limited Access

The Umayyads surveilled all movements by the Imam Al-Sajjad ('a), which made it difficult for the few companions of the Imam ('a) to meet him. These rulers had shown what they were aiming for when they had directly and indirectly imprisoned, tortured and murdered many of Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a), followers.¹²

They had no limitation in bloodshed and the only thing that kept them from direct intervention against the Imam ('a) after Ashura was the unstable situation in parts of the nation as well as the competition they had among themselves. But this did not prevent them from using other methods such as surveillance, punishment penalties and raids against those who were kind to the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a). The companions who remained were, therefore, very few and had limited opportunity to reach the Imam ('a). The rulers of the time, by restricting access to Imam Al-Sajjad ('a), wanted to prevent him from gaining more followers and being able to spread the true teachings of Islam. These rulers were looking to keep the skin of Islam where people appeared to be Muslims, prayed and fasted, so as to be able to rule over the people by distorting the message to their own advantage. But the essence of Islam, which included demands for justice and resisting oppression, oppressors and self-proclaimed world masters, was not allowed.

Therefore, the Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) teachings constituted, and in this case the very existence of Imam Al-Sajjad ('a), a danger to them and when they had failed to kill the Imam ('a), they used all methods to isolate him. This was a new phenomenon since people had previously had free access to the Prophet (S), Imam Ali ('a), Imam Al-Hasan ('a) and Imam Al-Husayn ('a). People could easily and openly turn to the Prophet's (S) Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) for their questions and concerns. Companions could reach their Imam ('a), and get instructions without being pressured. But during the time of Imam Al-Sajjad ('a), all this had changed. The companions needed to understand and follow an Imam ('a) to whom they had extremely limited access, and this was the beginning of a new stage in the Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) preparation for the final Imam ('aj), which is in occultation.

1. Among the sources where these facts about Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) are found and where also contemporary Sunni scholars testified to the high standing of the Imam ('a) are Tabaqat Al-Kubra volume 5 p. 214; Helyat Al-Awliya's volume 3 p. 135 and 141; Kashf Al-Ghumma volume 2 p. 80; Mokhtasar Tarikh Dameshq volume 17 1 236; Tahdhib at-Tahdhib volume 7 p. 305; Seyr A'lam an-Nobala' volume 4 p. 391; Umdat at-Talib p. 193; Sharh Nahjul Balaghah by Ibn Abil Hadid volume 15 p. 273; and Al-Irshad by Sheikh Mufid volume 2 p. 138; Kafi by Kulayni Volume 1 p. 188–189; A'lam Al-Wara by Tabarsi Volume 2 pp. 181–182; Ithbat Al-Huda by 'Ameli volume 2 p. 285 et al.

2. This Mu'awiya was the son of Yazid and the grandson of the first Mu'awiya son of Abu Sufyan. After Yazid's death, the governorship was passed to him, but his government did not last more than forty days according to some historical accounts, he resigned and did not die long after. The reason for his departure is narrated in historical accounts that he felt that the Umayyads had no right to governing at the same time as he distanced himself from his father Yazid's and his grandfather Mu'awiya's outrage, especially the war Mu'awiya had waged against Imam Ali ('a) and Yazid's massacre of Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and his companion. The circumstances surrounding his death are also unclear, despite his young age, he passed away shortly after he resigned and some historical accounts indicate that he was murdered by his family, including Mas'oodi in Morooj ath-Thahab volume 3 p. 73 and Ya'qobi in Tarikh Ya'qobi volume 2 p. 254 and Daynoori in Al-Imama wa as-Siyasa volume 2 p. 17 et al.

3. Imam Ali ('a), after the battle of Jamal when the opponents including Marwan suffered defeat, describes in brief terms Marwan's unsuccessful procedure, speaks of his hidden intentions to take power and predicts that he will reach his wish but that his time in power will be brief. The Imam ('a) resembles Marwan's time in power to a "dog licking his nose" and also

speaks about the fact that the people will endure bloody days through his sons, who then become true. These statements of the Imam ('a), which also show his knowledge of the hidden and the link to divine knowledge, can be found in, among others Nahjul Balagha sermon 73.

4. This is narrated in several sources including Maqta Kharazmi volume 2 p. 61; Lohoof by Seyyed Ibn Tawoos p. 177–178 and 211–212; Bihar Al-Anwar volume 45 p. 129; Ihtijaj volume 2 p. 120–122 et al.
5. Imam Al-Sajjad's ('a) sermon and the events surrounding the caravan's arrival and stay in Sham have been narrated in several historical accounts and sources including Maqta Kharazmi volume 2 p. 70; Bihar Al-Anwar volume 45 p. 138 et al.
6. This is narrated, among other things in Tarikh Tabari p. 462; Al-Kamil fi at-Tarikh by Ibn Athir p. 88; as well as Al-Irshad by Sheikh Mufid p. 122; by A'lam Al-Wara Tabarsi p.476 et al.
7. The inhuman deeds committed in Medina are portrayed to be among the worst in history. The event is extremely brutal and is portrayed by all historical narratives including Tarikh Tabari volume 5 p. 484; Al-Bidaya wa an-Nihaya volume 4 p. 220; Al-Imama wa as-Siyasa volume 1 p. 179; Ansab Al-Ashraf volume 4 p. 37; Tanbih by Mas'oodi p. 305; Hawadeth wa Wafiyah by Thahabi p. 30 and 61–580 et al..
8. Imam Al-Sajjad's ('a) invocations are collected in the supplications-collection, Sahifa Al-Sajjadiya, which is also called Aal Muhammad's Zaboor, named after the Prophet Dawood's ('a) script. Sahifa Al-Sajjadiya is translated to Swedish and can be ordered in Swedish bookstores in paperbacks or read online at <https://dvv.se/bok/sahifa/> [18]. Online in English and Arabic at: <https://www.al-islam.org/sahifa-al-kamilah-al-sajjadiyya-imam-ali-zayn-a...> [19]
9. The Imam's ('a) description gives an idea of the enormous difficulty of the prevailing situation and the pressure that existed on the Ahl Al-Bait ('a), and how alone the Imam ('a) really was with the lack of faithful companions. This is narrated in Sharh Nahjul Balagha by Ibn Abil Hadid volume 4 p. 104; Bihar Al-Anwar volume 46 p. 143; Al-Gharat p. 573 et al.
10. Imam Al-Sajjad's ('a) behaviour and his magnanimity towards other people were known to the people and examples of it are narrated in many sources including the book Zain Al-'Abedin by Seyyed Al-Ahl p. 7 and 47; A'yan ash-Shi'a volume 4 p. 468; Sharh Al-Akhbar volume 3 p. 260; Kashf Al-Ghumma volume 2 p. 101; Al-Athaf p. 137–138; Mokhtasar Tarikh Dameshq volume 17 p. 243; Tarikh Tabari volume 6 p. 526 et al.
11. The people's obeisance for Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) had reached such a degree that they self-opened the way for the Imam ('a) when he touched Hajar Aswad (Black Stone) under Hajj while the son of the then Caliph, Abd Al-Malik, could not reach it despite his and his companions' attempts to get rid of people. When the famous poet Farazdaq saw how Hisham Ibn Abd Al-Malik denied his knowledge of the Imam's ('a) identity in front of his wondering followers from Sham, he rose with all courage and responded with his famous poem in the Imam's ('a) acknowledgment:

This is he whose ability the valley (of Mecca) recognizes,

He is known by the (Sacred) House and the Holy sanctuary and the lands outside the sanctuary.

This is the son of the best of God's servants.

This is the pure pious man, the pure eminent man

This is the son of Fatimah if you do not recognize him.

He whom the prophets yielded to his grandfather's

Farazdaq's bold performance annoyed Hisham who had imprisoned him and withheld his share of Bayt Al-Mal (Treasury House). After this event, Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) sent a larger sum to Farazdaq's assistance. Farazdaq thanked and returned the money with the statement that he was only after God and the Prophet's (S) satisfaction with his standpoint, whereupon Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) prayed for Farazdaq and asked him to accept the gift. Farazdaq's poem became a strong historical testimony of Imam Al-Sajjad's ('a) and Ahl Al-Bait's ('a) position and right. The story is narrated, among other things in Manaqeb Aal Abi Talib volume 4 p. 169 and others.

12. Ashura and subsequent violations such as the incident in Harra, the burning of the House of God, Ka'ba and the defeat of Tawwabin (repenters) and Mukhtar's resurrection are some of the brutal events witnessed by history through the hands of the Umayyads and the Marwanites.

6.7 – The 5th And The 6th Imam [Seventh And Eighth Ma’soom] – Imam Al-Baqir (‘A) & Imam Al-Sadiq (‘A)

Birth And Characteristics

Imam Al-Baqir (‘a) was born in Medina in 57 AH/676 AD. He was named Muhammad and was called Baqir, which was the Iaqab (title) that the Prophet (S) had given him. As with other Imams (‘a), the specific title was referred to as one of the Imam’s (‘a) characteristics that would stand out most and be of great importance to his time. The name Baqir referred to the outstanding knowledge of Imam Al-Baqir (‘a) and explained by the Prophet (S) that this Imam (‘a) was “the splitter of the Prophet’s (‘a) knowledge”. Imam Al-Baqir’s (‘a) father was Imam Al-Sajjad (‘a), and his mother was Fatimah, daughter of Imam Al-Hasan (‘a). Like his father, Imam Al-Baqir (‘a) was recognized to be the one with the noblest qualities and most knowledge of his time.

Imam Al-Sadiq (‘a) was born in Medina in the year 83 AH/702 AD. He was named Ja’far (‘a) and was called Sadiq for his distinctive truthfulness. Imam Al-Sadiq (‘a) was the son of Imam Al-Baqir (‘a), and his mother was Umm Farwa, daughter of Qasim, son of Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakr. Like his father and grandfathers, Imam Al-Sadiq (‘a) was recognized by contemporary scholars for being the most superior in all knowledge and piety.

Becoming An Imam

Before his martyrdom, Imam Al-Sajjad (‘a) handed over the banner of the Imamah to his son Imam Al-Baqir (‘a) in accordance with the command of the Prophet (S). This is also stated in history by one of the Prophet’s (S) companions by the name of Jabir Ibn Abdullah Al-Ansari (r.a.). He was among those whom the Prophet (S) had entrusted with a list of the Imam’s (‘a) name. Jabir (r.a.) had been informed by the Prophet (S) that he would have a long life and live long enough to meet the fifth Imam (‘a).¹

Jabir (r.a.) had been commissioned by the Prophet (S) to deliver the Prophet’s (S) peace greeting when he met the fifth Imam (‘a).

When Imam Al-Baqir’s (‘a) martyrdom was near, he handed the banner of Imamah to his son Imam Al-Sadiq (‘a) in accordance with the Prophet’s (S) previous preaching and command.

W. The Shift Of Caliphate Power

Imam Al-Baqir ('a) and Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) lived during a delicate period in which the rule of the Umayyads was greatly weakened. After Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) revolution, the Umayyads lost their foothold and gained increasing resistance against them. The uprisings replaced each other, and while those who rose up had different motives, they jointly weakened the rule of the Umayyads. Although Abdullah Ibn Zubayr's self-proclaimed rule in Mecca did not survive long, the Umayyads could not restore their power. Internal conspiracies within the ruling power, combined with external pressures and public dissatisfaction, made the kingdom unstable. After the Ashura massacre, the days of the Umayyads were counted and their doom a matter of time.

Now they had also acquired a new competing family that considered themselves justified for power. The Abbasids, who came from the Prophet's (S) uncle Al-Abbas, considered themselves to be more closely related to the Prophet (S) and rose during the slogan that they wanted revenge for what the Prophet's (S) Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) were exposed for and restore Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) deprived right to govern. Due to the people's increased attraction to the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), the Abbasids decided to pretend to support the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a). With this, they wanted to win people's trust. These circumstances allowed Imam Al-Baqir ('a) to have more freedom and fewer restrictions than Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) had at his time.

Governed During The Time Of Imam Al-Baqir ('A)

Imam Al-Baqir ('a) lived during a time when five different Umayyad caliphs took power one after the other for a period of over twenty years as follows:

- 1) Walid Ibn Abd Al-Malik (86 AH/705 AD – 96 AH/714 AD)
- 2) Sulayman Ibn Abd Al-Malik (96 AH/714 AD – 99 AH/717 AD)
- 3) Omar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz (99 AH/717 AD – 101 AH/719 AD)
- 4) Yazid Ibn Abd Al-Malik (101 AH/719 AD – 105 AH/723 AD)
- 5) Hisham Ibn Abd Al-Malik (105 AH/723 AD – 125 AH/742 AD)

During the turbulent period that this power play was going on, Imam Al-Baqir ('a) was given greater freedom to reach people. Even the people could turn more openly to the Imam ('a) for their questions and affairs with less risk of persecution as the Umayyads could not monitor the Imam ('a) to the same extent. The Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) were known for their piety and knowledge before, and now that the fear of contact with them was gone, more people began to seek Imam Al-Baqir ('a) to learn from him. Imam Al-Baqir ('a) began to set up gathering and lectures that became the basis for outstanding development of knowledge in the Islamic empire and the emergence of scientists whose great work came to form milestones in the scientific development of the world. Imam Al-Baqir ('a) taught in the sciences which

were directly related to religion, including fiqh (jurisprudence) and Qur'anic teachings, as well as natural sciences based on his divine knowledge of The Holy Qur'an, and the environment.

Therefore, as circumstances changed, Imam Al-Baqir's ('a) method changed. The prevailing conditions were different in comparison to Imam Al-Sajjad's ('a) time since the Umayyads did not have the opportunity to monitor Imam Al-Baqir ('a) to the same extent. In addition, they were forced to officially downplay their hostility towards the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) due to the wave of revenge requests for Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) blood and popular opinion. During the caliphate of the eighth Umayyad caliph Omar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz, Imam Al-Baqir ('a) also received back Fadak.² From its income, schools could be set up in Medina by Imam Al-Baqir ('a) where students came to learn. Hundreds of scholars and reporters of hadith who came to seek knowledge in the Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) school eventually came to pass on the prophetic teachings. Consequently, Imam Al-Baqir ('a) devoted plenty of resources to establish the foundations of a continuous education system and public schools in order to convey the reality of God's message for human guidance.

Imam Al-Baqir's ('A) Martyrdom

When the fifth caliph of the Marwani family, Hisham Ibn Abd Al-Malik, came to take over the caliphate, he intended to control the situation and retain power with a hard grip. Although Imam Al-Baqir ('a) stayed out of the political arena and devoted himself to teaching, the rulers could not tolerate the success and popularity of the Imam ('a), which now reached the entire Islamic empire. The caliph finally ordered the assassination of Imam Al-Baqir ('a) through poisoning, and the Imam ('a) reached martyrdom in 114 AH, 732 AD.

Imam Al-Sadiq's ('A) Time

The period of Imam Al-Sadiq's ('a) Imamah coincided with the height of power shift where the Abbasids took over the caliphate from the remnants of the Umayyad's, the Marwanites. The following ruled during Imam Al-Sadiq's ('a) time:

- 1) Hisham Ibn Abd Al-Malik (105 AH/723 AD – 125 AH/742 AD)
- 2) Al-Walid Ibn Yazid Ibn Abd Al-Malik (126 AH/743 AD)
- 3) Ibrahim Ibn Walid (126 AH /743 AD – 127 AH/744 AD)
- 4) Marwan Ibn Muhammad (127 AH/744 AD – 132 AH/749 AD)
- 5) AbulAbbas Al-Saffah (132 AH/749 AD – 136 AH/753 AD) [first Abbasid caliph to take over the rule in connection with the change of power]
- 6) Al-Mansoor Al-Dawaniqi (136 AH/753 AD – 158 AH/774 AD)

Imam Al-Sadiq's ('a) Imamah began during a period when the Umayyad caliphs had been interchanging at regular intervals, leaving the empire in a turbulent state. This while the Abbasids had begun to be transformed into a serious competitor at the same time as conspiracies, groupings and rebellions were part of everyday life. Therefore, Imam Al-Sadiq's ('a) Imamah coincided with a period in which the Umayyads took their last breath, followed by the Abbasids who needed time to consolidate their power. In addition, the Abbasids had seized power during the slogan of wanting revenge for Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and giving control back to the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a). Therefore, the newly arrived caliphs officially pretended to have a friendly attitude towards Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) to get people on their side. The Abbasids adhered to this tactic under pretty much all their empire. However, history is a testimony to their true intentions as this family was behind the assassination of Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) and the upcoming Imams ('a).

During the relatively lawless period, at the height of a shift of power where the Abbasids took command, Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) had more space to build on and to develop what Imam Al-Baqir ('a) had set the foundation for. The earlier divisions among the people led to interpretations that were turning into the shape of new beliefs and schools of thought. As every crowd saw themselves as being on the right path and therefore having the correct interpretation of the message of God, disputes and debates were not uncommon in society. There in between a search for truth started to emerge among the people slowly. The rumour of Imam Al-Baqir's ('a) knowledge and wisdom were now attracting disciples, scholars and scientists from near and far to Imam Al-Sadiq ('a). He received and answered people with all kinds of different thoughts and beliefs; he debated them based on logical arguments taken from The Holy Qur'an, and the prophetic way. His tolerance and thoughtfulness in these debates, even for the most hateful opponents, finally made him receive their respect.

Other religions scholars, even atheists, came seeking the Imam ('a) and they were all greeted with respect. They were overwhelmed by his extensive knowledge of their own scriptures. No matter the question, the Imam ('a) gave, from all conceivable angles, excellent and precise answers and this within all subjects and fields of science. But above all, it was the prophetic lifestyle of the Imam ('a), filled with the fragrance of divine mercy and care for the wellbeing and development of humanity, that left the deepest mark. Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) always listened carefully to the counterpart's arguments and always let the person finish his sentences, and first after that, answered in a calm manner. Truthfulness, impartiality and justice are what defined the answers of the Imam ('a) as he firstly confirmed the correct parts of his counterparts' arguments and then continued with logical evidence and Qur'anic proofs in order to complete the answer. His humility and truthfulness were a light that spoke to every human, no matter their faith or background. In that way, his approach won the heart of his opponents, while his arguments defeated them.

This made more and more seek Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) to gain from his knowledge and wisdom. His classes, discussions and debates with all types of people became a prevailing phenomenon in a society that was followed by experts and the public alike. Imam Al-Sadiq ('a), as an Imam striving for the

guidance of mankind, did not spare a thirsty soul that wished to drink from the fountain of knowledge that was the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), which flows from the divine source of wisdom. Because of that, the classes of the Imam ('a) were open for the public and whoever sought him got to take part in the knowledge.

Beyond these public classes and debates, there were those who were thirsty for more and wished to be enlightened by the light of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a). Consequently, the Imam ('a), spent special classes fitting their abilities and taught extraordinary disciples, which he eventually could send to debates as his representatives. Based on their individual gifts and personal strengths, the Imam ('a) had each one of them specialize within a field and to primarily debate within it. That which characterized his students the most was not just their knowledge, but their morals and devotion, which they had been bestowed through the nurture of the Imam ('a).

The Abbasids did not want to slip behind in this trend of society or to lose control over it. The Abbasid caliphs set up debates where they invited scholars, both from within and from outside the realm. With this step the Abbasids strengthened their position among the people and showed tolerance and care for scientific development, when they were, at the same time, trying to create an antipole, drawing the attention from Imam Al-Sadiq ('a). The emerge of all possible thoughts which divided people into groups was also a way to control the masses, as every group followed their own school of thought. Meanwhile, they wanted to contribute to the overshadowing of the knowledge of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) with other thoughts and directions.

Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) continued to stay distant from the official political arena and the uprisings during the time of the Abbasids. The Imam ('a) explained this by announcing that this time was not his, as well as the lack of truly devout companions as one of the reasons for not rebelling himself. Instead, he dedicated the resources to the guiding intellectual and spiritual movement of which the people were thirsty and what the conditions of his time were suitable.

During the time of Imam Al-Sajjad ('a), there were not even twenty households that loved the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), but now the knowledge of their glory and reputation had been spread to all the corners of the caliphate. Hospitality and love for the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) had spread to the hearts of many, especially new Muslims who were living in distant areas and had barely even known of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a). Several uprisings were made, even against oppressing governors during the time of Imam Al-Sadiq ('a). There were occasions when groups of followers of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) came to Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) and asked the Imam ('a) to rise with their support. But the response of the Imam ('a) was that he did not have enough companions. Even though more and more were following the school of Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) the Imam ('a) showed that they were not yet devoutly enough to be ready for the uprising of an Imam ('a). Imam Al-Sadiq's ('a) era demanded the fight to be on another front, that was equally important in the preparation of future generations and the final Imam ('aj); namely, to spread knowledge. In order for the reality of God's message to reach all people and guide them, Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) educated students and above all thinkers.³

Imam Al-Baqir ('a) had established the foundation of Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) school of thought. Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) continued in his father's path and expanded the school for over thirty-five years. The school remains standing to the present day and is known as the Ja'fari school.

Imam Al-Sadiq's ('A) Martyrdom

Abbasid caliph Mansoor Dawaniqi could not withstand the highly regarded rank of Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) among people. He ultimately ordered the assassination of the Imam ('a). Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) was poisoned and reached martyrdom in 148 AH/765 AD.

W1. Enemies' Solution: Spreading Confusion Through Invented Religious Branches

Imam Al-Baqir ('a) had begun the establishment of the system, in which his son Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) built upon for people's enlightenment and guidance to the truth. As a result, a wave of general education surged in society encompassing all societal circles. Higher education was also provided for those who seek higher and deeper knowledge in all fields, comprising both the field of religion and science. Imam Al-Sadiq's ('a) school came to be a popular university where everyone was welcomed. It served people the possibility to learn divine knowledge and wisdom according to their own will and potential. There were a number of devoted disciples taught by Imam Al-Sadiq ('a). On account of them, the Imam ('a) could ensure that Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) knowledge, morals and teachings would reach out to all people and be preserved for future generations, even if the Imam of the time would be in occultation.

The enemies viewed the communal movement as a threat to their rule. Due to the fact that it is far more difficult to rule over enlightened people, than over oppressed and ignorant masses. Therefore, all sorts of people and groups who came up with their own interpretations were encouraged to create and disseminate their inventive ideologies and distorted ramifications within religion. By filling society with opinions and baseless or distorted interpretations, haqq was overshadowed by batil, and with this, the situation becomes diffuse and discerning the truth was more difficult.

In addition to organizing lessons, Imam Al-Baqir ('a) and Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) opened space for debates and logical discussions as well as answered questions. Everyone, from knowledge-seeking students to prominent scholars holding differing religious theories, sought themselves to the Imam's ('a) classes. Even scholars with other religious affiliations, atheists and idolaters, came to these gatherings to debate. All who came were received by the Imams ('a) with tolerance and respect. Imam Al-Baqir ('a) and Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) illuminated the right path for people through knowledge based on logic. In addition, these debates did not merely hold the function of answering raised questions on the spot but also became the basis for the presentation and preservation of Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) school. Many sects' misinterpretations were counteracted through logical arguments.

Through these lessons and debates, Imam Al-Baqir ('a) and Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) displayed clear superiority in all fields of life, from religion and knowledge to their moral way of life and piety. It was elucidated within religious circles, that the true knowledge of The Holy Qur'an, could only be found with Ahl Al-Bayt ('a). They were the only ones who could clarify the deep meanings of the Qur'anic verses. The Imams ('a) placed great emphasis on storytelling and encouraging the use and retelling of authentic ahadith to discern false narratives.⁴ All these aspects and more led to Imam Al-Baqir ('a) and Sadiq ('a) to hold a prominent position in society. The growing status of the Imams ('a) among the people frightened the rulers, who were forced to treat Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) more leniently due to public opinion.

Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) continued in his father's footsteps and worked in the same spirit. He participated in many debates himself but also raised students. To the degree that they themselves became experts and could participate in many debates as the Imam's ('a) representatives.

The Abbasid caliph's attempts to counter the Imam ('a) never stopped. Attempts were made to confuse the followers of the Imam ('a) by claiming that Imam Al-Sadiq's ('a) two sons, Ismail and Abdullah, were the succeeding Imams. Even though these two sons died before Imam Al-Sadiq ('a), many fell for the falsehood and created other religious ramifications for themselves. Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) had already informed the people that his son, Musa ('a), would be the Imam after him.

W2. Preparations For The Final Imam ('Aj) Knowledge

Imam Al-Baqir ('a) and Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) clarified and presented the Prophet's ('a) knowledge in a structured and academic manner that is preserved until this day. They prepared all future generations, and above all the followers of the awaited Imam ('aj), with the knowledge needed. Most of the narrations we have today come from Imam Al-Baqir ('a) and Imam Al-Sadiq ('a).

Imam Al-Baqir ('a) established schools in which important Islamic concepts were taught. The concept of Imamah was for the first time explained in depth. That is to say, the concept of Imamah had been introduced earlier, albeit not as thoroughly. Its theoretical and practical dimensions were studied in detail. Similarly, Imam Al-Baqir ('a) clarified many other fundamental Islamic concepts, such as tawhid. The Imam ('a) based his teachings on that of the Qur'an and the Prophet (S). He taught the Qur'an and hadith in the same manner as the Prophet (S) and Imam Ali ('a) had done before him.

The Imam ('a) had many disciples, and it is said they amounted up to twenty-five thousand. Many of whom studied in all fields of Islamic science and theology. It was during this time that around four-hundred books of ahadith were written by them under the Imam ('a) leadership. These books became valuable sources for later ahadith collections that are currently used as supportive evidence, of which the collection of Al-Kafi by Kulayni, compiled during the twelfth Imam's ('aj) era, is a part.

In line with the diminished surveillance and the less frightening social atmosphere, Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) was able to continue his father's efforts and develop the establishment of the Islamic sciences to an

even greater extent. Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) further elaborated on Islamic concepts and remained the Imam from whom most narrations have been narrated – approximately 30,000; amounting to more than the sum total of all the narrations from other Imams ('a). It is, for this reason, the school which Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) followers adhere to came to be known as the Ja'fari school, named after Imam Al-Sadiq ('a), whose first name is Jafar.

Imam Al-Sadiq's ('a) educational system became like a university where thousands of students were transformed into scholars, scientists and narrators of hadith. These, in turn, were the beginning of the chain of thinkers that Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) had brought up. The Imam's ('a) accomplishments and his students' influence in the teaching of religion and science has left its mark on the world to this day. Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) continued the same trajectory as the previous Imams ('a). Albeit more freely and away from the control of the authorities on the basis of prevailing conditions in society, and therefore left an invaluable legacy in the preservation of the Prophet's (S) message and in preparation for the Imam's ('aj) era.

Did You Know?

The personalities who founded the largest schools in the Sunni branch have been students of Imam Al-Sadiq ('a), either directly or indirectly. Abu Hanifa and Malik Ibn Anas who founded the Hanafi and Maliki schools were both among the Imam's ('a) students. They have said to have never seen anyone with more knowledge than Imam Al-Sadiq ('a). Abu Hanifa has also said that if it was not for the two years as Imam Al-Sadiq's ('a) student, he would have perished.⁵ The other two schools, Shafe'i and Hanbali, were founded by Muhammad Ibn Idris and Ahmad Ibn Hanbal who in turn were students of Abu Hanifa and Malik Ibn Anas. Therefore, these schools had their basis in knowledge obtained from the same source.

However, despite their great respect for Imam Al-Sadiq ('a), these personalities lacked the view of the Imam ('a) as Imam, based on the meaning of Imamah. Instead, they asserted their and other's differing views alongside the Imam's ('a) proclamations and therefore gained followers and eventually own schools of thought. Therefore, they were not followers of Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) in that sense.⁶

^{1.} This is narrated, among others, in *Kifayat Al-Athar* p. 144–145; *Tathkerat Al-Khawas* p. 337; *Al-Irshad* p. 262; *Bihar Al-Anwar* volume 46 p. 223 et al.

^{2.} The events concerning Fadak and its seizure have been discussed extensively earlier in the book; see Q1 and beyond.

^{3.} Several recognized personalities who are accepted as reliable narrators of hadith both in Sunni and Shi'a, as well as prominent scholars, experts and thinkers in religious as well as other scientific fields are among these; such as Jaber Ibn Hayyan [Gebber], Hisham Ibn Hakam, Abu Basir, Zurara and others. Historical depiction and the debates in which these students participated in at the Imam's ('a) command and that the Imam ('a) referred others to them on specific issues show that the Imam ('a) educated them both as general scholars and specialists in various fields. Malik Ibn Anas and Abu Hanifa who later came to found the Sunni schools Maliki and Hanafi have been among those who took part in Imam Al-Sadiq's ('a) lessons in Medina. They narrated ahadith from the Imam ('a), testified to the superiority of his piety and knowledge and engaged in debates with his students.

^{4.} This is recounted in *Bayat Al-Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir* av Sharif Al-Qurashi volume 1 p.140–141 online at:

<https://www.al-islam.org/life-imam-muhammad-ibn-ali-al-baqir-baqir-share...> [20] et al.

5. This has been narrated, among others, in Jami' Asanid Abu Hanifa volume 2 p.222; Tahthib at-Tahthib volume 2 p. 104; Tathkerat Al-Hufadh by Thahabi (published 1419 AH) volume 1 p.126; at-Tuhfa Al-Ithna Asharyia p.8 et al.
6. This is explained in Sharh Nahjul Balagha by Ibn Abil Hadid (published 1385 AH) volume 1 p. 18 et al.

6.8 – The 7th Imam [Ninth Ma'soom] – Imam Al-Kadhim ('A)

Birth And Characteristics

Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) was born on 7th Safar in 128 AH/745 AD. He was the son of Imam Al-Sadiq ('a), and his mother was Hamida Barbariyya.¹

Imam Al-Kadhim's ('a) name was Musa, but he was called Al-Kadhim for his tolerance and forbearance. From an early age, Imam Musa Al-Kadhim ('a) displayed all signs of divinely inspired knowledge and understanding. His father Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) used to emphasize his son's status and often encouraged his companions to ask the young Al-Kadhim ('a) questions to show his dignity to be his successor.

Like the other Imams ('a), Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) was known for his qualities that resembled the Prophet's (S), including his piety, worship, and his patience towards those who treated him poorly.

Becoming An Imam

Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) had on several occasions announced Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) as his successor to his reliable companions², in accordance with the Prophet's (S) mention that Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) was the seventh Imam ('a).

The governance during Imam Al-Kadhim's time ('a)

Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) lived under four different Abbasid caliphs:

- 1) Abu Ja'far Mansoor (136 AH/754 AD – 158 AH/775 AD)
- 2) Muhammad Ibn Mansoor Mahdi ³435 (158 AH/775 AD – 169 AH /785 AD)
- 3) Musa Ibn Mahdi Hadi (169H/785 AD – 170 AH/786 AD)
- 4) Haroon Rashid (170 AH/786 AD – 193 AH/809 AD)

X. Society In A New Iron Grip

Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) lived during a time when the Abbasid regime had stabilized. Therefore, he was held in strict surveillance. The Abbasids deceived the people by creating a revolution with the aim of giving back the rule to Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), but once they had won, they did not keep their promise. They were very afraid that the people would rise up and take power from them because they had not kept their promise. The Abbasids knew of Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) popularity among the people and therefore wanted to limit the Imam's ('a) contact with the people.

Mansoor Abbasi's Time

Mansoor Abbasi was terrified that the people would revolt and remove him from the regime. He was suspicious of Shi'a Muslims and Imam Al-Kadhim's ('a) close followers. As such, they faced many difficulties and were at risk of being killed. They were persecuted and had to conceal their faith. Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) had to hold a politically withdrawn role, which was the reason Al-Mansur did not imprison him. Since Al-Mansur was busy building Baghdad, Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) still had the opportunity to teach Islam and spread narrations by the Prophet (S).

Mahdi Abbasi's Time

Mahdi Abbasi came to governance after his father paving the way by diminishing any opposition. Therefore, he was given a greater possibility to surveil and persecute Imam Al-Kadhim ('a). Despite his efforts to do otherwise, the Imam's ('a) knowledge and reputation spread throughout the Muslim empire. This made the caliph more concerned about the influence of Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) and kept the Imam ('a) under strict surveillance.

The caliph summoned Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) to Baghdad for questioning on numerous occasions as he grew fearful that the followers of Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) would rebel. The Imam ('a) had no plans to partake in the uprisings. Yet he was held under arrest a number of times under the accusation that he was responsible for certain turbulences, even though there was no evidence present to support such claims.

Hadi Abbasi's Time

Hadi Abbasi was a young and arrogant caliph who did not live long. Despite his short life he still managed to mass murder Imam Ali's ('a) descendants, inter alia the Fakh massacre, which befell the oppressed descendants of Imam Ali ('a) who rebelled. The caliph suspected that Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) was behind the uprising and called him in for questioning. It was confirmed that the Imam ('a) had no involvement in the matter and was therefore released. Hadi Abbasi was soon killed on the orders of his own mother and power fell into the hands of his brother Haroon Rashid.

Haroon Rashid Abbasi's Time

Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) spent most of his time in prison under Haroon Rashid's rule. Under this rule, Shi'a Muslims were persecuted the most, and Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) was subjected to the cruellest treatment. Imam Al-Kadhim's ('a) position vis-à-vis Haroon's rule differed from the other caliphs. Haroon's tyranny made Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) openly show his opposition. Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) forbade his followers from associating or cooperating with the regime. The only exception was the cases where co-operating with the government could prevent injustice towards the people. An example of this was Ali Ibn Yaqtin, who was Haroon's minister but at the same time, a supporter of Imam Al-Kadhim ('a). He had to conceal his faith in order to continue operating in the ranks of power and prevent the oppression that was being committed.

Imam Al-Kadhim's ('a) opposition to Haroon's rule made him known as a defender of justice and became even more popular among the people. This worried Haroon. Haroon feared Imam Al-Kadhim's ('a) profound knowledge, along with his courage to confront Haroon without the slightest fear, and the ever-increasing number of admirers spreading around the world. Therefore, under Haroon Rashid's order, Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) spent most of his remaining life in several prisons.

Moved And Imprisoned In Basra

Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) was arrested in the midst of his prayer near the Prophet's (S) tomb in the mosque year 179 AH/796 AD. When the people of Medina received the news of the Imam's ('a) imprisonment, Haroon Rashid grew fearful of an imminent revolt. He ordered two different caravans to go in different directions in order to hide where Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) was being escorted to. Finally, Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) was taken to and imprisoned in Basra. After being imprisoned there for a year, news spread of the Imam's ('a) whereabouts and Haroon Rashid became, yet again, afraid of an uprising. He asked Basra's governor to kill the Imam ('a) to get rid of the threat. The governor fearfully refused and did not view the Imam ('a) as a harmful threat. On the contrary, he had seen the holiness of the Imam ('a) as the Imam ('a) spent his time in prison in prayer and fasting. Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) used to ask God for forgiveness and mercy for himself and all Muslims.

Furthermore, the Imam ('a) had acted with such kindness and compassion towards the prison guards that many of them became his followers. The situation grew to such an extent that the governor and guards felt bad by imprisoning such a person. The governor excused himself and asked Haroon Rashid to transfer the Imam ('a) to another prison.

Moved And Imprisoned In Baghdad

Under the order of Haroon Rashid, Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) was moved to Baghdad and imprisoned in the house of Fadhl Ibn Rabi', one of Haroon Rashid's ministers. By having the Imam ('a) in the home of one of his ministers, Haroon Rashid was trying to avoid that the Imam's ('a) arrest is viewed by the public as

a direct form of detention.

Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) spent his time in his new prison in worshipping God, fasting, sojood and invocation. Fadhl Ibn Rabi' who closely watched Imam Khadhim ('a) was overwhelmed by the greatness and the way of life of the Imam ('a) and eventually became a great follower.

Haroon Rashid knew that the Imam ('a) was admired and loved by all the people he met and therefore he personally supervised his captivity to ensure that the Imam ('a) had a hard and tough time. The situation worsened for the Imam ('a) who constantly showed patience despite the cruel treatment he had to endure. Yet in the end, Haroon was again forced to give orders for the Imam ('a) to be moved.

Fadhl Ibn Yahya soon realized what an extraordinary personality Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) was. Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) had suffered a lot of pain, but he still met the prison guards with magnanimity and good behaviour. The morals and strong faith of the Imam ('a) caused the hard hearts of his prison guards to soften, by this the Imam ('a) continued his divine mission in spreading the light of guidance. When Haroon Rashid failed to stop the influence of the Imam ('a) from behind the bars of yet another prison, he could not stand it anymore and decided to get rid of the Imam ('a). Haroon Rashid ordered Fadhl to kill the Imam ('a). Fadhl refused and was punished with a hundred whips.

Martyrdom – The Imam ('A) Is Moved To Be Imprisoned One Last Time

Finally, Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) was sent to jail and was detained by Sindi Ibn Shahik, who was responsible for Haroon Rashid's police force in Baghdad. This time the aim was to kill Imam Al-Kadhim ('a). Sindi was a tyrant without conscience. He put Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) in deep dungeons and tortured him. Ultimately, he poisoned Imam Al-Kadhim ('a), who became a martyr alone in the darkness of prison in 183 AH/799 AD.

Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) was in prison during the last 19 years of his life. Meanwhile, his Shi'a was scattered around the world, either as the Imam's ('a) official representatives or chased and displaced. They spread from Arabia to Egypt, Iran, Iraq and even to India. In this way, many of Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) supporters came to other areas of the world, and Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) school and mannerism spread despite the enemies' brutal plans.

How Did Imam Al-Kadhim ('A) Spread The Message?

At the beginning of Mansoor's reign, Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) had greater freedom to spread knowledge. Additionally, the Imam ('a) spread the message by holding academic debates. Additionally, by not cooperating with the government, he showed the people that it was an illegitimate government. As a result, people's confidence in it diminished. The Abbasids tried to legitimize their rule by proclaiming their lineage to the Prophet (S), whereby Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) would show that he was the one with the closest relation to the Prophet ('a). In one instance, Haroon Rashid visited the Prophet's (S) graved and uttered "Peace be upon you O cousin", whereupon Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) greeted the Prophet (S) with

“Peace be upon you O father”.

Another instance where Imam Al-Kadhim (‘a) propagated the truth was when Abbasid caliph Mahdi claimed that he wanted to waive the oppression of former rulers and therefore wanted to return Ahl Al-Bayt’s (‘a) property to their rightful owner. Imam Al-Kadhim (‘a) requested Fadak, which after being returned to Imam Al-Baqir (‘a) for a short period was again seized by later caliphs. The Abbasid caliph, who wanted to gain public support, asked Imam Al-Kadhim (‘a) about the boundaries of Fadak to determine its size whereupon the Imam (‘a) set boundaries that covered the whole empire.⁴ By doing so, Imam Al-Kadhim (‘a) proclaimed the basis on which Fadak had been seized from the beginning. He proved that the whole empire was in fact under seizure as it had been deprived of its rightful leaders, namely the Imams (‘a) of the Prophet’s (S) family.

X1. The Enemies’ Solution: Prison

Imam Al-Kadhim’s (‘a) knowledge and good reputation were widely known throughout the Muslim empire, which troubled the Abbasid regime. Albeit the fact that the Abbasids had risen under the slogan to support Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) reclaim their right from the Umayyads. As the Abbasids consolidated their power and seized the kingdom, they reinstated tougher surveillance and action against Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a). Imam Al-Kadhim (‘a) was supervised, arrested and eventually imprisoned several times and forced to spend a large part of his life in prison. By keeping the Imam (‘a) imprisoned, the Abbasids attempted to cut off Imam Al-Kadhim (‘a) from his followers and reduce his influence to secure their own power and position.

When the Abbasids were in practice seen to follow the same path as their predecessors, dissatisfaction among the people rose, and several uprisings took place. The Abbasid caliphs who were afraid of Imam Al-Kadhim’s (‘a) influence among the people constantly accused the Imam (‘a) of being behind the uprisings that ensued. The Imam (‘a) was closely guarded and often summoned to the caliphs with these accusations. In order not to arouse the anger and commotion of the people, during the times the Imam (‘a) was held under arrest, the caliphs used to officially pretend that the Imam (‘a) was called in as a guest. The Imam (‘a) was held captive in the houses of ministers and other prominent figures. Eventually, however, Imam Al-Kadhim (‘a) was imprisoned in deep, dark dungeons and tortured until he was poisoned under Haroon Rashid’s order.

The sects that had been formed during the time of Imam Al-Sadiq (‘a), where his sons were considered to be the succeeding Imams, were strengthened by the Abbasids and therefore the members of these sects did not believe in Imam Al-Kadhim’s (‘a) leadership.

X2. Preparations For The Final Imam (‘Aj) – Difficulty Seeing

The Abbasid caliphs imprisoned Imam Al-Kadhim (‘a), which meant that the Imam’s (‘a) followers did not have access to him. They could neither visit nor see him for long periods of time, and had extremely

limited opportunities to contact the Imam ('a) or receive anything from him. It was unlike previous Imams ('a), where although they were kept in house arrest or isolation, people could still see them, even if from a distance. However, people could not even see Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) with the ensuing covert prison transfers schemed by the caliphs. This was something the Shias had not experienced before.

Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) knew that he would be forced to be away from his followers and therefore expanded the system of representatives established by his father Imam Al-Sadiq ('a). This was done by sending his companions to various areas as his representatives. The Imam ('a) saw the need for a wider and more independent operating network as the governing power tried to isolate him from his followers. Eventually, the Imam's ('a) representatives were scattered throughout the empire. They were mainly located in the most important areas and cities including Kufa, Baghdad, Egypt, Kandahar, Neyshaboor and Ahwaz. In this way, they were available to the people while being protected from the Abbasids.

The preceding Imam's ('a) preparatory work laid a foundation, step by step, preparing the Shi'a Muslims to the challenge of a hidden Imam. Imam Al-Sadiq's ('a) students had been equipped with a structured school of thought whilst being educated to become pious scholars whom other people could trust and turn to in the Imam's ('a) absence. The regime at the time encouraged inventive ideologies that led people astray. However, the Imams ('a) had presented Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) school in such a way that the truth shone brightly for those who read, reflected and drew conclusions based on the guidelines the Imams ('a) had left behind. These scholars could, therefore, represent Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) more independently without having to see him.

In parallel, the Imam ('a) maintained contact with his representatives but also other companions via the exchange of letters to the extent possible. Through these letters, the Imam ('a) answered more difficult questions regarding religious laws and religious beliefs, but also questions concerning his representatives. In doing so, the Imam ('a) presented his representatives, reaffirmed his support for them and, where required, removed them from their positions. In this way, the Imam's ('a) indirect presence and his control over the network were confirmed.

1. Hamida Barbariyya is known by that name when she was from the Berber people and belonged to this indigenous people from Northern Africa. She is also known as Hamida Andalusiya and therefore may have had roots from Andalusia, today's Spain. Hamida came to have a very prominent position and Imam Al-Baqir ('a) testified his daughter in-law's acclaimed personality in this world and next. Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) testified to his wife's piety and she was one of his main companions and whom he would refer to answer questions. Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) also named Hamida as one of the five trusted representatives he left behind. Hamida had initially been a slave and taken in by Ahl Al-Bait ('a).

2. Some of these occasions and the words of the Imam ('a) in the question are described, among other things in Al-Kafi volume 1 s 307–311; Bihar Al-Anwar volume 48 s 12–29; Al-Irshad volume 2 s 216–222; A'lam Al-Wara volume 2 s 7–16 et al.

3. Note that this Abbasid caliph, like many others, was named with the same name as the Imams ('a) and the Prophet (S) had proclaimed and named during their time. In fact, this was one of the Abbasid rulers' propaganda ploy to direct the people's attention to themselves, to buy legitimacy by showing themselves as the Prophet's (S) followers, to assert themselves as kind to Ahl Al-Bait ('a) and if possible use their kinship to the Prophet (S) to create confusion among the people as to who the actual Imams were.

[4.](#) This event is narrated in Tahdhib Al-Akam by Sheikh Al-Tusi volume 4 p.149; Hayat Musa Ibn Ja'far by Qorashi p.472 et al.

6.9 – The 8th Imam [Tenth Ma'soom] – Imam Al-Ridha' ('A)

Birth And Characteristics

Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) was born 11 Dhu 'l-Qa'da in the year 148 AH/766 AD. and was the son of Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) and Najma Khatoon (r.a.).[1](#)

The name of Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) was Ali but was called Ridha for his satisfaction with God's decree and for all creations were content with him. Like previous Imams ('a), no one in Imam Al-Ridha's ('a) time could compare with him. Friends and enemies alike testified to the Imam's ('a) good morals and magnanimity, as well as his deep knowledge and devoted worship.

Becoming Imam

Due to the prevailing circumstances, Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) took special precautions in the appointment of Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) as his successor. Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) had many children and was aware of the Abbasids' plans to create confusion as to whom the next Imam would be. Therefore, Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) gathered his companions and wrote a will whom sixty of the elderly and respected people in Medina signed. The will be revealed that Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) was the successor of Imam Al-Kadhim ('a), in accordance with the Prophet's (S) proclamation. Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) proclaimed Imam Al-Ridha's ('a) position and Imamah in other contexts as well.[2](#)

Governance During Imam Al-Ridha's ('A) Time

Imam Al-Ridha's ('a) Imamah which lasted a total of 20 years coincided with the rule of three Abbasid caliphs. The rulers during the time of Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) were:

- 1) Haroon Rashid (170 AH/786 AD – 193 AH/809 AD)
- 2) Muhammad Al-Amin (193 AH/809 AD – 198 AH/813 AD)
- 3) Abdullah Al-Ma'moon (198 AH/813 AD – 218 AH/833 AD)

Imam Al-Ridha's ('A) Time

Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) was over thirty years old when he took over the divine leadership and Haroon Rashid was still the caliph in governance. Haroon was even less tolerant of Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) than he was of his father Imam Al-Kadhim ('a). But his government had lost its popularity among the people because of their long-standing oppression and assassination of Imam Al-Kadhim ('a). This prevented Haroon Rashid from harassing Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) as much. Nevertheless, the local governors of Medina were still hateful to all Shias. The people could not visit the Imam ('a) freely, and Haroon's spies monitored all of Imam Al-Ridha's ('a) movements.

Towards the end of Haroon's time, there was a political war waging beneath the surface between two of his sons. The conflict had spread and divided the kingdom into two parts. The older son, Amin, who was from an Arab mother and had an Arab nationalist agenda, received support from the Arabs, while the younger son, Ma'moon, who was from a Persian mother, had a Persian nationalist agenda and was supported by the Persians. Haroon Rashid, who hated that there was a rivalry between his sons, took a vow from both that after his death Amin would rule the western part of the empire while Ma'moon would rule the eastern side. When Haroon died, Ma'moon was with him and buried him while Amin, who was in Baghdad, declared that the entire kingdom was his and he immediately deposed Ma'moon. In order to regain power, Ma'moon sought to have Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) by his side as he knew many Persians were followers of Ahl Al-Bayt ('a).

Due to the prevailing circumstances, Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) was freer in spreading knowledge. Therefore, the Imam ('a) clarified the concept of Imamah even more and introduced himself as the one whom it was obligatory to obey, without fearing the oppressors. However, the Imam ('a) asked his followers to be careful in their actions and not to speak openly and publicly about this, in order not to be harmed.

Even in response to one of Ma'mon's letters asking the Imam ('a) to write something for him regarding the principles of Islam, the Imam ('a) began to speak of the unity of God, the Prophet's (S) prophecy, Imam Ali ('a) and the eleven Imams ('a) Imamah, he described their responsibilities as "those responsible for the affairs of the Muslims".³

Ultimately, Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) emphasised, on several occasions and with several prominent ahadith, *inter alia* through the famous hadith known as 'the golden chain', Imamah and its important role in protecting the faith.⁴

Y. The Authorities' New Strategy

After a time of conflict and internal conspiracies, Ma'moon managed to win the conflict against his brother Amin, who was killed. Ma'moon became caliph, but the state of the kingdom was still unstable, and his rule was still shaky. On the one hand, half the empire had supported his brother Amin, and on the other hand, the popular uprising was a constant threat as there was much dissatisfaction among the

people for the prevailing oppression in the empire. In addition, Ma'moon was afraid of Imam Al-Ridha's ('a) position and his enlarged influence among the people.

The rulers constantly considered the Imams ('a) of Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) as the greatest threat to their dominion. Albeit the fact that the Imams ('a) did not revolt, they were treated as the most serious adversaries. Moreover, the Shi'a Muslims, and in fact, Imam Ali's ('a) followers, were the most disadvantaged group since the time of the Prophet (S) and paid a high price for their devotion to Ahl Al-Bayt ('a). They were oppressed, persecuted, displaced, imprisoned, tortured and brutally murdered while their fortunes were confiscated. In the majority of cases, not even their families and relatives escaped the tyranny of the rulers and found themselves outcasts on the outskirts of society, and had to conceal their faith in order to survive. However, after Imam Al-Husayn ('a), some of them rose against oppression. Although such movements were, sooner or later, brutally defeated and the people involved massacred, their cries and uprisings for justice left an impact on society and opened a path for other oppressed people. Consequently, Shi'a Muslim movements were always viewed as a threat, first to the Umayyad and then to the ruling empire of the Abbasid rulers.

Ma'moon was a sly person and did not afford to fight such movements publicly and openly spill blood; he wanted to stave off the threat strategically. He did this by showing affection to Imam Al-Ridha' ('a), whom the Shi'a Muslims saw as their supreme leader and obliged to obey. Ma'moon appointed Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) as his successor, thereby accentuating himself as a supporter of the Prophet's (S) household and gaining legitimacy. In doing so, he encouraged Shi'a Muslims and others who favoured Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) to support him and strengthen his rule. By this plot, he intended to control the increased influence that the Imam ('a) had received among the people. At the same time, he wanted to eradicate the Shi'a Muslim movements that were causing uprisings in the empire on a regular basis. He also sought to remove Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) from Medina where his followers surrounded him, and isolate the Imam ('a). By bringing the Imam ('a) closer to himself, Ma'moon could better surveil the Imam ('a) and keep his movements and contacts under control.

Y1. The Enemies' Solution: Exile

Ma'moon decided to force Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) into exile, so he brought him to Khorasan and presented him as a successor.

Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) was summoned to Khorasan without warning and was forced to accept in order to avoid bloodshed. The Imam ('a) headed towards Khorasan in a caravan accompanied by Ma'mon's representatives and soldiers, while the Imam's ('a) family and relatives were not allowed to join. On Ma'mon's order, the caravan travelled to Khorasan via a special itinerary where large cities, in which Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) had a strong following, were avoided. Instead, the Imam ('a) was led through villages, cities and areas where Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) were less well known or where the Abbasids had a stronghold and where tendencies of hostility towards Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) roamed. The Imam ('a) was constantly watched

throughout the journey and the caravan, on the order of Ma'moon, travelled relatively unnoticed in order not to reveal the Imam's ('a) identity and not give him the opportunity to get in touch with people. But the Imam's ('a) outstanding personality shone like a bright light through the blanket of darkness, and sooner or later people became aware of his presence, gathered around him and found out his identity, prompting Ma'mon's representatives to rush the caravan onward.

When the Imam ('a) arrived in Khorasan, Ma'moon spoke about his plans to officially appoint the Imam ('a) as his successor, whereby the Imam ('a) refused and replied:

"If the caliphate is your legitimate right, you do not hold the right to bestow it, and if it is not your legitimate right, you are not entitled to bestow it."⁵

In this way, Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) questioned the whole foundation of the Abbasid caliphate and Ma'mon's legitimacy as a caliph, in addition to shedding light on Ma'mon's underlying purpose behind his proposal. Ultimately, Ma'moon threatened the Imam ('a) that there was no other way but to accept the position as his successor. The Imam ('a) accepted with the condition of not being involved in government-issued orders, and neither need to issue orders, prohibitions, or judgments nor appoint or set aside anyone for any service, which Ma'moon accepted.⁶ By doing so, Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) clarified that the position was forced upon him and attested to the fact that he had nothing to do with Ma'mon's rule. Additionally, the stipulation of the conditions ensured that Ma'moon would not use the Imam's ('a) title as successor against the Imam ('a) for the purpose of deceiving the people.

Ma'moon hoped, after the Imam's ('a) acceptance, to avert several threats, including preventing Shi'a Muslims from rebelling against the regime by making them feel involved in the regime through the Imam ('a). Ma'moon also believed that he could isolate Imam Al-Ridha' ('a), make him lose contact with his followers and no longer be able to lead and influence people. In addition, he intended to give legitimacy to his regime and his decisions through the forced presence of the Imam ('a) near the court. He also tried to challenge and question the Imam's ('a) knowledge in front of others to reduce the Imam's ('a) position. This was intended to be achieved by organizing gatherings where well-known ideologues and prominent scientists and scholars were invited to debate against Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) and ask "impossible" questions.

Opposite Effect – Imam Al-Ridha' ('A) Spreads The Truth And Gets More Followers

During his time in Khorasan, Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) partook in many public discussions with people from different faiths and ideologies, where he prevailed by far. People, who either did not hitherto know of the Imam ('a) or met him in a hostile manner, left the gatherings as his admirers and followers. The news of these discussions spread to the people, causing even the most unversed of them to open their eyes to Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) and Ahl Al-Bayt ('a).

Ma'moon initially wanted to engage Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) in all kinds of debates, with the hope that the

Imam ('a) would someday be confounded. As such, the reputation and honour of the Imam ('a) would weaken, not least in the question of having a uniquely divinely chosen position and knowledge. Therefore, the debates transpired in every possible field, from issues of monotheism and God's justice to scientific questions. Ma'moon called in Christian and Jewish scholars as well as scholars from other Muslim branches to debate against the Imam ('a). He made sure to invite the most prominent scholars in each field and from various schools and ideologies in the hope that one of them could surpass the Imam's ('a) knowledge or challenge him with a question he would not be able to answer. However, all who met Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) soon came to recognize the outstanding scientific superiority of the Imam ('a), alongside his excellent piety and morality that illuminated the debates. They loved the arguments he put forth and the manner in which he dealt with his counterparts.⁷

Ma'mon's plans were revealed once again when he asked the Imam ('a) to lead the Eid prayer. He wanted to show the people that he had respect for the Imam ('a) and gave him preference. The Imam ('a) initially refused based on the condition of not participating in the governance. Thereof, disseminating the message that religion is not separate from governmental affairs. After Ma'mon's insistence, the Imam ('a) then asserted to lead the prayer on the condition of being allowed to do so in the same manner in which the Prophet (S) did.

People were used to seeing the caliph go to prayer accompanied by a large escort of lavish splendour with luxury and officials riding horses. But Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) began to walk towards the place where the prayer was to be performed barefoot while invoking the greatness of God with each step, the people then followed him and also began to walk barefoot behind him. Even the military commanders and the civil judges stepped down from their horses and began to walk barefoot. A huge crowd of people followed the Imam ('a). When the Imam ('a) called out in supplication to God prior to the prayer, all people did the same, and the situation became such that Ma'moon became afraid that a revolution would break out at any moment. Ma'moon, therefore, ordered that the Imam ('a) be brought back immediately and did not even let the Imam ('a) perform the prayer. Consequently, many people understood that the evil intentions that the government was assumed to hold were in fact, true.

Imam Al-Ridha' ('A) Becomes A Martyr

When Ma'moon finally realized that all his plans were unsuccessful and Imam Al-Ridha's ('a) following was growing, as was the reach of his message, the caliph decided to poison the Imam ('a).⁸

In the Arab parts of the empire, many were dissatisfied with Ma'mon's policies and proclaimed Abbasid Ibrahim Al-Mahdi as a caliph in Baghdad. Ma'moon decided to seize the opportunity and with the removal of Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) and the restoration of Baghdad as the capital of the kingdom, show that the caliphate will stay within his lineage and thereby receive the support of other Abbasids. On his way to Baghdad, Ma'moon poisoned Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) who became a martyr in 203 AH/818 AD.

Once he arrived in Baghdad, Ma'moon got the Arabs on his side, as Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) was no longer

his successor. Ma'moon then returned to his father's harsh manners towards Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) followers.

Y2. Preparing For The Final Imam ('Aj) – Difficult To Achieve

It was very difficult for Imam Al-Ridha's ('a) companions to meet and reach the Imam ('a), owing to the geographical distance as well as the constrain on his movements by the regime. These conditions were further preparations for a time in which the final Imam ('a) would be in occultation. Ma'moon wanted to separate Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) from his companions in order to weaken their relationship and spiritual contact. In effect, the separation became an important lesson and a great preparation for the final Imam ('aj). The Shi'a Muslims gained the skillset needed for having an Imam ('a) hidden from sight. They had to conjure up new methods while discovering the strengths and weaknesses that needed to be secured to cope in such a situation.

The system that preceding Imams ('a) had established and expanded, of having Shi'a representatives around the Islamic world, played an important role during the time of Imam Al-Ridha' ('a). As the Imam ('a) moved to Khorasan and his contact with Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) companions became even more limited, the system played a more significant role. Seeing as it was difficult to reach the Imam ('a), it was important to be able to take responsibility, be independent and to act in accordance with the Imam's ('a) will without receiving direct orders. For this, a higher understanding of the Imam ('a) and his path was required, in order to better appreciate what the Imam ('a) himself would have done in different scenarios. This acted as a preparation even for those who had not themselves attained such level of insight, as they learned to seek out the Shi'a Muslim scholars who had the better insight and lived by to the Imam's ('a) teachings; a practise that still applies today.

Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) had an extremely important role in spreading Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) doctrine and describing the concept of Imamah. He got the message to reach many more. He educated others through his actions, exemplified by the stance against Ma'mon's schemes and the empire's developments. As well as through his words, embodied when he officially and openly called himself an 'Imam whose obedience is obligatory'.

Furthermore, one should not forget Imam Al-Ridha's ('a) political role. Admittedly, Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) agreed to become the caliph's successor under threat and with the condition of not being involved in state affairs. But through his presence, the Imam ('a) created a political consciousness and movement within the people. The Imam's ('a) humble and good behaviour towards all people, was in itself a political stance. Further, the insistence of the Imam ('a) to separate his path from Ma'moons showed the people that there was a clear difference between what they stood for. The imam ('a) further proved this difference when he performed the Eid prayer similar to the Prophet's ('a), reminding the people of the Prophet's ('a) way and how it stood in stark contrast to the way of Ma'moon.

Finally, the movement that arose in connection with Imam Al-Ridha's ('a) exile to Khorasan was of immense importance. Many of the Imam's ('a) relatives and companions emigrated in their attempts to

reach the Imam A) and with this, they spread within and beyond the Islamic empire. Many of Imam Al-Ridha's ('a) siblings, including his sister Sayyida Ma'sooma ('a), were among those who started their journey towards Khursan. Despite being attacked by Ma'mon's secret troops and becoming martyrs on the road, the sanctuary of this great endeavour came to form the heart of a holy city that has been the premise for the advancement and spread of Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) teachings to the world ever since and to this day!

Did You Know?

On the road to Khorasan, Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) stopped at the city of Qom for a few months and organized mourning ceremonies in memory of Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) tragedy. Even in Toos, where the Imam ('a) stayed for over a year, he did the same. Mourning ceremonies in Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) memory had also been maintained by preceding Imams ('a), however, due to the impending circumstances in society, they were restricted to their home and closest followers. The era and position of Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) enabled him to spread the gatherings more openly, even in Marv, which was the capital of the kingdom during the time and a central city where people from all corners of the world met. With the advent of the month of Muharram, Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) initiated these mourning ceremonies, and an atmosphere of sorrow embossed the surroundings. The public participated and was reminded of the events that took place in Karbala and above all the values Imam Al-Husayn ('a) upheld.

Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) personally called the people to these gatherings and began by narrating the events of Ashura, followed by other people portraying the story of Karbala. The Imam ('a) encouraged two of the most famous poets of his time, Abdullah Ibn Thabit and De'bel Al-Khuza'i, who had dictated poetry in the description of the Ashura tragedy, to read their poems melodically in the gathering which evoked the cries of the Imam ('a) and the people.

1. Najma Khatoon (r.a.) was originally from Nubia, the territory of southern Egypt and northern Sudan, and had been brought to Arabia as a slave. Some say that she also had roots in the islands of Marseille, today's southern France. Imam Al-Sadiq's ('a) wife, Hamida (r.a.), took her into their home and Najma (r.a.) came to be Imam Al-Kadhim's ('a) wife. Najma (r.a.) was prominent in piety and it is stated that Hamida (r.a.) saw the Prophet (S) in a dream where he asked her to marry Najma (r.a.) to Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) and proclaimed that the best child on earth will be born from this marriage.

2. This is narrated in Al-Irshad volume 2 p.248 et al.

3. This is narrated in Kafi by Kulayni volume 1 p.187 et al.

4. Hadith Silsilat adh-Dhabab (the Golden Chain) is a well-known hadith whose witnesses and narrators are said to be between 10000–30000 people and are therefore among the frequently recounted and authentic ahadith of both Sunni and Shi'a. During his journey to Khorasan and in connection with a stay in Neyshaboor, Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) narrated this hadith from his father as told from his father and on to the Prophet (S) who narrated from God. It is stated that when Imam Al-Ridha's ('a) caravan was ready for departure, while thousands of people had made their way to the site and gathered to see the Prophet's (S) son, those present asked the Imam ('a): O the Prophet's (S) son, should you not render a hadith before leaving our city?

Accordingly, Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) reported that he heard from his father Musa Ibn Ja'far Al-Kadhim ('a) who heard from his father Ja'far Ibn Muhammad Sadiq ('a) who heard from his father Muhammad Ibn Ali Baqir ('a) who heard from his father Ali Ibn Husayn Al-Sajjad ('a) who heard from his father Husayn Ibn Ali ('a) who heard from his father Ali Ibn Abu Talib ('a) who

heard from the Prophet (S) from Jibrail ('a) that God said: " 'La ilaha ill Allah' (there is no deity except God) is My fort; so whoever enters My fort is protected from My punishment" and then the Imam ('a) stopped the caravan and added: " ... with its conditions; and I am one of its conditions."

With a highly reliable narrative chain that went back to Imam ('a) after Imam ('a) all the way to the Prophet (S) and further to God, the hadith became known as hadith Silsilat ath-Thahab, while Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) emphasized the belief in Imamah as the central condition and path to tawhid and belief in God. The hadith is narrated in Yanabi 'Al-Mawadda by Qandozi (print year 1422 AH) p.364; as-Sawa'iq Al-Muhriqa by Ibn Hibr Haythami (print year 1417 AH) volume 2 p.595; Al-Fosool Al-Mohamma by Ibn Sabbagh Maliki (print year 1409 AH) p.243; Jawaher Al-'Eqdayn (print year 1407 AH) p.334; and Ketab at-Tawhid by Ibn Babooye p.49; Ma'ani Al-Akhbar by Sheikh Sadooq p.371 et al.

[5.](#) Imam Al-Ridha's ('a) response is narrated in Bihar Al-Anwar volume 49p. 129 et al

[6.](#) The Imam ('a) expressed his refusal to accept Ma'mon's offer several times during the ongoing conversation, but in the end Ma'moon presented an embedded threat by referring to the assembly council as the second caliph Omar had arranged and how the refusal to accept would mean death. This is reflected in Irshad volume 2 p.259 et al.

[7.](#) This is narrated in I'tijaj by Tabarsi volume 2 p.396; 'Uyoon Akhbar Al-Ridha by Sheikh Sadooq volume 1 p.152 et al.

[8.](#) This is narrated in i.a. Tarikh Ya'qobi volume 2 s 471; Al-Irshad by Sheih Al-Mufid volume 2s s 270; 'Uyoon Akhbar Al-Ridha volume 2 s 245; Al-Hayat as-Siyasiyya li-l-Imam Al-Ridha of 'Amili s 202; Al-Thiqat by Ibn Hibban Volume 8 s 456-457 et al.

6.10 – The 9th, 10th And 11th Imams [Eleventh, Twelfth, And Thirteenth Ma'soom] – Imam Al-Jawad ('A), Imam Al-Hadi ('A) And Imam Al-'Askari ('A)

Birth And Characteristics

Imam Al-Jawad ('a), son of Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) and Sabika (r.a.)[1](#), was born on the 10th Rajab in 195 AH/811 AD in Medina. His name was Muhammad, and one of his most famous titles was Jawad, the generous one, in accordance with the Prophet's (S) proclamation.

Imam Al-Hadi ('a), son of Imam Al-Jawad ('a) and Samana Maghrebiyya (r.a.)[2](#), was born on the 15th of Thul Hijja in 212 AH/827 AD near Medina. His name was Ali, and one of his most famous titles was Hadi, meaning the guiding.

Imam Al-'Askari ('a), son of Imam Al-Hadi ('a) and Hudayth (r.a.)[3](#), was born in 232 AD/846 AD. in the city of Samarra, Iraq. His name was Hasan, and one of his most famous titles was Askari, derived from "Ashes" which means the army and its hiding place and refers to the fact that the Imam ('a) spent his

entire life in Samarra which was originally a military base, in an area called Askar.

All three Imams ('a), as well as former Imams ('a), were recognized among the scholars of their time for possessing the highest knowledge and expertise in religious matters as well as being god-fearing, pious and upholding distinguished moral values, in particular in their relation with other people, like their grandfather the Prophet (S).

Becoming Imams

Imam Al-Jawad ('A)

There are many narrations depicting the manner in which Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) announced his son Imam Al-Jawad ('a) as the succeeding Imam ('a).⁴ Imam Al-Jawad's ('a) Imamah started at the age of 8 after the martyrdom of Imam Al-Ridha' ('a). The Imam's ('a) young age was met by some doubt. There were attempts to confuse people, especially Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) followers, by questioning the Imam's ('a) age. But Imam Al-Ridha's ('a) close and faithful followers adhered to Imam Al-Ridha's ('a) clear instructions in the question of the successive Imam ('a) after him.

Imam Al-Ridha' ('a), through divine knowledge, was aware that his son would become Imam ('a) at a young age and that it would prove to be a great ordeal for all, not least Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) companions.

The Imam ('a) prepared the people in advance by clarifying the concept of Imamah to an even greater degree than before. The Imam ('a) exemplified those of God's chosen guides who was given divine knowledge and wisdom at a young age. The likes of which were Prophet Sulayman ('a) [Salamo] and Prophet Isa ('a) [Jesus] who even spoke in the cr'Adalahe. In this way, Imam Al-Ridha' ('a) indicated Imam Al-Jawad's ('a) similarity to them while making it clear that the position of Imamah is a divine position of God's choice and not age-dependent. This in itself was also a preparation for the twelfth and final Imam ('aj), who also exercised the position of Imamah at a young age.

There were numerous attempts to try and test Imam Al-Jawad ('a) in various ways. However, the Imam's ('a) approach and the response showed time and again that he possessed unique knowledge, wisdom and morality, which were linked to the divine source of truth.⁵

Governance During Imam Al-Jawad's ('A) Time

Imam Al-Jawad ('a) experienced harsher surveillance and restriction than previous Imams ('a). This is, not least, reflected in the limited amount of narrations attributed to him, that do not exceed 250 ahadith.⁶

The rulers during the time of Imam Al-Jawad ('a) were two Abbasid caliphs:

1) Ma'moon Abbasi (193 AH/808 AD – 218 AH/833 AD)

2) Mu'tasim Abbasi (218 AH/833 AD – 227 AH/841 AD)

Imam Al-Hadi ('A)

Imam Al-Jawad ('a) was called to Baghdad by Mu'tasim Abbasi, whereby the Imam ('a) knew that his life was in danger. Accordingly, he presented Imam Al-Hadi ('a) to the Shi'a Muslims as his successor and left a written will in this regard to eliminating doubts. Like his father, Imam Al-Hadi ('a) was 8 years old when he took the position of Imamah. There was a strong agreement among Shi'a that he was the Imam ('a).⁷

Governance During Imam Al-Hadi's ('A) Time

The rulers during the time of Imam Al-Hadi ('a) were seven different Abbasid caliphs:

1. Mu'tasim Abbasi (218 AH/833 AD – 227 AH/842 AD) [Ma'mon's brother]
2. Wathiq (227 AH/842AD – 232 AH/847 AD) [Mu'tasim's son]
3. Mutawakkil (232 AH/847 AD – 248 AH/861 AD) [Wathiq's brother]
4. Muntasir [Mutawakkil's son – 6 months]
5. Musta'in (248 AH/862 AD – 252 AH/866 AD) [Muntasir's cousin]
6. Mu'tazz (252 AH /866 AD – 255 AH/869 AD) [Mutawakkil's second son]

Imam Al-'Askari ('A)

Imam Al-'Askari ('a) officially became Imam at the age of twenty-two, subsequent to his father, Imam Al-Hadi's martyrdom. Imam Al-'Askari ('a) had been designated as the successor of his father Imam Al-Hadi ('a) based on the Prophet's (S) proclamation. Although there were attempts by the enemies to create doubt and confusion about Imam Al-'Askari ('a) Imamah, most companions followed the Imam ('a).⁸ As they had been given clear instruction from Imam Al-Hadi ('a) through his established system of reliable representatives, while the Shi'a Muslims had matured to some extent through their past experience of attempts to confuse regarding the matter.

Governance During Imam Al-'Askari's ('A) Time

There were three Abbasid caliphs during Imam Al-'Askari's time:

- 1) Mu'tazz Abbasi (252 AH/866 AD – 255 AH/869 AD)
- 2) Muhtadi Abbasi (255 AH/869 AD – 256 AH/870 AD)
- 3) Mu'tamid Abbasi (256 AH/870 AD – 279 AH/892 AD)

Z. Fear Of The Expected Saviour Increases

The Prophet (S) had spoken about the final Imam ('aj) to such an extent that his arrival was a matter of course for everyone. The fact that Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) would be the twelfth descendant from the Prophet's (S) family drew more attention to Imam Al-'Askari ('a). The enlightened enemies and the faithful companions knew that the final Imam ('aj) would be Imam Al-'Askari's ('a), son. This caused the companions to yearn for the fulfilment of God's promise and the enemies to be in constant fear and do everything possible to prevent it.⁹

Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) enemies kept a close watch to prevent the birth of Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj). Reminiscent of the parable of Pharaoh who killed 90000 boys on account of a prophecy that a child from Bani Israel would grow to crush his power. Similarly, Nemrood did the same before the birth of Prophet Ibrahim ('a) [Abraham]. The reason the Imams ('a) were always kept under strict surveillance, restricted, forcefully moved and finally murdered was in order to prevent the birth of the final Imam ('aj). The surveillance of the Imams ('a) was constantly a matter of fact, and it intensified for every Imam ('a) up until the time of Imam Al-'Askari ('a) where it reached an unprecedented height. Imam Al-'Askari ('a) was held under house arrest all his life and was not even allowed to travel to Mecca to perform the mandatory duty of Hajj! The enemies were afraid that Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) would be born without their knowledge. They can be likened to Pharaoh with their attempts to monitor newborn children in the household of Imam Al-'Askari ('a) and check the women in the house daily to prevent the birth of the expected child who would become Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj).

Z1. Enemy's Solution: Intense Surveillance And House-Arrest

Imam Al-Jawad ('A)

Following the forced relocation of Imam Al-Ridha' ('a), the Abbasids continued to oppress Imam Al-Jawad ('a) who was taken in by Ma'moon to live near the royal palace and be closely surveilled. To increase surveillance even further, and in an attempt to bring the final Imam ('aj) from Ma'mon's own lineage, Ma'moon forced Imam Al-Jawad ('a) to marry his daughter Umm Al-Fadhl. In this way, Ma'moon also had, from the perspective of the public, an acceptable reason to keep Imam Al-Jawad ('a) close and under his constant watch. However, his plans failed, and Umm Al-Fadhl bore no children. God's plan in asserting the purity of Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) was upheld as the next Imam ('a) was born from another pure wife.

Imam Al-Jawad ('a) spent twenty-three years of his life under the caliphate of Ma'mon and two years during the caliphate of Mu'tasim. Ultimately, Imam Al-Jawad ('a) was martyred by the hands of Ma'mon's daughter Umm Al-Fadhl who poisoned the Imam ('a) in 220 AH, the Imam ('a) was twenty-five years of age.

Imam Al-Hadi ('A)

During the time of Imam Al-Hadi ('a), the situation worsened, and the surveillance of the Imam ('a) and his household intensified. The Imam ('a) lived at first in Medina. The Abbasids had the Imam ('a) under surveillance and limited his contact with people.

Under the rule of Mutawakkil, in 233 AH, the Imam ('a) was called to Samarra. Samarra was both closer to the capital and was a military city where the caliph's forces were concentrated. Therefore, the caliph could better keep an eye on the Imam ('a) in Samarra. The caliph made sure to publicly make it seem that he wanted the Imam ('a) close to him for virtuous aims and that he invited the Imam ('a) to Iraq with respect. What may have seemed like an invitation on the surface, was, in fact, an indirect threat to kill the Imam ('a) if he refused.

People in Medina complained a lot about being separated from Imam Al-Hadi ('a) whom they loved. The position and influence of the Imam ('a) among the people caused the caliph to fear him even more.

Finally, the Imam ('a) saw that there was no other way but to go along to Samarra. Imam Al-Hadi ('a) was living with his immediate family in the middle of the military city of Samarra and was surveilled from all directions. Imam Al-Hadi ('a) and his son Imam Al-'Askari ('a) became known as Askariyyayn¹⁰ as they settled in the Askar area and were not allowed to leave Samarra and were kept under strict house arrest until their martyrdom. Therefore, Imam Al-Hadi ('a) was even more heavily guarded than his father Imam Al-Jawad ('a) and had even more limited contact with his followers.

In addition, many spies were hired to monitor the Imam ('a), and his contact with humans was limited. Guards surrounded the Imam's ('a) house. Imam Al-Hadi's ('a) home was stormed on occasions when the caliph suspected that the Imam ('a) had contact with his followers or received their letters.

In about twenty-one years, till his martyrdom, Imam Al-Hadi ('a) lived in Samara. Mutawakkil, akin to previous Abbasid caliphs, publicly respected the Imam ('a) all while scheming to undermine his rank and influence among people. After failed attempts, Imam Al-Hadi ('a) was poisoned and martyred year 254 AH/868 AD.¹¹

Imam Al-'Askari ('A)

Imam Al-'Askari ('a) was the Imam to be surveilled most intensely, also reflected in his short lifetime and Imamah. The Abbasids knew the final Imam ('aj) to be the son of Imam Al-'Askari ('a), and therefore the Imam ('a) and his household were on surveillance during all hours of the day. The Imam ('a) was in constant house-arrest, unable to leave and visits were strictly limited. Even the Imam's ('a) companions were surveilled, causing great danger and risks in trying to visit the Imam ('a). Hence, only a few had access to his home and his faithful companions would visit him disguised in order to send him only important concerns. Imam Al-'Askari ('a) urged many of his followers not to greet him or even show signs of knowing him; lest for their own safety. The fear concerning his offspring was so intense that he

was murdered early and became the Imam ('a) martyred at the youngest age. Imam Al-'Askari ('a) was martyred year 260 AH, by poising ordered by the caliph of age, similar to his father and forefathers.

Z2. Intensively Preparing For The Final Imam ('Aj) – Shi'a Network

Imam Al-Jawad ('a) continued his father's and grandfather's work and drafted a systematically written foundation for religious laws. Likewise, the organization of a self-governing network of reliable personalities, and above all, criteria for scholars that people could follow and turn to in the absence of the Imam ('a). Imam Al-Jawad ('a) wrote down the collection of religious laws and developed this system because he knew that both Imam Al-Hadi ('a) and Imam Al-'Askari ('a) would spend most of their lives under house arrest and under close supervision. The Imam ('a) therefore prepared the people for the fact that it would be difficult to receive direct guidance from an Imam ('a) for a long time to come. With these works, the Shi'a Muslims now had guidelines for how the religion should be preserved and followed. Simultaneously, this systematic arrangement accounted for how answers to new questions could be obtained without having direct contact with the Imam ('aj).

Imam Al-Jawad ('a) also appointed representatives in various parts of the Islamic world who were connected in a network. The Imam's ('a) representatives had various responsibilities throughout the Islamic world and maintained his contact with his followers. The Imam ('a) actively referred people to the representatives in their living areas and countries, therefore confirming his support to them and strengthening their position. One of these prominent representatives was Sayyid Abdul-Adhim Hasani (r.a.) who was sent to Rey. He was of Imam Al-Hasan's ('a) descendants and a scholar whose religious and insightful position and high understanding of the contemporary situation and what was required, made him one of the most reliable representatives of the Imam ('a). It is recounted in the history that the Imam ('a) asked a multitude of Shi'a Muslims, who had travelled with difficulty all the way from Khorasan to visit him, to henceforth turn directly to Abdul-Adhim Hasani (r.a.) in Rey. In this way, the Shi'a Muslims were prepared, step by step, for the long occultation of the final Imam ('aj).

As surveillances intensified during Imam Al-Hadi' ('a) and Imam Al-'Askari's ('a) time, communicating through the Shi'a network of representatives became critical. These Imams ('a) utilized this kind of contact by often referring to pious reliable scholars who could be the best representatives of faith and Ahl Al-Bayt ('a). This was due to the strict surveillance and to ensure the safety of their followers, as well as the fact that Shi'a Muslims would be taught to seek out the most pious among scholars in the future.

Additionally, through this network, there were now Shi'a representatives spread throughout the Islamic state. The system of networks ensured that the establishment and preservation of the strong contact with the infallible Imam ('a) (as it is the centre and driving force), could live on despite threats and limitations. In addition to distributing Khums (one fifth wealth tax), sent by believers from all parts of the state, to the needy through the representatives, the Imams ('a) could also assist in other issues

concerning the Shias, through these representatives. The representatives of the Imams ('a) were self-propelled in many issues thanks to the guidelines and supporting documents provided by previous Imams ('a). At the same time, these representatives were connected and, if necessary, in contact with the Imams ('a) via letters, through a few reliable companions who gained access to the Imams ('a). This happened while other Shi'a Muslims were linked to the Imams ('a) through the representatives. The anchoring of this system was therefore very important in preparation for the final Imam's ('aj) time. Moreover, a large part of the teachings of the final Imams ('a) has reached us through the exchange of letters between them and their representatives.

Towards the end, the Imams ('a) referred people to their representatives more strictly and commanded Shias that they had to turn to these representatives and not directly seek the Imams ('a). Slowly but surely, the contact with the Imams ('a) was completely limited to the representatives, this was in connection with the intensified surveillance, causing extreme danger if getting in contact with them. It is narrated in history that on some occasions, the Imams ('a) spoke from behind a cloth so that people would not see them but only hear their voice and therefore Shias had to get used to following an Imam without seeing him. This while the Imams ('a) could at times refrain from meeting their followers so that the contemporary tyrants would not act accordingly. On other occasions, they abstained from it for the purpose of preparing the Shias for the occultation of the final Imam of the time, Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj).

In fact, Imam Al-Jawad ('a), Imam Al-Hadi ('a) and Imam Al-'Askari ('a) expanded and strengthened the system of representatives and scholars that previously was established over the Islamic world. They transformed the system into an even more entrenched network that enabled Imam Al-'Askari ('a) to keep in touch with his followers despite being on house arrest all of his life. This great effort came in addition to all the guidelines that all the Imams ('a) left behind, to constitute a very important preparation for the final Imam's ('aj) occultation and to be a basis for the survival of the Shias in the indirect presence of the Imam ('aj).

1. Imam Al-Jawad's ('a) mother, known as Sabika Nubiyya (r.a.), as she was originally from Nubia, is said to have been descended from the Prophet's (S) wife, Marie Qebtiyya (r.a.). She too was enslaved before Ahl Al-Bait ('a) took her in. She was known for her piety.

2. Imam Al-Hadi's ('a) mother Samana Maghrebiyya (r.a.) was also enslaved and taken to Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) home under Imam Al-Jawad's ('a) command. She often fasted and spent a lot of time in worship. Imam Al-Hadi ('a) has stated his mother was fully aware of the Imam ('a) of her time and was among the people of paradise.

3. Imam Al-'Askari's ('a) mother Hudayth (r.a.) was enslaved and taken in by Ahl Al-Bait ('a). Hudayth (r.a.) later became known as Jadda (grandmother) given that she was Imam Al-Mahdi's ('a) grandmother. Imam Al-'Askari ('a) appointed his mother as his representative to whom Shi'a would turn to in important matters. Accordingly, Hudayth (r.a.) had an important role in defending Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) and in dismissing false claims about him during his occultation as well as in addressing important issues and conveying important messages. Sayyida Hakima (r.a.), Imam Al-'Askaris ('a) aunt, resembles Imam Al-'Askaris ('a) appointment of his mother Hudayth (r.a.) at Imam Al-Husayn's ('a) leaves behind by her sister Sayyida Zaynab ('a) in the front to protect the next Imam ('a); Kamal ad-Din volume 2 p.501. In comparison, this is similar to Imam Al-Sadiq's ('a) appointment of five representatives, including his mother Hamida (r.a.), for preserving Imam Al-Kadhim's ('a) life and supporting the message while giving Shi'a reliable people to turn to.

4. Some of these events and occasions have been recounted, among others, in Kafi by Kulayni Volume 1 a p.320-323;

Irshad by Sheikh Mufid volume 2 p.265 and 274–280; Bihar Al-Anwar by Allamah Al-Majlisi volume 50 p. 18–37; ‘Uyoon Akhbar Al-Ridha by Sheikh Sadooq volume 2 p.586; Aṣl Al-Wara volume 2 p.92–96 et al.

[5.](#) The descriptions of questions that have been asked to Imam Al-Jawad ('a) and Imam's ('a) response are many and are narrated, among others, in Manaqib Aal Ali Ibn Abu Ṭalib by Ibn Shahrashoob volume 4 p.383; Dala'il Al-Imama by Tabari p.205–206; Kafṣ volume 1 p.322; Bihar Al-Anwar volume 50 p.99–100 et al.

[6.](#) This is recounted in Musnad Al-Imam Al-Jawad by Atarudi p.249 et al.

[7.](#) This is recounted in Kafi volume 1 p.381–382 and Musnad Al-Imam Al-Jawad p.20 et al.

[8.](#) This is narrated, in Al-Ghayba p. 120–122; Kashf Al-ghumma vol 2 p.404–407; Hayate Fekri va Siyasiye Imamane Shi'a by Ja'fariyan p.537 et al.

[9.](#) God says in the Holy Qur'an: "They want to extinguish the light of God with their mouths, but God will perfect His light, although the disbelievers dislike it." (the Holy Qur'an 61:8).

[10.](#) Askariyyan is also from the term boxes with the meaning army and its hiding place. The Imams' ('a) forced relocation to Samarra on the caliph's orders and their circumstances as well as consequences is a given historical fact narrated in the majority of historical accounts and sources including Tathkirat Al-Khawas by Ibn Jawzi volume 2 p.492 et al.

[11.](#) This is narrated in Irshad p 649; Kashf Al-Ghumma volume 4 p 40 et al.

6.11 – The 12th Imam [Fourteenth Ma'soom] – Imam Al-Mahdi ('Aj)

Å. Who Is The Final Imam ('Aj)?

Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) is the final of the twelve promised Imams ('a). He is the last expected saviour to fill the world with justice at the end of time.

[Birth And Characteristics](#)

Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) was born on the 15th of Sha'ban in the year 255 AH/869 AD, and he is the Imam ('aj) of our time. His father is Imam Al-'Askari ('a), and his mother is Sayyida Narjis (r.a.), a princess from Rome.[1](#) Sayyida Narjis's ('a) trip from Rome to Imam Al-'Askari's ('a) house, based on the prevailing circumstances, is as astounding as the Imam's ('aj) miraculous birth that, despite daily checks, avoided detection since no signs of pregnancy appeared on his mother.[2](#)

As the Abbasids' surveillance on the household of Imam Al-'Askari ('a) had reached its peak, as they waited for the Twelfth Imam and were terrified for his birth, the existence of the Imam ('aj) during his first year was a great secret only the closest companions knew of. Imam Al-'Askari ('a) kept his son Imam Al-Mahdi's ('aj) birth secret and only the most reliable companions were blessed by his presence, however occasionally.[3](#)

Appearance

According to narratives, the Prophet (S) has described Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) as the one that resembles him the most, which has also been narrated by Imam Al-'Askari ('a).⁴ Imam Ali ('a) has also stated that Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) will, at his arrival and uprising, have the appearance of a thirty or forty years old, despite his long life.⁵

Morality

Likewise, Imam Al-Mahdi's ('aj) morality has been compared to Prophet Muhammad's (S) morality; the most humble and submissive to God, the one with the highest wisdom and knowledge and the greatest benevolence, kindness, patience and indulgence.⁶ Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) is firm in standing up to oppression and leads the fight for justice courageously and firmly. The Imam ('aj) is also extremely generous, and with his uprising, the balance of the world will be restored, and not a single human being on earth will remain poor. Through the Imam ('aj) and his uprising, humanity will be advanced in its entirety and under his leadership develop its immense inherent potential. This is because Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) is the Imam for all mankind, the one who wants the good for all people and the one who will defeat oppression of the world and spread justice on earth.

Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) also has the traits and characteristics of former prophets ('a) and is, therefore, the collection of former prophets ('a) and the consummator of the prophetic mission.

Become An Imam

Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) officially took over the position of Imamah at the age of five in 260 AH/874 AD, when his father Imam Al-'Askari ('a) became a martyr. Imam Al-Mahdi's ('aj) name is Muhammad, and he is given the title Mahdi, meaning the guide.

Ā. What Will He Do?

Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) will emerge at a time when oppression is widespread, and people yearn for justice and equality. The Imam ('aj) will lead a revolution that will triumph over the power-thirsty, oppressive and evil forces that cause injustice and oppression.

It has been narrated that the Prophet (S) has said:

“Mahdi, from my descendants, will arrive at the end of time; the sky will pour down the rain, and the earth will bring greenery to him. **He will fill the earth with fairness and justice**, as it has been filled with oppression and injustice.”

And also:

“Listen to the good news about Mahdi! He will arrive at a time when the people will be suffering from a severe contradiction, and the earth will be struck by a violent quake. He will fill the earth with fairness and justice as it has been filled with injustice and tyranny. He will fill the hearts of his companions with piety and will spread justice everywhere.”

The Prophet (S) also said:

“A man comes up to him and asks, ‘O Imam Al-Mahdi (‘aj)! Bestow me! Bestow me!’ The Imam (‘aj) then responds by bestowing him to that extent which he could bear.”⁷

There are several narrations that prove that the Imam (‘aj) is a sea of grace and generosity. Also, narrations mention how he will treat people with kindness and save them from poverty and defeat, and spread peace and abundance of blessings among them.

À1. Enemy’s Solution: One Of Two Options – Prevent His Birth

Or Kill Him

Prevent The Birth Of The Imam (‘Aj)

Everyone had heard of Imam Al-Mahdi (‘aj) from the Prophet (S), and no one of the enemies doubted that he would be the twelfth Imam (‘aj). They believed it and were terrified that he would be born. Therefore, the contemporary tyrants monitored all movements to and from Imam Al-’Askari’s (‘a) house, and let midwives do daily checks to detect signs of pregnancy in the household. They were so scared that Imam Al-’Askari (‘a) was not even allowed to travel to Mecca to perform Hajj.

During Pharaoh’s time, Pharaoh also had competent women who controlled which of Bani Israel’s women became pregnant. When Prophet Musa’s (‘a) mother became pregnant, no signs of her pregnancy appeared. Similarly, it was for Imam Al-Mahdi’s (‘aj) mother, Sayyida Narjis (r.a.), who showed no sign of pregnancy. On the night when the Imam (‘aj) would be born, Imam Al-’Askari (‘aj) asked his aunt Hakima (r.a.) to stay and help Sayyida Narjis (r.a.). For a long time, it was a secret that Imam Al-’Askari (‘a) had a son. This was not even widely known among Shias and, apart from a few very close and reliable people, no one had knowledge of this. These few companions only got to know about or see the Imam (‘aj) once in a while. Under such circumstances, the final Imam (‘aj) began his life. He was protected, and during the first years, most people did not even know he was born.

Wanting To Kill The Imam (‘Aj)

When Imam Al-’Askari (‘a) was martyred, his brother Ja’far, known as ‘Ja’far the liar’⁸ wanted to pray the prayer for the deceased over him. Then Imam Al-Mahdi (‘aj) stepped forward and asked him to step aside since only one infallible Imam (‘a) can pray over another infallible Imam (‘a). Just afterwards, when the prayer was completed, and the guards realized what had happened, all guards ran to arrest Imam

Al-Mahdi ('aj), who had disappeared after the prayer. The military arrived there quickly and despite intensively searching for months, they could not find the Imam ('aj). They searched the basement of Imam Al-'Askaris ('a) house where the Imam ('aj) had been seen last time, in wells, the river and everywhere they could imagine. For four years, all of Samarra's wells were monitored 24-hours a day with deployed guards. The guards monitored the sites 24-hours a day and changed shifts three times daily. Because the wells were linked, they believed that the Imam ('aj) might have gone from one well to another. For six months, boats also travelled around the river at Samarra, scouting and striking down with spears in the water to kill the Imam ('aj) in case he got to the water. They did everything to find the Imam ('aj) and kill him. No offspring from Imam Al-'Askari's ('a) lineage was to live, so they took all measures to confirm that.

Ä2. God's Solution: Ghayba (Occultation)

God protected Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) by allowing the Imam ('aj) to enter a period of ghayba (occultation). The occultation meant that the Imam ('aj) would not be seen by people, and contacting him would be extremely limited. Initially, during the first ghayba soghra (minor occultation) the Imam ('aj) had contact with four representatives who replaced each other for a period of just over sixty-nine years. After the fourth representative's death, the Imams ('aj) ghayba Kubra (the great occultation) began, continuing until this day. This is so that Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) would be protected and return when the time is right and all of mankind mature, as the Prophet (S) and the Imams ('a) proclaimed. The Prophet (S) has said:

“God will reveal the occultation of Al-Mahdi from my Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) before the Day of Judgment; even if only one day would remain in this life. He will spread justice and will eradicate oppression and injustice.”⁹

Imam Al-Kadhim ('a), when asked if he is the Qa'im¹⁰, said:

“Yes, I am the rightful Qa'im. But the Qa'im who will cleanse the earth from God's enemies and fill it with fairness and justice is my fifth offspring. As he fears for his life, he will be in occultation for a long time. During the period of occultation, a group will turn away from religion. But some will be steadfast in their faith. Blessed are the Shi'a who, during this period of occultation, continue to be faithful to us and who remain stable in their loyalty to us and who have a hostile attitude toward our enemies. Surely, they are from us, and we are from them. They are convinced of our Imamah, and we acknowledge their oath of allegiance to us. By God, blessed are they! They will be with us in paradise.”¹¹

Imam Al-Hasan ('a) has said:

“God will give a long life to the ninth child of my brother Husayn's ('a) offspring so that he will then return and look like a young man at the age of 40.”¹²

The Life Of Imam Al-Mahdi ('Aj) In Various Periods

From his birth until that of his father's, Imam Al-'Askari's ('a), martyrdom (when the Imam ('aj) was five years old) the birth of Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) had not gone officially announced. During this period only on special occasions did Imam Al-'Askari ('a) show his son, but only to his faithful companions and prominent pious scholars, and announce him as the final Imam ('aj) and ordained them to obey him.

The minor occultation officially started when the Imam ('aj) was five years old and continued to approximately until his seventy-four years of age. During this period, it was not possible for anyone other than selected representatives to contact the Imam ('aj). These four people met the Imam ('aj) when receiving answers to their and the people's most difficult questions and were specially selected by the Imam ('aj) to be the link between the people and the Imam ('aj) during this period. Those were:

- 1) Uthman Ibn Said Amri (260 AH/873 AD – 267 AH/880 AD) [father]
- 2) Muhammad Ibn Uthman Amri (267 AH/880 AD – 305 AH/917 AD) [son]
- 3) Husayn Ibn Rooh Nobakhti (305 AH/917 AD – 326 AH/937 AD)
- 4) Ali Ibn Muhammad Samori (326 AH/937 AD – 329 AH/940 AD)

These specifically chosen representatives had the trust of the Imam ('aj), and each of them faithfully performed their duties. Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) was the one who made the final decisions and instructed his representatives on the crucial issues. The chosen representatives, in turn, conveyed the people's questions to the Imam ('aj) and the Imam's ('aj) answer to the people. There are several documented letters with questions and response letters from the Imam ('aj) today that the Islamic scholars use as a reference in their deductions and statements.[13](#)

As the passing of the fourth representative was approaching, Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) announced this to him and ordered him to speak out on this to the shia. With this, the direct contact between the Imam ('aj) and specific representatives would cease since the Imam ('aj) would enter into the great occultation. Shi'a would henceforth turn to the Imam's ('aj) general representatives, that is, the foremost among the scholars. Therefore, the great period of occultation began in 329 AH and is still going on.

Ä3. How Can A Man Live For So Long?

Almighty Creator

One question that may come up in connection with the Imam's ('aj) ghayba is the matter of the Imam's ('aj) age and how it is possible for him to live for so long? In order to answer this question, it is important to take some basic facts into account. First of all, God is the Creator who created everything, and He is Almighty, meaning He is capable of changing His creation according to His divine will. God says:

[All] praise is [due] to God, Creator of the heavens and the earth, [who] made the angels messengers having wings, two or three or four. He increases in creation what He wills. Indeed, God is over all things competent.” (The Holy Qur'an, 35: 1).

Furthermore, there are many miracles that God has let happen through history, and the long life of Imam Al-Mahdi's ('aj) is far from the most remarkable of miracles. On deeper reflection, the length of Imam Al-Mahdi's ('aj) life is no more surprising than that of Prophet Ibrahim's ('a) [Abraham] survival from the fire of Nimrod or Prophet Musa's ('a) [Moses] crossing through the divided Nile or the transformation of his stick to a snake. All these miracles are clear evidence of God's power.

It is no difficult task for the Almighty to keep the final Imam ('aj) alive according to the promises God Himself has given us. God has promised that there will be twelve Imams ('a) after the Prophet (S) and that every folk until the Day of Judgment will have a guide.

Nooh's ('A) Example

The Qur'an and historical accounts have also mentioned the long lives of other prophets ('a) such as Prophet Nooh ('a) [2500 years], Luqman ('a) [400 years] and Prophet Suleyman ('a) [712 years]. Regarding Prophet Nooh ('a), the Qur'an states that only his calling to God among his people lasted for 950 years, while narrations from Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) state that he lived about 2,500 years:

“And We certainly sent Noah to his people, and he remained among them a thousand years minus fifty years, and the flood seized them while they were wrongdoers.” (The Holy Qur'an, 29: 14).

Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) has also narrated that Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj), like Prophet Nooh ('a), will live long:

“His [Imam Al-Mahdi's ('aj)] traits, that he has in common with Adam ('a) and Nooh ('a) are their long lives.”¹⁴

Ö. Preparing For His Arrival – Directory Of Scholars And Guidance Of The Companions' Hearts

Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) is the most engaged of all the awaiting and leads the movement even though we do not notice it. He does so by guiding scholars and the hearts of the companions.

The Imam ('aj) indirectly guides the scholars and the companions' hearts to organize and work towards the same aim so that his arrival can be hastened. As a leader, Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) is at the forefront of the movement and strives and exerts more effort, than those who await him, for his arrival to be hastened and the people saved. The Imam ('aj) also organizes his followers and asks for God's guidance and blessings for them during long nights of prayers. He strives uninterruptedly and by all

means so that this period until the promised justice, shall reach its goal. But there is one condition for the arrival to be; humanity must mature, and people must have a will reach out for the Imam ('aj) as he is already waiting and prepared. Practically, this means that we, like the Imam ('aj), become engaged whilst waiting and pave the way for the world of justice, that man is constantly longing for, by following his principles the best way we can.

Lead The Scholars

Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) has called the true scholars his *hujja* (argument and proof) over us. These scholars, therefore, act as representatives and leaders among us to awaken our hearts, connect us with each other and direct people towards the common goal we all strive for. In fact, this is the continuation of the system that the Imams ('a) established and to prepare for the pursuance of the road under the occultation of the final Imam ('aj). This is strived for until the time is set and humanity is ready to embrace the final Imam ('aj) – who will fight oppression and fill the world with justice.

In this leadership-system, it is adhered to principles and conditions with the guidance of scholars, in a world where most of the leaders of society are corrupt and unprincipled. The leaders of this system are at the forefront of piety, knowledge and wisdom, insight and courage, and are familiar with the affairs of their communities, the Muslim nation and even the world. These leaders are the ones who devote themselves to this path and have dedicated their lives to its advancement without turning a blind eye to anything. This is leadership where the leader links the followers to the Imam ('aj), who helps his followers to both survive and become stronger, despite all adversities.

This leadership, inspired and led by the Imam ('aj), stands up today to oppression and injustices and manifests pious qualities and moral principles that the Imam ('aj) will spread. When truth-seeking people who want to live in a just world and are ready to stand for it, open their eyes to this leadership and begin to understand it, more people will join it. When we prove to God and the Imam ('aj) that we do stand up for justice and stand with leaders who strive for justice, we prove that we will also stand up for the Imam ('aj), who will follow this path and lead it to the goal line. When we prove that we are prepared to stand up for our Imam ('aj) and never allow what happened to the previous Imams ('a) to repeat; then we will be ready.

Due to the wise and revolutionary leadership, Shi'a Islam has become stronger and today constitutes a worldwide political movement. This movement does not only belong to Shias or a specific group of people, but to all people who prepare themselves in standing up and fighting for what is right.

Leads The Hearts Of The Believers

The Imam ('aj), as the *Hujja* of God, is the link between man and God, and it is through him that God's blessings reach us. It is through the Imam ('aj) that our hearts are awakened to the realization that we must become engaged and act. Besides our religiousness and our ordinary deeds, it is by him we are

awakened to realize the true meaning of being engaged whilst awaiting. It is through this process we will seek him the way he wishes us to; prepared, in a group, linked together and striving for one and the same goal. Lest we forget that the Imam's ('aj) revolution is for all of humanity and therefore the awaiting-process is required to be balanced on the same worldview; love beyond measurement and far from dissociation from society.

Such groups and movements must be created in all corners of the world; standing up and fighting for justice. Creating a community of awaiting followers is an inevitable necessity. Strong gatherings focusing on unity and guiding the masses is the key to being an engaged person who awaits and hastens the return of the Imam ('aj). Structured and united organizations characterized by a divine goal strengthen those of weak willpower, humbles those of arrogant character and enlightens the path towards development and perfection.

1. Sayyida Narji (r.a.) was originally a princess from Rome by the name of Melika. She was, from her mother's side, a descendant of Sham'oon, one of the disciples of the Prophet Isa ('a) [Jesus]. She was a believer and a devout person. It is reported that in a dream she got to see the Prophet's (S) daughter Fatimah az-Zahra ('a) and Sayyida Maryam ('a) [Mary Jesus' mother] and was told that she would be married to a son of the final Prophet's (S) family and give birth to the promised Savior that all Prophets ('a) have spoken about and all people are waiting for. She was asked to be disguised and let herself be taken prisoner in the coming attack that would hit the kingdom. Accordingly, she was brought to Arabia where Imam Al-Hadi ('a) sent someone to the slave market with a special sign so that she would feel safe and accompany the person to the Imam's ('a) household, and where she got married to Imam Al-'Askari ('a) and gave birth to Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj). The description of the entire event is narrated, among other things, in Kamal ad-din wa Tamam Al-Ni'ma by Sheikh Sadooq ('a) (published 1359 AD) volume 2 p. 417; Dalael Al-Imama by Tabari (published 1413 AD) p. 262; Al-Ghayba by Sheikh Al-Tusi (published 1411 AD) p. 417 hadith 178 et al.

2. This is narrated in Muntakhab Al-Athar by Safi Golpaygani p. 353 et al. Online at:

<https://www.al-islam.org/selected-narrations-about-twelfth-imam-volume-1...> [21]

3. The closest and most reliable companions to Imam Al-'Askari ('a) got to see Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) on a few occasions. It is reported that at one point, Imam Al-'Askari ('a) showed his son to Muhammad Ibn Uthman Al-'Amri and 40 other people and then Imam Al-'Askari ('a) said: "This is your Imam and my successor; obey him and do not end up in disputes in your religion." Muhammad Ibn Uthman had also been Imam Al-Hadi ('a) and Imam Al-'Askari's ('a) representative and later came to be Imam Al-Mahdi's ('aj) first representative. Some others of Imam Al-'Askari's ('a) companions who saw Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) were Muhammad Ibn Isma'il, one of Imam Al-Kadhim's ('a) grandchildren and Hakima, daughter of Imam Al-Jawad ('a) and hence, Imam Al-'Askari's ('a) aunt.

4. Some depictions describing the appearance and characteristics of the Imam ('aj) have been found in narratives and ahadith from the Imams ('a) in Kamal ad-Din wa Tamam Al-Ni'ma by Sheikh Sadooq volume 1 p. 534-55 and volume 2 p. 118 et al.

5. This is narrated in Ihqaq Al-Haqq by Shushtari volume 19 p. 654 et al.

6. Some of these depictions are narrated in Mala'ikim wa Al-Fitan by Ibn Tawoos p. 73 and Bihar Al-Anwar by Al-Majlisi volume 46 p. 372 et al.

7. These and similar ahadith where the arrival and the uprising of Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) has been promised and the signs preceding his resurrection has been described, are numerous and are repeated in several sources, for instance in Bihar Al-Anwar volume 51 p. 74; Ithbat Al-Hudat volume 7 p. 9; Yanabi 'Al-Mawadda p. 431 et al.

8. Ja'far, who was Imam Al-'Askari's ('a) brother and therefore Imam Al-Mahdi's ('aj) uncle, claimed to be Imam and successor to Imam Al-'Askari ('a) after his martyrdom. He is said to have been a non-pious person who committed sins and was involved in corruption, and also called on the Abbasi rulers in search of the Imam ('aj). According to some sources, he remained firm to his claim while stating that he later regretted it. One of those who stood strong against Ja'far's false

claims and fought them was their mother Hudayth, also known as Jadda (grandmother) she was Imam Al-Mahdi's ('aj) grandmother. Imam Al-'Askari ('a) had appointed her mother Jadda as her representative and left many of Shi'a's affairs in her responsibility.

9. This hadith is narrated in Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal volume 1 p. 99 and is one of several similar ahadith with the same meaning narrated in hadith collections.

10. Qa'im is one of Imam Al-Mahdi's ('aj) most well-known accusation titles and means the upriser or the one who does the uprising and rises for justice against oppression.

11. This hadith is narrated, among other ahadith in Bihar Al-Anwar volume 51 p. 151; Ithbat Al-Hudat volume 6 p. 417 et al.

12. This hadith is narrated in Kamal Al-Din wa Tamam an-Ni'ma volume 1 p. 316 et al.

13. One of the scholars who collected many of these letters signed by the Imam ('aj) is Sheikh Sadooq (r.a.)

14. The longevity is one of Imam Al-Mahdi's ('aj) similarities to Prophet Nooh ('a) and this hadith is narrated in Kamal Al-Din wa Tamam an-Ni'ma volume 1 p. 323 et al.

Chapter 6 – Summary

L. Imamah is a divinely chosen leader who guides and leads people to their existential purpose. The leader, after the Prophet (S), is, therefore chosen by God.

L1. Imamah is needed for guidance and for the message to be preserved, protected and above all completed.

L2. To ensure that the message and guidance of the people are guaranteed, God selects an infallible leader who can take on the great responsibility. The fact that the Imam ('a) is someone whom God has chosen and ordained people to follow is something many Qur'anic verses and prophetic narrations emphasize.

M-M1. The Prophet (S) gave everything and went through hard difficulties in order to convey the message. He was most concerned about everyone's continued guidance and would never leave the people without a successor. Nor did he do such thing, and with God's order, he selected Imam Ali ('a) as a successor and confirmed this on several occasions.

N. The verses of The Holy Qur'an, are completely preserved in original condition, and no change or distortion has occurred. The Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) and the Qur'an are the two valuable things that the Prophet (S) ordained everyone to hold on to, in order to not go astray. This is because the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), with the Prophet (S), is the personification of the Qur'an and the only ones who have its correct interpretation.

O-O1. Imam Ali ('a) was miraculously born inside the Holy Ka'ba and raised by the Prophet (S) himself. He was the first man to accept Islam. The Prophet (S) has described Imam Ali's ('a) position to him as Prophet Haroon's ('a) position to that of Prophet Musa ('a), except that there is no prophet after him. The Prophet (S) has also equated Imam Ali ('a) with a gate that must be passed through in order to reach the Prophet's (S) insight and knowledge. Moreover, the Prophet (S) announced that Imam Ali ('a) is his

successor, during the first gathering to convey God's message to his closest kin, and in Ghadir Khumm, Imam Ali ('a) was officially appointed as a successor as ordained by God. Imam Ali ('a) had the greatest key role among all companions and Muslims in the major events, in which Islam's survival was at stake.

P. The Prophet (S) was prevented by some companions to writing down something that would ensure that people never go astray after him.

After the death of the Prophet (S), a group of followers gathered in Saqifa and chose a leader among themselves, despite the fact that the Prophet (S) appointed Imam Ali ('a). That was while Imam Ali ('a) was busy burying the Prophet (S). Imam Ali ('a) refused to pledge allegiance to this chosen leader because it was against the Prophet's (S) command. There were few followers who were ready to stand up for Imam Ali's ('a) right. Therefore, Imam Ali ('a) showed patience in accordance with the Prophet's (S) request and acted according to his role as Imam, for the preservation of the message and the guidance of the people, according to the circumstances and prevailing conditions.

Q1-Q3. The rule of the first three caliphs led to the change of the Prophet's (S) sunnah, and by the end of the third caliph's rule, the Umayyads had taken over. The Prophet (S) had warned of this. The enemies of Islam, whom the Prophet (S) had expelled as Al-Hakam and his son Marwan, were not only invited back but also received the highest posts in governance. This immense corruption led to an uproar and caused the murder of the third caliph. The Umayyads, given power by the third Caliph, had refused to help him and therefore contributed to his murder.

R. Imam Ali's ('a) caliphate began when people rushed to him and felt that he was the only one who could do everything right. Imam Ali ('a) got rid of all corrupt individuals within governance and reintroduced the Prophet's (S) approach to governing.

Imam Ali ('a) was falsely accused of the third caliph's murder by opportunists who wanted to exploit this. This caused many wars to follow. Yet, in his reign, he succeeded in achieving justice that, to this day, is a model for all civilizations.

R1-Ö. From Imam Ali ('a) – who was the first Imam, to Fatimah az-Zahra' ('a) and all the following eleven Imams ('a), prepared for Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) in various ways. That is because they had different conditions depending on prevailing circumstances. Such as the number of followers, the government's surveillance and pressure, the one that threatened the message and the other things that affected the kind of fight that the Imams ('a) impelled. That was to achieve the purpose of guiding people and creating the conditions for future generations' guidance.

The Imams' ('a) fought and protected the religion every moment of their blessed lives; some examples are:

The rule of Imam Ali ('a) was not compromised with justice, where justice permeated everything in the government. Everything from the appointment of posts, to being equal before the law, the distribution of

the Treasury House, and more, were all characterized by fairness. The government did not leave room for special treatments and unfair privileges at the expense of others, which many at that time were not ready for. This prepared for the complete justice Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) will to govern with.

Imam Al-Hasan ('a) was left alone and was severely oppressed and with no opportunity of fighting the enemy militarily. His tribulations in life make it clearer that an Imam ('a) must have real companions in order to be victorious. He, therefore, ensured the preservation of guidance by signing a peace treaty with Mu'awiya and listed important conditions, eventually demonstrating Mu'awiya's hypocrisy and true intentions.

Imam Al-Husayn ('a) stood up against oppression and was left alone with a few companions and his family, against tens of thousands of enemies, in the known battle of Karbala. The time in which he lived and the circumstances required this uprising for the preservation of religion. It led to the great and indescribable sacrifice that heated the hearts of believers that will subside. It contributed to future revolutionaries who overthrew oppressive rulers such as the Umayyad regime, which no one had thought would reign in such a short period of time. The uprising of Imam Al-Husayn ('a) with all its details became a revival for the people and kindled a longing for revolutionary justices. It became a school for all future generations and a great preparation for the Imam's ('aj) revolution.

Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) continued to spread faith in spite of the hard surveillance. Among other things through his deep and beautiful invocations that emphasized important religious principles – such as Ahl Al-Bayt's ('a) high and important position.

Imam Al-Baqr ('a) and Imam Al-Sadiq ('a), among others, established a structured educational system that ensured that all necessary knowledge of the Prophet's (S) approaches and lifestyle, would reach the people of all future generations until the return of the Imam ('aj).

From the time of Imam Al-Kadhim ('a) to that of Imam Al-'Askari's ('a), developing a communication system and as such, a network, with the Shi'a continued. Gradually, the system evolved further, until the end, where there was hardly any direct contact with Imam Al-'Askari ('a). And Shi'a Muslims were urged to only seek the Imam's ('a) representatives in order to communicate. Now there was this system of reliable scholars whom the believers turned to in religious and important matters, and the people did not depend on direct contact with the Imam ('aj).

Imam Al-Mahdi ('aj) is himself the *hujja* of God (argument and proof) over all people, and he has called the true scholars his *hujja* over us. These scholars, therefore, act as deputies, representatives and leaders among us to awaken our hearts, connect us with each other and direct people towards the common goal we all strive for. In fact, this is the continuation of the system that the Imams ('a) established and prepared for the completion of the road under the occultation of the final Imam ('aj). This is up to the era when the time is right, and mankind is ready to embrace the final Imam ('aj) who will fight oppression and injustice and fill the world with justice.

The Imam ('aj) also leads the hearts of believers to seek him as he wants them to come to him; ready, hand in hand, in a group, linked together and actively striving towards one and the same goal.

May God hasten the promised day when truth and justice are spread in the world with the arrival of the Imam ('aj) and when humanity can flourish fully under His leadership with all kind-hearted, and truth-seeking souls united together.

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