



A Biography of the Ten Given Glad Tidings of Paradise

May Allah Be Pleased with Them



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The Ten Given Glad Tidings of Paradise

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my father, the one who taught me the love of giving and placing others before myself, even when I have but little. May Allah's Mercy be upon his soul.

Next, this work is dedicated to my mother, who taught me the pillars of my faith and the way to fulfil my religious obligations sincerely to Allah alone and encouraged me to love being His slave. May Allah's Mercy be upon her soul.

﴿My Lord, have mercy upon them, as they raised me up when I was little﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Isra' 24:17).

Finally, I dedicate this effort to my dear wife, who has been a constant support in all my endeavors.

After seeking Allah's Help and Guidance, I have undertaken to serve my religion and to accomplish this modest piece of work.

Hassan Ashmawy

*In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful,
the Ever-Merciful*

Introduction by His Eminence, the Mufti of the Republic of Zimbabwe

All praise be to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon the best of Allah's creation, our Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH)¹, and upon his noble family and Companions.

It is a source of pleasure and happiness for me to see the fruits of the efforts exerted by our dear friend and elder brother, Dr. Hassan Ashmawy, now published in the form of a book: *The Best Man in Creation and His Honorable Companions*. The work comes after decades of sincere and diligent work to introduce Islamic history, starting with the fragrant biography of Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH).

Dr. Hassan Ashmawy has given many lectures in different mosques across the country, which he recorded and distributed at his own expense. These recordings have been met with great interest and approval from Muslims in Zimbabwe and the surrounding countries of Zambia, Botswana, South Africa, and others, and they continue to attract great interest.

Today, as we see this hard work culminating in this book, we feel it is a blessing and a favor from Allah Almighty and, by His Will, a sign of acceptance of his effort.

Side by side with his work as a doctor and surgeon, Dr. Hassan Ashmawy has made consistent efforts, sacrifices, and commendable contributions to help our people in Zimbabwe. In this regard, he founded the Islamic Medical

¹ PBBUH, short for "May peace and blessings be upon him [English translation of: *`alayhi as-salatu wa-salam*]," is an Islamic honorific mentioned after reference to a Prophet of Allah.

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Association of Zimbabwe, which assists the poor and needy and treats them for free. All thanks and praise be to Allah, the Association expanded and now has branches in most of the country's provinces.

We ask Allah Almighty to protect our brother, Dr. Hassan Ashmawy, and to reward him abundantly for the dedicated efforts and zealous work he has carried out to serve Islam and Muslims. I am certain that this book will be of great benefit and use to us all.

May Allah, the Most Exalted, accept this effort and make it a continuous success. Amen.

Sheikh Isma`il Musa Menk

Mufti of the Republic of Zimbabwe

Friday 26 Sha`ban 1434 A.H., 5 July 2013 A.C.

*In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful,
the Ever-Merciful*

Introduction to Part Two by the Author

All praise be to Allah alone, with no partner or associate, and peace and blessings be upon the man sent as a mercy to the worlds, our Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH), and upon his family and Companions.

To continue...

With Allah's Help and Grace, the first book: *A Biography of the Best Man in Creation* has been published, and thanks to Allah, it has gained great approval and interest from the readers. The first edition has sold out, and the second edition is soon to be released.

In continuation of this series, I am honored to present the second book: *A Biography of the Ten Given Glad Tidings of Paradise*. I have decided to devote the entire book to narrating the lives of these ten noble, senior Companions of Messenger Muhammad (PBBUH) because of their great merit and the many valuable lessons that we can learn from them.

While giving this series of lectures on the lives of the ten Companions promised Paradise, I was keen to distribute their names printed to all attendees. I would mention their names at the beginning of each lecture, and at the end of the series of lectures, a competition was held and valuable prizes were awarded to those who mentioned all the names of the ten Companions. This took place in all the mosques in which I delivered this series of lectures.

The Ten Given Glad Tidings of Paradise

Thanks be to Allah and with His Grace, there is no Muslim in the city where I live, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, who does not know by heart the names of the ten Companions promised Paradise. All gratitude belongs to Allah—always.

I ask Allah the Almighty to accept this humble work from me, for indeed He is the Protector and the One Capable of everything.

Dr. Hassan Ashmawy

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The Objectives of Narrating the Biography of the Companions

This book has not been written as a collection of stories to entertain people, but important objectives have been set for this work, including the following:

1. Admiring the Companions and Following Them as Role Models

Nowadays the *Ummah* (worldwide Muslim community) is living in a state of confusion and dispersion. How much we need a role model for us and a good example to follow! If you want to learn swimming, medicine, engineering, drawing, or any aspect of life, you always search for the best in this or that field to be your teacher and guide.

Who can be better teachers and guides for us than those who were raised and taught by beloved Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) himself and became the graduates of his noble school? Indeed, the Prophet's school is the highest and most advanced academic institution ever known to history and humanity.

The Companions are, as my beloved Prophet (PBBUH) described them: **“By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, if any one of you spent the equivalent of Mount Uhud in gold, he would not attain the level of any one of them (the Companions), or even come half way.”**¹

¹ Reported by Muslim, hadith no. 2540.

The Companions are the role models that we must follow and emulate in all aspects of life, and this is the only way to achieve prosperity and advancement for this *Ummah* and spread the true Islam.

2. Inspiring Love for the Companions

This work aims to create a state of love and admiration for these Companions, with the hope that Allah (Exalted be He) may gather us with them in the Gardens of Paradise; our beloved Prophet (PBBUH) said: **“A person will be with those he loves.”**¹

I ask Allah Almighty to put love in our hearts for them and for those who love them, to make us follow in their footsteps, and to gather us with them, by Allah’s Will.

¹ Reported by Abu Dawud, hadith no. 5127.

Who Is a Companion?

Scholars have agreed that a Companion is defined as anyone who met the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), that is, personally met him (PBBUH) while believing in him, and lived and died as a Muslim.

Many people met the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) during his lifetime, but they did not embrace Islam. Some of them embraced Islam but then apostatized from it. Therefore such people cannot be called 'Companions'.

It should be noted that this definition applies to male and female Muslims.

Virtues of the Companions

The virtues of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) are countless, summarized to the best of my ability as follows:

First: The Special Honor that Allah Bestowed upon the Companions

Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) mentioned the Companions and praised them in many places in the Noble Qur'an. Reference to them takes three forms:

1. Ayahs that refer to all the Companions and highlight their outstanding status, as in the Almighty's Saying:

﴿Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are severe against disbelievers and merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and falling down prostrate (in prayer), seeking Bounty from Allah and (His) Good Pleasure. The mark of them (i.e., of their faith) is on their faces (foreheads) from the traces of (their) prostration (during prayers). This is their description in the *Tawrah* (Torah). But their description in the *Injil* (Gospel) is like a (sown) seed which sends forth its shoot, then makes it strong. It then becomes thick, and it stands straight on its stem, delighting the sowers that He may enrage the disbelievers with them. Allah has promised those among them who believe and do righteous good deeds, forgiveness and a mighty reward (i.e., Paradise)﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Fath 48:29).

﴿But the Messenger (Muhammad) and those who believed with him strove hard and fought with their wealth and their lives (in Allah's Cause). Such are they for whom are the good things, and it is they who will be successful. Allah has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide eternally. That is the supreme success﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Tawbah 9:88-89).

Numerous ayahs praise the Companions and recognize their superb merit and distinguished achievements, but the scope of this book does not allow mentioning them all.

2. Ayahs that refer to a specific group of the Companions, as in the Almighty's Saying:

﴿Indeed, Allah was pleased with the believers when they gave their pledge to you (O Muhammad) under the tree. He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down tranquility upon them, and He rewarded them with a near victory﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Fath 48:18).

The previous ayah refers to the sincere Companions who swore the Ridwan Pledge¹.

﴿And when the believers saw the Confederates, they said: "This is what Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad) had promised us, and Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad) had spoken the truth," and it only added to their faith and to their submissiveness (to Allah). Among the believers are men who have

¹ A pledge that was sworn under a tree to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) by his Companions after the rumored death of `Uthman. All the Companions pledged that they would not flee the battlefield, if a battle broke out with Quraysh, and they would keep on fighting firmly and steadfastly to the last man.

been true to their covenant with Allah. Of them, some have fulfilled their obligations (i.e., have been martyred), and some of them are still waiting, but they have never changed (their commitment) in the least ﴿﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Ahzab 33:22-23).

The previous ayahs refer to the Companions who fought in the Battle of the Trench, also known as the Battle of the Confederates. There are other ayahs that refer to the Companions who fought in the Battles of Badr, Hunayn, and other major events.

3. Ayahs that refer to a specific Companion:

a. Without mentioning the Companion's name, as in the Almighty's Saying:

﴿﴾ (It does not matter) if you do not help him (Muhammad), for Allah did indeed help him when the disbelievers drove him out, (only) one of two. When they (Prophet Muhammad and Abu Bakr) were in the cave, and he said to his Companion (Abu Bakr): "Be not sad (or afraid), surely Allah is with us." Then Allah sent down upon him His Tranquility and strengthened him with forces (angels) which you could not see, and made the word of those who disbelieved the lowermost, while it is the Word of Allah that is the uppermost, and Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise ﴿﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Tawbah 9:40).

The previous ayah refers to Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him).

b. Mentioning the Companion's name. This occurred once in the Almighty's Saying:

﴿﴾ And (remember, O Muhammad) when you said to the one on whom Allah had bestowed favor and you had bestowed favor, "Keep your wife and fear

Allah,” while you concealed within yourself that which Allah is to disclose. And you feared the people, while Allah has more right that you fear Him. When Zayd had no longer any need for her, We¹ (Allah) married her to you in order that there should not be any blame upon the believers concerning the wives of their adopted sons when they no longer have need of them. And ever is the command of Allah accomplished ﴿ (translated meaning of Al-Ahzab 33:37).

The previous ayah refers to Zayd ibn Harithah (may Allah be pleased with him).

Which words can be truer than those of Allah (Exalted be He)? What honor is higher than having one’s name in a Holy Book that is recited and turned to as a means of worship, and will continue to be recited like this until the Day of Judgment?

Second: The Special Honor that the Prophet (PBBUH) Bestowed upon His Companions

In several hadiths, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) emphasized the special honorable place that his Companions held and will continue to hold for all Muslims. These hadiths include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **“The best of my followers are those of my generation, then those who will come after them (the next generation), and then those who will come after them (the next generation).”**²

¹ Royal We used by Allah Almighty in the Qur’an to denote majesty and power.

² Reported by Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 6429.

2. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **“Do not revile my Companions. For by the One in Whose Hand is my soul, if any one of you were to spend the equivalent of Mount Uhud in gold, it would not equal a *Mudd* spent by anyone of them, nor even half a *Mudd*.”**¹

A *Mudd* is a type of dry measure of half a bushel, 543 grams; it is a quarter of a *Sa`* (1 *Sa`* = 3 kg. approx.).

This previous hadith signifies that spending the equivalent of Uhud in gold will not bring a Muslim [nowadays] the same reward and merit as one of the Companions attained by spending a *Mudd* of food or half of it.

3. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **“Fear Allah! Fear Allah regarding my Companions! Do not make them targets (of criticism, slander, insults, false allegations, and so on) after me. Whoever loves them, it is out of love of me that he loves them. And whoever hates them, it is out of hatred for me that he hates them.”**²

These hadiths are some among many others that show the superb merit of all the Companions, in general. These are in addition to numerous hadiths in which the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) praised many of his Companions specifically. They shall be cited at the appropriate places when shedding light on the life of each Companion.

¹ Reported by Ibn Majah, hadith no. 161.

² Reported by Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 3862.

Third: The Statement that Ibn Mas`ud Made Regarding the Companions

`Abdullah ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “Verily, Allah looked into the hearts of His slaves and found the heart of Muhammad (PBBUH) to be the best among His slaves’ hearts. He chose him for Himself and sent him with His Message. Then He looked into the hearts of His slaves, after the heart of Muhammad (PBBUH), and found the hearts of his Companions to be the best among the slaves’ hearts after him. He made them the supporters of His Prophet, fighting for His religion. Therefore, whatever the Muslims see as good is good in Allah’s Sight, and whatever the Muslims see as bad is bad in Allah’s Sight.”¹

Fourth: The Characteristics of the Companions

The question that arises in this context is: Why is this immense honor bestowed upon the Companions in the Glorious Qur’an and Sunnah?

Briefly, the answer is as follows:

The Companions were distinguished by many various characteristics from the followers of previous Messengers and from the Muslims who came after them as well. They rose to the highest heights in these characteristics, which mainly included the following aspects:

1. Piety

The Companions were connected to Allah (Exalted be He), their hearts were attached to Him alone. Allah loved them, and they loved Him. They

¹ Reported by Ahmad, hadith no. 3600.

longed for Him, and He longed for them. They called upon Him with words coming from their hearts. When He was mentioned before them, they felt humble and peaceful. And when they stood before Him in prayer, they stood submissive and fearful of Him.

2. Ideal Devotion

The Companions reached the zenith in their performance of worship, in their dealings with people, and in the morals with which they lived.

a. They showed humility to the point of excellence and reached the pinnacle of sincerity; they were truly as Allah Almighty described them: ﴿And when they listen to what has been sent down to the Messenger (Muhammad), you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of the truth they have recognized. They say: "Our Lord! We believe; so write us down among the witnesses"﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Ma'idah 5:83).

b. Their hearts softened, their skins shivered in awe, and their eyes shed tears when they recited the Noble Qur'an. Here are some examples:

- The man of the nation who adhered to the truth most, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), wept often. When he wept, you could hardly hear his recitation because of his deep, emotional weeping.
- When `Umar Al-Faruq read Allah's Saying: ﴿Verily, the Torment of your Lord will surely come to pass. There is none that can avert it﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Tur 52:7-8), he kept weeping and was overcome by fear for twenty days.
- When this ayah was revealed: ﴿Then at this statement do you wonder? And you laugh and do not weep?﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Najm

53:59-60), the People of the *Suffah*¹ wept until their tears ran down their cheeks. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) wept too upon hearing their weeping.

c. As soon as an ayah was revealed, the Companions would act upon it and start applying its law on their lives immediately. The examples of this are plentiful. They will be presented in detail while exploring the different topics that this book covers, Allah willing.

3. Striking the Perfect Balance Between Life and Religion

The Companions achieved this balance, without exceeding or falling short of it.

This is something that we need now more than ever. Some people are so immersed in religious matters that they forget their share of worldly life. The opposite is true as well. Many people are so immersed in worldly matters that they forget their share of the afterlife.

As for the Companions, they achieved the perfect balance between what the body needs for replenishment and what the soul needs for growth.

There are abundant examples of this, including the following:

- The Companions were eager to learn what would benefit them and help them accomplish a better life for themselves and others. Ibn Al-Zubair spoke more than one language (it was said a hundred

¹ *Al-Suffah*: Literally, the shaded place. It was a roofed section in the back portion of the Prophet's Mosque in which the poor homeless Emigrants could find shelter and live. The inhabitants of it became known as the People of the *Suffah*. All needy emigrants stayed there and were kindly provided for by the Muslim community.

languages). And Zaid ibn Thabit was dispatched by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to learn Hebrew and Syriac.

- The Companions took care of both obtaining knowledge (learning their religious matters) and earning their livelihood.
- `Umar ibn Al-Khattab said: “My neighbor from the Ansar (the Supporters of the Prophet PBBUH from the local inhabitants of Madinah) and I used to take turns going to visit the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He would go one day, and I would go another day. When I went, I would bring him the news of that day regarding divine revelation and other issues. When he went, he would do the same for me.”¹

That is, one of them would go to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to listen to him and learn from him, and the other would go to work to earn a living, and so on.

- Al-Bara’ (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “Not all of us heard the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) personally. We had properties and jobs to look after, but people did not lie at that time. Those present would convey knowledge to those who were absent.”²
- Many Companions, such as `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf and `Uthman ibn `Affan, achieved great success in their trade business and built great wealth. However, they made this world a means and not an end. They took from it what would benefit their physical wellbeing and made the Hereafter their top concern and goal.

¹ Reported by Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 89.

² Reported by Ahmad, hadith no. 18493.

4. Bravery

The Companions were distinguished by sacrificing their lives and wealth to an amazing level. Their biographies testify to their unparalleled bravery, which always manifested itself at times of hardship and need. The abundant examples of the Companions' bravery will be explained in detail when narrating the biography of each Companion.

5. Fairness

Fairness was an essential part of the makeup of the Companions' character. They were known for their fairness, which was acknowledged by foes before friends. That is why they attained supremacy and sovereignty. "Justice is the foundation of kingship," as people say. There are many examples, which will be explored in detail in the biography of each Companion.

6. Openhandedness and Generosity with What the Lord Had Given Them

The Companions loved lofty matters and noble morals; they gave away the best of what they had and spent the best of what they could find. They spent from those things which they loved most to attain righteousness. In accordance with the Almighty's Saying: ﴿You will never attain righteousness until you spend from that which you love. And whatever you spend (of good), Allah knows it well﴾ (translated meaning of Al `Imran 3:92). One of them might give away everything he had without fear of poverty or need, knowing that the Lord of the Throne would never forsake them.

Examples of the Companions' generous nature will be provided in detail with the discussion of each Companion.

7. Selflessness

History has not mentioned that anyone died of hunger during the time of the Companions. How could it be otherwise when Allah, the Almighty, praised them, saying: ﴿And those who, before them, had homes (in Madinah) and had adopted the faith love those who emigrate to them and have no jealousy in their breasts for that which they have been given, and (they) give them (the emigrants) preference over themselves, even though they were in need of that. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul—it is those who will be the successful﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Hashr 59:9).

The Companions' lives are rich with valuable examples and instances of compassionate acts of selfless giving, which will be explored in detail, Allah willing.

8. Genuine Love for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)

Above and beyond all that has just been mentioned was the Companions' love for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Their love for him (PBUH) was immense, exceeding their love for their children, their wealth, and themselves. They did not hesitate to sacrifice their most precious possessions for the sake of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

Examples of the overwhelming love and concern of the Companions toward the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) were included in book one: "*A Biography of the Best Man in Creation*", in confirmation of the Almighty's Saying: ﴿The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves...﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Ahzab 33:6).

More examples will be given while presenting the life of each Companion, Allah willing.

This, my dear ones, was a small part of the many qualities and characteristics of the Companions. Entire books and volumes have been devoted to them, and it is difficult to list all these qualities here.

The Companions were truly worthy of Allah's Praise and worthy of the praise of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). They were worthy of being chosen by Allah to become the Prophet's Companions, and to attain the great honor of enjoying the company of the best man of Allah's creation, our Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH).

A question may come to mind at this point: Can we reach this lofty level of nobleness and closeness to Allah (Exalted be He)? Or is it not only difficult but impossible to catch up with the Companions, who lived in the time of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and learned Islam directly from him (PBBUH)?

The answer to that is found in the Prophet's (PBBUH) words: **"The likeness of my *Ummah* is that of rain, knowing not whether the beginning of it is better or the end."**¹ Hope exists forever. The path to Allah is paved. The guidance and good examples that illuminate the path for us are near and available. We must sincerely seek Allah's Help and beg Him, the Almighty, to enlighten our vision and insights to be able to follow the guidance and light that Allah (Exalted be He) has bestowed upon us and enjoy the company of *The Best Man in Creation and His Honorable Companions*.

¹ Reported by Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 2869.

The Ten Companions Given Glad Tidings of Paradise

Who are the Ten Companions Given Glad Tidings of Paradise?

This title is used to refer to ten specific Companions of Messenger Muhammad (PBBUH) who were promised Paradise in certain hadiths and all of them together in one hadith. These ten men were the most virtuous and righteous among the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that he heard the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) saying: **“Abu Bakr is in Paradise. ‘Umar is in Paradise. ‘Uthman is in Paradise. ‘Ali is in Paradise. Talhah is in Paradise. Al-Zubayr is in Paradise. ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf is in Paradise. Sa’d (ibn Abu Waqqas) is in Paradise. Sa’id (ibn Zayd) is in Paradise. And Abu ‘Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah is in Paradise.”**¹

Other than these ten Companions, there were many other male and female Companions to whom the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) gave glad tidings of entering Paradise. However, these Ten Men Given Glad Tidings of Paradise were mentioned at the same time, in one hadith. Perhaps because they were found together in one gathering and as a result the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) mentioned them together.

¹ Reported by Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no 3747.

The Names of the Ten Companions Given Glad Tidings of Paradise

They are as follows:

- 1. Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him).**
- 2. `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him).**
- 3. `Uthman ibn `Affan (may Allah be pleased with him).**
- 4. `Ali ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him).**
- 5. Talhah ibn `Ubaidullah (may Allah be pleased with him).**
- 6. Al-Zubayr ibn Al-`Awwam (may Allah be pleased with him).**
- 7. `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf (may Allah be pleased with him).**
- 8. Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with him).**
- 9. Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah (may Allah be pleased with him).**
- 10- Sa`id ibn Zayd (may Allah be pleased with him).**

Now dear readers, let us, in the following pages, enjoy the company of the Ten Companions Given Glad Tidings of Paradise.

1. Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq



May Allah Be Pleased with Him

Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq

If you ask any Muslim on earth to name just one Companion, the answer you will receive without hesitation is... Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq.

Abu Bakr was the close friend of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and the first student in the school of the beloved Chosen Prophet (PBBUH). He was the friend, the companion, the *Atiq*¹ (one freed from the fire), and the ‘Second of Two’ (in the cave with the Prophet PBBUH).

Sheikh Al-Sha`rawy (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq was the second of two in many situations:

1. He was the second person whom Allah especially commanded to forgive and overlook misdeeds. Allah first commanded His Messenger (PBBUH) to forgive and overlook misdeeds, in His Saying: ﴿Because of their breach of their covenant, We (Allah) cursed them and made their hearts grow hard. They change the words from their (right) places and have abandoned a good part of the Message that was sent to them. And you will not cease to discover deceit in them, except a few of them. But forgive them, and overlook (their misdeeds). Verily, Allah loves the good doers﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Ma'idah 5:13). Allah also commanded Abu Bakr to forgive and overlook misdeeds in His Saying: ﴿And let not those among you who are blessed with graces and wealth swear not to give (any sort of help) to their kinsmen, the poor, and those who left their homes for Allah's Cause. Let them pardon and forgive. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾

¹ As reported by Al-Tirmidhi, Abu Bakr was known as *Al-'Atiq* because the Prophet (PBBUH) said to him: “**You are the one Allah freed from the Fire.**”

(translated meaning of Al-Nur 24:22). This ayah is an instruction to Abu Bakr urging him to pardon and forgive his maternal cousin who participated in the slanderous attack on Lady `Aishah, despite the benevolence that Abu Bakr was showing toward him at the time.

2. Abu Bakr was the second to convey Allah's Message to people after the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

3. Abu Bakr was the second one to emigrate, i.e., emigrating straight after, and thereby joining, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

Having thus briefly introduced my readers to Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, come, let us draw closer to him to discover some aspects of his life and fragrant biography. May Allah be pleased with him and please him.

Who Was Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq?

Abu Bakr's Lineage

His full name was `Abdullah (nickname Abu Bakr) ibn `Uthman (nickname Abu Quhafah) ibn `Amr ibn Ka`b ibn Sa`d ibn Taym ibn Murrah ibn Ka`b ibn Luai ibn Ghalib ibn Fihir Al-Taymi Al-Qurashi.

He shared the sixth grandfather, Murrah bin Ka`b, with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

Abu Bakr's Birth and Upbringing

Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq was born in the second year following the Year of the Elephant¹, and he was about two years younger than the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He was born to parents from Banu Taym—a people known for their courtesy and good manners.

Abu Bakr was a man of good character and integrity. The men of Quraysh used to come to him and seek his friendship because of his knowledge, successful trade, and good company.

¹ The year Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) was born, when the Ethiopian ruler Abraha attempted to destroy the Ka`bah in Makkah with an army that included elephants. According to the Qur`an, Allah protected the Ka`bah by sending a flock of birds to pelt the invaders with stones of baked clay, leaving Abraha and his army destroyed and scattered like chewed-up straw, leading to the year being named in commemoration of that event.

Abu Bakr's Position on Idol Worship

Abu Bakr grew up when idol worship prevailed in Makkah, although some people at the time worshipped the sun and angels.

Overwhelming *Shirk* (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) had distanced people from the true monotheistic religion that Ibrahim (Prophet Abraham, PBBUH) brought from Allah. However, there were some who still waved the banner of worshipping only Allah and raised their voices refuting *Shirk* and deviation.

Among these people were Quss ibn Sa'idah, Zayd ibn `Amr ibn Nufayl, and Waraqah ibn Nawfal. Abu Bakr greatly admired these men and their beliefs, and this exposed him to the denunciation of Quraysh.

Abu Bakr shunned idols and spent his days far away from frivolity and the playful customs of his people. He was like the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), neither mentioning idols in a bad or good way but not worshiping them, prostrating to them, or drawing near to them in any form.

Abu Bakr and the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) shared the same mentality and were of the same age, but Abu Bakr saw the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) as his role model and a trusted source of guidance and advice. He followed the ways of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) with regard to contemplation and listening carefully; the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) listened to the truthful inspiration of divine origin, whereas Abu Bakr listened to the wisdom of the wise and the logic of enlightened worshipers.

Abu Bakr's Physical Appearance

Abu Bakr was described as having a white complexion with a yellowish tinge, being handsome with fine, abundant hair on his head and little hair on his face, and having sunken eyes. He was slim, tending to be short, and had thin legs.

Abu Bakr's Nicknames

The first Caliph in history was known by many names, the most famous of which were Abu Bakr and Al-Siddiq (the affirmer and adherent to the truth), followed by 'Atiq (the one freed from the fire) and 'Abdullah. It was said that he was known by these names and titles in Islamic and pre-Islamic eras alike.

During the Pre-Islamic Era

- He was known as *Al-Siddiq* because he was entrusted with the issues of blood money and represented Quraysh concerning them. Whatever blood money he agreed to, Quraysh endorsed his opinion and accepted it. If someone else took charge of the case, they distrusted him and hesitated to accept his judgment.
- He was known as 'Atiq because of his handsome face. The word 'Atiq is derived from 'Ataqah, which means excellence in everything. It is also derived from 'Itiq (manumission). This is because, before his birth, all children born to his mother soon died. When he was born, his mother took him to the Ka'bah and supplicated, saying: "O Allah, if this slave of Yours is free from death, please grant him to me." Consequently, Abu Bakr survived and became known as the 'Atiq.

During Islam

- He was nicknamed *Al-Siddiq* (affirmer of and adherent to the truth) because he instantly believed the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) regarding the Event of *Isra'* (the Prophet's PBBUH Miraculous Night Journey to Jerusalem).
- He was also known as *Al-'Atiq* because the Messenger Allah (PBBUH) gave him the good news of being freed from Hell, saying to him: **“You are the one Allah freed from the Fire.”**¹

¹ Reported by Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 3679.

Abu Bakr Embraces Islam

Abu Bakr Sees a Vision

Abu Bakr went on a business journey to the Levant. When he had completed his work and was preparing to return to Makkah, he saw a vision in his sleep of the moon leaving its place in the sky and descending upon Makkah. It was divided into many pieces and parts that were scattered throughout all the houses of Makkah. Then these parts came together again, and the moon returned to its original state and settled in Abu Bakr's lap.

When Abu Bakr woke up, he hurried to one of the monks and narrated to him the vision. The monk said to him: "The days of the Awaited Prophet have arrived. You will be a believer with him, and you will be the happiest of people in his company." Light shone into Abu Bakr's soul upon hearing these words, and his longing to meet this Awaited Prophet intensified.

Exclusive Worship of One God Becomes the Talking Topic of Quraysh

As soon as the caravan that Abu Bakr was traveling with reached Makkah after accomplishing that business trip, Abu Bakr found the people of Quraysh in a state of rebellion. They were anxious and angry. He asked why they were alarmed, and he was told: "Your companion (Muhammad) claims that there is one God in the heavens, and that he has received divine revelation. He says he was sent to us as a Prophet to worship Allah alone and abandon what our fathers used to worship."

Abu Bakr Responds to the Call to True Faith

Right after Abu Bakr heard these protestations of his people, he headed to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and asked him: “O Abul-Qasim¹, is what I have heard about you true?”

The Prophet (PBBUH) replied: **“What have you heard about me, O Abu Bakr?”**

Abu Bakr said: “I have been told that you are calling people to believe in Allah alone, and that you are the Messenger of Allah.”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **“Yes, O Abu Bakr, my Lord has made me a bearer of good tidings and a warner. He has made me the (continuation of the) call of Ibrahim, and He has sent me (as a Prophet) to all people.”**

Abu Bakr immediately replied: “By Allah, I have never known that you told a lie. You are indeed worthy of conveying Allah’s Message due to your great trustworthiness, your maintaining ties of kinship, and your good deeds. Extend your hand, for I will pledge allegiance to you (for Islam).”

Holding the Prophet’s right hand with both his hands, Abu Bakr said: “I bear witness that you are truthful and trustworthy. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and I bear witness that you are the Messenger of Allah.”

Abu Bakr was the first man to embrace Islam. About him, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **“Everyone I offered Islam to halted and hesitated, except Abu Bakr.”¹**

¹ The Prophet’s (PBBUH) nickname, meaning ‘Father of Qasim.’ Qasim was his eldest son who died at a young age before he (PBBUH) received prophethood.

Abu Bakr Lives Out His Commitment to Islam

1. Calling People to Allah Almighty

Da`wah (calling people to Allah) became Abu Bakr's greatest concern after he embraced Islam. He started propagating Islam. In doing so, he was truly the 'Second of Two' preachers of Allah's Message.

In the next visit to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), after he embraced Islam, Abu Bakr was not alone; along with him was a group of the noblemen of Quraysh who had embraced Islam. Among them were six of the ten men who were later promised Paradise, namely: `Uthman ibn `Affan, Talhah ibn Ubaidullah, Al-Zubayr ibn Al-`Awwam, Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas, Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah, and `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf. Thus, Abu Bakr will come on the Day of Resurrection with the noble acts of these eminent men in the Scale of his good deeds.

Moreover, `Uthman ibn Madh`un, Abu Salamah ibn `Abdul Asad, Al-Arqam ibn Abu Al-Arqam, and many others were guided to Islam through Abu Bakr.

Indeed, Abu Bakr's good reputation, sound judgment, and steadfast actions had a great impact on gaining people's trust of his righteous intentions. These qualities produced a favorable impression and made it easy for him to persuade his community to enter Islam.

¹ Al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah by Ibn Kathir.

2. Defending the Vulnerable, the Weak, and the Slaves

Many noble and upper-class people of Quraysh embraced Islam through Abu Bakr, and also many slaves and weak people embraced Islam through him. The noble people had their families and clans to protect them from the brutality of the polytheists, but Muslim slaves had none to protect and defend them. Abu Bakr was the one who protected and defended them. He used to buy the slaves from the disbelievers and free them for Allah's Sake.

One day, Abu Bakr was passing by when he saw Umayyah ibn Khalaf inflicting brutal torture on his slave, Bilal ibn Rabah. Abu Bakr offered to buy Bilal, but Umayyah inflated the price, thinking that Abu Bakr would abandon Bilal. Finally, Abu Bakr bought Bilal from him for ten ounces of gold. After the deal was completed, Umayyah said to him: "If you had refused to take him except for one ounce, I would have sold him to you." Abu Bakr replied: "If you had refused to sell him except for one hundred ounces, I would have bought him from you."

Once Abu Bakr bought Bilal, he freed him. He did the same with `Amir ibn Fuhayrah and other helpless Muslims.

3. Enduring Personal Harm to Preach Islam and to Protect the Prophet (PBBUH)

The *Mushrikin* (those who associate others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) of Quraysh fumed with rage and exasperation at Abu Bakr after he embraced Islam. They swore to persecute him severely.

The following are some of the many attacks that Abu Bakr was subject to:

Despite Hardship and Persecution, Abu Bakr's Primary Concern Was the Prophet's (PBBUH) Safety

The Muslims were less than forty persons on the day when Abu Bakr went out with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to the Sacred Mosque, where they gathered to call people to Allah in public. Abu Bakr stood among the people calling them to believe in Allah and His Messenger (PBBUH). In no time, the *Mushrikin* attacked the Muslims, beating them and harming them. `Utbah ibn Abu Rabi`ah came against Abu Bakr and began to beat him with two sandals until his face became swollen.

Abu Bakr's family from Banu Taym learned of this violent attack against their kinsman, and they hurried to rescue him from the polytheists. Wrapped in a garment, they carried Abu Bakr to his house. They thought that he was close to death, so one of them angrily shouted: "By Allah, if Abu Bakr dies, we will kill `Utbah." His kindred stayed around him, talking to him until he regained consciousness. The first thing Abu Bakr said while in that pitiable state was: "What happened to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)?"

Abu Bakr's kindred received his inquiry after the Prophet's health with reprimand. They asked his mother to bring him something to eat or drink, but Abu Bakr refused to eat or drink until he knew what had happened to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

Quickly Abu Bakr's kindred dispatched someone to bring them news of all that took place to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Abu Bakr learned that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was well and safe. But that was not enough for Abu Bakr. He asked to see him with his own eyes. Consequently, his kindred guided him out, with him leaning on two of them, until they arrived at the house of Al-Arqam ibn Al-Arqam—the gathering place for early Muslims. When Abu Bakr entered upon the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) while in that

bad state, he (PBBUH) leaned over him and kissed him. He (PBBUH) felt very tender toward his friend and dear Companion, and he (PBBUH) compassionately asked him: **“What is the matter with you, O Abu Bakr?”** He replied: “May my father and mother be sacrificed for you! I have no injury except what the wicked one has done to my face.”

Only after becoming reassured that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was well and unharmed, did Abu Bakr proceed to eat and drink.

“Would You Kill a Man Because He Says, ‘My Lord is Allah?’”

While the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was in the courtyard of the Ka`bah, a group of *Mushrikin* approached him. They encircled him and seized him by the collar, shouting: “Are you the one who made the gods into one God.” ‘Uqbah ibn Abu Mu`ayt charged toward the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to fight him. He grabbed him by the shoulder and wrapped his garment around his neck, strangling him severely. The Muslims who were close to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) were weak. None of them dared to approach these *Mushrikin*, except Abu Bakr. He came forward, grabbed the shoulders of Ibn Abu Mu`ayt, and pushed him and those with him away from the Prophet (PBBUH), while saying: “Woe to you! Would you kill a man because he says, ‘My Lord is Allah?’”

Thus, despite persecution and challenges, Abu Bakr remained among the *Mushrikin*, not caring about the danger and harm they might inflict on him, fearless and bold in the face of any danger that might touch the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), whether significant or small, actual or looming. He was always ready, whenever and wherever danger lurked, as long as he was able to defend the Prophet (PBBUH) and fight off the attackers.

4. Abu Bakr Decides to Emigrate to Abyssinia

As the days and months passed by, the situation only got worse for Abu Bakr, who endured the same afflictions at the hands of the *Mushrikin* as the rest of the Muslims. He asked the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to permit him to emigrate to Abyssinia, and he (PBBUH) permitted him.

The manner of Abu Bakr's departure angered the honorable people of Makkah. One of them, Rabi`ah ibn Fahim, better known as Ibn Al-Daghinah, caught up with him on the way and asked him: "Where are you going, O Abu Bakr?"

Abu Bakr replied: "Your people have expelled me. I want to travel the earth and worship my Lord."

Ibn Al-Daghinah asked: "Why [should you endure injustice]? You provide livelihood for the destitute. You maintain good relations with your kindred. You help the weak and the poor. You entertain your guests generously. And you support the calamity-stricken people. A man like you should never be made to emigrate. Go back and worship your Lord in your country, for you are under my protection."

Ibn Al-Daghinah went around the noblemen of Quraysh, informing them that he had granted Abu Bakr protection.

The chiefs of Quraysh acknowledged the protection Ibn Al-Daghinah extended to Abu Bakr but said to him: "Tell him to worship his Lord inside his house. He should pray there and recite whatever he wants. He must not harm us (our interests) or be seen publicly, for we fear that he may misguide our women and children."

Abu Bakr Sees Allah's Protection as Enough

Abu Bakr had a place for prayer in the courtyard of his house, and because he was an emotional man, any time he recited the Noble Qur'an he would weep. Passers-by stopped and listened to him and were moved by his recitation. This alarmed the disbelievers of Quraysh. They demanded Ibn Al-Daghinah to stop Abu Bakr from doing so. They told Ibn Al-Daghinah to tell Abu Bakr to limit himself to worshipping his Lord inside his house, or else Ibn Al-Daghinah must take back his pledge of protection.

When Ibn Al-Daghinah told Abu Bakr this, he refused to stop praying and reciting the Qur'an out loud. He said to him: "I give back your pledge of protection. I am satisfied with Allah Almighty's Protection."

5. Abu Bakr's Firm Reaction Regarding the Prophet's (PBBUH) Night Journey to Jerusalem and Then to the Heavens

The Event of *Isra'* (the Prophet's PBBUH Miraculous Night Journey to Jerusalem) was a landmark moment that positioned Abu Bakr as *Al-Siddiq* for his honesty, trustworthiness, and unwavering faith.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was taken on the Night Journey to Jerusalem, about which he (PBBUH) informed Quraysh. They strongly discredited what he (PBBUH) proclaimed to them and said: "Do you claim that you went to Jerusalem and returned in one night, while we travel for a month going, by camel to reach it, and a month returning?"

Abu Bakr Declares Complete Belief in the Prophet's (PBBUH) Veracity

The chiefs and members of Quraysh rushed to Abu Bakr and shouted at him: "O Atiq, everything that your friend told us before today was easy, except now. The matter has become unbearable."

Abu Bakr replied anxiously: "Woe to you, has anything bad happened to him?"

They replied: "He is telling people that this night his Lord took him on a journey to Jerusalem."

"He left at night and came back to us in the morning!"

Abu Bakr's response shocked them. His reply was: "I believe him. I believe him in what is more (amazing) than that. I believe that he receives news (revelations) from heaven."

Then Abu Bakr uttered his memorable statement: "If he (PBBUH) said so, he (PBBUH) has spoken the truth."

Truly, O Abu Bakr, your faith was genuine, and your strong certainty was a gift to you from Allah,

Before that day, Abu Bakr was known among people as Abu Bakr ibn Abu Quhafah, the *Atiq*, and other names. But from that day on, he was called Abu Bakr *Al-Siddiq* (affirmer of and adherent to the truth). He earned this honorific title for his unconditional belief in the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) on this particular incident, which people regarded as a lie.

6. Abu Bakr's Role in the Prophet's (PBBUH) Emigration to Madinah

The Muslims emigrated to Madinah with the permission of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). They were happy to emigrate and find relief from the persecution they faced from their own people, even though separation from family and homeland was bitter and painful.

Abu Bakr was ready and asked the permission of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to emigrate, but he (PBBUH) said to him:

“Do not be in haste. Perhaps Allah will provide you with a Companion.”

Abu Bakr kept two camels tied up and well-fed, waiting for the moment to be the Companion of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

The Hazards Surrounding the Prophet's Emigration Journey

The chiefs of Quraysh realized that if they let the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) emigrate to Madinah, he would soon rally the Arabs around him and then attack Quraysh with their support. Therefore, they decided to kill him.

Perhaps they left the Muslims—and particularly `Umar ibn Al-Khattab—to emigrate so that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) would remain solitary among them without supporters. Then they could easily get rid of him.

Clearly seeing these hazards, the emigration of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was not an easy task, but rather a terrifying risk and a dangerous chase. Abu Bakr knew this very well. He knew that Quraysh would spread their forces over the plains and mountains to capture the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

Abu Bakr Weeps with Joy

Despite his full awareness of these dangers, why did Abu Bakr yearn for this companionship, and why did his heart soar with joy for it? It was genuine faith and certainty on his part.

Once the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) received permission from Allah to emigrate, he went to Abu Bakr's house, at noon.

When Abu Bakr saw the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), he said: "May my father and mother be sacrificed for you. By Allah, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) would not come at this hour except for a grave matter."

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to him: **"Allah has given me permission to depart."**

With his face beaming with joy, Abu Bakr said: "Are we going to be companions, O Messenger of Allah?"

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asserted his hopes saying: **"Yes, companions."**

It was narrated that Lady `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said on this occasion: "By Allah, I never thought, before that day, that anyone could weep with joy until I saw Abu Bakr weeping on that day."

With the Emigrant to Allah

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) arrived at Abu Bakr's house. Expecting that there were spies watching Abu Bakr's house, they departed through an opening that was in the back of the house. Thus began the journey of the Emigrant to Allah, and with him was his close Companion and friend, Abu Bakr, who had taken with him all his wealth—six thousand dirhams.

To the Cave

When they both reached Thawr Cave, Abu Bakr said to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH): “By Allah, you will not enter it until I first enter it. If there is anything harmful inside, it will harm me instead.”

Abu Bakr entered the cave and swept it clean. On noticing a hole on its side, he tore a piece of his garment and closed the hole with it. Then they entered the cave together.

“Do Not Grieve... Indeed, Allah Is with Us”

After days of investigating, tracking, and trying to locate the Prophet (PBBUH) and Abu Bakr, the disbelievers reached the entrance of Thawr Cave. At that moment, Abu Bakr, fearful and anxious for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), said: “O Messenger of Allah, if one of them looked under his feet, he would see us.”

The Prophet (PBUH) responded with the confidence of a staunch believer in Allah’s Victory: **“O Abu Bakr, what do you think of two for whom Allah is the Third? Do not grieve, indeed Allah is with us.”**

The miracle of the cave occurred. Abu Bakr calmed down. He saw the pursuers circling the cave in confusion, then turning away from it. They left, quite bewildered and blind. They achieved nothing.

“I Was Afraid to Wake You, O Messenger of Allah!”

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and his Companion Abu Bakr stayed in the cave for three nights. On one of these nights, sleep overcame the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He (PBBUH) put his head in Abu Bakr’s lap and slept. When Abu Bakr stretched out his leg, he saw a hole that he had not noticed

before, and therefore he blocked it with his toe. He was stung, but he did not move his leg.

Finally, overwhelmed with pain, Abu Bakr wept. His tears fell on the face of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) who woke up and asked: **“What is wrong, O Abu Bakr?”**

Abu Bakr replied: “I was stung, may my father and mother be sacrificed for you.”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked him: **“Why did you not move your leg?”** He said: “I was afraid to wake you up, O Messenger of Allah.”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) applied his saliva on Abu Bakr’s foot, and immediately the poison ceased to be in his body. He (PBBUH) then supplicated Allah for him.

This is how Abu Bakr was willing, ready, and eager to sacrifice himself, his wealth and everything he owned for the sake of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). This was perfect love for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Abu Bakr loved him more than he loved himself.

“The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) Drank Until I Was Satisfied”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and his Companion Abu Bakr continued their way to Yathrib (the old name of Madinah). While they were on the road, a shepherd came with his sheep. Abu Bakr milked some of his sheep into a vessel he had with him and brought it to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to drink.

Abu Bakr, narrating this incident, said: “The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) drank until I was satisfied.”

Abu Bakr Constantly Guarding the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)

Along the way, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) often alternated his position. Sometimes he walked on the right side of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), and then suddenly he would shift to his left side. Sometimes he walked in front of him (PBBUH), and then suddenly he would walk behind him (PBBUH). When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked him about this, Abu Bakr replied: “When I am on your right side, I think of the danger that may come to you from your left side. So I hurry to your left. And when I am walking in front of you, I fear that harm may reach you from behind. So I hurry to stand behind you.”

May Allah Reward You with the Best, O Abu Bakr

Thus, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) attained the honor of being the Companion of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) on this blessed journey. Although it was fraught with danger, it was surrounded by Allah’s Care and Protection. Abu Bakr was granted the unsurpassable honor of being mentioned in the Glorious Qur’an, which will be recited to the Day of Judgment, in Allah’s Saying:

﴿(It does not matter) if you do not help him (Muhammad), for Allah did indeed help him when the disbelievers drove him out, (only) one of two. When they (Prophet Muhammad and Abu Bakr) were in the cave, and he (the Prophet) said to his Companion (Abu Bakr): “Be not sad (or afraid); surely, Allah is with us.” Then Allah sent down His Tranquility upon him and strengthened him with forces (angels) which you could not see, and made the word of those who disbelieved the lowermost, while it is the Word of Allah that is the uppermost. And Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Tawbah 9:40).

`Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “By Allah, a night lived by Abu Bakr is better than the entire family of `Umar, and a day lived by Abu Bakr is better than the entire family of `Umar.” As for the night, it is the night of *Hijrah* (the Prophet’s emigration from Makkah to Madinah). And as for the day, it is the day of the ‘*Isra*’ (the Prophet’s Miraculous Night Journey to Jerusalem); the day when people rejected to believe that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was taken on a night journey to Jerusalem by Allah’s Power, but Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) believed him.

To learn more about the journey of the Emigrant to Allah, please refer to the first book of this series: “*A Biography of the Best Man in Creation*”, pp. 240-255.

Abu Bakr Arrives in Madinah

The Prophet (PBBUH) and Abu Bakr Enter Madinah

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) entered Madinah with his Companion Abu Bakr to illuminate it forever. How happy and joyful were the people for seeing the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Most of them had not seen him before. Some of them thought that Abu Bakr was the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). But the hot sun shone on the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), and Abu Bakr hurried to shade him with his cloak, which was what he had been doing throughout the journey and continued to do, namely, protecting the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). When the people saw this, they recognized the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

Abu Bakr Goes Through All Battles and Situations with the Prophet (PBBUH)

Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) participated in all the battles with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He stood firm by his side in all situations, with unparalleled steadfastness and perseverance.

The following pages are some of what history teaches us about Abu Bakr, narrating the positions taken by Al-Siddiq and the great role he played in all major events in Islam.

1. Abu Bakr's Role on the Day of Badr

- The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) consulted his Companions about whether to fight the battle or not. The first to speak was Abu Bakr, who advised him to go forward and fight the battle, speaking with

reinforcing words. Next `Umar spoke, then Al-Miqdad ibn `Amr, and finally came the statement of the leader of the Ansar, Sa`d ibn Mu`adh.

- When the Muslims built a roofed structure on a high hill to serve as a command headquarters for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) at the rear of the battlefield, the Companions asked: “Who will be with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) so that the *Mushrikin* do not reach him?” Abu Bakr stepped forward, brandishing his sword, and he said: “Anyone who approaches him, this sword will descend upon him.”
- When the battle intensified and the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) saw the large numbers of the Qurayshi forces versus the small number of the Muslims, and their poor equipment compared to the enemy’s well-equipped army, he (PBBUH) returned with Abu Bakr to the headquarters. He (PBBUH) then faced the *Qiblah* (Ka`bah-direction faced in prayer) and turned to his Lord, earnestly supplicating: **“O Allah, fulfill for me that which You have promised me. O Allah, I beseech You to bring about Your Covenant and Your Promise. O Allah, should this group (of Muslims) be destroyed today, You will no longer be worshipped.”**

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) continued to beseech his Lord until his cloak fell off his shoulder. Abu Bakr was behind him. He put it back on his shoulder, saying: “This is sufficient, O Messenger of Allah. You have entreated your Lord very pressingly. Allah will surely fulfill His Promise to you.” And victory was complete for the Muslims.

2. Abu Bakr’s Role on the Day of Uhud

The tides turned against the Muslims, and after they had at first been victorious in that battle, the *Mushrikin* succeeded in trapping the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) in a pit. He (PBBUH) sustained multiple injuries, including his

front teeth being broken. The senior Companions learned of this, and they rushed to where the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was. They formed a fence with their bodies and weapons around him. The first to reach the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, who stood in that position strong and unyielding, as firmly as a mountain, defending him.

3. Abu Bakr's Role on the Day of Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty

After Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty was concluded, the Muslims—especially `Umar ibn Al-Khattab—saw that the terms of the treaty were unjust and that the Muslims' position was weak and servile, which aroused their anger. However, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), who thought in a very similar way, had the same transparent heart, and provided the same explanation as the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), looked at the situation with deep insight and boundless farsightedness.

At the time when the souls of the Companions were provoked and angered by this agreement, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) was at the farthest part of the gathering, immersed in peace and tranquility, unlike the rest of the Companions. He was certain that this was ultimately good and honorable for the Muslims.

Let us allow `Umar Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) to narrate this scene to us, in order for us to appreciate the steadfastness of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) and his resemblance to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

`Umar said: "I said to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), 'Are you not truly the Prophet of Allah?'"

He (PBBUH) replied: 'Yes'

I said: 'Are we not following the truth and our enemies following falsehood?'

He (PBBUH) replied: **'Yes.'**

I said: 'Why should we accept a deal that is humiliating for our religion?'

He (PBBUH) replied: **'I am the Messenger of Allah. I do not disobey Him, and He will grant my victory.'**

I said: 'Did you not tell us that we would go to the House (the Ka`bah) and circumambulate it?'

He (PBBUH) replied: **'Yes,'** and added: **'Did I tell you that we would go to it this year?'**

I replied: 'No.'

He (PBBUH) said: **'Indeed, you will go to it and circumambulate it.'**

`Umar continued narrating the event: "So I went to Abu Bakr and said, 'O Abu Bakr, is this not truly the Prophet of Allah?'

He replied: 'Yes.'

I said: 'Are we not following the truth and our enemies following falsehood?'

He replied: 'Yes.'

I said: 'Why should we accept a deal that is humiliating for our religion?'

He replied: 'He is the Messenger of Allah. He does not disobey his Lord, and He will grant him victory.'

I said: ‘Did he (PBBUH) not tell us that we would go to the House and circumambulate it?’

He replied: ‘Yes, but did he (PBBUH) tell you that you would go to it this year?’

I said: ‘No.’

He said: ‘Indeed, you will go to it and circumambulate it.’”

The conversation between them ended there.

‘Umar continued: “Abu Bakr then took hold of my hand, pulled it forcefully, and said to me, ‘He is the Messenger of Allah, so hold fast to what he says (and do not disobey him); for by Allah, he is upon the manifest truth.’ Following this, Allah sent down tranquility upon my heart, and I knew that it was the truth.”

By contemplating the words of Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him), you will find, dear readers, that they are the same words that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to ‘Umar, even though Abu Bakr was not with them when this dialogue took place between them. What a superb harmony between these two pure, chaste, pious, and honest souls!

After Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty was the manifest victory for the Muslims.

For more information on Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty, please refer to the first book of this series: “*A Biography of the Best Man in Creation*”

4. Abu Bakr’s Role on the Day of Tabuk

Once the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) decided to march to the Byzantines and take the fight to the enemy’s territory to ward off the invasion of Madinah, he (PBBUH) informed the people of his resolve for them to begin the necessary

preparations. He (PBBUH) sent messages to the wealthy Muslims to participate in equipping this army. As soon as the Muslims heard the word of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), they raced to obey him, each according to his capacity and means.

“I Left Them Allah and His Messenger”

On this day, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab said: “Today I will outdo Abu Bakr, if ever there were a day to outdo him.”

Consequently, `Umar brought half of his wealth to the Prophet (PBBUH). The Prophet (PBBUH) asked him: **“What have you left for your family?”**

`Umar replied: “The same amount.”

Then Abu Bakr brought all his wealth. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked him: **“What have you left for your family?”**

Abu Bakr replied: “I have left them Allah and His Messenger.”

`Umar said: “By Allah, I will never try to outdo him (Abu Bakr) in anything.”

The Battle of Tabuk took place. In it the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) handed the major banner of his army to Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him).

5. Abu Bakr Leads the First Hajj Journey

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent Abu Bakr as the leader of the first pilgrimage to Makkah in Dhul-Qi`dah, in the year 9 A.H.

6. Abu Bakr in the Farewell Hajj

As the month of Dhul-Qi`dah arrived in the year 10 A.H., the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) started preparing for the Hajj journey and ordered the people to prepare for it.

On the Day of `Arafah (9th of Dhul-Hijjah), the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) delivered his “Farewell Sermon”. Upon finishing his speech in which he recapitulated the principles of Islam, the Almighty’s Saying was revealed:

﴿This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Ma’idah 5:3).

Abu Bakr wept intensely as he heard this ayah. When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked him what made him weep, he replied: “I wept because we were increasing in our religion. Now it is completed, and anything that is complete must start to decrease.”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **“You spoke the truth.”**

7. Al-Siddiq Constantly with the Beloved Prophet (PBBUH) during His Last Days

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) fell terminally ill, and his fever became severe. Yet this did not prevent him from walking to the mosque, with the help of one of his family members, to lead the people in *Salah* (prayer). He (PBBUH) continued like that for several days.

On one of these days, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) delivered a sermon to the people in which he (PBBUH) said:

“A slave of Allah was given the choice between the splendor of this world and that which is with Allah, and he chose that which is with Allah.”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was silent, and the people were attentive, as if birds were perched on their heads, except for Abu Bakr. He could not hold back his tears and wept profusely. He said: “We would sacrifice ourselves, our fathers, and our mothers for you, O Messenger of Allah.” He knew for sure, through his tender feelings and great friendship with the Prophet (PBBUH), that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) meant himself. The slave given the choice was no one other than the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) himself.

The Companions were surprised by Abu Bakr’s reaction at that time, but they later became certain that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was the one given the choice, and that Abu Bakr was the most knowledgeable of them.

“If I Were to Take a Close Friend, I Would Have Taken Abu Bakr”

Seeing Abu Bakr weeping profoundly, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) feared that Abu Bakr’s emotions would spread and affect other people, so he (PBBUH) motioned to him and said: **“Take it easy, Abu Bakr.”**

Then he (PBBUH) ordered that all the doors leading to the mosque be closed except for Abu Bakr’s door. After the doors were closed, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said:

“I do not know anyone who was a better supportive companion to me than Abu Bakr. If I were to take a close friend from among Allah’s slaves, I would have taken Abu Bakr as a close friend. But (between us is) the brotherhood of Islam.”

“Tell Abu Bakr to Lead the People in *Salah*”

The illness of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) aggravated, rendering him unable to go out to the mosque, so he (PBBUH) said: **“Tell Abu Bakr to lead the people in *Salah*.”**

Abu Bakr led the people in *Salah* for three days, which were the last days of the Prophet’s life (PBBUH). During these remaining days, Abu Bakr acted as Imam in seventeen prayers: the ‘*Isha*’ (Night) Prayer on Thursday, the *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer on Monday (on which the Messenger of Allah, PBBUH died), and fifteen prayers in between (five prayers on each of Friday, Saturday, and Sunday).

The Last Day of the Prophet’s (PBBUH) Life

On Monday, while Abu Bakr was leading the Muslims in the *Fajr* Prayer, the curtain covering Lady ‘Aishah’s room was removed and the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) came out, feeling and looking better—as if it were the vigor that sometimes precedes death. When the Muslims saw him (PBBUH), they were on the verge of interrupting their prayer. Abu Bakr felt what the Muslims had done and was certain that they had only done it because they saw the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) among them. Abu Bakr moved back, wanting to give his prayer position to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) pushed him back to his place, ordering him to continue to lead the people in prayer. Then the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sat next to Abu Bakr and prayed sitting, on his right.

Upon finishing his prayer, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) turned to the people, raising his voice for those outside the mosque to hear him. Abu Bakr came to him and said: “O Prophet of Allah, I see that you have become, by Allah’s Grace and Bounty, as we would like,” and he asked that he might go to visit his family. The Prophet (PBBUH) gave him permission. Abu Bakr went to

his family and the people went back to their work, extremely happy that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) regained health and vitality.

8. Abu Bakr's Pivotal Role on the Day the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) Died

In this difficult situation we see Abu Bakr's faith, in utmost dimension, where its true power, resilience, and unwavering depth became most apparent. We can appreciate how strong belief keeps the person, no matter what, connected to the Sustainer of the heavens and the earth. We see the profound belief and certainty shown by Abu Bakr on the day when the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was called to the Highest Companion (Exalted be He), and he (PBBUH) responded and departed this life to the next.

It was only hours after Abu Bakr left the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) that the momentous event occurred. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) died. It shook all the Companions. Al-Siddiq was preparing to return to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), after he met some of his family's needs, when he received the devastating news. Abu Bakr hurried back, not running but jumping.

Despite the illness that affected him, the death of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) came as a shock to all the Muslims, as if they never imagined that they would be told one day: "The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) has died." This left them in a state of imbalance and uncertainty.

Most people may expect that Abu Bakr, more than anyone, would experience the greatest share of grief and astonishment at the death of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), as he was his lifelong friend, the first man to believe in him, and his Companion in the cave. He loved him immensely and was his brother in a way that made separation from him—and the patience over such separation—beyond human capacity.

However, Abu Bakr seemed as if he was not moved by ordinary human power, but rather by a power given to him by Allah (Exalted be He). Abu Bakr arrived and entered the mosque. He saw the Muslims surrounding `Umar, who was giving them a sermon, denying that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) had died. People were listening to him and feeling confused, as they wanted to believe him.

Abu Bakr did not stop but went directly to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to find him in a corner of the house, covered with his cloak. He uncovered his face, kissed him, and said: "May my father and mother be sacrificed for you, O Messenger of Allah. You are good in life and in death. You have tasted the death that Allah has decreed for you, and no death will ever befall you after it."

Abu Bakr put the cloak back on the face of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and went out to the people. `Umar was still speaking to them. He asked him to be silent, but `Umar refused. Therefore Abu Bakr turned to the people and spoke to them. Allah had given him strength and composure, despite the pain he was in, and despite his tenderheartedness and deep friendship with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

"Whoever Was Worshipping Muhammad (PBBUH), Indeed Muhammad Has Died!"

Abu Bakr stood up to address the people, and they turned to him, listening attentively. He praised Allah and thanked Him, then said: "O people, whoever was worshipping Muhammad (PBBUH), indeed Muhammad has died. And whoever worships Allah, indeed Allah is alive and shall never die." Then Abu Bakr recited the Almighty's Words:

﴿Muhammad is no more than a Messenger, and indeed (many) Messengers have passed away before him. If he dies or is killed, will you then turn back on

your heels (as disbelievers)? And he who turns back on his heels does not harm Allah in the least, and Allah will give a reward to those who are grateful ﴿﴾ (translated meaning of Al `Imran 3:144).

The people wept as if they were hearing this ayah for the first time. `Umar fell to the ground, certain, through Abu Bakr's words, that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had truly died.

Abu Bakr's faith was like the eye of a hawk. In less than a blink of an eye, it found the secret words that would restore the spirits, which collapsed under the weight of the calamity, to reasonableness. He helped them find their inner strength again to face any grave consequences and overcome the crisis of the Prophet's (PBBUH) death peacefully.

These secret words were nothing but the decisive and definite statement: "Whoever was worshiping Muhammad, Muhammad has died. Whoever worships Allah, Allah is alive and shall never die." Abu Bakr's cry instigated the correct response, as the Companions rose to the noble body lying there and gave him a farewell prayer mixed with determination to continue the journey to keep Allah's Word uppermost.

Thus, Abu Bakr's faith stood firm on the day of the death of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) in a way that enabled him to endure what no one else could.

It seems that when Allah, the Almighty, chose Muhammad (PBBUH) to be His Messenger to the people, He chose Abu Bakr with him to protect the Prophet's Message, continue his path, and preserve Islam.

Abu Bakr Becomes the Caliph

The initial news of the death of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) triggered panic and confusion among the Muslims and made them lose their equanimity. Al-Siddiq reacted firmly to this turn of events, delivering a powerful speech that brought people back to their senses. They knew for sure that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had died, and that Allah is the Ever-Living. Right after these grave events, there occurred an unforeseen situation that complicated the matters. This situation was the Saqifah incident that almost caused sedition between the Muhajirun (the Emigrants from Makkah) and the Ansar (the Supporters of the Prophet PBBUH from the local inhabitants of Madinah). It could have destroyed everything in its path, if it were not for Abu Bakr. He put it out before it could flare up, even though there were those who provoked and fueled it and did not want it to die out.

The Incident of Saqifah Banu Sa`idah

Following the death of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), a group of the senior Companions from among the Ansar gathered in the Saqifah of Banu Sa`idah<sup>1</sup> to pledge allegiance to Sa`d ibn `Ubadah for the caliphate. When Abu Bakr learned of this gathering, he rushed to them, accompanied by `Umar ibn Al-Khattab and Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah. Abu Bakr was not stirred to action to reserve the caliphate for himself, but rather to stop the turmoil and curb

¹ Saqifah of Banu Sa`idah, simply known as the Saqifah, was a roofed structure that served as a communal gathering place for the Banu Sa`idah clan of the Banu Khazraj tribe, where decisions were made and public affairs were discussed. The Saqifah is significant as it is the site where Abu Bakr was elected as the first Caliph of the Muslims, after the death of Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH).

bigotry, as some Muslims stood shouting out: “O Ansar,” and others stood shouting out: “O Muhajirun.”

Al-Siddiq Extinguishes the Turmoil Before It Started Raging

At the Saqifah, `Umar was about to speak when Abu Bakr motioned him with his right hand to allow him to speak first.

Abu Bakr said: “O group of the Ansar, any excellence you may mention, you are worthy of it.”

This is how Al-Siddiq began his speech, and then words began to flow from his heart. He told them that preference of the Muhajirun for the caliphate was not because they were the emigrants in Allah’s Cause, but because emigration gave them a place of precedence in Islam. The emigration to Madinah brought an end to the stage of hardship in which Quraysh had unleashed all their brutality upon the Muslims to tempt them away from their religion. However, this brutality only increased them in faith and steadfastness.

So the scale by which Abu Bakr weighed the people was Allah’s Book and the Sunnah.

He relied on Allah’s Book, on the Almighty’s Saying:

﴿And the first to embrace Islam of the Muhajirun (those who emigrated from Makkah to Madinah) and the Ansar (the citizens of Madinah who helped and gave aid to the Muhajirun) and also those who followed them exactly (in faith), Allah is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise), to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Tawbah 9:100). Clearly, the Muhajirun are mentioned before the Ansar here.

Abu Bakr relied on the Sunnah, on the Prophet's (PBBUH) saying to the two paternal cousins of Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari who came asking him to appoint them as governors: **“By Allah, we do not appoint anyone to this position who asks for it or desires it.”** These people from the Ansar were keen to acquire the caliphate, but it was part of the usual policy of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) not to allow anyone who seeks power or desires authority over people to receive it.

Through this calm speech, people returned to their senses. After things had started to take an evil turn, they ended with concord.

The above such behavior of the Ansar was foreign to them, and there is no better evidence of that than their quick return to the truth.

Pledging Allegiance to Abu Bakr as Caliph

After Abu Bakr finished speaking, he approached `Umar and Abu `Ubaidah, raised their arms with both his hands and said: “I am satisfied with one of these two men, `Umar or Abu `Ubaidah. You may choose one of them.”

Here Umar's hand trembled and he said: “By Allah, to be brought forward and my neck be struck for no sinful cause is more beloved to me than to be appointed as ruler over a people among whom is Abu Bakr.”

Addressing the Ansar, `Umar said: “Do you not know that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered Abu Bakr to lead the people in prayer? Which of you would be willing to place himself ahead of Abu Bakr?”

The Ansar replied: “We seek refuge with Allah from placing ourselves ahead of Abu Bakr.”

No sooner had `Umar said these words and advanced, extending his hand to pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr, than the Ansar crowded to pledge allegiance

to Abu Bakr, as if a caller from heaven directed them to do so. They all gathered around this forbearing, righteous, and compassionate man.

The day of the Saqifah could have ended tragically, leaving deep cracks in the Islamic structure. But Allah honored Islam and the Muslims that day with Abu Bakr, whom Allah made a strong fortress to protect this religion twice in one day: once upon the death of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and again at the Saqifah of Banu Sa`idah.

The Muslims came through this experience peacefully, united under the leadership of Abu Bakr.

The First Sermon of the Successor of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)

The day that witnessed the death of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and the ensuing events in the Saqifah of Banu Sa`idah that led to pledging allegiance to Abu Bakr as Caliph was a very stormy day. On the following day (Tuesday), Abu Bakr advanced to ascend the Prophet's (PBBUH) pulpit.

The Prophet's (PBBUH) pulpit had three steps. The Prophet (PBBUH) would ascend to the third step and then address the people. Abu Bakr ascended to the second step and then stopped and said: "It is not right for me to ascend to where the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) used to be," and he sat on the second step. Here, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab stood up, praised Allah and thanked Him, then said:

"O people, Allah has united you around the best of you, the Companion of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and the 'Second of the Two' when they both were in the cave. So stand up and pledge allegiance to him."

“I Have Been Appointed Over You, Though I Am Not the Best of You”

After the pledge of allegiance was completed, Abu Bakr stood up to deliver his first speech as the Caliph of the Muslims.

Let us listen to what the Caliph of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said.

He praised Allah, thanked Him, and then said:

“O people, I have been appointed over you, though I am not the best of you. If I do good, help me; and if I do wrong, correct me. Truthfulness is an obligation, and lying is treachery. The weak among you to me is strong until I return to them that which is rightfully theirs, and the strong among you to me is weak until I take from them that which rightfully belongs to others. Obey me as long as I obey Allah and His Messenger. If I disobey Allah and His Messenger, there is no obedience for me over you.”

May my father and mother be sacrificed for you, O Messenger of Allah. You (PBBUH) brought up this group of rare and great men to achieve a common goal. Here is Abu Bakr beginning his rule with these words: “I have been appointed over you, though I am not the best of you.” If you, O Caliph of the Messenger of Allah, are not the best of us, after the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), who would be?

Fundamental Principles for Every Ruler

Through this speech, Al-Siddiq laid down the foundations of a just rule and outlined a constitution for every ruler to contemplate and work with, acting at the same time as a bill of rights for every citizen.

Expanding on this, the following lessons can be drawn from his speech:

1. The relationship between the ruler and the subjects

a. Ruling is a job, not a position of superiority. A ruler is not the best of his people just because he is their ruler. However, Abu Bakr was indeed the best of them for being endowed with honesty, trustworthiness, and wisdom. He truly deserved to be the ‘Second of Two’.

b. The people should help the ruler act righteously and discharge his responsibilities. They should back him when he does well and correct him if he makes mistakes.

2. The constitution

The constitution is the reference for everyone; the constitution which Al-Siddiq applied was full obedience to Allah and His Messenger (PBBUH).

3. The rule of law

No one is above the law. The law is above all persons and all authorities. It is enforced on the strong before the weak.

As Abu Bakr phrased it: “The weak among you to me is strong...”

Thus, the first Caliph of the Muslims began his mission, even though he was totally undesirous of it. He was honest when he said: “By Allah, never, on any day or night, was I desirous of rulership, nor did I ask for it secretly or openly.”

If it were not for the fact that by abandoning this position, he would have escaped from his religious and faith-based responsibilities, he would have earnestly found a way to avoid it.

The Official Salary of the First Caliph

Early on the morning of his ascension to caliphate, Abu Bakr left his house carrying a large bundle of clothes on his shoulders. On the way, he met `Umar ibn Al-Khattab and Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah, and they both asked him:

“Where are you going, O Caliph of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)?”

Al-Siddiq replied: “To the marketplace.”

`Umar said: “What are you going to do in the marketplace when you have been appointed in charge of the Muslims’ affairs?”

Al-Siddiq said: “From where would I feed (provide for) my family?”

`Umar said: “Come with us, and we will entitle you to some payment from the Muslim public treasury.”

They all headed to the mosque to which the Companions were summoned, and `Umar presented his suggestion to them; a salary should be assigned to the caliph that would suffice him, so that he could devote himself to run the Muslims’ affairs.

Guess, dear readers, how much was the salary of the Caliph of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)?

It was two hundred and fifty dinars a year. Then it was increased to three hundred. The Caliph lived with this small amount, he and his large family, even after Allah (Glorified be He) helped the Muslims gain more territories and the bounties of Syria and Iraq began to reach Madinah.

Perhaps Abu Bakr felt that he was no better than anyone else and so he should live at the level of the average citizen.

When Abu Bakr lived on his own money and successful trade business, his standard of living was appropriate for the level of his income, which afforded him a comfortable social status and an affluent lifestyle. After he took over the affairs of the people, he rejected everything that would give him any privilege.

“The Man Who Milks the Sheep, O Mother”

The simplicity of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) was one of the main components of his great personality. Before becoming a caliph, he used to provide wonderful services to the people of his neighborhood. Among his neighbors were some old widows whose husbands had died or were martyred in Allah's Cause. There were also some orphans who had no fathers to look after them. Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) used to visit the homes of these widows and milk the sheep for them, and he used to visit the homes of these orphans and cook food for them.

When Abu Bakr became a caliph, these widows and orphans thought that they would lose these great services from him. They were greatly saddened by this. However, the caliph of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) proved their assumptions wrong.

One day, there was a knock on the door of one of these houses and a little girl rushed to the door. Immediately, when she saw it was the Caliph of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), she cried out: “The man who milks the sheep, O mother.”

The mother came to find herself before the great Caliph, so she very embarrassedly said to her daughter:

“May Allah be merciful to you! Why do you not say the Caliph of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)?”

Then she addressed Al-Siddiq saying: “By Allah, O Caliph of the Messenger of Allah, we thought that you would not do such work after you became the Caliph.”

He replied to this saying: “No, it is the most beloved of my deeds for Allah.”

The milker of the sheep then stepped forward to perform the duty that he imposed on himself—milking the sheep for the old women and kneading the bread for the orphans.

Performing small acts to make people’s days easier was something Abu Bakr loved to do, which shows his simplicity and mercy whether in character, lifestyle, or communication, and his dedication in fulfilling the important roles and responsibilities of life and serving people. He was, as the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) described him: **“The most merciful of my followers toward my followers is Abu Bakr.”**

Competition in Doing Good Deeds

In our days, we notice that people chase materialistic gains and compete, or even fight, over money, prestige, and worldly life and its pleasures.

As for the Companions who were directly taught by the best of humankind (PBBUH), there was also a race and competition between them. However, this race was over good deeds and attaining Allah’s Good Pleasure.

Caliph Abu Bakr learned about the case of an old blind woman who had no family to look after her. He went to her house to meet her basic needs of food, drink, and other necessary services. When he finished his work and left her house, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab entered. He was the one who took care of this woman, but he found that someone else had preceded him and supplied what she wanted.

`Umar asked her: “Who came to you, O mother, and provided what you need?”

The old woman replied: “I do not know, O my son, I thought it was you.”

`Umar departed, feeling sad because he lost this source of great reward. Perhaps if this matter had happened to one of us nowadays, he would have been thankful because someone else had lifted this task from his shoulders. But look at what Al-Faruq did?

He did not give up and decided to come to her early to see who had taken over this good deed.

He was no one else other than Caliph Abu Bakr himself.

`Umar went to him and said: "Is it you, O Caliph of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)?"

They embraced and wept.

What a great school from which these superb people graduated!

The school of the beloved Chosen Prophet (PBBUH).

The Main Challenges that Abu Bakr Encountered during His Caliphate

The Caliphate of Abu Bakr began. Many hard challenges awaited him, which only Abu Bakr could face.

These challenges can be grouped into two types: internal challenges and external challenges.

The following pages will present these challenges. Through them, we will see how the faith, sincerity, certainty, and insight of the Caliph of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) were the greatest means for overcoming these trials and surmounting these difficulties and helping Muslims grow stronger and find a path forward.

First: The Internal Challenges

1. The Army Under the Leadership of Usamah

Before his death, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had prepared an army under the command of Usamah ibn Zayd and deployed it to the Levant. With the worsening of his illness (PBBUH), the advance of this army, encamped at Al-Jurf (three miles from Madinah), was postponed.

After the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) met his Lord, the situation became serious. The calamity intensified, hypocrisy appeared, and some Arab tribes around Madinah apostatized from Islam, while others refused to pay *Zakah* (obligatory charity).

The First Decision Taken by Caliph Abu Bakr

The first decision taken by Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, after assuming the caliphate, was to mobilize Usamah's army (to confront the Byzantine forces), as the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had commanded before his death. This decision of his was met with great opposition from many Companions. They objected to two matters, the first of which was the timing of the mission and the second was the leader of the mission.

As for the timing of the mission: A group of Muslims, headed by `Umar ibn Al-Khattab and Usamah himself, saw that sending the army carried a great risk at a time when Madinah, the capital of Islam, was facing the threat of invasion from the apostates.

They stressed the necessity that the army should head back to Madinah, regroup and prepare to confront the emerging events.

“Even if the Birds and Beasts of Prey Were to Snatch Us Away”

Inappropriate time and circumstances for mobilization of the army was the opinion of those Companions who objected to Abu Bakr's decision. They held tangible concerns which they had highlighted to him, but Al-Siddiq derived his logic from his faith. For him, every issue was open to exercising discretion and independent reasoning except for an issue for which Allah gave a law and the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had given an order. Before his death, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had ordered that Usamah's army be sent forth to battle. What the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered must be done, no matter what dangers laid ahead. Abu Bakr's decisive and firm reply was: “By Allah, I will not untie a knot (i.e., a banner) that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had tied (to march under). Even if the birds and beasts of prey were to snatch us away from around Madinah, and even if the dogs were to (enter the city and)

bite upon the legs of the Mothers of the Believers, I would dispatch Usamah's army."

If someone other than Abu Bakr had said these words, it would have been a serious situation. But the one who said that was Abu Bakr. His daughter, Lady `Aishah, was the most beloved among the Mothers of the Believers.

According to Abu Bakr, at this critical juncture, there was no greater danger than daring to violate the duty of obedience to Allah and His Messenger.

As already mentioned, the second objection raised by the Companions was about the leader of the mission. Many of the Companions saw that someone older than Usamah, and more experienced in the art of fighting, should be brought forward to lead.

"The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) Appointed Usamah and You Are Asking Me to Dismiss Him!"

This objection to the leader of the army, examined in the light of pure logic, also seemed sound. But Abu Bakr, as was his case in all matters, derived his logic from his faith.

The one who assigned Usamah to this task was the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) himself; could Abu Bakr dismiss a man whom the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) appointed?

Here was also his decisive and conclusive response: "The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) appointed him, and you order me to dismiss him?"

Usamah's Army Marching Forth

After fully answering all objections, the Caliph, followed by `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, went out to where the army was camped. He told them to march forth with Allah's Blessing, and he walked with them, bidding them farewell.

The Caliph was walking on foot, and beside him were `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf leading his mount and Usamah riding his horse. Usamah said: "O Caliph of the Messenger of Allah, by Allah, you must either ride or I will dismount." He replied: "By Allah, you will not dismount, and I will not ride. What harm can there be if my feet get dusty for a while in Allah's Cause?" Then the Caliph asked Usamah to allow him to keep `Umar ibn Al-Khattab with him, saying: "If you see fit for `Umar to assist me, then do so." Therefore Usamah allowed `Umar to stay with the Caliph.

A Message to Human Rights Advocates

Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) stood addressing the army, to supply them with the best provisions on their journey and to draw up for them a wartime constitution. This is a constitution whose principles are more just and more sublime than anything history has ever known and are more consistent with dignified treatment. Abu Bakr said to them: "O people, stand up to give you ten commandments, which you should keep in mind [when going through the battle]:

1. Do not betray anyone.
2. Do not exceed the limit (when you fight).
3. Do not act treacherously.
4. Do not mutilate anyone.

5. Do not kill a child, an old man, or a woman (i.e., civilians).
6. Do not uproot a palm tree or burn it.
7. Do not cut down a fruitful tree.
8. Do not slaughter a sheep, a cow, or a camel, except for food.
9. When you pass by people who have secluded themselves in hermitages, leave them to that which they have devoted themselves (i.e., leave them alone).
10. When food is brought to you, mention Allah's Name."

Then Abu Bakr turned to Usamah and said to him: "Do what the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered you to do, and do not fall short in anything that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered."

Abu Bakr's profound words and lofty commandments, which preceded all wartime constitutions by centuries, remain superior to all laws adopted during war. I dedicate them to all advocates and defenders of human rights.

Indeed, they are the most eloquent response to those who try to distort this valuable religion and falsify facts.

The Army Marches Forth to Battle and Abu Bakr's Decision Proves to Be Farsighted

Usamah's army set out under Allah's Protection, and eventually, Caliph Abu Bakr's viewpoint and conviction proved to be accurate. While advancing to the Levant, all tribes by which Usamah's army passed were overwhelmed by its vastness, so they came to their senses. Some of them said to each other: "By Allah, if Madinah was moaning under the burdens of weakness and discord, as we have heard, it would not have been able to send this vast army to confront the Byzantines."

The mere marching ahead of the Muslim army toward its destination was a deterrent to many tribes, after intentions of apostasy had crept into them.

Usamah's army returned to Madinah victorious, after being absent from it for forty days. It performed admirably and achieved a sweeping victory.

The people admired the shrewdness and farsightedness of the Caliph of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). His decision proved beneficial to Islam and Muslims, because it was based on his steadfast faith and commitment to what Allah and His Messenger had commanded.

2. The Wars of Apostasy

A great calamity befell the Muslims after the death of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). If it were not for the wise leadership of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), Islam would have dwindled, and the Muslims would have been scattered.

Shortly, after learning about the death of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), the Arabs apostatized from Islam. No one outside of Madinah remained steadfast in their religion, except Quraysh in Makkah, Tha'if in Al-Ta'if, and just a few others.

Types of Apostasy

Apostates were divided into three groups:

- A group who rebelled against paying *Zakah*.
- A group who apostatized and abandoned Islam completely.
- A group who claimed prophethood and had some followers.

The Stance that Al-Siddiq Adopted in Relation to the Apostates

From the start to the end of the uprising, Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) firmly confronted the rebellion and apostasy of the Arabs. He stated

that withholders of *Zakah* must be fought against and resisted as strongly as outright apostates would be. Denial of *Zakah* would also be denial of *Salah* (prayer); that is, it would inevitably move and extend to include all other pillars and core beliefs of this religion.

Opposition to Al-Siddiq's Firm Stance

Here, two opinions emerged:

- An opinion said that those who refuse to pay *Zakah* should not be fought against, as long as they committed nothing else than refusal to pay *Zakah*. Of those who held this opinion, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab was the most eminent.
- Another opinion said that *Zakah* is a main pillar of Islam, and the Caliph must not allow it to be obliterated. Refusal to pay *Zakah* would only be the beginning. This was more akin to a reconnaissance movement, after which rebellion and the elimination of Islam would follow. Abu Bakr held this opinion.

Umar's Statement and Abu Bakr's Response

`Umar said: "How can we fight a people who testify that there is no god but Allah, and the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, **'When they say that (there is no god but Allah), their blood and wealth become inviolable to me, except for a right that is due, and their reckoning lies with Allah.'**"

Abu Bakr replied: "Did he (PBBUH) not say, **'except for a right that is due'**? Part of that due right is to establish *Salah* and pay *Zakah*." Then he uttered his famous decisive and firm statement: "By Allah, if they withheld from me a rope (with which a camel is tied) that they used to pay (as *Zakah*) to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), I would fight them for it."

`Umar said: “O Caliph of the Messenger of Allah, draw people toward you and be kind to them.”

Abu Bakr replied: “I hoped for your support, but you desert me (in time of need)! You were a tyrant in pre-Islamic time. Now, in Islam, will you be faint-hearted? Indeed, the divine revelation has ended, and the religion has been completed. Will it decline while I am alive?”

Here, `Umar said: “Quickly, I felt that Allah has opened my heart to Abu Bakr’s opinion.”

Why Did the Two Companions Act Differently from Their Usual Selves?

The people may have been asked which of them, Abu Bakr or `Umar, would be more strict and tough, and which would be more lenient and reconciling? They would not have hesitated, before each of these two Companions gave his opinion, to point to `Umar as the one who would call for stringent measures and to Abu Bakr for cautious and lenient measures. However, what happened was the opposite, totally not conforming to what would be expected based on the usual nature of the two men.

Explaining this phenomenon, Prof. `Abbas Al-Aqqad said: “The main idea that can explain this surprising response is based on two commonplace facts:

“The first: Usual human manners make up a great part in each human character, but not the entire human character. Usual manners may be different than those perceived in all possible conditions the person may be subject to, which the people are unfamiliar with.

“The second: Usual manners can be interpreted in many ways. Some of these agree with what readily comes to mind, and some of them do not agree with what readily comes to mind except after careful and thorough investigation.

“Abu Bakr was tough when a situation demanded toughness, and `Umar was lenient when a situation demanded leniency. Such unusual personal behaviors do not manifest themselves except in difficult times, when facing critical situations. One critical situation they faced was this apostasy crisis and the consequences that followed! The two Companions had the same aims and purposes but a different opinion.”

Bright Signs of Abu Bakr’s Position

There are two clear, positive qualities that became apparent in the position Abu Bakr took:

- The first: Abu Bakr’s certainty, showing him as “the faithful Al-Siddiq”.
- The second: Abu Bakr’s insight, showing him as “the Caliph and the leader.”

Abu Bakr’s certainty in Allah did not allow anything of Allah’s Law or the Sunnah to change during his era. With the insight of a leader, he realized that any sign of weakness befalling Islam at this stage would tempt many to attack it from every side.

Yet, Abu Bakr did not rely on his faith and insight without relying on the collective opinion of the group; he remained committed to consulting and discussing matters with the people. He did not send the armies until the Muslims were convinced of his view and the extent of the danger that was looming over them. They were facing an armed mass coalition that was clearly advancing toward Madinah and against Islam.

If we examine the issue from a modern standpoint, we will find that the crisis began with an act of “civil disobedience” represented in abstaining from paying *Zakah*. Then it escalated into armed disobedience to confirm this claim of abstention. Should the government stand still and submissive before this challenge, or bear the responsibility of deterring and suppressing it? Which is

the correct response, considering that these people did not remain at their homes, holding only a defensive position if they were attacked, but rather rallied their forces to march into Madinah?

This was the size of the crisis, as Al-Siddiq saw it.

Dispatching the Muslim Armies to Fight the Apostates

Following this psychological and educational, and even, we can say, democratic preparation, the Caliph of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) issued his orders to dispatch the armies. He sent eleven armies that headed to the strongholds of turmoil in all parts of the Arabian Peninsula. He appointed over them the best of the Companions—men who were true to what they promised Allah.

Victory of Truth Over Falsehood

A clear victory was achieved. The tyrants, who were instilling wrong beliefs and tempting people into apostasy, were killed. Everything became settled into its proper place. The Arabian Peninsula was put into order, and remote parts became as steadfast in Islam and secure as near and central parts.

Indeed, the greatest share in this outstanding victory belonged to the faith, certainty, insight, and sound judgment of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him).

After these tough battles and hard situations, `Umar entered Abu Bakr's house one day only to find him weeping. As soon as Abu Bakr saw `Umar, he clung to him as if he were a lifeboat amid a stormy sea. He said to him: "O `Umar, I have no need for this rulership." But `Umar did not let him finish his speech. Before he added anything else, `Umar hastened to say: "By Allah, we will not dismiss you from your position, nor ask you to resign."

Ibn Mas`ud said some words that best captured people's appreciative feelings toward Abu Bakr: "After the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), we were put into a situation that almost brought our destruction, had Allah not blessed us with Abu Bakr."

Abu Raja' Al-Basri narrated: "I entered Madinah and saw the people gathered. A man was kissing the head of another man and saying to him, 'We would sacrifice ourselves for you. Had it not been for you, we would have perished.' When I asked who these two men were, they said, 'This is `Umar kissing the head of Abu Bakr, after fighting the apostates when they withheld payment of the *Zakah* until they brought it submissively.'"

It was as though, when `Umar kissed the noble head of Abu Bakr, he was extending this gesture of honor and deep gratitude on behalf of all Muslims.

3. Collecting the Noble Qur'an on Papers

If accomplishing the mission of Usamah's army successfully and putting an end to apostasy are attributed to Abu Bakr, another outstanding action must be attributed to him. This action, although it does not fall under dispatching military expeditions, was more conducive to the welfare of the Muslim state than all expeditions; it had to do with the book that serves as the constitution of this *Ummah* (worldwide Muslim community), which could not have been established without it. That outstanding deed by Abu Bakr was the collection of the Qur'an on papers.

The Battle of Yamamah—the most decisive battle in the wars of apostasy led by Khalid bin Al-Walid to fight against Musaylimah the Liar (who claimed to be a prophet)—ended. Allah defeated Musaylimah and those with him; Musaylimah was killed, victory was given to the Muslims, and the furious turmoil was extinguished. However, a large group among the memorizers of the Qur'an was also killed in this battle. Its number was said to be seven hundred men. This aroused the concerns of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, fearing that the wars

against Persia and Byzantium would annihilate those memorizers who remained. As a result, he advised the Caliph to collect the different manuscripts of the Qur'an on papers. At first, Abu Bakr hesitated and said: "How can I do something that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) did not do?" To this `Umar replied: "By Allah, this is something good," and he kept explaining his viewpoint until Allah opened Abu Bakr's heart to this matter.

Abu Bakr assigned this enormous task to one of the scribes of the divine revelation. That man was Zayd ibn Thabit.

Abu Bakr said to him: "You are a young, wise man. You were one of the scribes of the divine revelation for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Trace (any manuscript containing) the Qur'an and collect it."

Zayd ibn Thabit said: "By Allah, had he ordered me to move a mountain (from its place), it would not have been heavier for me than that which he ordered me to do regarding collecting the Qur'an."

Thabit traced any records of the Qur'an, collecting them from palm fronds, thin stones, and the chests of the Companions. He transcribed all the parts of the Qur'an onto papers. These papers remained with Abu Bakr until his death, then with `Umar throughout his life, and finally with Hafsa bint (daughter of) `Umar after Umar's death.

Second: The External Challenges

The above were the overall internal challenges that the Caliph of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) faced from inside the Muslim state. However, these challenges had an external instigator. The great empires neighboring Islam at that time were the Persian kingdom in the east, with Iraq under its dominance, and the Byzantine kingdom in the north, with the Levant under its dominance. Once the Muslim state became a threat to their authority in the region, it became the target of conspiracies and seditions by these empires in an

attempt to destroy it. The greatest challenge for the Caliph of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was to confront these conspiracies outside the Muslim state.

Islamic Conquests in Iraq—The Persian Kingdom

After Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) was finished with the wars of apostasy, gathering all the Arabs again under Islam, and Allah united their word, Abu Bakr sent Khalid ibn Al-Walid at the head of an army to Iraq, reinforced with Al-Qaqa' ibn 'Amr. He ordered them to mobilize those men who had fought the apostates and disallow the participation of any apostate. According to Abu Bakr, no help should be sought in a battle from an apostate.

Victories and conquests succeeded one after another in the lands of Iraq under the leadership of Allah's Sword, Khalid ibn Al-Walid. Allah helped the Muslims enter the city of Al-Ubulla, followed by Al-Saniyy, Al-Walaja, then Al-Hirah, and finally Dumat Al-Jandal.

Thus, during the reign of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) the territories of the Persian kingdom shrank considerably from all the fertile lands west of the Euphrates, and its borders were reduced to the Euphrates River.

Islamic Conquests in the Levant—The Byzantine Kingdom

At the time when the Islamic conquests were continuing at a fast pace in Iraq against the Persian Kingdom, the eyes of Al-Siddiq were focused on the Levant.

He prepared four armies to send to the Levant, putting them under the command of the following leaders mobilizing them to the destinations below:

- 'Amr ibn Al-'As, who directed his army to Palestine.
- Shurahbil ibn Hasana, who directed his army to Jordan.

- Yazid ibn Mu`awiyah, who directed his army to Balqa (the Levant) and was then reinforced with his brother Mu`awiyah.
- Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah, who directed his army to Homs.

These Muslim armies marched with Allah's Blessings, each to its destination. Before their departure, Abu Bakr would accompany each army on foot, bidding them farewell and giving them pieces of advice that would enhance and elevate their worldly and afterlife.

Some Pieces of Advice Given by Caliph Abu Bakr to His Army Leaders

Among the great pieces of advice that were reported to have been said by Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) were those he gave to Yazid ibn Abu Sufyan, in which he said:

- "I have appointed you to test you and requite you [for your efforts]. If you do well, I will return you to your work, increase your status, and reward you. If you do badly, I will dismiss you. So fear Allah, for He sees your inner self as clearly as He sees your outer self."
- "When you preach to people, be brief. Too much talk causes one to forget some of what has been said."
- "Correct yourself and people will be righteous with you."
- "Offer all prayers at their appointed times, making compete and proper bowing and prostration with humble devotion."

These were the commandments of Caliph Abu Bakr as an imam. Next are some of his commandments as a commander. He said:

- “When envoys from your enemy come to you, honor them; but shorten their stay (i.e., do not let them stay with you for long) for them to leave your camp while they are still ignorant (i.e., without discovering any of your secrets).”
- “Stay up at night with your companions; news will come to you and secrets will be revealed to you.”
- “Keep many guards and conduct a surprise inspection of them at their guard posts, without them knowing about you (i.e., make it unexpectedly). Whoever you find negligent in duty, discipline him well and punish him reasonably.”
- “Be sincere in the encounter (i.e., with the enemy), and do not be a coward, lest the people then act cowardly.”

What kind of a man were you, O Caliph of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)?

As we contemplate, dear readers, these commandments, we will notice that they issued from a pious imam as well as a veteran commander. This was the difficult balance which the Companions perfectly achieved by following the good example that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) set for them.

After putting their trust completely in Allah (Exalted be He) and performing the duties that Allah placed upon them, they made good plans and managed all details well, from start to finish.

How much we need to embrace such ideals and follow such role models today! Indeed, there can be no better example than *The Best Man in Creation and His Honorable Companions*.

The Battle of Yarmuk

Heraclius (Caesar), the Byzantine Emperor, heard about the advancing, victorious Muslim armies. He ordered the assemblage of his armies. A large force of Byzantine warriors set out, far larger than the Muslim armies. The Muslim commanders sent a message informing Abu Bakr of this numerical superiority of the enemy. He sent a reply to them, saying: "People like you will not be defeated because of their small numbers, but rather because of sins. Therefore, beware of them."

Abu Bakr wrote to Khalid ibn Al-Walid, the commander of the Iraqi army, ordering him to appoint a substitute for him over the army there and then take half of the army and head to the Levant.

It is noteworthy to say here that firstly, Abu Bakr advised his commanders to fear Allah (Exalted be He) and avoid sins. Then secondly, he took the necessary measures and sent Khalid ibn Al-Walid to the Levant (employing the necessary means towards achieving an end).

When Khalid arrived in the Levant, he advised the commanders to unify the four Muslim armies under one leadership. They agreed that he should be that commander.

The Battle of Yarmuk ended with a terrible defeat for the Byzantine forces.

This battle was the last one in the life of Abu Bakr. With it his caliphate ended. Although the term of his position as Caliph did not last long, only two years and three months, by the time his caliphate finished the Muslim state had stretched and expanded into new territories.

During Abu Bakr's caliphate, the Muslim governorates, in addition to Madinah (the capital of the Muslim state), included the following.

- Makkah.

- Al-Ta'if.
- Sana`a.
- Hadhramaut.
- Khawlan District.
- Najran.
- Bahrain.
- Jerash.
- Dumat Al-Jandal.
- (Most of) Iraq.
- (Most of) the Levant.

Outstanding Traits of Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq

Before we bid farewell to Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) and close this topic, let us tackle some of his commendable traits. This is in order to bring ourselves closer to this great personality, taking him as a role model and using his life as an example of success to follow.

Here are some of Abu Bakr's remarkable characteristics:

1. Abu Bakr's Piety

Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) was very pious with regard to all his feelings and very righteous in all his behavior. He worshiped Allah Almighty as if he could see Him. After his death, `Umar went to ask his wife, Asma' bint `Umais: "How did Abu Bakr worship his Lord when he was alone?"

She replied: "When it was pre-dawn, he would get up, perform *Wudu'* (ablution), and pray. Then he would continue praying... reciting the Qur'an and weeping, prostrating and weeping, supplicating and weeping."

`Umar wept and said: "How can Ibn Al-Khattab ever be like him?"

Abu Bakr's reverence and respect for his Lord filled his soul with awe and modesty. He knew with absolute certainty that part of his reverence for his Lord was to respect the slaves of this great Lord. This pious man did not give people what they expected from him; rather, he gave them as much as he was able to give, and he was able to give a lot. This was obvious in his dealings with people and his extreme humility, even after he became the Caliph of the Muslims.

2. Abu Bakr's Humility

Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) was extremely humble, and for his humility Allah raised him high. He did not find it demeaning to milk the sheep of widows and cook food for orphans—as mentioned earlier. He continued like this even after he became the Caliph of the Muslims.

Whenever Abu Bakr went out to bid farewell to his soldiers, he would walk beside them while they were riding. They would say: “O Caliph of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), you are walking while we are riding?” He would say: “I consider these steps of mine to be in Allah’s Cause.”

He had the utmost simplicity, compassion, and dedication to fulfilling the duties that he owed to Allah.

3. Abu Bakr's Bravery

‘Ali ibn Abu Talib was asked: “Who is the bravest of people?”

He replied that the bravest of people is Abu Bakr, especially when the *Mushrikin* crowded around the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) in Makkah, one dragging the Messenger (PBBUH) and another grabbing him violently, and they were saying: “You have made the gods only one god.” ‘Ali continued that by Allah, no one of the Muslims dared go near to help him (PBBUH) except Abu Bakr. He was beating this one and fending off another, while saying: “Would you kill a man because he says, ‘My Lord is Allah?’”

Then ‘Ali added: “Is the believer of the family of Pharaoh better or Abu Bakr? By Allah, an hour of Abu Bakr is better than filling the earth with the believer of the family of Pharaoh. The believer of the family of Pharaoh was a man who concealed his faith, but Abu Bakr was a man who declared his faith.”

Further describing the bravery of Abu Bakr, `Ali said: “When it was the Day of Badr, we made a roofed structure for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), and we said, ‘Who will be with the Prophet (PBBUH) for none of the *Mushrikin* to reach him?’ By Allah, no one stepped forward by his side except Abu Bakr, who brandished his sword and said, ‘Anyone who approaches him, this sword will descend upon him.’”

4. Always the First to Take the Initiative to Do Good

`Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “Any time I tried to do something good before Abu Bakr, he preceded me to it.”

`Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “He was always the first to do good. By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, we never tried to do something good before Abu Bakr except that he did it before us.”

`Umar said virtually the same as `Ali, using almost the same words and stressing Abu Bakr’s promptness to do good.

“Anyone Who Possess These Traits of Goodness Will Enter Paradise”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked: “**Who among you is fasting today?**”

Abu Bakr replied: “I am.”

He (PBBUH) asked: “**Who among you has followed a funeral (procession) today?**”

Abu Bakr replied: “I have.”

He (PBBUH) asked: “**Who among you has fed a needy person today?**”

Abu Bakr replied: “I have.”

He (PBBUH) asked: **“Who among you has visited a sick person today?”**

Abu Bakr replied: “I have.”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **“Anyone in whom these (traits of goodness) are combined will certainly enter paradise.”**¹

5. Abu Bakr’s Generosity

Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) was uniquely generous. When he gave something, he would not give a part of his wealth, as people do, nor even half of it. Rather, when he gave something, he would give all his wealth.

There are many examples of this, including the following:

- When Abu Bakr emigrated with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), he took all his money (six thousand dinars) with him. His father, Abu Quhafah, learned of this, and he visited his house. He was a blind man. He asked Asma’ bint (daughter of) Abu Bakr: “I heard that your father went out with Muhammad, and that he gave him all his money and did not leave you anything.” Asma’ replied: “No, he left us a lot.” She gathered some pebbles, put a cloth over them, and then took his hand and said: “O father, put your hand on this money.” He put his hand on the pile, and it made a sound like that of dinars. He was reassured and said: “There is nothing wrong, if he left you this.”
- On the Day of Tabuk, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered the collection of money in preparation for this decisive battle—as was mentioned earlier. `Umar said: “Today I will outdo Abu Bakr, if ever there were a day to outdo him.” Then he came with half his wealth. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked him: **“What did you leave for your family?”** `Umar replied: “The same amount.” Then Abu Bakr

¹ Reported by Muslim, hadith no. 1028.

came with all his wealth. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked him: **“What did you leave for your family?”** Abu Bakr replied: “I left them Allah and His Messenger.” `Umar said: “By Allah, I will never try to outdo him in anything.”¹

This is how generous and giving Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) was.

6. Abu Bakr’s Justice

Just as Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) was very generous and the first to do good, he was also firm in his justice. He would never relent unless it was for the truth and what Allah (Exalted be He) and His Messenger commanded.

Here are some examples of his justice:

Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) treated his subjects equally in giving and dividing money. When amounts of money came to him, he would divide it among the people equally—the free and the slave, the male and the female, and the young and the old.

Lady `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: “My father, during the first year, divided the booty, giving ten dinars each to the free man, the slave, the woman, and her female slave. Then in the second year, he divided the money and gave them twenty each.”

¹ Reported by Abu Dawud, hadith no. 1678.

Abu Bakr Is Confronted with a Difficult Situation Where His Justice Is Put to Test

It was decreed for Al-Siddiq to begin his caliphate with an incident that significantly tested his loyalty to justice and the guidance of his Prophet (PBBUH). Fatimah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), came to him, asking him for a piece of land to be given to her as her father's inheritance.

Abu Bakr said to her: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) say, **'We, the Prophets, do not leave anything as inheritance. Whatever we leave behind is charity.'**¹ By Allah, I will not leave anything that I saw the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) do without doing it. I fear that if I abandon anything of his commandments, I will go astray."

Thus, Al-Siddiq found himself torn between two loyalties: one to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), in a matter related to the person dearest to him, his daughter Fatimah, and another to the law which the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) brought. Abu Bakr made the definite choice and chose to take the difficult path. He sided with the law and justice that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) brought.

It is not fair to cast aspersions on the loyalty of Abu Bakr to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) by claiming that he deprived Lady Fatimah (may Allah be pleased with her) of her father's inheritance. If he deprived her, this means he would have deprived his daughter `Aishah as well. According to the law of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), the Prophets leave behind no material possessions as inheritance. Abu Bakr would not withhold the inheritance of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) from his legal heirs, including his daughter and the most beloved person to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Rather, he acted in

¹ Reported by Ahmad, hadith no. 58.

alignment with the commandments of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), as nothing should have more priority than them—neither wealth nor offspring.

7. Abu Bakr’s Devoutness, Scrupulousness, and Fear of Allah

Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) was very devout and had an intense fear of Allah. He was an emotional man who was given to weeping.

The following are some examples of this:

- The Caliph of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) had a young boy who brought him something to eat one day. After he took one bite of it, the boy said: “Every night you would ask me [about the source of the food I purchased], but tonight you did not ask me?”

Abu Bakr replied: “Because of [extreme] hunger. From where did you get this (food)?”

The boy replied: “I used to predict fortune for a man during the pre-Islamic time. I am not good at divination, but I was able to deceive him. He met me today and gave me that (food). This is what you ate from.”

Abu Bakr said: “You almost destroyed me,” and at once he put his hand into his throat and started vomiting until he expelled everything in his stomach.

It was said to him: “May Allah be merciful to you, all this for a single morsel?”

Abu Bakr replied: “If it had not come out except with my soul as well, I would have brought it out. I heard the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) say, ‘**Every**

flesh that grows from unlawful earnings, the Fire is more deserving of it.’¹ I feared that something of my body would grow from this morsel.”

The Caliph of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) would prefer to have a stone or two tied to his stomach to alleviate the pangs of hunger, as his teacher and Messenger (PBBUH) did, rather than have a morsel of food bought with ill-gotten money put into his stomach.

- After the death of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), Abu Bakr said to `Umar: “Let us go and visit Umm Ayman as the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) used to visit her.” But when they arrived and met her, she wept. They (Abu Bakr and `Umar) said to her: “What makes you weep? Indeed, what Allah has in store for His Messenger (PBBUH) is better (than this worldly life)?” She said: “I know that what Allah has in store for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) is better (than this world), but I weep because the divine revelation has ceased to come.” This moved both to tears, and they began to weep along with her.

8. Abu Bakr’s Renunciation of Worldly Attachments

- The Muslims pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) after the death of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), and as a result, he became their Caliph and Imam. Apostasy of the Arabs was an enormous challenge for him, but Allah granted him a decisive victory over it. He saw the towers of the Byzantines and Persians collapsing under the fluttering of his victorious banners. Yet this did not induce him to feel superior to others, nor did any amount of arrogance take hold of his soul; rather, detachment from the pleasures and comforts of this world took hold of him.

¹ Reported in *Mishkat Al-Masabih*, hadith no. 2772.

- He would often grab his heart with his right hand and fervently utter the supplication of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH): **“O You Who turns the hearts, keep my heart firm upon Your religion.”**¹ While shedding tears, he would say: “I wish I were a tree that would be cut down and done away with.” When he was reminded of his status with Allah and the glad tidings of the Gardens of Bliss that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had given him, he would say: “By Allah, even if one of my feet were in Paradise [and the other outside of it], I would not feel secure from Allah’s Plan.”
- It was narrated that Abu Bakr asked for some water to drink, and a vessel containing water and honey was brought to him. But on bringing it close to his mouth, he wept and burst into tears until those around him wept. Then he wiped his face and regained vigor. They said: “What made you weep?” He replied that one day he was with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), and the Messenger kept pushing something away from him that Abu Bakr could not see. The Messenger (PBBUH) said: **“Go away from me, go away from me.”** Abu Bakr said to him: “O Messenger of Allah, I see that you are pushing something away from yourself, but I do not see anyone with you.” He (PBBUH) said: **“This world has appeared to me with what is in it, so I said to it, ‘Go away from me.’ It stepped aside but said, ‘By Allah, if you escape from me, those who come after you will not escape from me.’”** Abu Bakr explained that he feared that it had caught up with him, and that is what made him weep.

¹ Reported by Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 3522.

9. The Precise One—Acting in Harmony with the Mind and Soul of the Prophet (PBBUH)

Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) was known to be astute; he discerned what others could not discern and had an accurate vision of things.

As we say nowadays, there was a unique, harmonious chemistry between him and the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). He felt what the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) felt, unlike other people. He clearly understood the purport of what the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, unlike other people.

He had perfect rapport with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) in heart, mind, and the transparency of feelings and thoughts. This was unique to Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him).

Here is some evidence supporting this:

The Love of the Prophet (PBBUH) for Abu Bakr

Just as Abu Bakr loved the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) loved him... very dearly.

`Amr ibn Al-`As asked the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH): “O Messenger of Allah, which of the people is dearest to you?”

He (PBBUH) replied: “`Aishah (my wife).”

`Amr asked: “Who among men?”

He (PBBUH) replied: “**Her father.**”

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: “**No one has been kinder and more generous to me than Abu Bakr. He supported me with his own self and with his wealth and married me to his daughter.**”

He (PBBUH) also said: **“Anyone who has done me a favor I have repaid them for it, except for Abu Bakr. He has done good deeds for me for which Allah will reward him on the Day of Resurrection.”**¹

`Umar ibn Al-Khattab used to say: “Abu Bakr is our master, the best man among us, and the most beloved to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).”

Abu Bakr’s Position on the Day of Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty

As mentioned before, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) was the only Companion on the Day of Al-Hudaibiyah whose position was in perfect agreement with the position of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). His statements to `Umar matched what the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said on this issue, without Abu Bakr seeing or hearing his remarks.

On the Day of the Farewell Hajj

On the day of the Farewell Hajj, Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) was deeply moved because of the revelation of the ayah stating: ﴿This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Ma'idah 5:3). He was the only one who wept among all the Companions, feeling the void that the Prophet’s (PBBUH) absence would surely leave. He wept because he knew that this ayah was an announcement of the death of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He remarked: “Anything that is complete must start to decrease.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to him: **“You spoke the truth.”**

¹ Reported by Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 3661.

Before the Death of the Prophet (PBBUH)

As mentioned earlier, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) took his seat on the pulpit and addressed the people thus: **“A slave of Allah was given the choice between the splendor of this world and that which is with Allah, and he chose that which is with Allah.”**¹ Hearing this, Abu Bakr wept profusely and said: “We would sacrifice ourselves, our fathers, and our mothers for you, O Messenger of Allah.” Abu Bakr knew that the slave given the choice was no one other than the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) himself.

The people were surprised by Abu Bakr’s reaction at that time, but they later realized that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was the one given the choice, and that Abu Bakr was the most knowledgeable of them.

10. The Broad Culture of Al-Siddiq

In addition to the previously mentioned outstanding traits that Al-Siddiq possessed, he was a man of broad culture. Perhaps one of the truest signs of his rich culture was his appreciation of eloquent speech, whether his own or others’. He was distinguished by brief statements, well-balanced words, decorous talk, and extensive knowledge of genealogies.

Abu Bakr’s Brevity and Clarity

Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) was the most careful of people about every word that came out of his mouth. He was always a man of few words who put all his thoughts together in a succinct manner and was a great listener. Therefore, brevity of speech was his first advice to his governors and commanders.

¹ Reported by Al-Bukhari, hadith 446; and by Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 3660.

Abu Bakr said to Khalid ibn Al-Walid: “Keep your words few (brief); your words are only those that can be understood.”

He said to Yazid ibn Abu Sufyan: “When you preach to people, be brief. Too much talk causes one to forget some of what has been said.”

Even though Abu Bakr was the closest Companion to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and kept his company day and night, he only narrated about one hundred and forty hadiths. This was only because he spoke little.

Abu Bakr’s Well-Balanced Speech

His words—despite their scarcity—were expressive and sagacious, whether from the perspective of eloquence and linguistic beauty or from the perspective of morality and wisdom.

There are numerous examples of his concise yet comprehensive statements, each of which indicates the talent of the speaker, as his few words were enough to convey profound meanings.

The strength of his words can be felt on hearing his following sayings:

- “Seek death, and life will be given to you.”
- “Honesty is the most veracious truth, and betrayal is the falsest lie.”
- “Patience is half of faith, and certainty is the whole of faith.”
- “When goodness escapes you, catch up with it. If it comes to you, outstrip it.”

These and other statements attributed to Abu Bakr are characterized by being short, clear, eloquent, and meaningful.

Abu Bakr's Tactful and Tasteful Speech

In addition to his eloquence, Al-Siddiq possessed tactful communication skills.

An example of this is the following account:

Abu Bakr asked a man carrying a garment: "Are you selling this garment?" He replied: "No may Allah protect you." Abu Bakr said to him: "Why do you not say: No, and may Allah protect you?"

When you first hear the man's reply, it is as though he said: "May Allah not protect you." Al-Siddiq tactfully said to him: "It is better to say: No, and may Allah protect you." This ensures clarity without ambiguity and gives the speech elegance and a special flavor.

Abu Bakr's Mastering the Skill of Reciting Poetry and Memorizing Proverbs

It is easy for someone who possessed this eloquence in his speech to grasp eloquence and beauty in the speech of others. Perhaps eloquence was a natural gift that Abu Bakr was born with, which he searched for in the words of fluent orators and poets. He recited poetry and memorized proverbs. This speech skill is traced back to him and manifested itself in his descendants, including `Abdullah and `Abdul-Rahman; they used to compose poetry. Even though Abu Bakr did not compose poetry, he was one of those who had a natural disposition for it, if only by savoring, memorizing, or narrating the poetic words.

Abu Bakr's Elaborate Knowledge of Genealogies (History)

Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) had extensive knowledge of genealogies, which is akin to history nowadays.

He knew the genealogy including the praiseworthy and faulty lineage in all Arab tribes. This was the most useful branch in the science of history.

At the beginning of the Islamic call, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) went out to introduce himself to the other tribes. Abu Bakr and `Ali ibn Abu Talib accompanied him.

`Ali narrated: "We came to an assembly of the Arabs, and Abu Bakr stepped forward to greet them, as he always hastened to every good thing. He was a man well versed in genealogy. He asked them: "Where are you from?"

They replied: "From Rabi`ah."

He asked: "Which branch of Rabi`ah are you from, from its chiefs?"

They replied: "From its supreme chiefs."

He asked: "Which of its supreme chiefs?"

They replied: "From Dhuhl Al-Akbar."

He asked: "Is `Awf ibn Mulhim among you?"

They replied: "No."

He asked: "Is Al-Muzdalif Al-Hur among you?"

They replied: "No."

He asked: "Is Bastam ibn Qais among you?"

They replied: “No.”

Abu Bakr then said: “You are not Dhuhl Al-Akbar; rather you are Dhuhl Al-Asghar.”

Thus, Abu Bakr was an expert in the genealogy of the families of every tribe and the merits and faults of its ancestors, especially Quraysh and those who lived near it. That is why whenever the *Mushrikin* heard some verses by Muslim poets that satirized them, they would say: “They have been taught this by Ibn Abu Quhafah (i.e., Abu Bakr), and no one else.” This was because he was exceptionally knowledgeable about lineages, without an equal.

The Wellsprings that Nourished Abu Bakr’s Culture

Abu Bakr’s culture at his time was that of the jurist, the literary man, and the historian, according to what was commonly agreed upon as meaning history at that time.

His culture had wellsprings, which were:

- A sound nature.
- Honest observation.
- Experience of the world through interaction and traveling.
- Carefully listening to good words and credible news.
- Knowledge of genealogies and histories.
- Comprehension of the entire Qur’an and understanding all the religion.
- Knowledge of what he heard from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

We do not expect every person who has these references to reach the level of the culture of Abu Bakr, as evident from the depth of his sayings, his actions, and his character. But if these were his references through which he reached this height, then we can conclude something else: he was a man created for greatness and excellence, not just an ordinary man and not just an ordinary life.

The Last Chapter in Abu Bakr's Life

Caliph Abu Bakr lived a life of struggle and sacrifice with his wealth, efforts and soul, during which Allah (Exalted be He) graced him with eliminating apostasy, expanding the lands of Islam, and doing much good for Islam and Muslims. After this long life, Abu Bakr fell ill with a fever. His illness worsened until he was unable to go out to *Salah* (prayer).

Entrusting the Caliphate to `Umar ibn Al-Khattab

Abu Bakr's illness aggravated. He felt his death was approaching, so he decided to appoint a man to succeed him who would continue on the path. Abu Bakr feared that he would die and the person most deserving of this position would refrain from it due to his asceticism and piety. Then someone who did not deserve this position might seize it, and thus he would have wasted the trust and responsibility that had been placed on him.

Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) decided that it was best to appoint this position to `Umar ibn Al-Khattab.

`Uthman Writes the Document of Appointment

After Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) consulted the Companions and all of them spoke favorably of `Umar, he summoned `Uthman ibn `Affan and dictated to him the following:

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

This is the entrustment that Abu Bakr ibn Abu Quhafah has made during his last hour of this world, from which he is departing [forever], and his first

hour of the Hereafter, into which he is entering. In such a state, when even a disbeliever would believe and a transgressor would attain certainty, I have appointed for you...

At this point, Abu Bakr fainted.

So `Uthman wrote: "I have appointed `Umar ibn Al-Khattab as the Caliph for you." Right after Abu Bakr regained consciousness, he said to `Uthman: "Read to me," and `Uthman read to him that which he had written. Abu Bakr uttered *Takbir* (saying: '*Allahu Akbar*') and said: "I see that you feared that people would differ if my soul were to perish while I fainted (i.e., I died)." He replied: "Yes."

Abu Bakr said: "May Allah reward you with the best for [your support of] Islam and its people." Then he ordered `Uthman to read out the document to the people. After that Abu Bakr summoned `Umar and enjoined him to do good for Islam and the Muslims.

The Last Moments in Abu Bakr's Life

Abu Bakr's final illness lasted for fifteen days. During them, Abu Bakr did not go out to prayer. Instead, he ordered `Umar to lead the people in prayer. The Companions used to visit him. The one who kept him company the most was `Uthman.

“Check My Wealth That Has increased”

Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) summoned his daughter `Aishah during his final illness and said to her: “Check my wealth that has increased since I came to power, and send it to the caliph that will succeed me.”

What could have increased Abu Bakr's material possessions when he sacrificed all his wealth in the service of Islam?

Here is the inheritance that Abu Bakr left behind and his wealth that increased after assuming the caliphate:

- A camel on which he used to draw water.
- A milking trough in which he used to collect milk.
- A cloak in which he used to receive delegations.

When Abu Bakr died and `Umar assumed the caliphate, `Aishah brought these articles of inheritance to `Umar. Once `Umar saw them and heard what they were for, he burst into tears and said: “May Allah have mercy on Abu Bakr! He has made it very hard for his successors to emulate him.” He repeated this three times.

“What Day Did the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) Die?”

When it was Monday, the twenty-second of Jumada Al-Akhirah, in the year 13 A.H., Abu Bakr attained the age of sixty-three.

He asked Lady `Aishah: “What day did the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) die?”

She replied: “On Monday.”

He said: “If I die during the night, do not wait until tomorrow, for the most beloved day to me is the day that is closest to (the day on which) the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) (died).”

Then he asked: “With what did you shroud him (PBBUH)?”

She replied: “With three white garments.”

He said: “Take this garment of mine, wash it, and make two other garments from it.”

She said: “O my father, this is an old garment.”

He said: “Living people have more right to the new, and it is only for the respite period (i.e., the period of the grave).”

Abu Bakr’s Last Words

When Abu Bakr began to experience the pangs of death, Lady `Aishah said:

“By your life, wealth will not benefit the rich

Once the soul produces a rattle one day and the chest becomes tight”

Abu Bakr looked at her and said: “It is not like that, O Mother of the Believers; rather Allah’s Saying is more truthful: ﴿And the stupor of death will come in truth: ‘This is what you have been avoiding!’﴾ (translated meaning of Qaf 50:19).

Abu Bakr’s soul departed to the Creator while he was saying: “O Allah, let me die as a Muslim (i.e., fully submitting to Your Will) and join me with the righteous.”

Washing and Burying Al-Siddiq

Asma’ bint Umayy, his wife, washed him. `Umar ibn Al-Khattab and the Muslims offered the Funeral Prayer for him. `Umar, `Uthman, Talhah, and his son `Abdul-Rahman placed him in his grave.

Abu Bakr was buried next to his close friend and Companion, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), with his head lying near the shoulders of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

Praising Abu Bakr and Expressing Sorrow for His Death

Madinah shook with sorrow because of the death of Caliph Abu Bakr, similar to the day the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) passed away. `Ali ibn Abu Talib came and stood at the house where Abu Bakr was and said: “May Allah have mercy on you, O Abu Bakr. You were the best friend, companion, comfort, confidant, and reliable partner of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). You were the first man to embrace Islam, the sincerest in his faith, and had the strongest level of certainty.

You were as the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) described you: **‘weak in your body, strong in matters related to Allah the Most Exalted’**. You were humble before yourself, great in Allah’s Eyes (the Most Exalted). In the eyes of the

people, you were ordinary, but in their souls, you held a great place. You conducted yourself with truth, honesty, and kindness.

Truly, we belong to Allah and to Him we shall return. We are satisfied with Allah's Decree, and we submit to His Command. By Allah, after the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), the Muslims will not be afflicted with a loss greater than you. We ask Allah not to deprive us of the reward for [supplicating for] you, nor lead us astray after you."

The people remained silent until `Ali finished speaking, then they wept until the sound of their weeping was audible. They said: "You spoke the truth."

As for `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, he said: "If the faith of Abu Bakr was weighed against the faith of the people of the earth, his faith would outweigh theirs."



This was Al-Siddiq, the Prophet's best Companion, the meticulous man, the Caliph, who accomplished in less than three years what normally would have required thirty years: such as, completing the mission of Usamah's army and overcoming the difficulties that arose during its achievement, successfully suppressing apostasy and addressing all the dangers surrounding it, reaching as far as the borders of the Persian and Byzantine Empires, and bringing the Muslims to a state of prestige and strength.

The Muslim state was like a deposit that was entrusted to his safekeeping, and no one could have guarded that trust better than Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him). He fulfilled this trust from the time he received it from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) until he handed it over to `Umar ibn Al-Khattab.

Such was Al-Siddiq. Those who write about him do not raise his status by what they say about him and his virtues; rather, they raise their own status, when they qualify themselves to talk about this lofty, great man.

May Allah have mercy on you, O Caliph of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

2. `Umar ibn Al-Khattab



May Allah Be Pleased with Him

`Umar ibn Al-Khattab

Now, dear readers, after we have enjoyed the company of Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) and left his garden, we will move ahead into another garden. It is the garden of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab Al-Faruq¹.

What a wonderful company to be in: the company of the righteous!

This is Al-Faruq, the one who, when justice is mentioned, teaches humanity the true meaning of justice, and when asceticism is mentioned, he is referred to as the leader of ascetics. He is the righteous imam, the devout worshiper, and the deeply repentant slave of Allah. Every reference to him makes any gathering feel special. He was the great yet simple, and simple yet strong man, while adhering to justice and mercy. The Arabian Peninsula gave birth to him, and Islam raised him. He is the man who set for the whole world an example that will never be forgotten.

In these coming pages, we will try to meet the man whom fate did not grant us the pleasure of meeting in the roads of Madinah. Let us, through the written scenes of his life, try to grasp the details we missed in the real scenes. Let us live some moments together with `Umar, the strong and trustworthy as he always was. He was the peerless teacher who graduated from the school of the beloved Chosen Prophet (PBBUH). Let us spend some moments in his company to uplift the value of our lives.

`Umar is the type of person that fills you with reverence when you read his biography, and deeper reverence when you experience sitting with him in person through visualizing the written scenes of his history. These live scenes

¹ The title of 'Al-Faruq' was given to `Umar by the Prophet (PBBUH). It means the one by whom truth and falsehood are separated and distinguished.

are not very different from the written ones, except for the absence of the hero from the scope of our eyes to actually perceive him. As for our hearts and minds, they indeed can perceive him. Reading his biography, they can even embrace him, sit with him, and witness the sublime deeds of this lofty historical figure.

Let us approach this enormous mountain. Let us sit with ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab to improve, enlighten and uplift ourselves. May Allah be pleased with him and please him.

Who Was Umar ibn Al-Khattab?

Umar's Lineage

His full name was Umar ibn Al-Khattab ibn Nufayl ibn Abdul-Uzza ibn Riyah ibn Abdullah ibn Qurt ibn Razah ibn Adiy ibn Ka'b ibn Luai ibn Ghalib ibn Fihri Al-Adawi Al-Qurashi.

He had the same great grandfather, Ka'b ibn Luai, as the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

Umar's Birth

Umar was born in the thirteenth year following the Year of the Elephant. In plainer words, he was born thirteen years after the birth of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

Umar's Physical Appearance

- Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) was a strong, muscular man, and his complexion was tinged with red. He was bald and left-handed, with thick feet and palms and broad shoulders. He was elegant, of imposing height, and strongly built. When he walked with people, he was the tallest among them. When he stood, he looked as if he was riding a mount because of his extremely tall stature.
- Since his childhood, Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) was known for his courage, his skill of wrestling, and his strength of

character. He took from his father's character a strictness that never weakened and a decisiveness that was never shaken with hesitation to proceed. He was as people described him: when he spoke, he was listened to; when he walked, he was quick; and when he struck, it hurt.

- In addition to his courage, decisiveness, and audacity, Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) was known to be a first-class diplomat. He was one of the noblemen of Quraysh. He was entrusted ambassadorship during the pre-Islamic time. Whenever a war broke out between Quraysh and other tribes, they would send an ambassador. Eager to have ʿUmar as their ambassador, they assigned the post to him (i.e. to be the representative of Quraysh who would talk to the enemies and negotiate with them on behalf of Quraysh).

ʿUmar Embraces Islam

ʿUmar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) was known for his hot temper and headstrong nature. Before he embraced Islam, he was the most hostile of all people to Islam and Muslims. It was even said that his hostility to Islam was almost equal to the harm caused by the entire Quraysh. Then Allah opened his heart to Islam, and his hostility to paganism became almost equal to the hostility which all the Muslims, as a whole, had to paganism.

The story of his conversion to Islam revealed the true nature of ʿUmar Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him). He was like a fruit with its exceptionally sweet taste and pleasant smell hidden inside a rough, hard outer shell.

ʿUmar Pays a Visit to Some Muslim Emigrants to Abyssinia

ʿUmar (may Allah be pleased with him) was affected by the departure of those who decided to leave Makkah to other safer lands. He was saddened by their leaving their families and homes and his separation from many of them.

One day ʿUmar went out to visit a friend who had decided to emigrate to Abyssinia. His name was ʿAmir ibn Rabiʿah. As he approached the house, he only found ʿAmir's wife, who was packing their belongings in preparation to emigrate. ʿUmar asked her in a sympathetic voice: "Are you leaving, O Umm ʿAbdullah?" She replied in a furious tone: "Yes, by Allah, we are going to Allah's land. You have harmed us and oppressed us. We shall leave here until Allah grants us a way out." ʿUmar, deeply moved by her words, said: "May Allah be with you." Then he left.

Due to her feminine sensitivity, Umm `Abdullah could see kindness and sorrow on `Umar's face. When her husband returned, she told him what had happened and how sympathetic and sad `Umar appeared to be, but her husband replied: "It seems that you hope `Umar will become a Muslim." She replied: "Yes." He said: "By Allah, he will not become a Muslim until Al-Khattab's donkey becomes a Muslim (first)," indicating the impossibility of `Umar's conversion to Islam.

`Amir's opinion resulted from the severe persecution and harm that `Umar was causing to the Muslims at the time. However, his wife's gut feelings proved stronger and more truthful than her husband's judgment.

`Umar Decides to Kill the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)

`Umar sat reflecting on what he had heard from Umm `Abdullah. Then he resolved to kill the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), because if it were not for him, these friends of his would not have left their homes. He immediately girded himself with his sword and went looking for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). While he was on the way, Nu`aym ibn `Abdullah met him and said to him: "Whom do you want (to attack), O `Umar?" He said: "I want this apostate, Muhammad, who divided Quraysh, ridiculed their minds, insulted their religion, and blasphemed their gods. (I want him) to kill him."

Here, Nu`aym, who had kept his Islamic faith a secret, sensed the danger that threatened the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He thus concluded the conversation with a sharp remark that curbed `Umar and dissuaded him from going ahead with what he intended to do. Nu`aym said to him: "By Allah, you have deceived yourself, O `Umar. Do you think that Banu `Abd Manaf (the Prophet's immediate clan) would let you walk on the earth after you kill Muhammad! Why do you not return to your own house and set it right first?" `Umar asked: "Which ones of my family?" Nu`aym replied: "Your sister Fatimah

and your paternal cousin and brother-in-law Sa`id ibn Zayd. They have both accepted Islam and are following Muhammad's religion."

The Shell Cracks to Show the Beauty on the Inside

Enraged, `Umar went directly to his sister's house. Khabab ibn Al-Arat was with them at the time, teaching them some ayahs of the Qur'anic chapter of Ta-ha from a scroll. As `Umar drew near the door, he heard Khabab's recitation and knocked on the door. When those inside realized it was `Umar, Khabab quickly hid in a corner of the house.

`Umar came in and asked: "What was that mumbling I just heard?" His sister Fatimah replied: "You did not hear anything." `Umar said: "Yes indeed (I did hear something). I have been informed that you two now follow Muhammad's religion." And saying this, he slapped his brother-in-law, Sa`id ibn Zayd. When Fatimah stood to defend her husband, `Umar slapped her so hard that her face bled. When Fatimah saw the blood, she said: "O son of Al-Khattab, whatever you are going to do, do it. We now follow Muhammad, and we bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

The decisive moment arrived, heralding the great transformation and revealing the pure, pious essence of this great man, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab. The blood that dripped from his sister's face was like a sharp knife that broke this hard cover and rough crust to reveal the true, sweet fruit inside, full of delicious flavor and pleasant aroma.

Seeing the blood dripping from his sister's face, `Umar's heart softened toward her. He regretted what he had done. He sat down and said to her: "Give me this scroll (of the Qur'an) that I heard you reading for me to see what Muhammad has brought." His sister, who had hoped that he would become a Muslim, said to him: "O my brother, you are impure because of your

polytheism, and none may touch it (the Qur'an) except the pure; get up and wash yourself." ʿUmar got up, washed himself, took the scroll, and read: ﴿Ta-Ha¹. We have not sent down the Qur'an unto you (O Muhammad) to cause you distress. But only as a Reminder to those who fear (Allah)﴾ (translated meaning of Ta-Ha, 20:1-3). ʿUmar continued reading until he reached: ﴿Indeed, I am Allah. There is no god except Me, so worship Me and establish regular prayer for My remembrance﴾ (translated meaning of Ta-Ha, 20:14).

ʿUmar's Heart Opening Up to Islam

ʿUmar finished reading the scroll. His eyes filled with tears, he said: "How good and noble these words are!" On hearing this, Khabab came out of his hiding place and said: "Rejoice, O ʿUmar! I hope that Allah has chosen you in response to His Prophet's supplication, for I heard him say, **'O Allah, strengthen Islam with ʿUmar ibn Al-Khattab or ʿAmr ibn Hisham (Abu Jahl), the one more beloved of them to you.'**"² ʿUmar said: "O Khabab, lead me to Muhammad (PBBUH)."

ʿUmar, wearing his sword, walked to the place where the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and his Companions had gathered. He knocked on the door. One of the men got up and looked through the keyhole of the door. He saw ʿUmar wearing his sword. He said: "O Messenger of Allah, it is ʿUmar ibn Al-Khattab wearing his sword." Hamzah said: "Open the door. If he desires good, we will give it to him. If he desires evil, we will kill him with his own sword."

When ʿUmar entered, he was met by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), who grabbed him strongly and said: **"What brought you, O son of Al-Khattab? By Allah, I do not think that you will stop until Allah sends down a calamity upon you."** ʿUmar said: "O Messenger of Allah, I have come

¹ These disjointed Arabic letters at the beginning of certain chapters are one of the miracles of the Qur'an, and none but Allah knows their meanings.

² This was due to their strength of character and the indisputable support they would bring to Islam.

to you to bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that you are the Messenger of Allah.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) joyfully uttered aloud: “**Allahu Akbar**,” from which his Companions learned that ʿUmar had become a Muslim. ʿUmar joined Islam, making the number of Muslims at the time forty in all.

Press Agent Spreads the News of ʿUmar’s Acceptance of Islam

After joining Islam, ʿUmar asked: “Which person among Quraysh is the fastest at transmitting news?” He meant, according to modern terminology, a press agent. He was told: “Jamil ibn Maʿmar Al-Jumahi.” ʿUmar went to him and said: “O Jamil, I have become a Muslim.” Jamil did not even respond to ʿUmar’s words but quickly headed to the Sacred Mosque to spread this piece of “breaking news”. He called out at the top of his voice: “O people of Quraysh, Ibn Al-Khattab has apostatized.” ʿUmar was right behind him saying: “He has lied. Rather, I have embraced Islam and believed in Allah and in His Messenger.”

The Remarkable Deeds of `Umar During the Early Days of Islam

In the blink of an eye, a man who stood for the highest level of paganism moved to the highest level of guidance. With the same strength of character and earnest enthusiasm, `Umar started to influence the call from the first moments of his conversion to Islam. He now thought about how to defeat the falsehood that he had always thought was true; how to uproot all the thorns that he planted in the path of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and his Companions; how to uproot them and plant flowers and sweet basil in their place.

Here are some of the flowers and sweet basil that `Umar Al-Faruq planted:

1. The Islamic Call Comes Out of Its Hiding Place

It was only a few moments after his conversion to Islam that `Umar began to think about how to support Islam. Before the conversion of `Umar, Muslims could not pray at the Ka`bah safely. Soon after `Umar converted to Islam, he said to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH): “Are we not on the true path whether we die or live?” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied: **“Yes indeed. By Him in Whose Hand is my soul, you are on the true path whether you die or live.”** `Umar asked: “Then why should we hide? By the One Who has sent you with the truth, you will go out and we will go out with you (i.e., openly practice and manifest our Islamic faith).”

The Muslims went out in two groups. One group was headed by Hamzah and the other by `Umar, while the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was in between, walking until they reached the Sacred Mosque. The Messenger of

Allah (PBBUH), along with the Muslims, circumambulated the Kaʿbah and prayed in peace, then they returned to the house of Al-Arqam.

With these steps that ʿUmar (may Allah be pleased with him) motivated the Muslims to take, the long-blessed march began. It continued for one thousand four hundred years and is still continuing.

2. ʿUmar Brings Retribution on Himself

Would this public emergence of the Islamic call from its hiding place, right in the sight and hearing of Quraysh, be enough for ʿUmar? No, there was still much admirable work in which ʿUmar would persist until he felt purified from all the sins of the pre-Islamic time and until his throbbing conscience, spurred by remorse for previously hurting Muslims because of their faith, found rest.

Yesterday the disbelievers of Quraysh were puffed up with pride because ʿUmar used to persecute the Companions of Muhammad (PBBUH). Today, ʿUmar wanted to give the Muslims pride by sharing the torment they were subject to because of their faith; let them be filled with pride that the mighty and valiant ʿUmar was being hit as they were hit and persecuted as they were persecuted. The persecution Quraysh meted out on the Muslims should not remain limited to the oppressed section of the community, such as Bilal, Khabbab, ʿAmmar and other poor and weak Muslims. ʿUmar needed to include himself as well and raise the value of the sacrifice that his brothers were making.

- ʿUmar went to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and said to him: “May my father and mother be sacrificed for you, O Messenger of Allah. By Allah, I will not leave a gathering in which I used to support disbelief without instead showing faith in it, neither feeling afraid nor cowardly.”

- Umar began to think about who the most hostile enemy of the Prophet (PBBUH) was. Instantly, the name of Abu Jahl (Umar's maternal uncle) crossed his mind. Umar hurried to him and knocked on his door. Abu Jahl came out and greeted him, saying: "Welcome, my nephew. Why did you come?" Umar replied: "I have come to tell you that I believe in Allah (Exalted be He) and in His Messenger Muhammed (PBBUH)." Abu Jahl slammed the door in Umar's face, saying: "May Allah damn you and what you have come with!"
- Umar passed by the dignitaries of Quraysh at their different dwellings, challenging them and hoping that one of them would engage in a fight with him, but they all avoided him.
- Finally, to get a share of the suffering that his weak and oppressed brothers in faith were experiencing, Umar decided to go to the disbelievers who were gathered at the Ka'bah. No sooner had he told them about his conversion to Islam than they attacked him, beating him, and he beat them back. Then his maternal uncle came and said: "I have given protection to my nephew," after which the people dispersed from him. But they continued to beat the weak Muslims, so Umar said to his maternal uncle: "I give back your protection." He said to him: "Do as you please." Umar continued to beat them and be beaten by them until Allah honored Islam and the Muslims through him.

Thus, this retribution which Umar inflicted upon himself was some relief to his sense of justice.

3. `Umar Al-Faruq¹

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) met `Umar, after the support he had provided to Islam, and looked at him with satisfaction, saying with a hopeful tone: **“Al-Faruq. Indeed, Allah has distinguished between truth and falsehood through him.”**

`Umar became known as: `Umar Al-Faruq.

As for the Quraysh, they were on a rampage of anger and frustration as never before. Ibn Mas`ud said: “We have remained honorable ever since `Umar embraced Islam.”

Ibn Mas`ud also said: “`Umar’s conversion to Islam was a conquest, his emigration was a victory, and his caliphate was a mercy. We could not pray at the Ka`bah until `Umar embraced Islam. When he embraced Islam, he fought the Quraysh until he prayed at the Ka`bah and we prayed with him.”

4. `Umar Emigrates to Madinah

`Umar continued with this strategy that showed no leniency or compromise with the enemies of Allah. By his emigration he proved himself to be harsh toward the disbelievers but merciful to the weak believers, as the Almighty says: ﴿Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are severe against disbelievers and merciful among themselves﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Fath, 48:29).

All the Muslims who received permission from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to emigrate sneaked out of Makkah in secret, except for `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him). When he wanted to emigrate, he stood

¹ The title of ‘Al-Faruq’ was given to `Umar by the Prophet (PBBUH). It means the one by whom truth and falsehood are separated and distinguished.

courageously before the *Mushrikin* (those who associate others with Allah in His divinity or worship) in a position in which he humiliated them, showed their weakness, and cast terror into their souls.

When ʿUmar ibn Al-Khattab decided to emigrate, he put on his sword and headed toward the Kaʿbah, where the people of Quraysh used to gather in its courtyard. He prayed two *Raʿkabs* (units of prayer) after he had circumambulated the Kaʿbah seven times, then he halted and said to those gathered near the Kaʿbah: “May faces be disfigured! Whoever wishes to bereave his mother, make his child fatherless and his wife a widow, let him meet me behind this valley. I am emigrating.”

Everybody heard ʿUmar, but not a single member of Quraysh dared to go after him. Rather, a group of weak Muslims followed him. Among them were his sister Fatimah and her husband Saʿid ibn Zayd, ʿAyyash ibn Abu Rabiʿah, Hisham ibn Al-ʿAs ibn Waʿil and several other Muslims.

Many of ʿUmar’s stances during his emigration journey were full of compassion and mercy for the weak who followed him, including, but not limited to, the following:

Umar’s Compassion Toward ʿAyyash ibn Abu Rabiʿah

Both ʿAyyash and ʿUmar arrived in Yathrib, where they stayed at Qubaʾ. Abu Jahl ibn Hisham and Al-Harith ibn Hisham caught up with them there. They had set out in pursuit of ʿAyyash ibn Rabiʿah, who was their half-brother from their mother’s side.

They said to ʿAyyash: “Your mother has vowed not to comb her hair nor take shade from the sun until she sees you.” What they said aroused ʿAyyash’s compassion for his mother, but ʿUmar warned him, saying: “O ʿAyyash, by Allah, your people only want to tempt you away from your religion; beware of them. By Allah, if lice were to harm your mother, she would comb her hair. And

if the heat of Makkah became intense for her, she would seek shade.” Despite being warned, ʿAyyash decided to return with them and fulfil his mother’s vow. ʿUmar, seeing that ʿAyyash insisted on going back to Makkah, said to him: “If you must go, take this she-camel of mine. It is well-bred and obedient. Remain firm upon its back, and if (at any stage) you suspect them of treachery, escape on its back.”

On the road, after riding for some distance, Abu Jahl said to ʿAyyash: “I find my camel too difficult to ride. Would you let me mount behind you on this she-camel of yours?” ʿAyyash agreed, and as they made their camels kneel to the ground for Abu Jahl to sit behind him, Abu Jahl and Al-Harith attacked ʿAyyash and tied him up. They entered Makkah with him tied up, and they addressed Quraysh, saying: “O people of Makkah! This is the way you should deal with your fools, just as we have dealt with this fool of ours.”

5. The Remarkable Positions of Al-Faruq as a Companion of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)

ʿUmar Al-Faruq became an important pillar of the call to Allah Almighty that was led by the beloved Chosen Prophet (PBBUH). He was an important support and a brave soldier under the command of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

He participated in all the battles and witnessed all the major events with the Messenger (PBBUH), from Badr to Tabuk, including Uhud, Al-Ahzab, Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty, the Liberation of Makkah and Hunayn.

In all these scenes, Al-Faruq played an important and prominent role, and the role may have been pivotal in many situations.¹

¹ For more information, please refer to the first book of this series: “*A Biography of the Best Man in Creation*” by the author.

Al-Faruq's contributions were characterized by courage, boldness, sound judgment, good insight, transparency, and perspicacity. His opinion often had the greatest impact in advancing the *Da'wah* (calling people to Allah).

Then the death of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) occurred which shook all the Companions. The one affected most among them was ʿUmar Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him), as mentioned earlier.

After that, a new phase began in the *Da'wah*.

6. The Remarkable Positions of Al-Faruq During the Caliphate of Abu Bakr

ʿUmar continued to give, contribute, and support the call after the death of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Prominent among his stances was that which he adopted on the Day of the Saqifah and his refusal of the caliphate, as previously mentioned.

Abu Bakr extended his right hand to him to pledge allegiance to him, but ʿUmar said: "Rather, we pledge allegiance to you, for you are the best of the people."

Abu Bakr said: "You are stronger than me."

ʿUmar replied: "My strength is on your side, while recognizing your own merit and superiority. I will not be appointed in authority over a people among whom there is Abu Bakr." ʿUmar then pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr, and all the people pledged allegiance to him after ʿUmar took the initiative.

Abu Bakr assumed the caliphate, and ʿUmar was his greatest advisor. He was his staunch helper and support in all the challenges that Abu Bakr faced during his caliphate.

In his last moments of life, Abu Bakr did not see anyone worthy of the caliphate after him except ʿUmar. He entrusted him with it; Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) did well.

The Caliphate of `Umar Al-Faruq

Now my dear readers, I invite you to live these moments in the company of the Commander of the Believers, Caliph `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him). The caliphate passed to him. He had been running away from it, but close to his death Abu Bakr entrusted it to him. He accepted it reluctantly and unwillingly. Had it not been for the fact that by declining this post in these critical circumstances he would be forsaking a duty that Allah would later ask him about, `Umar would have refused to assume power and govern the people.

Before delving into the life of `Umar as a ruler, my humble piece of advice to every person in authority is to read some pages of the biography of Al-Faruq every night before going to sleep. May Allah elevate the status of this *Ummah* and restore it to its former glory and civilization.

Justice in the law of `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was the basis of his governance. Let us see how Al-Faruq began his reign as Caliph.

The First Sermon by Caliph `Umar ibn Al-Khattab

Let us read this important sermon with which Al-Faruq began his caliphate and in which he laid down the constitution that would govern him and his subjects.

Abu Bakr was so gentle that when the children saw him, they would run to him and say: “O father... O father,” and he would caress their heads. `Umar was so awe-inspiring that when people saw him, they would disperse and leave their gatherings out of reverence for him.

This matter reached ‘Umar. He called out to the people: “*As-Salatu Jam‘iah* (gather for congregational prayer), so they attended. He sat on the pulpit where Abu Bakr used to put his feet. When all the people were gathered, he rose and stood on the lower step of the pulpit—the step below Abu Bakr used to stand.

“I Put My Cheek on the Ground for Virtuous People”

‘Umar praised Allah and extolled Him as He deserves. He sent peace and blessings upon the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), then he said:

“It has reached me that the people are scared of my severity and are afraid of my harshness. They said, ‘‘Umar used to be severe when the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was alive among us. Then he was severe on us while Abu Bakr was our ruler. What would he be like now that matters have been handed over to him?’ Whoever said this has spoken the truth. I was a helper and servant with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Indeed, he (PBBUH) was someone whose gentleness and mercy cannot be matched by anyone. He was truly ﷺ...for the believers (he PBBUH is) full of pity, kind, and mercifulﷺ (Al-Tawbah 9:128). I was like a drawn sword before him, until he would sheathe me or allow me to proceed. I remained with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) in that manner until Allah took his soul while he (PBBUH) was pleased with me.

Then Abu Bakr took over the leadership of the Muslims, and he was someone whose kindness, generosity, and gentleness you will not deny. I was his servant and helper. I mixed my severity with his gentleness, so I was like a drawn sword until he would sheathe me or allow me to proceed. I remained like that with him until Allah took his soul while Abu Bakr was pleased with me.

Now I have been appointed over your affairs, O people. Know that this severity has been softened. It is only against unjust and transgressive people. As for peaceful, pious and clement people, I am gentler with them than they are

toward one another. I will not allow anyone to oppress or transgress against another until I put his cheek on the ground, with my foot on the other cheek, until he (the transgressor) submits to the truth. After that severity, I will put my own cheek on the ground for the virtuous and the poor.”

“You Have Certain Obligations Upon Me; Make Sure I Abide by Them”

‘Umar added: “You have certain obligations that I must (officially) fulfill toward you, O people, which I will mention to you. Therefore make sure I abide by them:

- You have an obligation upon me that I will not collect any tax from you, or from what (property) Allah has bestowed upon you, except for a due right.
- You have an obligation upon me that once it (the rightful tax) falls into my hands, it will not come out of them except for its rightful purpose.
- You have an obligation upon me that I will increase your grants and provisions, by Allah’s Will, and that I will fill any gaps you have (those you cannot afford to fill).
- You have an obligation upon me that I will not throw you into hazards. And if you are absent (from your family) on an expedition, I shall be the father of the family until you return to them.

Fear Allah and help me with yourselves by keeping them away from me (i.e., my just but uncompromising measures). Help me with my self by enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and giving me sincere advice regarding your affairs with which Allah has entrusted me.”

The Commitment That `Umar Made to the People

With these decisive words, `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) made a commitment that his toughness would be softened, yet it would remain strong as ever against wrongdoers and transgressors. He would make people enjoy justice, dignity, and a good life as much as he could.

`Umar was, during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), a drawn sword against everything false and unjust. He remained the same sword in the hand of Abu Bakr, the Caliph of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

But today, `Umar became both the sword and the holder of the sword, and the one responsible for everything.

He no longer considered himself responsible before the people, before history, or before any of these terms; rather, he was responsible before the True Lord, from Whom nothing is hidden on the earth or in the heaven.

The Rules of Governance That `Umar Took Upon Himself to Pursue

`Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) established for himself certain rules of governance. Although these rules were appropriate for his era, they are also appropriate for all times and places.

These rules can be summarized into the following three categories:

- His self-monitoring and his policies with his family.
- His responsibility toward the people.
- His selection and follow-up of governors.

First: Self-Monitoring and Special Policies with His Family Members

`Umar's Adherence to Self-Monitoring

`Umar Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) took his responsibility in managing the affairs of the people by first starting with himself and his family.

As a ruler, `Umar deprived himself not only of the lawful good things for rulers but of the lawful good things for ordinary citizens as well. He was the first to go hungry when they were hungry, and the last to be satisfied when they were satisfied. He lived at the lowest level of the common people. He said: "How can I care for people's problems if I am not afflicted with what afflicts them?"

In the Year of Ramada crisis,¹ which was a year of famine in Madinah, ʿUmar one day ordered that a camel be slaughtered and its meat be distributed to the people of Madinah. They distributed it and kept the best parts of the slaughtered animal for the Commander of the Believers. When ʿUmar (may Allah be pleased with him) saw this on his table, he said: “From where did this come?” They said: “From the camel that was slaughtered today.” He said: “What a bad ruler I am if I eat its best parts and leave the people its bones.” He then gave orders to his servant Aslam, saying: “Remove this bowl and bring me some bread and oil.”

This [ascetic] behavior of ʿUmar was not only toward the living but also toward the dead. He refused to attain a bliss that his brothers, who were martyred in Allah’s Cause and preceded him to Allah, did not attain.

When ʿUmar visited Syria, he was brought delicious food of different kinds. He looked at it with tearful eyes and said: “All this for us, whereas our brothers died poor, not even having enough barley bread to satisfy them.”

His Special Policies with His Family Members

1. “Place ʿUmar and His Kindred in Their Proper Place”

This approach which ʿUmar embraced was not limited to only him; rather, it extended to all his family members. Kinship to the Commander of the Believers did not mean obtaining preference and superiority, but rather it meant toil and hardship.

¹ The Year of Ramada (Ashes) is the name given to a year of drought, famine and hunger that struck Madinah and its surroundings during the caliphate of ʿUmar ibn Al-Khattab. The famine lasted nine months, turning the land black, resembling ash. Hence it became known as the Year of Ashes.

When Allah (Exalted be He) bestowed much goodness upon the Muslims during `Umar's reign and the Muslim treasury became full, a group of his companions suggested to him that he should count the number of people and record their names in a register. This was so that they would all receive their annual salaries according to a precise system.

They began to write down the names, starting with Banu Hashim (the Prophet's family), then the family of Abu Bakr, and then Banu `Adiy (`Umar's family). Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) looked at this register, but after reading it he ordered them to place many other families before the family of `Umar, suggesting their names, mentioning their families and saying: "Put `Umar and his family in their proper place."

When Banu Adiy learned of this, they went to `Umar, hoping that their names would remain at the forefront in order to receive more money. They said to him: "Are we not the family of the Commander of the Believers?" `Umar replied: "Well done (or Great!), Banu Adiy! Do you want to obtain privileges through me and that I give you my good deeds? No, by Allah, you will take your proper place, even if you come last of all people."

2. No Government Positions for Relatives

The Commander of the Believers, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, completely refused to appoint any of his relatives to any position. He refused to submit to the insistence shown by his companions to appoint his son `Abdullah to a position in the state. They were motivated by their keenness to benefit from `Abdullah's rare skills, but `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) absolutely refused this suggestion. Upon his death he also refused to nominate `Abdullah for the caliphate, saying: "It is enough for the family of `Umar that one of them will be held accountable, and that one is `Umar." Reminding those who recommended `Abdullah for his justice and piety, `Umar would often say: "`Abdullah is not the only righteous and just person." There were other

Muslims who were equally just and pious. If ʿUmar preferred him over them, he would be behaving with discrimination and favoritism.

ʿUmar (may Allah be pleased with him) was an exemplary man. He wanted to leave a good example for his successors. If he employed the righteous men among his family today, rulers who would succeed him might go to extremes in appointing their relatives, saying: “ʿUmar did this?”

Therefore, ʿUmar set a noble principle; he said: “Whoever employs a man out of affection or kinship, motivated to employ him for no other reason than this, has betrayed Allah, His Messenger, and the believers.”

Assignment of posts by the authorities should not be restricted to reliable and trustworthy people or friends, but rather to those who are experienced and competent.

How much the *Ummah* needs you today, O Commander of the Believers!

3. His Policy with His Offspring

Governing with firmness and equal treatment of persons was not limited to ʿUmar’s kindred but included the closest and dearest people to him as well, his own children ʿAbdullah and Hafsa.

“Great! Great!... O Son of the Commander of the Believers”

ʿAbdullah ibn ʿUmar bought some camels and took them to *Al-Hima* (a state-run place where people graze their camels for free). When they grew fat, he brought them to the market to sell them. ʿUmar went out to the market on an inspection tour and saw some fat camels, distinguished from the rest of the camels by their large size and good growth. Therefore he asked: “Whose camels are these?” He was told that these camels belonged to ʿAbdullah ibn ʿUmar.

“`Abdullah ibn `Umar? Great! Great! O son of the Commander of the Believers!” `Umar exclaimed, summoning his son. When `Abdullah arrived, `Umar asked him: “What are these camels, O `Abdullah?”

`Abdullah replied: “They are some emaciated camels that I bought with my own money and sent to *Al-Hima* to trade in them, seeking what the Muslims seek.”

`Umar said, delivering him a stinging rebuke: “When they see them in *Al-Hima*, people say, ‘Feed the camels of the son of the Commander of the Believers! Water the camels of the son of the Commander of the Believers!’ In this way your camels grow fat and the profit of the son of the Commander of the Believers increases.” Then `Umar shouted: “O `Abdullah ibn `Umar, take your capital that you paid for these camels, and put the profit in the treasury house of the Muslims.”

`Abdullah did not do anything wrong. He invested his lawful money in lawful trade. His reputation was well known, and his religious commitment and morals were above suspicion. But because he was the son of the Commander of the Believers, the Commander of the Believers deprived him of what was rightfully his, because `Umar suspected that the fact that `Abdullah was his son had provided `Abdullah with opportunities that were not available to others.

“His Father Was Dearer to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) Than Your Father”

When distributing gifts, Al-Faruq gave preference to the early emigrants and gave his sons less. One day, he gave preference to Usamah ibn Zayd over his son `Abdullah ibn `Umar. Consequently, `Abdullah asked him: “O Commander of the Believers, you preferred Usamah ibn Zayd over me. He is not older than me. Did he emigrate before me or witness battles that I did not witness?”

Abdullah said this not because of greed for temporary wealth nor out of love for a worldly life that he might gain; rather, to know if there was a weakness in his faith or a shortcoming on his part that Al-Faruq knew about and he did not know, and this was why Al-Faruq gave preference to Usamah over him.

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) replied to him: “You spoke the truth. However, I did that because Usamah was dearer to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) than you, and his father, Zayd ibn Harithah, was dearer to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) than your father.”

This was the standard that Al-Faruq set for himself... precedence, not kinship.

“My Relatives Have a Right to My Money... Not the Money of the Muslims”

It is no wonder this policy extended to the Mother of the Believers, Hafsa bint Umar (may Allah be pleased with her). One day, some of the money collected from the provinces arrived in Madinah, so his daughter, the Mother of the believers, Hafsa, went to Umar to take her share. She jokingly said: “O Commander of the Believers, your relatives have a right to this money. Allah has enjoined that the relatives be treated with kindness.” He answered her seriously: “O my daughter, my relatives have a right to my money, but this is the money of the Muslims... and I have no right to it.”

To sum up, Umar’s policy towards his family was as follows:

Umar, as a ruler, not only warded off any fortune or privileges from his family members, but he also compelled them to live with him according to a path sharper than a blade and thinner than a hair. Umar experienced a life of hunger and austerity, in food and clothing, and he made his family live that life with him.

Being related to the Commander of the Faithful—as said earlier—did not mean obtaining special privileges and superiority, but rather it meant toil and hardship.

Some may class this behavior of Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) under the heading of asceticism and austerity. However, the truth is that it is for a deeper and more profound reason, as its main driver was his fear of Allah (Glorified be He) and his commitment to the promise he had made to Allah Almighty regarding his responsibility toward this nation.

Second: `Umar's Responsibility Toward the People

In his first speech to the people after assuming the caliphate, `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) made a vow and a commitment to Allah (Exalted be He) that he would serve his people according to the following plan:

- He would always be on the side of the oppressed against the oppressor. “I will put one cheek of his (the transgressor’s) on the ground and put my foot on the other cheek until he submits to the truth.”
- He would work toward creating prosperity, justice, and equality within the society: “You have an obligation upon me that once it (the rightful tax) falls into my hands, it will not come out of them except for its rightful purpose. You have an obligation upon me that I will increase your grants and provisions, by Allah’s Will.”

This was `Umar’s commitment to all people. Yes, to all people, meaning all his subjects, literally anyone under his command, regardless of religion, color, or race.

Actions, Not Mere Words

`Umar's statements were not just words to comfort people and give them false dreams, but rather glorious actions and deeds recorded by history in letters of light.

The following, dear readers, are some of these examples. These are just a few of a long list of actions that are too numerous to mention.

“Will You Carry My Burdens on the Day of Resurrection?”

`Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) went out with his servant Aslam at night to inspect the people's living conditions. When he arrived at the outskirts of Madinah, he saw a fire was lit. `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “O Aslam, I see here some riders hindered because of the darkness and cold. Let us go to them.” When they approached, they found a woman with some children and a pot placed on the fire. The children were screaming. `Umar said to the woman: “Why are these children screaming (weeping)?” She said: “From hunger.” He said: “What is in this pot?” She replied: “Some water to calm them down until they fall sleep. And Allah is between us and `Umar.” He said: “May Allah have mercy on you, and how can `Umar know about you?” She said: “He has shouldered the responsibility for our affairs but then neglects us!”

`Umar said to Aslam: “Let us go.” They ran until they reached the flour store. `Umar took out a sack of flour and a quantity of ghee. He said to Aslam: “Put it on my shoulder.” Aslam said: “I will carry it for you, O Commander of the Believers.” He repeated this three times, and `Umar kept saying: “Put it on my shoulder!” After the third time, `Umar said to him angrily: “Will you carry my burdens on the Day of Resurrection?” `Umar carried the flour sack, and they hurried to the woman.

There `Umar took out some flour and started blowing under the pot until he cooked the food himself. He waited until the children had eaten and were satisfied. He stayed with them until he saw the boys playing and laughing and then sleeping peacefully.

When `Umar got up and was about to leave, the woman said to him: “May Allah reward you with good. By Allah, you are more deserving of this matter (administering people’s affairs) than Ibn Al-Khattab.” He said to her: “Say a good word [when] you come to the Commander of the Believers; you will find me there, by Allah’s Will.”

What kind of ruler are you, O Commander of the Believers! You would not rest until you fed the children who were crying from hunger. You did not allow any of your workers to do this task on your behalf, for no reason other than that you feared Allah and knew that no one would bear your burdens for you except yourself.

“Do Not Rush to Wean Your Infants!”

This story is another flower from the garden of Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him), which is rich in flowers, sweet basil, and green spaces, of which we are in dire need today.

Some merchants came to Madinah and camped at its outskirts. The Commander of the Believers, accompanied by `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf, went to check on this caravan. When it was the last part of the night, `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said to `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf: “Let us spend the rest of the night here to guard our guests.” While they were sitting there, `Umar heard an infant crying, so he quickly went toward him. When he was close to him, he said to his mother: “Fear Allah and treat your infant well!”

Umar repeated this several times. Finally, he said to her: “Woe to you! I can see that you are a bad mother. Why can you not calm your infant during the night?”

She said, not knowing who she was addressing: “O `Abdullah, you have made me tired since last night. I am trying to wean him early, but he refuses to be weaned.” Umar asked her: “Why are you trying to wean him early?”

She said: “Because Umar does not assign (give) an allowance except to a weaned child.”

He said: “How old is he?” She said: “Just a few months old.” He said: “Woe to you, do not rush (to wean) him.”

Umar went to pray *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer. The people (the congregation praying behind him) could barely hear his recitation over the sound of his intense weeping. When he finished, he said: “Woe to Umar, how many Muslim children did he kill?” Then he ordered a crier to call out in the city of Madinah: “Do not rush in weaning your children, for an allowance has been assigned to every newborn in Islam.” Orders to this effect were issued to all his governors in the different provinces.

This is Al-Faruq who shook the strongholds of Khosrow and Caesar. His concern over a child’s weeping bothered him to the point of keeping him awake and making him burst into tears while he was leading the people in prayer. He then placed a solution not to only handle this solitary incident, but to instantly establish a law that included all similar cases.

Umar showed exceptional concern for people’s problems and interests and an extraordinary sense of responsibility toward the people he ruled over.

“Satisfy People with What You Satisfy Yourself!”

One day, Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) received a gift of sweets from his governor of Azerbaijan, ʿUtba ibn Farqad. When it was placed before ʿUmar (may Allah be pleased with him), he asked the messenger who brought it: “What is this?” He replied: “Sweets made by the people of Azerbaijan.” ʿUmar tasted it and found it delicious. He asked the messenger again: “Do all the people there eat this?”

The man replied: “No, it is the food of the elite.”

ʿUmar closed the container tightly again and said to the man: “Take this load of yours, return it to ʿUtba, and tell him that ʿUmar says to him, ‘Fear Allah and satisfy people with what you satisfy yourself.’”

Such was the state of ʿUmar Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him), as illustrated earlier. He was the first to go hungry when his people faced hunger, and the last to be satisfied when they were satisfied.

The Economic Policy Pursued by Al-Faruq

Dear readers, we are still exploring how Al-Faruq fulfilled his responsibility toward the people.

Truly, the way he managed the nation’s money was something that will both amaze the minds and touch the hearts.

Here is a summary of the economic rules that Al-Faruq established and adopted as a method and an approach.

1. Preserving Public Money

It does not seem strange, or surprising, that Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) who lived as an ascetic, devout and repentant worshiper, was very careful of every dirham of the Muslims' money.

Here are some examples of his financial prudence with people's money:

“We Have Been Extravagant with All This Money!”

`Abdullah ibn `Amir ibn Rab`iah narrated: “I accompanied `Umar ibn Al-Khattab from Madinah to Makkah during Hajj, then we returned. He did not have a tent or a shelter set up for him, nor did he have a structure to seek shade under its roof. He would only throw a cloak over a tree and take shade under it. `Umar asked, ‘How much did we spend on this Hajj [journey]?’ They replied: ‘Fifteen dinars.’ He said, ‘We have been extravagant with all this money!’”

This is how Al-Faruq of the *Ummah* behaved with money. The riches of Khosrow and Caesar were placed under the threshold of his treasuries. Then he set out for Hajj in the middle of a burning desert without equipping himself with any necessities of the journey! He suffered the blistering heat of the sun and the scorching heat of the mountains, just as all people did. He spent fifteen dinars during the entire journey, then he said: “We have been extravagant!”

The Salary of the Commander of the Believers

Before `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) assumed the leadership of the Muslims, he was a merchant who earned his living and the livelihood of his family from trade. When he devoted himself to the caliphate, he assigned a salary for himself and his family to live on at a basic level. As the days passed, his obligations, needs, and expenses increased. Whenever conditions improved and prosperity spread, he would raise the allowance that was paid to all

Muslims, but he did not think of increasing his salary by one dirham. This state continued until his companions heard that the Commander of the Believers was borrowing money to live. A group of them gathered and agreed to talk to him and ask him to increase his salary, but they were afraid because they knew what his reaction to this issue would be.

They asked the Mother of the Believers, Hafsa bint Umar, to find out about her father's financial situation. Hafsa opened the topic with her father. He said to her: "You were the wife of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). What clothes did he possess?" She replied: "Two garments." Umar asked: "What is the best food you saw him eat?" She replied: "Soft barley bread smeared with ghee."

Umar asked: "What was the softest mattress in your house?"

She Replied: "A rough cloak, which we used to spread out in the summer. When it was winter, we would spread out half of it and cover ourselves with the other half (i.e. half of it was a mattress and half of it was a blanket)."

Umar said: "O Hafsa, my likeness and that of my two companions—the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him)—is that of three persons who took a path. The first one walked ahead, had provisions, and reached the destination. Then the second one followed him, took his path, and reached him. There remained the third one. If he adheres to their path and is satisfied with [the amount of] their provisions, he will catch up with them. But if he takes a path other than theirs, he will not meet them."

"You Have Set a Difficult Example for Those Coming After You to Follow, O Umar!"

On a very hot day, Uthman ibn Affan looked out from his building in Aliyah (province). He saw a man walking with two small camels in front of him and the hot air all around him. Uthman said to himself: "What would happen if this man stayed in Madinah until the weather cooled down?" Then he said to

his servant: “Find out who this man is?” The servant looked and said: “This is the Commander of the Believers, wrapped in his cloak, walking with two camels in front of him.” `Uthman stuck his head out of a small window, avoiding the hot wind, and called out: “What brought you out at this hour, O Commander of the Believers?” `Umar replied: “Two camels from among the charity camels strayed from *Al-Hima* (the state-run private pasture). I feared that they might get lost, and Allah would ask me about them.”

`Uthman said: “O Commander of the Believers, come to the shade and water! We will take care of this matter for you.” `Umar said to him: “Return to your shade, O `Uthman,” and he continued on his way. The heat was so hot it almost melted the rocks. Then `Uthman said: “Whoever wants to see someone who is strong and trustworthy, let him look at `Umar.” Then he added: “By Allah, you have set a difficult example for those coming after you to follow, O `Umar.”

Smart Investment of Wealth

`Umar Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) did not only preserve the nation’s money, but worked to develop it and increase the national income as well.

In this regard, he performed the following:

The Land Belongs to Those Who Cultivate It

Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) resisted the idea of distributing productive land to the conquerors, because this would create a monopolistic class which, at the same time, would be incapable of serving the land due to being inexperienced in cultivating it. Therefore, he left the land in the hands of its cultivators, content with the *Zakah* (obligatory charity) paid to the treasury

from it. This way each individual of the *Ummah* would get a share of the profit from it.

Land Reclamation

ʿUmar (may Allah be pleased with him) also encouraged the revival of barren land which no one owned, regarding which the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **“Anyone who revives a dead land, it belongs to him.”**¹ He enacted laws according to which he would give the land to those who took it to reclaim and cultivate it. He would grant them a chance of three years. If he saw that they were neglecting to reclaim and cultivate the land, he would take it from them and give it to others who could revive the land and turn it into a field, orchard, or pasture. For this purpose, ʿUmar was interested in digging water channels to increase the area of agricultural land and for people to enjoy its benefits.

Promoting Animal Husbandry

ʿUmar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) was concerned about rearing animals too. He allocated a fertile and spacious pasture for livestock, known as *Al-Hima*, for people to graze their livestock for free. He often went out at noon, putting his garment over his head to protect himself from the heat of the sun, heading to *Al-Hima* land to inspect it and warn those working there not to allow anyone to cut any of its trees or strike the land with an axe.

¹ Reported by Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 1379.

3. Tax Collection Policy

`Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) used to order his workers to collect *Kharaj* (land tax) and *Zakah* with kindness, justice, and mercy.

One day, a large sum of money was brought to him from one of the provinces. Consequently, `Umar asked about its source and why it was so abundant. When he learned that it was from the *Zakah* paid by Muslims and the *Jizyah* (poll tax required from non-Muslims living in an Islamic state) paid by the People of the Book (i.e., Jews and Christians), he said: "I think you have consumed the people (i.e., their property)." They said: "No, by Allah, we only took that which was pure and given willingly." He said: "Without force?" They replied: "Yes."

`Umar said: "All praise be to Allah that no mistreatment of people happened at my hands or under my authority."

Using Wealth in the Service of People

Wealth and national income during the days of `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) were not scarce or limited to some shallow resources. `Umar did not die until his strong and trustworthy hands used and dispersed the largest income at that time, after most of the possessions of the Byzantine and Persian Empires had been transferred to Islam. This affluence was reflected in the individual's income. In all the countries of the Muslim State, each individual received a sufficient annual salary. The income per person was between one thousand five hundred and two thousand dinars. For each newborn, whether male or female, more than one hundred dinars was given every month.

`Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) ordered that the riches of each country be divided among its people first. If they reached adequacy, the share of

the capital of the state should be sent to the treasury. `Umar would be intensely enraged at any governor who deprived the people of his province in order to send a large amount of tax to Madinah, thinking that he would gain the satisfaction of the Commander of the Believers.

For `Umar, wealth must be used in the service of the people, not the other way around.

Prosperity, Justice, and Security for All

Dear readers, we are still exploring how `Umar carried out his responsibility toward the people.

Prosperity, security and justice during the time of `Umar were not limited to one religion, one color, or one race. Rather, goodness extended to all people, Muslims and non-Muslims, men and women, young and old.

Here are some examples:

“We Took It from You When You Were Young; We Will Give It Back to You When You Are Old”

Once `Umar ibn Al-Khattab saw a blind old man begging at someone's door. When `Umar learned that the man was a Jew, he asked him: “What made you do what I see you doing?” He said: “I am begging because of the *Jizyah*, need, and old age.” Therefore, `Umar took him by the hand to his house. He gave him what was enough for him, at the time, and said to him: “We took it from you in your youth, and we will give it back to you in your old age.” Then `Umar summoned the treasurer of the Muslim treasury and said to him: “Take care of this man and those like him, for by Allah we have not been fair to him! We have consumed his youth and then abandoned him in his old age.” `Umar was not satisfied with just these steps, but he sent a notice to all the provinces:

“Anyone who has a debt that consumes his money or is unable to pay is exempted from *Jizyah*.”

Although the People of the Book paid the *Jizyah* with willing submission, Umar saw that it should be collected from only those who were able to pay it.

“Hit the Son of the Noble Ones!”

The son of Amr ibn Al-As, the governor of Egypt, had a race with a Copt in which the Copt beat the son of the head of state. Amr’s son raised his hand and slapped the Copt, saying to him: “Are you going to beat me in the race when I am the son of the noble ones?”

The Copt went directly to the Commander of the Believers in Madinah. He was willing to travel these distances and endure the hardships of travel as he knew for certain that he would find nothing but justice and fairness at Madinah.

After the Copt complained to the Commander of the Believers about what had happened, Al-Faruq sent a message to the governor of Egypt saying he and his son must come. When they arrived, the ruling council began. After the Commander of the Believers became certain that the complaint was true, he said to the Copt: “Take this stick and hit the son of the noble ones with it.” The Copt raised the stick and hit the son of the governor of Egypt until he was injured. Umar said: “Put it on Amr’s bald head. By Allah, his son did not hit you except with the authority of his father.”

The Copt said: “O Commander of the Believers, I got my due in full. I hit the one who hit me.”

Then Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) turned to Amr ibn Al-As and uttered some words that history has remembered and are still repeated by

everyone to this day. He said: “When did you enslave people when their mothers gave birth to them free?”

This was Al-Faruq’s view on what we call today “citizenship”: People in one homeland all have equal rights and duties, there is no difference due to religion, color, or race.

I have stated many times before, and I am not tired of repeating it now: How much we need you and your righteous way of dealing with others... O Commander of the believers!

His Responsibility Toward Every Creature under His Government

The care and concern shown by Al-Faruq was not limited to humans but extended to include every creature that lived under his government, whether human, animal, or plant.

Therefore, he repaired and paved the roads. He used to say: “If an animal stumbled on the banks of the Euphrates, I would fear that I would be asked about it.”

Not only that, but he also respected the rights of animals. It was narrated that he scolded a man when he saw that the man had loaded his camel beyond its capacity.

He used to put his hand in the camel’s wound to treat it and say: “I am afraid that I will be asked about what is wrong with you.”

Third: `Umar’s Selection and Follow-Up of Governors

Now dear readers, let us move on to the third section of the governance rules that `Umar established for himself, which is his selection and follow-up of the governors and workers who took care of the affairs of the people in all the

countries, both far and near. The Commander of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with him) had his own style and method in administering his responsibilities as a ruler over his workers.

Here is a summary of the four main priorities of his method:

1. The Conditions that `Umar Placed for Selecting Governors

`Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) chose his governors with great care: the care of someone choosing his own fate. He considered himself responsible for every mistake made by any of his governors, whether he knew about it or not. Therefore, he would use his discretion and judgement, seek guidance from his Lord, consult his companions, and wait and deliberate before choosing his representative.

`Umar said to his companions: “Tell me, if I appoint the best of those I know over you and then order him to be just, would that clear my conscience?”

They replied: “Yes.” `Umar would say: “No... not until I look at his actions; will he do what I ordered him to do or not?” He also said: “Any worker of mine who wrongs any person and the act of the injustice he committed reaches me and I do not change it, then I have wronged that person as well.”

`Umar wanted his governors to carry out their responsibilities at the same level that he carried out his responsibilities.

Consequently, he used to stipulate that his governors should satisfy the following requirements:

The First Condition

The governor should not be desirous of the position or aspire to hold such a position. `Umar used to reject anyone who sought or requested a position. In this, he used to follow the example of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), who

said: **“By Allah, we do not appoint anyone to this position who asks for it or desires it.”** Those who seek to be rulers or governors do not fully recognize the responsibility of ruling; otherwise, they would flee from it and lose interest in it.

The Second Condition

The governor should fit the description of “the strong and trustworthy one”. Once ʿUmar chose a governor, he would take him by the hand and inform him of the “Letter of Assignment”, as we call it nowadays, and the set of commands and prohibitions that it contained.

As for the commands, he would say to him:

- Establish prayer among the people.
- Divide grants among people fairly.
- Administer justice among them.

As for the prohibitions, he would say to him:

- Do not ride an animal of superb beauty and grace.
- Do not eat luxurious food.
- Do not close your door against people’s needs.

ʿUmar (may Allah be pleased with him) thus forbade the governors working under his supervision from good lawful things to make them always live at the level of poor hardworking individuals, being servants to the people, not masters over them. He did not want them to be tempted away from their goals, lead a life of luxury, or gain any privilege in the name of governorship.

The Third Condition

The governor should be a humble man of good character. Al-Faruq did not want his governors to lose their prestige, but he wanted them to have legitimate prestige, in which there is no transgression or arrogance. He wanted them to

excel over people through the elegance of their souls, not through the elegance of their clothing.

Al-Faruq summarized these specifications in his saying: “I want a man who, if he is among the people and not their leader, appears as if he is their leader. And if he is among them and is their leader, he appears as if he is one of them.”

These were the men Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) wanted around him: leaders due to their good morals and modesty, not due to their lavishness and superiority; leaders who share life with the people, and do not stand out from them except by excelling in good works and efforts.

2. ʿUmar’s Supervision of the Governors

ʿUmar’s responsibility for his governors did not stop at selecting and directing them well, but rather it extended to placing each governor under constant and continuous supervision. Governors were subject to double supervision, from Al-Faruq and from his subjects (the public).

To achieve this twofold supervision, ʿUmar used to perform the following:

- He would invite all the governors of the provinces during the Hajj season every year to personally know from them how the subjects were doing. Moreover, he would listen to people’s opinion of their governors, and if there was any complaint or shortcoming from any of them, he would stand among the people as a preacher and say:

“O people, by Allah, I do not send my workers to you to beat you nor to take your money, but I sent them to you to teach you your religion and the Sunnah of your Prophet. Whoever encountered anything other than that, let him report it to me. By the One in Whose hand is my soul, I will enable him to exact retribution.”

- He would investigate, personally and immediately, every complaint that a citizen made against a ruler, and would follow with vigilance the conduct of his governors in all countries.

Here are some examples of `Umar's supervision:

`Umar asked a delegation from Homs about their governor, `Abdullah ibn Qurt, and they replied: "He is the best Emir, except that he built a lofty tower for himself."

`Umar said: "A lofty tower to put himself above people?"

Then `Umar sent an envoy to him, telling the messenger: "Start with his lofty tower and burn its door, then bring him to me."

When `Umar's envoy arrived, he gathered some firewood and burned the door of the tower, just as the Caliph had ordered him. The people hurried to the Emir, saying: "There is a man here burning the door of your home." He said: "Leave him, for he is the envoy of the Commander of the Believers." Then the envoy entered upon him and handed him the letter of the Commander of the Believers. He did not put the letter down from his hand until he had started riding toward Madinah. When `Umar saw him, he refused to meet him for three days. On the fourth day, he received him, choosing to meet him at "*Al-Harrah*", where the camels and sheep for charity grazed.

There, `Umar ordered him to take off his clothes and put on some shepherd's clothes instead. `Umar handed him a bucket and said to him: "Water these camels and graze them, O `Abdullah." Then he left him. After a while, he summoned him and said to him: "O Ibn Qurt, when did your emirate start?" He replied: "A long time ago, O Commander of the Believers." He said: "Is this why you built the upper parlor for you to tower over the people, including the widows and the orphans? Go back to your work and never do what you did again."

This was the attitude of Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) toward a man whose subjects testified that he was the best Emir but had given himself more than others by building a high tower. What more can one say!

There is also the aforementioned story with the ruler and liberator of Egypt, Amr ibn Al-As, when the Copt was beaten by his son in a race. The Copt headed all the way to Madinah to complain about what the ruler's son did to him. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) fairly investigated the grievance and gave everyone his due right.

There are numerous other examples that cannot be narrated in this limited space.

3. Reward and Punishment

Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) applied the policy of reward and punishment to his governors.

Just as his attitude was strict and firm with each of his governors who committed a mistake, he would melt with compassion and joy when it was proven that one of the governors was innocent of what was attributed to him or had performed a praiseworthy act.

- One day Umar received a complaint against one of his governors, Sa'id ibn Amir Al-Jumahi. Three objections were raised against him:
 - **First:** He does not go out to the people until the sun is high.
 - **Second:** He does not answer anyone at night.
 - **Third:** He is absent from the people for one day every month, during which he does not see anyone, and no one sees him.

ʿUmar (may Allah be pleased with him) summoned Saʿid and asked him about these complaints. His response was as follows:

As for the first: (he does not go out to the people until the sun is high), Saʿid replied: “By Allah, O Commander of the Believers, my family does not have a servant. I knead my dough with them, and I sit until it ferments. Then I bake my bread. After that I perform ablution and go out to the people.”

As for the second: (he does not answer anyone at night), Saʿid replied: “By Allah, I devote the whole day to them, and I devote the night to [worship] Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He).”

As for the third: (he is absent from the people for one day every month, when no one sees him), Saʿid replied: “I do not have a servant to wash my clothes. On this day, I wash them and wait for them to dry. Then I go out to the people at the end of the day.”

ʿUmar said: “All praise be to Allah that my insight proved accurate.”

Another example of the Commander of the Believers’ compassionate dealings is when he sent ʿUmayr ibn Saʿid as a governor over Homs. ʿUmayr stayed there for a year, not sending any collected tax and there being no news from him. ʿUmar sent for him. When ʿUmayr arrived in Madinah, he was clearly exhausted and tired from the long journey.

ʿUmar was pained by the obvious signs of exhaustion and fatigue on ʿUmayr, and he asked him: “What is the matter with you, O ʿUmayr?”

He replied: “Do you not see that I have a healthy body and pure blood, and I have this world with me, dragging it by its horns?”

ʿUmar asked: “Did you come walking?”

He replied: “Yes.”

`Umar asked: “Did you not find anyone who would give you a beast to ride?”

He replied: “They did not give me one, and I did not ask them for one.”

`Umar said: “What did you do with what we entrusted you with?”

He replied: “I went to the city to which you sent me, and I gathered the righteous people in it. I put them in charge of collecting their spoils and their money. When they had collected them, I distributed them to the proper recipients. If anything of them had remained, I would have brought it to you.”

`Umar said: “So you did not bring me anything?”

He replied: “No.”

`Umar said: “Renew the covenant with `Umayr.”

Thus, Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) shouldered his responsibility regarding his governors, choosing and monitoring them as much as he monitored himself. They were the mirror that reflected his method and style of governance.

This, my dear readers, was `Umar’s method of governance and the rules he used to achieve security, justice and prosperity for all people.

The Achievements That `Umar Made

It was natural, and even inevitable, after establishing these rules of governance, that there would be great achievements, described by some as historic and by others as miraculous. Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) established the Muslim State with its modern concepts and all its pillars and mechanisms. The borders of this state extended east and west in his era.

The achievements introduced by `Umar can be summarized in two sections:

- **External achievements (liberation of lands).**
- **Internal achievements (establishing the Muslim State).**

The Lands That Were Liberated Under ʿUmar

Soon after ʿUmar Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) assumed the caliphate of the Muslims, he started to face great challenges from the two great powers at that time, which were: the Persian Empire and the Byzantine Empire.

The Status of the Persian Empire During the Reign of Al-Faruq

Internal Disagreements Threatened the Persian Empire

The Persians were preoccupied with their internal conflicts, after the successive defeats they had suffered at the hands of the Muslims during the reign of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him). They disagreed about who would take over the reins of their kingdom. They finally agreed to hand over the reins to Buran (Boran), the daughter of Kisra (Khosrow), under the supervision of Rustam (Rostam), until they would find a man from the bloodline of Kisra fit for the kingdom.

After Rustam assumed power, he prepared the armies to fight the Muslims. He suffered successive defeats at the hands of the Muslims until the vast majority of Iraq had been gained by the Muslims. This deepened the rift and discord between the Persians. They were divided into two sections: one section wanted Rustam and the other wanted Firuzan. This deepened the weakness of the Persians and helped in securing more victories for the Muslims.

The Persians saw that their kingdom was declining. It would eventually disappear if they did not remedy the situation and seek to eliminate the conflicts between them.

The Coronation of Yazdegerd and the Mobilization of Persian Forces Against the Muslims

The Persian leaders gathered at the assembly of Rustam and Firuzan and said to them: “Nothing has helped the Muslims and given them victory over us except your disunity and cowardice. You must settle this conflict, otherwise the Persian kingdom will be lost.”

The two princes did not disagree with this statement. They searched for a man from the family of Kisra who was fit to rule over the kingdom. After finding a son of Kisra named Yazdegerd, they crowned him king.

Yazdegerd began his reign by not only preparing huge armies to protect the borderlands of their kingdom and recover what had been lost, but by threatening the Muslims with invading Madinah, the capital of the Muslim state. He succeeded in mobilizing more than one hundred thousand soldiers for this purpose.

“By Allah, I Shall Defeat the Kings of the Persians Using the Kings of the Arabs”

This was the greatest challenge that Al-Faruq faced at the beginning of his reign.

Upon learning about these large Persian armies, ‘Umar said: “By Allah, I shall defeat the kings of the Persians using the kings of the Arabs.” He wrote to Al-Muthanna ibn Harithah, the commander of the armies of Iraq, ordering him to withdraw from the land of the Persians until all Muslim armies had gathered. Al-Muthanna complied and placed his army on the borders of the Persian lands, waiting for reinforcements.

A Massive Mobilization Among the Muslim Ranks

Umar send a message to all his workers that they should send everyone who could participate with strength, horses, weapons, or good advice. He set out to perform Hajj (in the year 13 A.H.), and upon his return, he found that large groups had assembled at Madinah. Those who were closer to Iraq joined Al-Muthanna.

Umar Deliberates Over Leading the Armies

A large army gathered around Umar, with which he set out from Madinah, appointing Ali ibn Abu Talib as his deputy. He stopped at Dharar, a site near Madinah, and camped there. The Muslims still did not know his plans at that time. Uthman ibn Affan asked him about his next movement, and he informed them that he would head to Iraq. He consulted them: should he stay in Madinah and appoint someone else to lead the army? Or should he lead the army himself? His companions advised him to stay in Madinah and appoint a gallant and brave man as commander of the army.

The Leadership of Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas

Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) elected Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas, the maternal uncle of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), to lead this great army. He appointed him as commander of the army and gave him certain commandments.

The Commandments of Umar as a Caliph and an Imam

Among the instructions that Umar gave to Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas were the following commandments for him and his soldiers:

- “O Sa’d ibn Umm Sa’d, do not be deceived by what people say about you: The maternal uncle of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and the Companion of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Allah does not erase evil with evil, but rather erases evil only with good, as there is no lineage between Allah and anyone except through obedience to Him. Therefore, seek the path to which the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) adhered, and adhere to it.”
- “I command you, and the soldiers with you, to fear Allah in every situation, for fearing Allah is the best way to prepare yourself to fight against the enemy.”
- “I command you, and those with you, to be more cautious (against sin) than you are of your enemy, for the sins of the army are more harmful to them than their enemy itself.”
- “The Muslims are victorious only because of their enemy’s disobedience to Allah. If it were not for that, we would not have had power over them, because our number is not like their number and our equipment is not like their equipment. If we are equal in sin, they will be superior to us in strength. If we do not defeat them because of our advantage (i.e. through fearing Allah and being close to Him), we will not defeat them because of our strength.”
- “Be shy before Allah. Do not commit sins when you have set out as soldiers in His Cause. Ask Allah for help against yourselves just as you ask Him for victory over your enemy.”

The Commandments of `Umar as a Caliph and a Commanders

Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) finished his commandments as an Imam for the Muslims, who had the duty to advise and guide them. Then he began his commandments as a military leader. Here are his military orders:

- “While marching forth, be gentle with the Muslims until they reach their enemy, not letting the journey diminish their strength.”
- “Set up camp with your soldiers every Friday (i.e., every week), for one day and night, for them to have a rest, reviving themselves and laying down their weapons and belongings.”
- “Position their camps away from the people who are under pacts of peace and protection, so that none of its people are harmed. Such people are inviolable and have our protection.”

When you step on the enemy’s territory:

- “Have your eyes on them; their affairs must not be hidden from you. (This is called military intelligence nowadays).”
- “Use several reconnaissance battalions and establish squadrons between you and them for the squadrons to cut off their supplies.”
- “Choose brave men for the reconnaissance battalions, those who have sagacious minds from among your companions.”
- “When you see the enemy, gather your furthest flanks, your reconnaissance battalions, and your squadrons. Moreover, do not rush them into combat until you discern the weak points and most fragile areas of your enemy [through which they can be defeated]. Become acquainted with the whole battlefield as much as you are acquainted with its people.”
- “Indeed, Allah is your Protector and Helper for securing victory for you over your enemy. Allah is the Only One from Whom you seek help.”

Lessons Learned from the Commandments of Al-Faruq to Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas

A pause is necessary here to study these great and profound commandments of `Umar. How much we need to contemplate `Umar's commandments these days!

Three significant lessons can be concluded from them.

First: The key to victory and superiority is having awe and fear of Allah (Exalted be He) and avoiding disobedience to Him. History shows that for all the battles that took place between the Muslims and *Mushrikin*, starting from Badr until the era of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and what followed in the first centuries of Islam, the ratio of Muslims to their enemies was at best 1:3, and it reached 1:20 or less in several cases. But victory was always granted to the Muslims. Why?

This is because: “Fearing Allah is the best way to prepare to fight against the enemy,” as the Commander of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with him) had said. The Muslims at that time believed in that and acted upon it.

Second: Along with due fear of Allah and due closeness to Allah, there always must be thorough and precise preparation. This can be noticed in `Umar's advice to Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas regarding how to deal with the soldiers, how to deal with the enemy (intelligence and the like) before the battle, and how to encounter and fight the enemy during the battle.

Preparation here should be according to our ability and available means, not according to the strength and capabilities of the enemy, as they may have much greater strength than ours. This is in accordance with the Almighty's Saying: ﴿And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allah and your enemy﴾ (translated meanings of Al-Anfal, 8:60).

By implementing these two factors together: fearing Allah first and then making good plans and using all available means second, victory becomes possible.

Third: After taking a close look at the weakness and humiliation that the *Ummah* has reached these days, we find that the explanation for this state lies in the saying of the Commander of the Believers:

“Our number is not like their number, and our equipment is not like their equipment. If we are equal in sin, they will be superior to us in strength.”

The matter is very simple. Nowadays, we not only stand equal with our enemy in sin, but we have surpassed them in committing sins and distancing ourselves from Allah (Glorified be He). It is natural for them to prevail with their power that exceeds ours.

Not only that, but we have not made any plans or preparations or developed ourselves using the means of strength from science, technology, and excellence.

I wish we would reread these commandments of `Umar, fear Allah as He should be feared, work hard and sincerely, and do our best efforts to uplift this *Ummah* and bring prosperity to the people.

The Great Victory and the Collapse of the Persian Kingdom

Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas marched with thirty thousand men to confront Yazdegerd's army of one hundred thousand men, and the Battle of Al-Qadisiyyah occurred. It was the greatest battle between the Muslims and the Persians, in which famous Persians and senior leaders were killed.

After the victory was complete, Sa`d ordered the collection of the spoils. He divided them, sending one-fifth and the good news of victory to the Commander of the Believers.

`Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) would go out every day from Madinah to wait for news until the heat of noon drove him back. Finally, the bearer of good news arrived. `Umar met him walking briskly and asked him: "From where have you come?" The man told him that he was sent by Sa`d. `Umar said to him: "O servant of Allah, tell me the news." He said: "Allah has defeated the *Mushrikin*." `Umar ran after him until he entered Madinah. The bearer of good news did not know `Umar, and when he saw the people greeting `Umar as the Commander of the Believers, he said: "Why did you not tell me [that you are the Caliph], may Allah have mercy on you?" `Umar said: "That is alright, O my brother."

Victories continued one after the other. Al-Mada'in—the capital of the Persian Empire—was conquered, and the Muslims entered the emperor's palace—the House of Kisra. The prophecy of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was thus fulfilled.

For more information, please refer to the first book of this series: "*The Biography of the Best Man in Creation*" by the author.

The bearer of good news brought the treasures of Kisra to `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him). Seeing them, `Umar said: “The people who have delivered this [wealth] must be trustworthy,” to which `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) responded: “You have been honest, so the subjects have been honest as well.”

Nahavand, Hamzan, Azerbaijan, Khorasan, and other regions were conquered.

These were the victories that the Muslims achieved during the reign of `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) in the land of the Persians, which was a vast empire of great power at the time.

The Byzantine Empire During the Era of Al-Faruq

At the time when the Muslims were achieving successive victories and the Persian Empire was being defeated, the eyes of the Commander of the Believers were on the other supreme power, which represented a great threat to the Muslim State, namely the Byzantine Empire. The clash with the Byzantines had begun in the era of the Prophet (PBBUH) and continued in the era of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him). It was necessary for Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) to complete what his two Companions had started.

The Liberation of the Levant

After the famous Battle of Yarmuk, in which the Byzantine Empire was crushed, the Muslims were informed that the remnants of the Byzantine forces had concentrated themselves at the city of Fihl (Pella) and that great reinforcements from the Byzantine king had arrived in Damascus. Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah wrote a message to the Commander of the Believers consulting him on which country to start with. `Umar instructed him to send a division to Fihl to distract those in it and march himself to Damascus. Abu `Ubaidah did what the Commander of the Believers had ordered. Damascus and its coasts were liberated, followed by the liberation of Homs and then Aleppo.

The Liberation of Jerusalem

`Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) ordered `Amr ibn Al-`As, who was in charge of Jordan, to march to Ajnadayn, where a large Byzantine army had gathered led by a cunning Byzantine leader named Aretion.

`Amr laid a tight besiege on them, conducting reconnaissance missions until he found out where Aretion was. `Amr then fought him and defeated his forces. Aretion then fled to Iliya (Jerusalem). `Amr pursued him and besieged him there. His family asked for peace on the condition that `Umar ibn Al-Khattab be the one who conclude the agreement. `Amr wrote informing the Caliph of the situation.

The Commander of the Believers on His First Visit to the Levant

`Umar resolved to travel to the Levant to receive the keys to Jerusalem. He asked to meet his workers in Jabiyah (a town in Damascus), and they met him there. Then the people of Iliya (Jerusalem) came to him seeking protection. He made peace with them and wrote them a security agreement.

The Terms of the Peace Agreement

This is the security that the servant of Allah, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, the Commander of the Believers, granted the people of Iliya:

- Security for their lives and property.
- Security for their churches and crosses.
- Their churches shall not be inhabited, demolished, or diminished.
- They shall not be forced to change their religion.
- None of them shall be harmed.
- The lives and property of anyone from the people of Iliya who would like to depart with the Byzantines. Their lives and wealth shall be secured until they reach their place of safety.

The Commander of the Believers in Jerusalem

The Commander of the Believers headed to Jerusalem, and when he entered the city, he entered the Church of the Resurrection. He sat in its courtyard and when the time for prayer came, he said to the Patriarch: "I want to pray." The Patriarch said to him: "Pray where you are." `Umar refused to pray there and prayed alone on the step at the door of the church.

After `Umar finished his prayer, he said to the Patriarch: "If I prayed inside the church, the Muslims would imitate me and say, ``Umar prayed here.'" Then he wrote to the Muslims: "No gathering for prayer shall be held at the step, and no call to prayer shall be made from it."

Building Al-Aqsa Mosque

`Umar said to the Patriarch: "Show me a place to build a mosque." He said: "On the rock, from which the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ascended on the Night of *`Isra* and *Mi`raj*." When `Umar reached it, he found a lot of rubble on it. He began to remove the rubble, and the Muslims followed his example. The rubble was removed instantly, and then he ordered the construction of the mosque.

Islam and Citizenship

This historic visit of the Commander of the Believers to Jerusalem, and the events that took place during it, gives an irrefutable response to all those who aim at distorting the image of Islam and its tolerance. `Umar Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) granted the followers of other religions every right to live in security and peace: security for their lives, their property, their faith,

and their churches. They were entitled to all the rights of Muslims. This is true citizenship. This is the true Islam, whose image some malicious entities have desired to distort with false ideas.

Umar's Second Visit to the Levant:

Running from One of Allah's Decrees to Another of Allah's Decrees

During his second visit to the Levant, the Commander of the Believers received news on his way informing him of the outbreak of the Plague of Amwas, an epidemic that had spread in the Levant. He consulted his companions from the Muhajirun (the Emigrants from Makkah) and the Ansar (the Supporters of the Prophet PBBUH from the local inhabitants of Madinah): should he continue on his way or return? They gave him two different opinions. Some of them said: "You set out for Allah's Sake. Do not let this deter you from going ahead with it." Others said: "It (the plague) is a calamity which destroys (the people). We do not think that you should go wherever it may be." Umar chose the second opinion and called out to the people: "I am returning to Madinah." It was said to him: "Are you fleeing from Allah's Decree?" He replied: "(I am going) from one of Allah's Decrees to another of Allah's Decrees."

Abdul Rahman ibn Awf heard their discussion. He came to them and told them that he had heard the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) say: **"If you hear that it (a plague) has broken out in a land, do not go to it; but if it breaks out in a land where you are present, do not go out escaping from it."**¹

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) returned with the people to Madinah.

¹ Reported by Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 3473.

Al-Faruq Visits the Muslims in Their Countries

After consulting his companions, the Commander of the Believers decided to visit the Muslims in their countries to make sure of their conditions. He left Madinah after appointing `Ali ibn Abu Talib as his deputy. He made his way to Iliya (Jerusalem). He was riding his camel when he approached it. The people met him and did not recognize him because of his extreme humility and asceticism. They asked him: “Where is the Commander of the Believers?” He said: “In front of you,” (meaning himself).

Upon arriving at the Levant, `Umar divided the grants and arranged the affairs of Muslims in all aspects of life.

Bilal Announces the Azan for the First Time After the Death of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)

People said to Caliph ʿUmar: “Could you ask Bilal to announce the azan (call to prayer)?” Bilal (may Allah be pleased with him) had settled in the Levant after the death of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He could not live in Madinah after the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was no longer there. He had not announced the azan since he left Madinah. ʿUmar asked Bilal to announce the azan, so he announced the azan.

All those who had met the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) were moved to tears, especially ʿUmar. He wept the most of all. They remembered the days when the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was living among them.

After that, Al-Faruq returned to Madinah.

The Liberation of Egypt

`Amr ibn Al-`As asked permission from the Commander of the Believers, during his visit to the Levant, to liberate Egypt. He explained to him its goodness and prosperity and how Egypt would be a great aid for the Muslims and would give them great power. `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) sent him with a large army and reinforced him with Al-Zubayr ibn `Al-Awwam.

They forcibly entered the Babylon Fortress, marched to Alexandria and camped in `Ain Shams, Al-Matariyah (on a branch of the Nile). Alexandria was soon liberated. Then the Muslims camped at the *Fustat* (pavilion), which `Amr had set up. They set up their tents around it. In this city, `Amr founded his famous mosque—`Amr ibn Al-`As Mosque. Following this victory, the Byzantines departed, but `Amr kept Al-Muqawqis as the leader of his people.

With the liberation of Egypt, the Muslims completed the last of their achievements during the reign of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him). They took two great states, the Levant and Egypt, and a major part of the south of the Byzantine lands (Anatolia).

The Muslims thus diminished the power of the Byzantines and eliminated their empire.

This way, dear readers, the borders of the Muslim State, during the reign of the Commander of the Believers `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him), extended from its capital, Madinah, until it reached the lands of Sindh and Transoxiana in the east, Egypt and the Levant in the west, the Arabian Sea in the south, and the Caspian Sea, Armenia, and Russia in the north.

As previously mentioned, the key to all these victories was having fear of Allah, avoiding sins, making good plans, and employing all the available means.

Internal Achievements (Establishing the State)

As previously mentioned, when Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) assumed the caliphate, he established for himself the principles and rules of governance, at the top of which were his responsibilities toward the people.

The human being was the main focus and driver of the Commander of the Believers. He spared no effort to ensure that every human being had a good and decent life under his command. This was literally every human being, regardless of their religion, color, or race, for they are all united by their humanity and in their rights and duties as citizens.

Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) is considered the founder of the Muslim State. He founded it years before the caliphate. He was its founder since he converted to Islam and enabled the Muslims, with his strength and prestige, to preach and practice their faith publicly.

He was the founder of the Muslim State the day he extended his hand to pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr for the caliphate, and thereby ended the strife that was about to destroy its pillars.

He was the founder of the Muslim State when he assumed the caliphate and laid strong foundations on which he constructed the edifice of the state with brilliance and competence in that era of nomadic, Bedouin life. His skillfulness would amaze you if he were a king actually raised to be a king. His skillfulness is even more amazing because he was a Bedouin who undertook this matter without prior knowledge of it. It is as though he reviewed the history of twenty states with extensive kingdoms and well-established civilizations to establish the Muslim State.

Al-Faruq established the Muslim State with its modern concept and laid its pillars and institutions, including:

- The judicial authority (courts).
- The legislative authority (Parliament), i.e., the *Shura* system (consultative council).
- The executive authority (Executive Committee), i.e., the *Dawawin* (ministries).

Below is an explanation of these achievements that focused on establishing the pillars of the state with its three branches:

First: The Judicial Authority (Courts)

Justice was the basis of governance for Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him). Therefore, he made the judiciary the highest authority in the state. The authority of the judge was above the authority of the Caliph himself.

To achieve this, he performed the following:

- Separated the judiciary from the governing authority.
- Established courts in each state.
- Appointed judges according to strict conditions. The procedure of choosing the governors and those in high positions in the state has been stated earlier.
- Prevented illegal means of income by determining an appropriate salary for each judge, which did not exceed five hundred dirhams per month.

- Prevented the judge from buying, selling, or trading in any commercial goods.

The Letter of Appointment That Al-Faruq Sent to Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari

Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) decided to dispatch Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari as a judge to one of the states. He sent him this letter, which is considered a very important judicial document. The instructions in the letter stated:

- “The judiciary is a firm duty and has clear procedures. Study the case when it is presented to you and implement the law when it (its evidence and facts) becomes clear to you. A right that is not enforceable is of no benefit.”
- “Treat people equally in your council meetings and when listening to them, so as not to allow noble people to covet your injustice (i.e., because of your courtesy toward them) and not make weak people despair of your justice.”
- “The burden of proof is on the person making the claim, whereas the burden of saying the oath is on the one who denies the claim.”
- “Reconciliation is permissible among Muslims, except that which makes lawful something which is unlawful or makes unlawful something which is lawful.”
- “Do not let a judgment you made yesterday, which you reviewed and for which you were guided to the right path today, prevent you from retracting your verdict to uphold the truth. Retracting your verdict to uphold the truth is better for you than persisting in falsehood.”

- “Muslims are just in their testimony against one another, except for one who has been flogged for a crime, was known to have given false testimony, or is suspected of having ascribed himself to other than his own guardians or relatives.”
- “Remove suspicion from yourself, and beware of being angry, bored, or annoyed with the people and of rejecting opposing views when they represent the truth.”

Careful and thoughtful consideration of this message, as well as the previous rules established by Umar for choosing judges and securing their independence, show that Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) was far ahead of his time. He laid down these respected judicial laws and rules which advanced nations started to apply only after many years of experience.

No Authority Is Above the Authority of the Judiciary

The Commander of the Believers did not refuse to let others settle a dispute when an opponent asked for anybody else to judge between them; rather, he would welcome such a course of action with joy because he would find help to uphold the truth if he was right and guidance to the right path if he was wrong.

Umar used to sit, while he was the Commander of the Believers, in front of a judge for the judge to arbitrate between him and those with whom he disagreed.

Here are some examples that deserve to be written in letters of gold:

- Al-`Abbas ibn `Abdul Muttalib had a house next to the mosque of Madinah. When Umar wanted to expand the mosque, he said to Al-`Abbas: “Give it to us to add it to the mosque, and I will allocate you a larger one.” Al-`Abbas refused. Umar said: “Give it to us.” Still Al-`Abbas refused and said: “Appoint between me and you someone who

will judge with justice.” The Commander of the Believers said: “Who do you choose?” Al-`Abbas said: “Hudhayfah ibn Al-Yaman.” Instead of summoning Hudhayfah, the Commander of the Believers and Al-`Abbas both went to him. Hudhayfah now represented the judicial authority, which was higher than the authority of the Caliph himself.

`Umar and Al-`Abbas sat in front of Hudhayfah and told him about the dispute between them. Hudhayfah ruled in favor of Al-`Abbas, and he said to `Umar: “I do not think that you should expel him from his house until you compensate him.”

Regarding the grounds for his judgment, Hudhayfah said: “I heard the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) say:

“The Prophet of Allah, Dawud (David PBBUH), wanted to enlarge *Baitul-Maqdis* (Al-Aqsa Mosque). He found a house near the mosque. This house belonged to an orphan. He asked the orphan for it, but he refused [to give it]. Dawud wanted to take it by force. Therefore, Allah revealed to him: “The purest of all houses from injustice is My House.”

After the case was decided, Al-`Abbas said to `Umar: “Do you still want to force me to give up my house?” `Umar said: “No,” and he left him. Al-`Abbas said to Hudhayfah: “Now that you have ruled in my favor, I will give it as charity to the Muslims to add to the mosque of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).”

- There was another dispute between `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) and Ubay ibn Ka`b. As a result, `Umar said to him: “Name a man to judge between you and me.” They chose Zayd ibn Thabit to judge between them, and they went to him. `Umar said: “We have come to you to judge between us.” When they entered upon him, Zayd made room for him at the head of his bed and said: “Here is for the

Commander of the Believers (where he should sit), and here is for Ubay.” `Umar said to him: “This is the first injustice that has occurred in your judgment. You called me the Commander of the Believers and called him by his name, and you gave me a distinguished place in your assembly; rather, I shall sit next to my opponent.” Both sat in front of him, and Ubay made a claim, which `Umar denied. Zayd said to Ubay: “Allow the Commander of the Believers to be excused from swearing the oath, but `Umar refused not to swear.” Then he swore the oath (in denying the claim).

There are other examples that are too numerous to mention.

Not only did the Commander of the Believers lay down the laws and constitutions to be a method for the common people, but he was the first to whom the law was applied. He insisted on being treated as an ordinary citizen, if the matter reached the courts.

How much we need someone like you these days, O Commander of the Believers!

Second: The Legislative Authority (Parliament): The *Shura* System

Consultation is a difficult art, and `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was a genius in this art. He was the one who established the *Shura* constitution in the Muslim State. Everything stated in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (PBBUH) was the constitution that `Umar governed with and resorted to. However, he allowed *Shura* and considered opposing views in all urgent matters and new issues in which there was no clear and decisive statement from Allah or His Messenger (PBBUH).

`Umar followed the highest levels of *Shura* and democracy in this regard. He listened to views and counterviews. For him, listening to opinions was not a search for an agreement, but a search for the truth. He often said to the people:

“Do not say the opinion that you think agrees with my desires; rather, say the opinion that you think agrees with the truth.”

For the Commander of the Believers, *Shura* and considering opposing views are the two wings of righteous and upright governance. They are what breathe life into any sound governance.

Before `Umar enacted a law or made an important decision, he had to consult his companions who were endowed with wisdom, maturity, and experience. Not only that, but he also sought the opinion of farsighted, spirited, and vigorous people who had different attitudes and ways of thinking. Whenever a difficult matter bewildered him, he would summon the young people and consult with them because of their sharp minds. He would listen to opposing views before listening to those who supported his ideas, and then make the decision for the good and in the interest of all people.

Although democratic institutions such as parliaments and other governance bodies had not yet appeared at that time, democracy manifested itself and enjoyed the best opportunities for prosperity during the era of the Commander of the Believers, `Umar.

Here are some evident examples of consultation meetings and listening to opposing views during the era of `Umar Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him):

- After Iraq was conquered and liberated from the rule of the Persians, `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) decided not to divide its agricultural lands among the *Mujahidin* (fighters in Allah’s Cause). He wanted to keep them as they were in the hands of their farm owners and to be satisfied with taking *Kharaj* (land tax) from them which would be collected in the treasury and divided among all the people. The grounds for his opinion were as follows:

- Dividing the lands among the *Mujahidin* would deter them from participating in *Jihad*.
- The produce of the land would dwindle due to the lack of experience of the *Mujahidin* in agriculture.
- This would create a class of monopolistic feudal lords.

A group of the Companions opposed this opinion, while others supported it. `Umar invited a group of them (those who supported his view and those who opposed it) to discuss the matter. He feared that someone would favor his opinion just because he was the Commander of the Believers, so he began the conversation by saying: “I have invited you to share with me the trust of taking care of your affairs that has been placed upon me. I am like any one of you. While searching for the truth, let those who disagree with me express their disagreement with me and those who agree with me express their agreement with me. I do not want you to merely follow my desires. For by Allah, whenever I say I want anything, I am only seeking the truth.”

After consulting each other, they agreed on the opinion that served the truth and was good for all parties: that is, for the land to remain in the hands of its farmers.

- One day Caliph `Umar ascended the pulpit to address the people concerning a serious matter. After praising Allah, he began his sermon by saying: “Listen to me, may Allah be merciful to you.” But one of the Muslims stood up and said: “By Allah, we will not listen to you! By Allah, we will not listen to you!” `Umar asked him anxiously: “Why Salman (the Persian)?”

Salman replied: “You have favored yourself over us in this world! You gave each of us one cloak and you took two cloaks.”

The Caliph said: “Where is `Abdullah ibn `Umar?”

His son `Abdullah stood up and said: “Here I am, O Commander of the Believers.”

`Umar asked him in public: “Who is the owner of the second cloak?”

`Abdullah replied: “I am, O Commander of the Believers.”

`Umar ibn Al-Khattab turned to Salman, in front of the people, and said: “As you know, I am a tall man. My cloak was short, so `Abdullah gave me his cloak to use it to lengthen my cloak with it.”

Salman said: “All praise be to Allah! Now you may speak, O Commander of the Believers, and we shall hear and obey.”

In general, are people allowed to oppose their ruler and specify the number of garments and clothes he has in such a strict tone? This is certainly a peerless occurrence in history.

- One day `Umar was giving a sermon to the people, saying: “Do not increase the amount of *Mahr* (mandatory gift to a bride from her groom) to more than four ounces of gold. If anyone increases the *Mahr*, I will put the extra sum in the treasury.”

A woman stood up and said: “You are not entitled to do so.”

The Caliph asked her: “Why?”

She replied: Because Allah the Almighty says: ﴿But if you intend to replace a wife by another and you have given one of them a *Cantar* (of gold i.e. a great amount) as *Mahr*, take not the least bit of it back; would you take it wrongfully without a right and (with) a manifest sin?﴾ (translated meaning of An-Nisa’, 4: 20).

Umar's face lit up as he said his famous phrase "The woman was right and Umar erred."

- One day a conversation took place between him and one of the people in which the man held to his opinion, saying to the Commander of the Believers: "Fear Allah, O Umar," and repeating it several times. One of the companions of Al-Faruq stood up and said to the man: "Be quiet, you have spoken too much to the Commander of the Believers." Umar said to him: "Leave him, there is no good in you (people) if you do not voice your opinion, and there is no good in us (people in authority) if we do not listen to it."

Yes, there is no good in people if they do not say what they think is true, and there is no good in the ruler if he does not listen and pay attention to them.

Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) did not assault those who had opposing views, not even once; otherwise, the consultation meetings during his era would have been a great failure. On the contrary, he excluded from his company people who used flattery and cajolery, and he raised to a high position those who discussed issues and voiced their opposition. His joy at a bold and just word spoken to him or to one of his governors surpassed any other joy.

In this way, Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) consulted others about every plan and every decision that had to be taken, and he gave the opposing view due respect and recognition. He did not limit the consultation meetings to only a close circle or one group of people, but rather understood it to be a valid right of all members of the nation, male or female, old or young.

Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) always appreciated people's views. His goal was to prepare people to be the true ruler, leaving them strong and solid, which he successfully accomplished.

Third: The Executive Authority (Executive Committee)

When the Muslim State expanded and its borders broadened, there was an urgent need to control matters to manage the movement of day-to-day affairs of life. The Commander of the Believers was concerned with organizing the affairs of the state using a precise system, for which he established unprecedented laws and standards to govern it. Just as his conversion to Islam was a conquest, his caliphate was exemplary, with which he preceded others of his era.

New and Innovative Acts of Umar

It is rare to find a system in the Muslim State that Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) did not contribute to with an original idea or method. He created a history, initiated a civilization, established a government, arranged the state's departments, organized its judicial and administrative affairs, and established its treasury. He did everything at the most appropriate time. These endeavors are truly worthy to be called "original, innovative ideas."

Below are some of these original and innovative methods introduced by Umar, explaining the impact they had on people's lives and the progress of the nation:

1. Establishing a Calendar for Muslims

The Arabs used to determine dates based on major events in their lives, such as the Year of the Elephant and others, or they used the Persian or Byzantine year. They did not have a specific system for dating events.

A document was presented to Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) which had "Sha`ban" written on it. He asked: "How do we know whether it is the current or the past month of Sha`ban?" Umar held a consultative council, attended by the senior Companions. He presented to them the issue of determining the date so that mistakes would not occur in contracts and transactions. Some suggested that they should date events starting from the birth of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), others suggested from the start of his mission as a Prophet (PBBUH), and others suggested from the time of his emigration (PBBUH) to Madinah. Umar approved of the last suggestion, and it

was decided that the starting point of the Islamic calendar would be from the emigration of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to Madinah. They started their calendar from the month of Muharram.

2. Night Patrols

Umar Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) was the first to make patrols at night to check on people's conditions and learn about their problems and needs. Any problem or need in some house was reported to him. In the morning, he would go to the owners of the house to found out more about their needs and fulfill them. In many cases, this would lead to the enactment of laws or the issuance of orders that would bring goodness and prosperity to the entire community.

3. City planning

Umar Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) was the first to order the selection of suitable places for people to live as well as planning such places to establish new cities.

Planning of Kufa

Al-Mada'in had remained the capital of Iraq since it was liberated; but when Umar noticed a change in the skin color of the Arabs who had settled there and how weak their bodies had become, he realized that it was not a good dwelling place for them. In plainer words, its conditions and climate did not suit the Arabs and the nature of their bodies.

Umar wrote a message to Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas to dispatch Salman Al-Farsi and Hudhayfah ibn Al-Yaman to search for another place to live. He added

that it had to be by land and sea to suit the nature of the Arabs. Saʿd complied and dispatched them. Each one started their search in a different direction, and they met at Kufa. They both agreed to choose Kufa as a place to live and prayed there, asking Allah to make it a stable dwelling place. Then they returned to Saʿd and informed him of their choice. After consulting the Caliph, he gave them permission to build a city there.

Saʿd summoned Abu Al-Hayaj ibn Malik, the planner of Kufa, to perform the task. He made the main street forty cubits long, the part that followed it thirty cubits, the side-roads twenty cubits, and the alleys at least seven cubits.

The first thing that was founded in the city was the mosque. Next, the construction of houses began, with each building not having more than three floors. Thus, the city of Kufa was built on the western bank of the Euphrates River. It was surrounded by palm gardens and had areas of verdure extending as far as the eye could see.

After completing its planning and construction, Al-Faruq ordered the Arabs in Al-Madaʿin to choose between staying in Al-Madaʿin or moving to Kufa.

Following the establishment of Kufa, the Commander of the Believers ordered ʿUtbah ibn Ghazwan to construct the city of Basra in the same way.

Administrative Division of Iraq

Iraq was divided into two administrative divisions:

- An upper section (north) with Kufa as its capital, whose governor was Saʿd ibn Abu Waqqas. The Persian lands that came under the control

of Kufa after they were liberated included: Bab, Azerbaijan, Hamadan, Ray, Isfahan, and Mosul.

- A lower section (south) with Basra as its capital, whose governor was ʿUtbah ibn Ghazwan. The lands that came under its control included: Khorasan, Sistan, Kerman, Fars, and Ahwaz.

Father of Cities

Fustat and Giza were built in Egypt in a similar way to the abovementioned cities in Iraq. This was also the case for the rest of the countries that were liberated. That achievement earned ʿUmar, the Commander of the Believers, the title of “Father of cities”.

Public Services for Cities

The Commander of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with him) did not just permit the construction of these cities, but he made educated choices based on priorities. He first planned the location of the city and the best areas to build houses, while providing public services to its people by building a mosque and a hospital.

He was careful in choosing the most suitable and healthiest place for the hospital; he used to order a piece of meat to be placed in each of the proposed places for building the hospital and then wait several days to see which one would rot the fastest. They would choose the place where the piece of meat took the longest to rot. This is because it would mean it was the place least exposed to bacteria and microbes. Accordingly, it would be the place chosen to build the hospital.

What kind of genius has Allah endowed you with, O Commander of the Believers?!

‘Umar also provided all the other services the city needed, such as courts, the treasury, the police station, and so on.

4. Land Reclamation and Diverting Water from Rivers

The Commander of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with him) was the first to pay great attention to developing agriculture and land reclamation. As previously mentioned, he issued a general law in this regard, stating: “Whoever reclaims fallow lands, wherever they are found throughout the country, their ownership reverts to him. But if he does not reclaim them within three years, they will be withdrawn from him.”

‘Umar’s interest in agriculture and lands made him also care about irrigation management, such as building dams, constructing aqueducts to distribute water, and divert water from rivers for the water to reach fallow lands and reclaim them.

5. Repairing and Paving Roads

The Commander of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with him) was the first to care about repairing and paving roads. This was due to the great impact that this project had on facilitating communication between cities and villages. It also helped in reviving agriculture, industry and trade.

‘Umar was the one who said: “If a lamb stumbled on the banks of the Euphrates, I would fear that I would be asked (by Allah) about it.”

Not only did ʿUmar pave roads, but he also built rest houses between Makkah and Madinah to ensure the comfort of Hajj and ʿUmrah pilgrims, and he built guest rooms in each rest house.

Maritime Transport

Caliph ʿUmar's interest was not limited to only land transport, but rather extended to maritime transport. He ordered the digging of a canal connecting the Nile River and the Red Sea. This canal began at Fustat and extended to Bilbeis and then the Red Sea. Ships transported supplies and goods from Egypt to Madinah with ease and comfort.

May Allah bless you, O Commander of the Believers!

6. Establishing the Diwans (Ministries)

The Commander of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with him) was the first to organize the administrative structure of the state by establishing Diwans (ministries) in various fields.

Diwans within the Economic field

When money became abundant and Allah (Exalted be He) bestowed much good on the Muslims during his reign, Caliph ʿUmar carried out the following procedures:

Establishing Diwan *Al-ʿAta* (the Ministry of Finance)

It performed the following special tasks:

- Recording people's names in order to facilitate the distribution of funds. He assigned this task to `Aqil ibn Abu Talib, Jubayr ibn Mut`am, and Mukhramah ibn Nawfal. They were the most knowledgeable people about genealogies. The Caliph ordered them to start with Banu Hashim, then the family of Abu Bakr. When he saw that they placed the family of `Umar after the family of Abu Bakr, he rejected that step, as mentioned earlier, saying: "Put `Umar and his folk in their proper place." He ordered other people to be placed before the family of `Umar.
- Every Muslim would receive continuous financial allocations (financial assistance) from this Diwan. A man or a woman, old or young, even an infant, had an allowance. He said: "If I live long enough, the shepherd on Mount Sana'a will take his share of this money."
- He gave grants from this Diwan to the poor non-Muslims. It was previously mentioned how he gave charity to the old Jew who was begging from people, saying to him: "We took it (*Jizyah*) from you in your youth, and we will give it back to you in your old age."
- This Diwan lent to anyone in need, without interest.

Establishing the Treasury (Central Bank)

Huge sums of money came to Madinah from the collection of *Kharaj* (land tax), but there was no specific place to keep these public funds. The money used to be instantly distributed to the Muslims. However, when the money increased, `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) consulted the Companions and they arrived at the opinion that `Umar should establish a treasury house: the first large treasury in the caliphate.

Selecting Workers Carefully

Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) was very careful and deliberate in selecting his workers, as mentioned earlier, especially those in charge of money. He used to order every worker to submit a statement of everything he owned upon assuming the position—a “financial statement”, as called nowadays. He used to review this statement every year.

The Diwans Established in the Military Field

The Commander of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with him) established the Military Diwan or “the Ministry of Defense”, as called nowadays. It performed the following special tasks:

1. Establishing military camps for training.
2. Making conscription compulsory, with a reserve ready to be called up.
3. Establishing medical clinics for soldiers in camps.
4. Recording the names and salaries of all soldiers in a special register kept in the soldiers’ Diwan.

The Diwans Established in Other Fields

In addition to the above, other Diwans were established during the reign of ʿUmar covering various fields, including:

1. Judicial Diwan.
2. Postal Diwan.
3. Diwan of Transportation and Roads.
4. Currency minting factory.
5. Jail (as a punishment).

7. The Initiatives That ʿUmar Undertook in Worship

1. He was the first to expand *Al-Masjid Al-Nabawi* (the Prophet's Mosque).
2. He was the first to organize the congregational performance of the *Tarawih* (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan) as twenty *Rak'ahs* (units of prayer).
3. He was the first to position *Maqam Ibrahim* (the Station of Ibrahim) at its original place.
4. He was the first to be called the Commander of the Believers. Abu Bakr was called the Caliph of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). When ʿUmar rose to the position of Caliph, people called him the Caliph of the Caliph of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). ʿUmar found that appellation inappropriate, especially for those who would come after him. He asked to be called the Commander of the Believers.

Now, dear readers, do you not feel proud and honored by this high-class style of ruler, who was ahead of his time and era. ʿUmar established an integrated system of governance, which nations still apply to this day.

May Allah bless you, O Commander of the Believers!

Outstanding Traits of `Umar

Dear readers, let us now explore some of the personal characteristics of `Umar Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him), which proceed from the characteristics of his greatest teacher and the teacher of all humanity, the beloved Chosen Prophet, Muhammad (PBBUH). Perhaps we can borrow some of their light to illuminate the darkness in which the *Ummah* lives today. Perhaps we can elevate its status and bring it closer to its Creator and Lord.

1. `Umar's Asceticism

Asceticism and the Commander of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with him) were two sides of the same coin. When people mention asceticism, they must mention `Umar. And when they mention `Umar, they must mention asceticism. `Umar lived a rough life and ate low quality food. He patched his clothes and carried a water skin on his shoulders, despite his imposing and awe-inspiring presence.

Many instances that indicate his asceticism have been stated in the context of discussing his style of governance and his accountability of himself and his rulers.

Here are more instances of `Umar's asceticism:

“Perhaps I Will Live Their Comfortable Life”

- Hafsah said to her father: “O Commander of the Believers, why do you not wear a garment that is softer than the garment you have and eat food that is better than the food you have? Allah has provided you with

abundant sustenance and bestowed immense goodness on you.” He said to her: “I will make you a witness against yourself. Do you not remember the hardships that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and Abu Bakr used to endure?” He kept mentioning them until he made her weep. He said to her: “By Allah, I will live a hard life like them; perhaps I will [later] live their comfortable life [in Paradise].”

- Anas bin Malik said: “I looked at Umar’s shirt. On its sleeves were four patches, none of which resembled the other.”
- When `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) assumed the caliphate, he said: “From Allah’s Wealth, only two garments are permissible for me: one for the winter and one for the summer. My family’s sustenance is like that of a man from Quraysh, not the richest of them. Indeed, I am only one man from among the Muslims.”

“Whenever You Desire Something, You Buy it!”

Jabir ibn `Abdullah narrated that `Umar once saw a piece of meat hanging from his hand. He asked him: “What is this, O Jabir?” Jabir replied: “I desired some meat, so I bought it.” `Umar said: “Whenever you desire something, you buy it? Are you not afraid that it will be said to you on the Day of Resurrection: ﴿You exhausted your pleasures during your worldly life and enjoyed them﴾ ” (translated meaning of Al-Ahqaf 46:20).

“What Prevents You from Eating My Food with Me?”

One day, Hafs ibn Al-`As visited `Umar who was sitting eating his food. He invited Hafs to eat with him, but when Hafs saw the hard dried meat that `Umar was eating, he declined to eat. `Umar asked him: “What prevents you from eating my food?” He said: “Your food is tough and difficult to eat. I am returning home where I can find some succulent food that has been prepared

for me.” `Umar said: “Do you think I am not capable of ordering a sheep to be skinned or ordering that flour be baked into soft bread for me to eat? Or do you think I am not capable of ordering a *Sa`* of oil to be thrown into a waterskin and then some water poured over it so that it becomes like the blood of a gazelle for me to drink?” Hafs said: “I can see that you are knowledgeable about fine living.” `Umar said: “By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, were it not that my good deeds would be diminished, I would also follow your easy way of life. If I wanted, I would have the best food and live the most comfortably among you, but I will abandon this for the Day on which every nursing mother will forget her nursling and every pregnant one will drop her load (i.e., the Day of Resurrection).”

This is how the Commander of the Believers was. His shyness before Allah (Exalted be He) kept him away from all luxury, and even from all comforts in this world. He insisted on having only what would suffice to sustain him and his family. If he wanted to obtain all the lawful bounties, which were abundant at that time, he would have obtained them all. But his ways were those of asceticism, heroism, and loftiness of the soul.

2. `Umar's Justice

You can talk tirelessly about `Umar's justice. When people talk about justice and the most just person on earth, the first name that comes to their mind is `Umar ibn Al-Khattab. He was an epitome of justice walking on the earth. Allah, the Almighty, is the absolute Just Sovereign, but He made some of His servants establish justice on earth and among people. Ibn `Abbas summarized this fact when he said:

- “Mention `Umar often, because when you mention `Umar, it means you mention justice; and when you mention justice, it means you mention Allah (Blessed and Exalted be He).”

Some examples of justice of the Commander of the Believers have been given in the context of discussing the judicial authority and the method he adopted in issuing rulings. There is the case of the Copt who traveled all the way from Egypt to Madinah to complain to him about the son of `Amr ibn Al-`As, the governor of Egypt. The Copt knew for certain that he would find nothing but justice and true equity with the Commander.

As also previously mentioned, `Umar did not refuse to sit before the judge to settle a dispute with one of the people, although he was the Commander of the Believers. He was ready to accept the verdict, whether it was in his favor or not.

Here, dear readers, are more examples of `Umar's justice:

“You Must Pay the Blood Money”

`Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) summoned a woman whose husband was absent, and people were suspicious of her. When she was informed that she should present herself before the Caliph, she said: “Woe to me, what do I have to do with `Umar?”

While she was on the way, she became frightened and started to experience the pain of labor. She entered a house and had a miscarriage. The child cried out twice before dying. `Umar consulted the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Some of them opined that there was no blame on him, but `Ali remained silent. `Umar turned to him and said: “What do you say, O Abul-Hasan?” He replied: “If they said what they thought, their opinion is wrong. If they said what would please you, they did not advise you well. I think that you should pay the blood money of that child, because you are the one who frightened her. She had a miscarriage while on the way to you.”

The Commander of the Believers accepted Ali's opinion and paid the blood money.

“Are You ʿUmar?”

One day, while the Commander of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with him) was sitting with his companions, a distressed man, consumed by the fatigue of travel, burst into the meeting and headed toward ʿUmar, saying bitterly: “Are you ʿUmar? Woe be on you from Allah, O ʿUmar,” and then he left. Some tried to catch up with him to punish him, but ʿUmar called out to them to return. Then ʿUmar ran after the man. When he caught up with him, he brought him back and asked him: “O brother of the Arabs, why did you invoke Allah that woe should befall me?” The man replied: “Because your workers and governors do not treat people justly, rather they wrong them.” ʿUmar asked: “Which worker do you mean?” The man replied: “A worker of yours in Egypt named ʿAyyadh ibn Ghanim.” After ʿUmar heard the details of the complaint, he ordered ʿAyyadh to come to Madinah to hear the story from him and punish him if he deserved punishment.

“You Have Judged Justly!”

Two men, one of them a Muslim and the other a Jew, disputed before ʿUmar (may Allah be pleased with him). ʿUmar saw that the Jew was right and gave judgment in his favor. The Jew said to him: “By Allah, you have judged justly.” ʿUmar said to him: “How do you know?” The Jew said: “By Allah, we find it written in the Torah: There is no judge who judges justly but one angel stays on his right and one on his left, guiding and directing him so long as he sides with the right. But if he abandons the right, they ascend and abandon him.”

“By Allah, I Have Not Forgotten It”

Iyas ibn Salamah narrated on the authority of his father that ʿUmar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) passed by the market with a whip in

his hand. He hit the hem of his garment with it once, saying: "Get out of the way." The following year, Umar met him and said: "O Salamah, do you want to perform Hajj?" He said: "Yes." Umar took him by the hand and went with him to his house. He gave him six hundred dirhams and said: "Use it to help you perform Hajj. Know that it is for the strike of the whip that I gave you last year." Salamah said: "O Commander of the Believers, by Allah, I had forgotten it until you reminded me of it." Umar said: "By Allah, I have not forgotten it since."

"You Ruled Justly, Felt Safe, and Slept Well, O Umar!"

Hormuzan came to Umar as a representative of Khosrow to announce the surrender of the Persian Empire. They went with him to his house but did not find him. Then they went out to find him lying on the ground in the mosque with a whip in his hand. Hormuzan asked: "Where are his guards and where are his gatekeepers?" They said: "He has no guards or gatekeepers." He said: "He should be a prophet." They said: "He acts like the prophets." Then he said his famous statement: "You ruled justly, felt safe, and slept well, O Umar."

There are numerous other examples of Umar's justice that cannot be narrated in this limited space.

3. Umar's Mercy

Justice and mercy were among the innate qualities of Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) that made him who he was. He ruled with a balance of mercy and justice in the best way. His justice was nothing but mercy for the weak and needy. He was truly, as mentioned earlier, like a mature fruit having a sweet taste and a pleasant smell hidden under a rough, hard shell on the outside.

There is no better evidence of this than the story of his conversion to Islam. It was apparent in his mercy toward two weak women, whom he saw as being helpless and, in a situation where they needed support. The first was Umm

ʿAbdullah who was preparing with her husband to emigrate to Abyssinia, so his heart softened for them. The second was his sister Fatimah, whom he slapped when he learned of her conversion to Islam. The blood that dripped from her face, as previously mentioned, was the sharp knife that broke this shell and that rough crust for the spring of mercy inside it to flow out.

Here are some of the many examples of ʿUmar’s mercy:

- There is the already mentioned story of the woman who was boiling water to distract her hungry children until they fell asleep. ʿUmar went and brought her some flour and ghee, cooked food for them, and waited until they ate and were happy enough to fall asleep.
- His mercy is clear in the already mentioned story of the woman who was trying to wean her infant before the due time in order to receive the allowance that ʿUmar had assigned for each weaned child. ʿUmar wept and decided to pay this allowance to each newborn.

Here are more examples of ʿUmar’s mercy:

ʿUmar Kissing and Jesting with His Son

ʿUmar (may Allah be pleased with him) appointed a certain task to a man from Banu Asad. He went to greet him. During the meeting, one of his sons entered. ʿUmar jested with him and kissed him. The Asadi man said: “Do you kiss your son, O Commander of the Believers? By Allah, I have never kissed any son of mine.” ʿUmar responded: “If you do not have mercy on your own children and Allah has removed mercy from your heart, you will be even less merciful to other people’s children. Never do any work for me.” He then relieved him of his position.

“Give Your Companion the Good News of a Baby Boy”

One night, `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was walking around the city to check on the people. He saw a tent he had never seen before, so he headed toward it. He heard a moaning sound coming from the tent, and he called out (to those inside). A man came out of the tent. `Umar asked him: "Who are you?" He replied: "A man from the desert. We have been afflicted with need. My family and I came to ask `Umar for food, as we learned that he would provide for and look after his subjects." `Umar asked: "What is this moaning?" He replied: "This is my wife, suffering from the pains of labor." `Umar asked: "Do you have someone to care for her and assist her in childbirth?" He replied: "No." `Umar asked: "Do you have money to feed her?" He replied: "No." `Umar said: "Wait, I will bring you the money and someone to assist her." `Umar rushed home to his wife, Umm Kulthum, daughter of `Ali ibn Abu Talib. He called out: "O daughter of the noble ones, will you do a favor that Allah has bestowed upon you?" She asked: "What is that?" He said: "There is a poor, needy woman in labor, at the edge of the city. Get up and prepare what the woman needs for childbirth." `Umar carried the food and cooking supplies on his shoulder.

They arrived at the tent. Umm Kulthum entered to assist in the delivery of the child. `Umar sat outside the tent with her husband to prepare food for them. When the woman gave birth, Umm Kulthum called out from inside the tent: "O Commander of the Believers, give your companion the good news that Allah has blessed him with a boy and that his wife is well."

The man stepped back in astonishment upon hearing her say: "O Commander of the Believers," not realizing beforehand that the helper was Caliph `Umar ibn Al-Khattab. `Umar smiled and said: "Come here, come here, brother of the Arabs, don't move away. Yes, I am `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, and the one who assisted your wife deliver is Umm Kulthum, daughter of `Ali ibn Abu Talib." The man fell to his knees, weeping, saying: "The family of the Prophet assisted my wife in delivery, and the Commander of the believers cooked for me and my wife." `Umar said: "Take it easy, brother of the Arabs. Take this, and I

will bring you what you need from the public treasury. And the newborn's due will be assigned to you."

"If You Leave, These Boys Will Attack Me"

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was compassionate and kind to children.

Sinan ibn Salamah narrated that one day, when he was a young boy, he was picking dates from the base of palm trees along with some boys. Umar approached him and the boys dispersed, leaving him alone. He saw the boy's dates and was pleased with him. The boy said: "O Commander of the Believers, do you see these boys. If you leave, they will attack me and seize what I have (collected)." Therefore Umar accompanied him until he reached his home.

Umar's Mercy to Animals

His mercy was not limited to the humans under his care but extended to animals as well. Umar was the one who said: "If an animal stumbled on the banks of the Euphrates, I would fear that I would be asked (by Allah) about it."

"Was an Animal Tortured for Umar's Sake?"

One day, Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) desired to eat fish. Yarfa` (Umar's servant) went in search of fish. He took his mount and traveled for two nights going and two nights returning, and brought Umar the fish.

Yarfa` then began to wash the animal (he had traveled on). Umar looked at it and saw a vein protruding beneath its ears. He said: "You tortured an animal for Umar's sake? No, by Allah, Umar will not taste it (what you brought). Take your fish." The Commander of the Believers refused to eat what he was longing for when he saw that the animal had been exhausted on the journey.

These are just a few illustrative examples and testimonies of his mercy for every being under his command, whether human or animal.

4. ʿUmar's Humility

Nothing distinguishes normal people with superior qualities more than their avoidance of arrogance. If there was ever a man whose impregnable fortresses were bound to be invaded by arrogance due to his immense virtues and magnificent glories, it was ʿUmar Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him); he had every reason to be proud and boastful.

1. He was received with great enthusiasm and cordiality by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and his Companions when he embraced Islam.
2. He saw how Islam started to be preached publicly the day he embraced it and how it gained a strong voice because he had believed in the call. Muslims were able to utter the *Takbir* (*Allahu Akbar*) aloud in Makkah after ʿUmar joined them.
3. He saw how the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) conferred upon him the title of “Al-Faruq” after Allah, through his conversion, distinguished between truth and falsehood.
4. He saw how he proposed some viewpoints to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and the divine revelation came down to support them, becoming passages of the Qur’an which are still recited today.
5. Then he became the Caliph of the Muslims and the Commander of the Believers. Through him, Allah opened the gates of the world to His Religion and shattered the great powers at the time, Persia and Byzantium.

Despite all these reasons for him to feel self-important, arrogance had no place in Umar's heart. On the contrary, he was the epitome of humility and submission to Allah (Exalted be He).

Here are some examples of Umar's humility:

"Allah Heard Her Words from Above the Seven Heavens"

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) left the mosque with Al-Jarud Al-Abdi. On the way, he met a woman. He greeted her, and she returned his greeting. Then, listening attentively and smiling, she said to him: "Hey, O Umar! I remember you when you were called Umayr, wrestling with young men in the Ukaz market. Days passed and you became named the Commander of the Believers. Fear Allah in your dealings with your subjects. Know that whoever fears death must fear loss." Umar wept.

Al-Jarud said to the woman: "How could you dare speak to the Commander of the Believers like this? You made him weep."

Umar said: "Do you not know who she is? She is Khawlah bint Hakim, whose words Allah heard from above the seven heavens when she was talking with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) about her husband and complaining to Allah. By Allah, Umar is more obliged to listen to her words."

Umar Looks After an Old Blind Woman

Umar went out in the darkness of night and Talhah saw him. He was about to enter a house, but then he left it to enter another. In the morning, Talhah went to that house and saw an old blind and paralyzed woman. He asked her: "Why does this man come to you?" She replied: "He has been looking after me since such-and-such a time, bringing me what is good for me and removing what is harmful from me." Talhah said (to himself): "May your mother be bereft of you, O Talhah! Are you trying to find fault with Umar?"

The Commander of the Believers used to take care of that old blind woman, cleaning her house, cooking her food, and providing everything she needed.

“Which Servant of Allah Is More Obligated to Serve People Than Me?”

A delegation from Iraq, including Al-Ahnaf ibn Qays, came to ʿUmar (may Allah be pleased with him) one very hot day. ʿUmar was wearing a turban to protect him from the heat and was smearing tar on one of the charity camels to treat an ulcer it had. He said: “O Ahnaf, take off your outer garments and come and help the Commander of the Believers with this camel. It is one of the charity camels and it involves rights of orphans, widows, and the poor.” A man from the group said: “May Allah forgive you, O Commander of the Believers. Why do you not order one of the servants who look after the charity to take care of this matter instead of you?” ʿUmar said: “Which servants are more obliged to do this than me and Al-Ahnaf? Anyone who is put in charge of the affairs of the Muslims is obliged to act the same as a slave should act toward his master in terms of giving sincere advice and fulfilling trusts.”

“I Wanted to Show Myself My True Worth”

ʿUmar (may Allah be pleased with him) called out: “Gather for congregational prayer!” When the people gathered, he ascended the pulpit, praised Allah, extolled Him, and sent blessings upon His Messenger (PBBUH). Then he said: “O people, I remember myself tending some flocks that belonged to my maternal aunts from the Banu Makhzum tribe. They would bring me a handful of dates and raisins, and that would suffice me the whole day—what amazing days they were!” Then he descended from the pulpit amid the astonishment and queries of those who had gathered.

ʿAbdul-Rahman ibn ʿAwf stepped forward and said: “O Commander of the Believers, what did you mean when you did this? You have just insulted yourself?” ʿUmar replied: “I was alone with myself, and it said to me, ‘You are

the Commander of the Believers; who is better than you?" So, I wanted to show myself my true worth."

"Hurry up! The Post Man Is About to Leave"

The Commander of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with him) came out, wearing a cloak with twenty-one patches, knocking on the doors of the houses, and asking the women whose husbands were away on the battlefields to sit behind them and dictate their letters to him. He said to them: "Hurry up! The post man is about to leave (for its destination)."

"Do You Need Anything from the Marketplace?"

`Umar himself, the Commander of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with him), would say to these wives whose husbands were out performing *Jihad*: "Tell me what you need. Whoever needs something from the marketplace should mention it or send her servant with me if she has one. I fear that you may be cheated in buying and selling." He would go to the marketplace, followed by a long line of servants. There, he would buy the items himself to meet the needs of these women whose husbands were absent.

This was how humble and simple `Umar Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) was. His humility and simplicity expose the great folly of those who get carried away by vainglory and arrogance because of a position they have attained, a victory they have achieved, or a fortune they have amassed. Arrogance is nothing but a heavy burden carried by those who are deceived by the vanity of impressing people or calling attention to themselves. As for the honest simplicity in which `Umar lived, that is true happiness. It embodies the soul's return to its true essence and its transcendence over conceit and egotism.

5. `Umar's Fear of Allah

Although `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) bore the burdens of the entire *Ummah*, he never forgot his share of worship which he

used to provide himself with on his journey to his Lord (the Almighty and Exalted). Nothing motivated him more than having fear of Allah (the Almighty and Exalted).

Here are some examples and testimonies of Umar's piety and fear of Allah:

Umar's Manner of Worship

1. Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) would pray during the night as much as Allah willed him to pray. Then, at the end of the night, he would wake his family, saying: "Prayer! Prayer."
2. Of all people, he fasted the most and prayed the most.
3. He used to say: "If I sleep during the day, I will neglect my subjects. If I sleep during the night, I will neglect my soul. How can I sleep with these two responsibilities?"
4. As previously mentioned, in the context of outlining his approach to governance, his fear of Allah Almighty and his piety were evident when he went out in the summer heat to catch the charity camels that had strayed from the flock. He also feared Allah when dealing with his son Abdullah, when he saw that he owned some fat camels.

"Great! Great! O Banu Al-Khattab"

Anas ibn Malik said: "I went out with Umar one day until he entered a garden. I heard him say (sarcastically), 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab, Commander of the Believers! Great! Great!' He continued: 'O Banu Al-Khattab! Fear Allah or else He will punish you severely.'"

"Allah Did Not Withhold This Gold from His Prophet and Abu Bakr for a Bad Reason"

Ibn `Abbas narrated: “Umar summoned me, so I went to him. In front of him was a plate on which there were scattered some pieces of gold. Umar said, ‘Come and divide this among your people. Allah knows best why He withheld this (gold) from His Prophet and Abu Bakr, and why He gave it to me. Is it for good or for evil?’”

Ibn `Abbas continued: “So I leaned forward to divide it when I heard a cry of distress. Umar was weeping and saying, ‘By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, it could not have been for a bad reason that Allah withheld this from His Prophet and Abu Bakr. So how could Umar have it?’”

“I Wish I Were This Straw”

It was narrated that Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) picked up a piece of straw from the ground and said: “I wish I were this straw! I wish I were nothing! I wish my mother had not given birth to me!”

“The Poor Will Have Paradise”

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) arrived in Syria, and there a meal was prepared for him the like of which he had never seen before. When it was brought to him, he said: “This is for us, but what about the poor Muslims who passed the night without having enough barley bread?” It was said to him: “The poor will have Paradise.”

The eyes of the Commander of the Believers filled with tears, and he said: “If this is our lot while those (poor people) have Paradise, they have truly achieved a great triumph.”

“Verily, the Torment of Your Lord Will Surely Come to Pass; There is None That Can Avert It!”

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) wept so much that two black lines formed on his face due to excessive weeping. He would recite an ayah during

his daily prayers, and he would weep. Sometimes he fainted. One day, he recited: ﴿Verily, the torment of your Lord will surely come to pass; there is none that can avert it﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Tur 52:7-8). He wept and fainted and was ill for three days.

“What Will You Say to Your Lord Tomorrow?”

One day, Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) went out and was met by a man who said to him: “O Commander of the Believers, come with me and retrieve what is due to me from so-and-so, for he has wronged me.” Umar raised his whip and hit the man with it, saying: “You leave the Commander of the Believers while he is receptive and fully attentive to your concerns. Then, when he is occupied with some of the matters of the Muslims, you come to him saying, ‘Retrieve what is due to me! Retrieve what is due to me!’” The man left, angry and regretful. Therefore Umar said: “Bring the man to me.” When he returned, Umar handed him the whip and said: “Take it and exact revenge on me.” The man said: “No, by Allah, but I will leave it for Allah,” and he departed.

Umar returned to his house and prayed two *Rak'ahs*. Then he sat down to take account of his deeds. He said: “Ibn Al-Khattab! You were low, so Allah raised you. You were astray, so Allah guided you. You were humiliated, so Allah honored you. He made you responsible for the people. Then a man came to you seeking your support, and you hit him! What will you say to your Lord tomorrow when you meet Him?!”

What will you say to your Lord tomorrow? This was Umar’s consistent manner of worship and path in this life.

Neither Sin nor Reward

Umar said to Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari: “O Abu Musa, would it please you that our embracing Islam with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), our emigration with him, our striving, and all our deeds would be returned to us in exchange

for our deliverance (from Hell), neither bearing sin nor expecting reward?” Abu Musa replied: “No, by Allah, O Umar. We have striven, fasted, and prayed, and many people have embraced Islam through us. We hope to be rewarded (by Allah) for that.”

Umar replied, weeping: “As for me, by the One in Whose Hand is my soul, I would like all of that to be returned to me by just being saved, meeting Allah without any sin or reward.”

“After You Are Gone, O Commander of the Believers, Who Can Give That Care to the People!”

Umar said to Abdul Rahman ibn Awf: “O Abdul Rahman, I was gentle to the people until I feared Allah because of being excessively gentle. Then I became harsh with them until I feared Allah because of my harshness. By Allah, I am more afraid and fearful than they are. What should I do?”

Ibn Awf replied: “Who can give that care to the people after you are gone, O Commander of the Believers!”

Umar’s Protection and Care for Public Funds

Umar would become so angry if he heard that a single dirham that belonged to the people had been embezzled or spent on luxury or the purchase of expensive items. He used to say: “If one of the charity camels were lost on the banks of the Tigris or Euphrates while Umar was in Madinah, he would fear that Allah would ask him about it on the Day of Resurrection.”

“I Would Have Feared That I Might Be That Man”

Despite the glad tidings given to him by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) of entering Paradise, Umar had great, genuine fear of Allah Almighty. He continued having this great fear to the point that he would say: “If a caller were to call out, ‘O people, you will all enter Paradise except one man,’ I would fear

that I might be him. If a caller were to call out, ‘O people, you will all enter Hell except one man,’ I would entreat Allah that I might be him.”

Such was the fear and awe that Al-Faruq had toward Allah. He worshipped Allah as if he could see Him. This is the state of the excellent believers, as the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) told us.

6. Umar’s Generosity

Abundant generosity was a common trait of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). By embracing and practicing generosity, they emulated the example of the teacher of humanity (PBBUH). As always, Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) aspired to the highest and noblest level in every virtue. Through his generosity, he also aspired to the highest levels, seeking reward from Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He).

- It was narrated on the authority of Al-A`mash that he said: “I was once with Umar ibn Al-Khattab when twenty-two thousand dirhams were brought to him. He did not leave his seat until he had distributed them all. Whenever he admired some item, he would give it in charity.” He often gave away sugar in charity. When asked about that, he said: “I love it, and Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴿By no means shall you attain righteousness unless you spend (in Allah’s Cause) from that which you love; and whatever good you spend, Allah has full knowledge of it﴾ (translated meaning of Al-`Imran 3:92).”
- Aslam (a freed slave of Umar) said: “I have never seen anyone, after the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), who was more serious or charitable than Umar.” Meaning, no one was more serious in handling issues or charitable with money than him.

7. Umar’s Astuteness and Eloquence

Allah blessed Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) with the gift of astuteness and brilliance. He was worthy of this favor. His entire life was dedicated to Allah, devoted to obeying Him and serving His creation. His intelligence was used to support the truth. It emanated from a sound nature. ʿUmar often said of himself: “I am not a deceiver, nor can I be deceived.” This phrase captures the nature of his brilliance and intelligence. It was not an aggressive, offensive form of intelligence, but rather it displayed resistance and heroism. This is the dividing line between praiseworthy cleverness and reprehensible cleverness (i.e., cunningness), or between sharp understanding and ugly malice.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) praised the insight with which ʿUmar interpreted different situations, saying: **“Allah has placed the truth on ʿUmar’s tongue and in his heart.”**¹

The Qur’an Supports ʿUmar’s Astuteness

On many occasions, Allah (Exalted be He) supported ʿUmar statements with the Qur’an, which was revealed agreeing with his opinion in a given situation.

The *Maqam Ibrahim* (the Station of Ibrahim, PBBUH)

ʿUmar (may Allah be pleased with him) said to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) one day: “O Messenger of Allah, is this not the *Maqam* (Station) of our father Ibrahim (Abraham PBBUH)?” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied: “Yes.” ʿUmar asked: “What if we take it as a place of prayer?”

Only a few days passed before this ayah was revealed: ﴿And (remember) when We (Allah) made the House (the Kaʿbah at Makkah) a place of resort for humankind and a place of safety. And take you (people) the *Maqam* (Station) of Ibrahim (Abraham) as a place of prayer. And We commanded Ibrahim and

¹ Reported by Abu Dawud, hadith no. 2961.

Ismaʿil (Ishmael) that they should purify My House for those who circumambulate it, or stay there (*Iʿtikaf*), or bow or prostrate themselves (there, in prayer) ﴿﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Baqarah 2:125).

There are many similar incidents, such as the ayah prescribing *Hijab* (veil), the captives of Badr, and others.

For this reason, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) described him as a source of legislation, when he said: **“I do not know how long I will stay among you, so follow the example of those who come after me: Abu Bakr and ʿUmar.”**¹

Here are some examples of ʿUmar’s insight and eloquence:

ʿUmar Felt in His Heart that the Man was Abu Muslim

Al-Aswad Al-ʿAnsi had claimed prophethood in Yemen. He sent for Abu Muslim Al-Khawlani—who did not believe in him or his prophethood. Al-Aswad built a great fire and then he threw Abu Muslim into it, but the fire did not harm Abu Muslim. Al-Aswad was given this advice: “He must leave or else he will corrupt those who follow you.” Al-Aswad ordered Abu Muslim to leave, and he arrived in Madinah. When he entered the mosque to pray, ʿUmar saw him and felt in his heart that he was Abu Muslim. He stood up and asked him. His intuition was confirmed; he was Abu Muslim, so ʿUmar embraced him and wept. He said: “All praise be to Allah Who did not let me die until I saw someone from among the followers of Muhammad (PBBUH) who received the same miracle as Ibrahim (Abraham, PBBUH).”

The Criteria ʿUmar Uses to Uncover a Person’s True Essence

ʿUmar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “The most beloved of you to me is the one with the best reputation (of good conduct and high standards)

¹ Reported by Ibn Majah, hadith no. 97.

among the people. When you all speak, it is he who has the clearest speech. When we test you all (in real life situations), it is he who performs the best.”

For `Umar, fleeting appearances are not enough to judge others:

`Umar heard someone praising another, saying: “He is truthful.” `Umar asked him: “Did you deal with him in dirhams and dinars (i.e., financial issues)?” The man replied: “No.” `Umar asked him: “Did you travel with him?” The man replied: “No.” `Umar asked him: “Has there ever been a dispute between you?” The man replied: “No.” `Umar said: “Then you do not know him. Perhaps you just saw him raising and lowering his head in the mosque (during prayer).”

To form an accurate estimation of people, `Umar did not limit himself to examining people’s worship, despite the high status of worship and worshipers in his eyes. Rather, he examined all aspects of their personalities.

“Do Not Be Satan’s Helpers Against Your Brother”

One day, a man came to `Umar, thinking he was bringing him important news. He said: “O Commander of the Believers, I saw such-and-such a man and such-and-such a woman embracing each other behind the palm trees.” `Umar grabbed him by the collar, hit him with his whip, and said: “Why did you not cover up his fault and hope for his repentance? The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, **‘Whoever conceals the faults of his brother, Allah will conceal his faults in this world and the Hereafter.’**”¹

`Umar advised the people, saying: “This is how you should act. If you see a brother slip, correct him, be gentle with him, and supplicate to Allah to accept his repentance. Do not be Satan’s helpers against him.”

¹ Reported by Muslim, hadith no. 2699.

Confession Is Not Always the ‘Master of Evidence’

Custom and law have recognized that confession is the master of evidence. This is true. However, the Commander of the Believers, with his insight, decided that this is not always the case. For a confession to be accepted as evidence, it must not be isolated from the circumstances surrounding it. It may come as a result of fear or coercion. At that point, it loses its value.

`Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “(In case of self-incrimination), a person is not reliable if you starve him, frighten him, or imprison him, as he may confess to something he did not commit.”

Money From the Perspective of `Umar

`Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said about money: “I have found that the benefit of this money lies in three things: that it be taken for a just purpose, be given for a just purpose, and be withheld from (being used in) a false purpose. I am, with regard to this money of yours, like the guardian of an orphan. If I am rich, I abstain (from taking any fee). If I am poor, I take according to what is reasonable.”

“I Know That You Are a Just Stone That Can Neither Harm nor Benefit”

Part of `Umar’s intelligence was that he believed that nothing could be beneficial or harmful by its own merit, except that which Allah (Glorified be He) wills to be beneficial or harmful. He would look at the Black Stone¹ and say, whenever he touched it: “I know that you are just a stone that can neither harm nor benefit. If I had not seen the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) kissing you, I would not have kissed you.”

¹ The Black Stone is a stone from Paradise that was set into one corner of the Ka’bah by Prophet Ibrahim (PBBUH). Muslims honor the Black Stone for that. They follow the example of Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) when he (PBBUH) kissed it during his Farewell Hajj. Muslims neither attach divine power to nor worship the Black Stone.

ʿUmar heard that people used to visit the tree under which the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) received the Ridwan Pledge¹, praying and seeking blessings from it. Right away he ordered that it be cut down, fearing that people would return to paganism and reliance on inanimate objects.

Eloquence and Wisdom in ʿUmar's Letters and Famous Sayings

Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) displayed eloquence and wisdom in his letters to his governors and workers.

An instance of this, as earlier mentioned in this work, is his letter to Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari in which he explained the judicial method that he should follow.

He also addressed Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas in a letter, explaining in it how to deal with his soldiers and his enemies. There were other letters in which ʿUmar gave his opinion on various issues, including the judiciary, construction, *Jihad*, and the duty of governance. In these letters, his intellect and brilliance shone clearly between their lines.

Here are some of ʿUmar's famous sayings:

General Advice

1. "He who does not know evil is more likely to fall into it."
2. "The wisest of people are those who are most forgiving of others."
3. "Do not be impressed by a man's devotion in prayer, but rather by the one who fulfills the trust entrusted to him and the one from whose tongue and hand people are safe."

¹ A pledge that was sworn under a tree to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) by his Companions after the rumored death of ʿUthman. All the Companions pledged that they would not flee the battlefield, if a battle broke out with Quraysh, and they would keep on fighting firmly and steadfastly to the last man.

4. “The best among you is not the one who works for the Hereafter and abandons this world or the one who works for this world and abandons the Hereafter. Rather, the best among you is the one who takes provisions from both.”
5. “The one who relies on Allah is the one who puts a seed into the earth and then relies on Allah.”
6. “Let none of you sit back and say, ‘O Allah, provide for me.’ For you know that the sky does not rain gold or silver, and that Allah provides for people from one another.”
7. Whenever he saw a man lowering his head to demonstrate humility, he would shout: “Raise your head, for humility does not exceed what is in the heart. Anyone who shows humility in front of people which is beyond what is in his heart is only showing hypocrisy upon hypocrisy.”
8. “Teach your children archery, swimming, and horseback riding.”

Advice on Health

1. “Beware of obesity, for it is a shackle.”
2. “Beware of overeating, for it makes one lazy in praying, spoils the body, and leads to illness.”
3. “Adhere to moderation in your food, for it steers you away from extravagance, is healthier for your body, and more effective for worship.”

Thus, Umar’s intelligence, insight and eloquence were not used to serve their owner, but rather to serve Allah’s creation (Exalted be He). They were used for Allah and His Cause and for the sake of goodness and mercy. His

intelligence was the cleverness of a repentant man. His gifts were from Allah, and to Allah was his destination and return.

8. Extraordinary Events That Took Place in Support of `Umar

Karamahs (extraordinary events caused by Allah for or through a pious person) are a grace that Allah bestows upon His righteous servants. Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) was well-known among his contemporaries for revealing some secrets of the *Ghayb* (all that is hidden and unknown), either through intuition, sincere assumptions, vision, or farsightedness, all of which were inspirations from Allah. Allah bestowed several *Karamahs* upon Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him), including the following two:

“O Sariyah, The Mountain!”

Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him) sent out an army led by a man named Sariyah ibn Hisn. While he (may Allah be pleased with him) was delivering the Friday sermon in Madinah, he suddenly interrupted the sermon and began calling out, three times: “O Sariyah, the mountain! O Sariyah, the mountain!” Those listening to him did not understand what he meant. When the prayer was over, `Ali ibn Abi Talib asked him: “What is it that you called out?” He replied: “It occurred to me that the *Mushrikin* had almost defeated our brothers, who were passing by a mountain. If our brothers stayed at the mountain, they would fight whoever they found and be victorious, but if they crossed it, they would perish. These words came to my mind.” A month later, the messenger [bearing the news] came, and `Umar asked him. He said: “O Commander of the Believers, we were almost defeated. While we were like that, we heard a voice calling out to us, as if you were shouting at us, ‘O Sariyah, the mountain!’ three times. Therefore we leaned our backs against the mountain, and Allah defeated them (our enemies) and granted us victory.”

`Umar ibn Al-Khattab Addresses a Letter to the Nile

When Egypt was liberated, its people came to `Amr ibn Al-`As and said: “O Commander, this Nile has a law in order to flow.” He asked: “What is it?” They said: “When twelve nights have passed of this month, we take a virgin girl from her parents, compensate her parents, and dress her in the finest jewelry and clothing. We then throw her into the Nile.” `Amr said to them: “This will not happen in Islam. Islam destroys what came before it.” Then he wrote a message to `Umar ibn Al-Khattab concerning this issue.

`Umar wrote back: “You have done the right thing. I have sent you a card inside this letter of mine. Throw it into the Nile.” When Umar’s letter arrived, `Amr took the card, and it read thus: “From Allah’s servant, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, the Commander of the Believers, to the Nile of the people of Egypt. To proceed, if you are flowing according to your own will, do not flow. We have no need of you! If you are flowing according to Allah’s Will, the One God, the Irresistible, He is the One who will make you flow. We ask Allah Almighty to make you flow.” `Amr threw the card into the Nile, and the people woke up to find that Allah had made the Nile flow sixteen cubits high in a single night. Allah stopped the people of Egypt performing this evil practice until today.

9. The Reciprocal Love between `Umar and the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)

Umar’s love for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was boundless. It was with deep admiration that he loved the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and believed in him. Once `Umar heard the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) address him as “O my brother.” `Umar kept mentioning this incident throughout his life. He asked the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) for permission to perform `Umrah (minor pilgrimage), and he (PBBUH) granted him permission, saying: **“O my brother, do not forget us during your supplications.”**¹ Whenever

¹ Reported by Ahmad, hadith no. 195.

`Umar related this incident, he would say: “I would not love to have all that upon which the sun rises (i.e., this entire world) rather than him (PBBUH) saying to me, ‘O my brother!’”

Here are some examples of `Umar’s love for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH):

“Now, O `Umar!”

`Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) entered upon the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and said: “O Messenger of Allah, you are dearer to me than my wealth and my children.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to him: **“A person’s faith is not complete until I am more beloved to him than his own self:”** `Umar said: “Now, by Allah, you are more beloved to me than my own self, O Messenger of Allah.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **“Now, O `Umar, your faith is complete.”¹**

`Umar Takes Turns with His Neighbor in Accompanying the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)

`Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was extremely careful not to miss a moment or a blink of an eye away from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), to enjoy seeing him and absorb his knowledge. He used to say: “My neighbor from the Ansar and I used to take turns visiting the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). One day he would visit him, and I would go to my work. The next day I would visit him, and he would go to his work. When I had my turn of visiting, I would bring him all the information that I had received that day, including divine revelation and other matters. When he had his turn of visiting, he would do the same.”

“Her father (Abu Bakr) Is Dearer to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) Than Your Father”

¹ Reported by Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 6632.

One day, `Umar's wife was arguing with him. He asked her how she could do that, and she replied: "Are you better than the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)? Your daughter argues with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)." Angrily, `Umar went to Hafsa and said to her: "Do you argue with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)? Do not look at (and compare yourself with) `Aishah, for she is dearer to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) than you. Her father is dearer to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) than your father."

`Umar's Love for the Household of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)

Just as his love for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was immense, so was his love for the household of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). As already mentioned, when gifts were distributed, the family of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had a perfect share and the highest position among the Companions.

"Abundant Favor Has Been Granted to Every One of Us Due to You"

The Commander of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with him) was waiting to meet Al-Husayn ibn `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him). On the way to `Umar, Al-Husayn was met by `Umar's son, `Abdullah ibn `Umar. Al-Husayn asked him: "Where have you come from?" He replied: "I asked permission to see `Umar, but he did not grant me permission." Consequently, Al-Husayn returned and did not go to see `Umar. Later, `Umar met Al-Husayn and asked him reproachfully: "What prevented you, O Husayn, from coming?" He replied: "I was coming to you, but `Abdullah ibn `Umar informed me that he was not given permission to see you, so I returned." This upset `Umar, who said: "Are you to me as him [or anyone else]?" He repeated it three times. Then he added: "Abundant favor has been granted to every one of us due to you."

"Now I Am Relieved"

`Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) provided clothes to the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), but there remained no

garments suitable for Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn. Therefore, he sent a message to Yemen and suitable garments were brought to them from there. When he saw them wearing them, he said: “Now I am relieved.”

Asking Rain from Allah by Virtue of the Supplication of Al-ʿAbbas

When people suffered drought, ʿUmar (may Allah be pleased with him) would often ask Allah for rain by virtue of the supplication of Al-ʿAbbas ibn ʿAbdul-Muttalib, the Prophet’s paternal uncle. He would say: “O Allah, we used to ask our Prophet (PBBUH) to supplicate You for rain, and You would give us rain. We are now asking our Prophet’s paternal uncle to supplicate You for rain, so give us rain.”

“Your Acceptance of Islam Is Dearer to Me than Al-Khattab’s Islam”

Everything that pleased the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) pleased Al-Faruq (may Allah be pleased with him). On the day of the Liberation of Makkah, Al-ʿAbbas and Abu Sufyan entered the tent of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). ʿUmar then entered and said: “O Messenger of Allah, this is the enemy of Allah, Abu Sufyan! Let me strike off his head.” Al-ʿAbbas said: “Take it easy, O ʿUmar. I have given him protection. By Allah, if he had been a man from Banu Adiy (ʿUmar’s family), you would not have said that.” ʿUmar replied: “Take it easy, O ʿAbbas. By Allah, your embracing Islam (the day you embraced Islam) was dearer to me than if Al-Khattab (my own father) had accepted Islam. This is because your embracing Islam was dearer to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) than that of Al-Khattab (had he converted to Islam).”

The Messenger of Allah’s (PBBUH) Deep Love for ʿUmar

Just as ʿUmar (may Allah be pleased with him) loved the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) loved him greatly.

Here are some of the virtues of Al-Faruq and the hadiths reported from the Prophet (PBBUH) regarding him:

1. The Prophet (PBBUH) said: **“Indeed, the people of the highest ranks will be seen by those who are beneath them like the stars which appear far off in the sky. And indeed, Abu Bakr and `Umar are among them, and they have done well”** (reported by Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 3658).
2. The Prophet (PBBUH) said: **“If there were to be a prophet after me, it would have been `Umar ibn Al-Khattab”** (reported by Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 3686).
3. The Prophet (PBBUH) said: **“While I was sleeping, the people were shown to me, and they were wearing shirts. Some shirts came down to the chest, and some were shorter than that. `Umar ibn Al-Khattab was shown to me, and he was wearing a shirt that dragged along the ground.”** They (the Companions) asked: “How did you interpret that, O Messenger of Allah?” He (PBBUH) replied: **“[According to] Religious commitment”** (reported by Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 3691).
4. The Prophet (PBBUH) said: **“While I was sleeping, I saw (in a dream) that a cup full of milk was brought to me, and I drank of it and gave the remainder of it to `Umar bin Al-Khattab.”** They (the Companions) asked: “How did you interpret that, O Messenger of Allah?” He (PBBUH) replied: **“(It is) knowledge”** (reported by Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 7032).
5. The Prophet (PBBUH) said: **“O Ibn Al-Khattab! By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, whenever Satan sees you taking a way, he follows a way other than yours!”** (Reported by Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 6085).

These are just a few of the many virtues of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him), all of which cannot be mentioned.

10. A Cultured Man

- When discussing how cultured `Umar was, it can be safely said that he was a man of abundant culture of his time. He was a man of letters, a historian, a jurist, a participant in all the arts, an expert in mathematics, and a gifted orator.
- Both prevailing literary and religious perspectives of his time encouraged him to learn Arabic and to master the rules of grammar, being the foundation of Arabic.
- It is well known that `Umar was well-versed in Arab history and the praiseworthy ancestors of the Arabs. He was naturally inclined to this, which he inherited from his father.
- His knowledge and the pieces of wisdom that he imparted were not limited to religious knowledge, nor to literature and language. He addressed all knowledge of his time, saying: “Learn from the stars what guides you thereby on land and sea.”
- `Umar had a better understanding of the geography of the east than any man in his country. He also had a keen eye for arithmetic and mathematics.
- In public speaking, he had fluent vocabulary, a resonant voice, clear pronunciation, and perfect lip movement when pronouncing letters.

This, dear readers, is a summary of the outstanding characteristics of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him). The virtues that flourished in his soul and behavior are many. If there was a main driving force behind them, it was his fear of Allah and his love and adherence to the teacher of humanity, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

Indeed, `Umar was a well-rounded person with many virtues. However, we may name one virtue at a time, referring to “Umar’s justice”, “Umar’s piety”, “Umar’s intelligence”, and so on, to educate ourselves and help ourselves comprehend and acquire these outstanding characteristics.

As for all these virtues and characteristics, when assembled together, they make up `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him).



The Final Chapter in Al-Faruq's Life

After a long life filled with years of struggle, obedience, sacrifice, and sparing no effort, and after ten years and six months of caliphate, the Commander of the Believers, `Umar, who had reached the age of sixty-three, felt his end was near.

He marched ahead to the final chapter of his prosperous and glorious life.

The Last Hajj Journey

When `Umar was performing his final Hajj in Mina, he raised his hands to the heavens and supplicated, saying: "O Allah, my strength has weakened, I have aged, and my subjects have spread everywhere. Take me to You without having neglected or fallen short in any of the rights of the Muslims."

Glad Tidings of Attaining Martyrdom

`Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) often supplicated to Allah, saying: "O Allah, grant me martyrdom in Your Cause, and let my death be in the city of Your Messenger (Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah)."

On several occasions, the Beloved Prophet (PBBUH) had given `Umar glad tidings of dying as a martyr:

1. Anas ibn Malik reported that the Prophet (PBBUH) ascended Uhud with Abu Bakr, `Umar, and `Uthman. The mountain shook beneath them, so the Prophet (PBBUH) struck it with his foot and said: **"Be firm, O Uhud. Upon you there is none but a Prophet, a Siddiq (who bears witness to the truth), and two martyrs"** (reported by Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 3699).

2. Ibn ʿUmar narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) saw ʿUmar wearing a white shirt, and he said: **“Is this garment of yours washed or a new one?”** ʿUmar replied: “Rather it has been washed.” He (PBBUH) said: **“May you wear new clothes, live a good life, and die as martyr”** (reported by Ibn Majah, hadith no. 3558).

ʿUmar Sees a Vision That Foretells the Approach of His End

When ʿUmar (PBBUH) returned to Madinah, he had a vision in which a rooster pecked him twice. When he told it to Asma bint ʿUmays, she said: “A non-Arab will kill you.” On the following Friday, ʿUmar stood on the pulpit, praised and glorified Allah, and then said: “I saw a vision that I believe foretells the approach of my death.” He then related to the people his vision and the interpretation of Asma’ bint ʿUmays gave for it.

ʿUmar Asks About Future Afflictions

ʿUmar asked: “Who among you remembers the statement of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) regarding afflictions?”

Hudhaifah replied: “I know it as the Prophet (PBBUH) said it. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, **‘The afflictions caused for a man due to his family, wealth, and neighbor are expiated by his prayers, fasting, charity and by enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil.’**”¹

ʿUmar said: “I do not mean that, but I am asking about the affliction that will spread like the waves of the sea.”

Hudhaifah said: “O Commander of the believers! You need not be afraid of them as a closed door is between you and them.”

ʿUmar asked: “Will the door be broken or opened?”

¹ Reported by Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 1895.

Hudhaifah replied: “It will be broken.”

ʿUmar said: “After that it will never be closed again.”

When Hudhaifah was later asked about that door, he replied: “The door was
ʿUmar himself.”

ʿUmar himself stood as the door shielding Muslims from all kinds of
afflictions.

The Story of `Umar's Martyrdom

Abu Lu'lu'ah, the Magian, Threatens the Commander of the Believers

One day, the Commander of the Believers went out to inspect the market and was met by Abu Lu'lu'ah, the Magian, who was the servant of Al-Mughirah ibn Shu`bah. Abu Lu'lu'ah complained to `Umar about the small salary Shu`bah was giving him. `Umar asked him: "How much is your salary?" He replied: "One hundred dirhams per month." `Umar asked: "What is your craft?" He replied: "[I am] a carpenter, engraver, and blacksmith." `Umar replied: "Your salary is large, in addition to the other work you do (i.e., and the profit from besides the regular salary you receive from Al-Mughirah)." Abu Lu'lu'ah left indignantly, saying: "His justice has encompassed everyone except me." Despite this, `Umar later spoke to Al-Mughirah about increasing his salary.

A few nights later, Abu Lu'lu'ah passed by and `Umar met him. `Umar said: "I have been informed that you have said, 'If I wish to make a mill that grinds and is powered by wind, I will do it.'" He replied: "Yes." `Umar said: "Then make me a mill." Abu Lu'lu'ah turned to him, frowning, and said: "I will make for you a mill which people will talk about," and he left.

The Beginning of the Conspiracy

This incident of Abu Lu'lu'ah was nothing but a blatant pretext, concealing a larger conspiracy. Abu Lu'lu'ah was merely the executor of the plot that several members had conspired to hatch.

That same evening, `Abdul Rahman ibn Abu Bakr saw Abu Lu'lu'ah, accompanied by two other Magians (Hormuzan and Jufaynah) and a Jew from

Madinah. He had heard whispers from them that aroused his suspicion and doubts; when they saw him approaching, they stood up abruptly and a two-headed dagger fell from them. They picked it up and left in a manner that only heightened the suspicions of `Abdul Rahman ibn Abu Bakr. After `Abdul Rahman ibn Abu Bakr informed `Umar of this incident and asked him to order his execution, `Umar refused, saying: "Do you want to kill a man based on suspicion?"

`Umar Wins Martyrdom

Morning came and `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) went out to lead the people in the *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer. Whenever he passed between the rows, he would say to the worshipers: "Straighten up." When he saw no gaps between them all, he stepped forward, pronounced the *Takbir*, and began the prayer.

As soon as `Umar began the prayer, Abu Lu'lu'ah infiltrated among the worshipers, carrying a sharp dagger. He stabbed the Commander of the Believers six times while he was standing praying. He then, using his dagger, continued stabbing furiously everyone he passed by on his right or left, until he had stabbed thirteen men, seven of whom died. One of the Muslim men who saw this quickly threw a cloak over him. Abu Lu'lu'ah, feeling he was about to be captured, slaughtered himself. `Umar had fallen to the ground, bleeding profusely. He took `Abdul Rahman ibn Awwf's hand and said: "Come forward and lead the people in prayer." `Abdul Rahman complied and led the congregation in a short prayer.

The Last Days in Al-Faruq's Life

After the prayer, `Umar was carried unconscious to his home. He remained there for three days receiving treatment before he was called back to Allah.

“Who Attacked Me?”

As soon as `Umar recovered from his swoon, he asked `Abdullah ibn `Abbas: “O Ibn `Abbas, find out who attacked me.” Ibn `Abbas investigated the issue for a while, then came back and said: “O Commander of the Believers, Abu Lu'lu'ah, the servant of Al-Mughirah ibn Shu`bah, attacked you.” `Umar said: “May Allah kill him! I ordered that he be treated kindly and talked to Al-Mughirah about (improving) his situation. All praise be to Allah Who did not decree that my death be at the hands of a man claiming to be a Muslim, so that he would not argue with me about a prostration he had made to Allah.”

“Have People Conspired against Me?”

`Umar thought he had committed a sin against the people that he was unaware of, and as a result they had conspired with Abu Lu'lu'ah to kill him. He summoned Ibn `Abbas and said to him: “Go out to the people and investigate this matter.” Ibn `Abbas went out, and every group of people he passed were weeping deeply, as if they had lost their firstborn children. Ibn `Abbas returned and informed `Umar about people's reaction toward what had happened to him. He saw a smile of assurance on his face.

“Have the People Prayed?”

`Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) would wake up from his unconsciousness at the time of every prayer, look at the faces of those present,

and ask: "Have the people prayed?" They would reply: "Yes, O Commander of the Believers." He would say: "Anyone who neglects prayer has no share in Islam." Then he would perform ablution and pray in bed.

"Put My Cheek on the Dust"

A pillow was placed for Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) to put under his head. According to another narration, he rested his head in Abdullah ibn Umar's lap. Umar said: "Put my cheek on the dust. Perhaps my Lord will look at me while I am like this and have mercy on me."

Abdullah complied and put his father's head on the ground. Umar said: "Woe to me and woe to my mother if my Lord does not have mercy on me."

"I Fear the Horror of the Experience of Death and the Rights of the Subjects"

When the people learned that Umar was expected to die soon, they visited him and began to praise him to keep up his morale. One of them said: "Rejoice, O Commander of the Believers, for there are glad tidings from Allah to you; you accompanied the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), and you were one of the earliest Muslims, as you know. Then you were appointed caliph and you were just. And finally you will attain martyrdom." Umar replied: "I wish I come out of all that with what is enough [to be saved], with nothing left for me or against me. I fear the horror of the experience of death and the rights of the subjects."

"Will You Bear Witness to That for Me Before Allah?"

When Ibn Abbas saw Umar weeping, he said: "Take it easy, O Commander of the Believers. You have ruled according to Allah's Book and divided [matters] equally [among the people]." Umar said: "Will you bear witness to that for me before your Lord?" Ibn Abbas replied: "Yes, I bear witness to that." Ali ibn Abu Talib, who was standing at the door, said: "I bear witness to that too, O Commander of the Believers."

`Umar's Last Commandments

Everyone sensed the approaching death of the Commander of the Believers; they began to ask him: "Why do you not appoint a successor?"

`Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) replied: "If I leave the matter undecided, someone better than me did so, namely the Messenger of Allah. If I appoint a successor, someone better than me did so, namely Abu Bakr."

`Umar added: "I do not find anyone more deserving of this position than these men with whom the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was pleased when he died." He named six men: `Uthman, `Ali, Al-Zubayr, Talhah, Sa`d, and `Abdul Rahman. `Abdullah ibn `Umar was present, but he had no part in the matter (he was merely a witness). It was said to `Umar: "You could appoint `Abdullah ibn `Umar (your son) as a successor. He is deserving of it, due to his religious commitment, his virtue, and his early conversion to Islam." `Umar replied: "I do not desire it (the caliphate) for anyone from my family. If it is good, we have taken our share from it. If it is evil, it is enough for the family of `Umar that one man from them be held accountable (before Allah) and asked about the *Ummah* of Muhammad."

Then `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) advised whoever would come as caliph after him: "Treat the Ansar well, treat the families of the Ansar well, and treat the Bedouins well." He advised `Ali, saying: "I beseech you by Allah, O `Ali, if you are given any authority over the people, do not place the Banu Hashim (your clan) over the people's necks." He advised `Uthman, saying: "I beseech you by Allah, O `Uthman, if you are given any authority over the people, do not place the Banu Abu Mu`ayt over the people's necks." He advised Sa`d, saying: "If you are given any authority over the people, do not place your relatives over the people's necks."

ʿUmar's Burial Near His Two Companions

After ʿUmar (may Allah be pleased with him) finished saying his commandments, he looked toward his son, ʿAbdullah ibn ʿUmar, and said: "Go to the Mother of the Believers, ʿAishah, and tell her, 'ʿUmar sends his greetings to you.' Do not say 'Commander of the Believers,' for I am no longer the Commander of the Believers today. Tell her, 'ʿUmar ibn Al-Khattab asks your permission to be buried near his two Companions.'"

When ʿAbdullah ibn ʿUmar went to Lady ʿAishah, he found her weeping. He said to her: "ʿUmar ibn Al-Khattab sends you his greetings and asks your permission to be buried next to his two Companions." She replied: "By Allah, I wanted this place (of burial) for myself, but today I will prefer him over myself."

ʿAbdullah returned to his father, who asked him: "What have you brought back?" He replied: "What you like, O Commander of the Believers; she gave her permission."

ʿUmar said: "All praise be to Allah. Nothing was more important to me than this. When I have died, carry me [to her (Lady ʿAishah)]. Then greet her and say, 'ʿUmar ibn Al-Khattab asks permission [to enter]'. If she gives me permission, bring me in. If she sends me back, take me to the Muslim cemetery."

ʿUmar died, a martyr in the land of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), just as he had always hoped and implored Allah (Exalted be He) for.

The Commander of the Believers died and was carried to where his two Companions lay. Just as Abu Bakr's head was placed near the shoulder of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), Umar's head was placed near the shoulder of Abu Bakr.

The Companions Mourn ʿUmar

Here are some statements the Companions said in their farewell tribute to the Commander of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with him):

- Al-ʿAbbas said: “I was a neighbor of ʿUmar ibn Al-Khattab, and I have never seen anyone better than him. His nights were spent in prayer, his days in fasting, and his time in attending to the needs of people.”
- Hudhayfah said: “During ʿUmar’s time, Islam was like a man advancing toward you, only getting closer. When he (may Allah have mercy on him) was killed, Islam became like a man backing away from you, only getting further away.”
- As for ʿAli ibn Abu Talib, he mourned ʿUmar, saying: “You have not left behind you a person whose deeds I like to imitate and meet Allah with more than your deeds. By Allah! I always thought that Allah will unite you with your two Companions. For I very often used to hear the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) saying, **‘I, Abu Bakr and ʿUmar went (somewhere); I, Abu Bakr and ʿUmar entered (somewhere); and I, Abu Bakr, and ʿUmar left (somewhere).’**”

And so, dear readers, we return to reality! After we have flown together in the company of a legendary man whose likes are hard to come by: the Commander of the Believers, ʿUmar ibn Al-Khattab.

As Ibn Masʿud said: “May Allah bless Ibn Al-Khattab. What a man he was!”

Finally, I can find no better way to conclude my talk about Al-Faruq ʿUmar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) than the words that Ibn ʿAbbas said in tribute to him: “May Allah have mercy on Abu Hafs. By Allah, he was an ally of Islam, a refuge for orphans, a repository of faith, an epitome of benevolence, a society for the weak, and a stronghold for the caliphs. He was a fortress for truth and a supporter of the people. He fulfilled the rights owed to

Allah, patiently and steadfastly seeking reward, until he made the religion prevail, liberated lands, and remembered Allah Almighty on hills and plains, fearing Allah in times of prosperity and adversity, grateful to Him at all times. Therefore Allah punished those who hated him with regret until the Day of Resurrection.”

May Allah have mercy on you, O Abu Hafs.

May Allah have mercy on you, O Commander of the Believers.

3. `Uthman ibn `Affan



May Allah Be Pleased with Him

`Uthman ibn `Affan

Now, dear readers, after having lived with the two eminent sheikhs, Abu Bakr and `Umar, let us move into another garden of the Companions and enjoy the fragrant companionship. This is the garden of “the Man with Two Lights”<sup>1</sup>, `Uthman ibn `Affan, before whom the angels felt shy. He was one of the foremost believers in Islam, whose sacrifices, morals, and generosity are boundless.

Let us, in the coming pages, live with this noble Companion, `Uthman ibn `Affan, may Allah be pleased with him and grant him peace. He was one of the Ten Given Glad Tidings of Paradise and the third of the Rightly Guided Caliphs.

¹ `Uthman ibn `Affan was called “the Man with Two Lights” because he married the two daughters of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum.

Who Was `Uthman ibn `Affan?

`Uthman's Lineage

His full name was `Uthman ibn `Affan ibn Abu Al-`As ibn Umayyah ibn `Abd Shams ibn `Abd Manaf, Al-Umawi Al-Qurashi.

`Uthman's Birth

He was born in Ta'if, six years after the Year of the Elephant (six years after the birth of the Messenger of Allah, PBBUH).

`Uthman's Upbringing

`Uthman ibn `Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) grew up in comfort and luxury. He did not experience financial hardship during his childhood or youth. His father was a prolific merchant who traveled with his caravans to the Levant. On one of these journeys, he died, leaving behind a vast fortune. He left his son, `Uthman, still a youth, with this vast wealth. `Uthman preserved and expanded his father's wealth until it flourished, and he became one of the wealthiest men in Makkah.

His mother was Urwa bint Kurayz ibn Rabi`ah ibn Habib ibn `Abd Shams. Her mother was Urwa Al-Bayda' bint `Abdul Muttalib (the paternal aunt of the Messenger of Allah, PBBUH). From his mother's side he inherited a marked inclination toward religious and spiritual values, for which `Abdul Muttalib and his sons were known.

After the death of his father, his mother married ʿUqbah ibn Abu Muʿayt, who was one of the most hostile and harmful men to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

The Rivalry of Banu Umayyad with Banu Hashim

There was rivalry and repulsion between ʿUthman’s paternal grandfather, Umayyah, and Hashim, who was the paternal grandfather of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). When the dispute and discord between them intensified, a verdict was issued against Umayyah, sentencing him to leave Makkah and move to Syria for ten years.

Hence grew the animosity between the Umayyads and the Hashimites, whose roots went back to their ancestors. This animosity and rivalry had a profound impact on the progress of the Prophet’s (PBBUH) mission. They also had a significant impact on ʿUthman’s life in various aspects, from the day he embraced Islam until the day of his martyrdom, which will be discussed in detail.¹

ʿUthman’s Description

ʿUthman ibn ʿAffan (may Allah be pleased with him) was a man of modest height, neither tall nor short. He had a handsome face, a high nasal bridge, smooth skin, dark complexion, and thick hair.

¹ For more information, please refer to the first book of this series: *The Biography of the Best Man in Creation* by the author.

‘Uthman’s Manners

His contemporaries agreed on two particular qualities that defined him, namely beauty and *Haya*¹. He was also gentle in spirit, of gracious character, and beloved by all who knew him. The women of Quraysh would even chant to their children, saying:

May the Most Merciful Lord love you, as Quraysh love ‘Uthman.

¹ *Haya*’ can mean many good things, the most popular definition of it is shyness, but it also means modesty, humility, decency, and self-respect.

ʿUthman ibn ʿAffan Embraces Islam

ʿUthman ibn ʿAffan (may Allah be pleased with him) was one of the early Muslims. His kind nature and his shyness before Allah, whose signs shone in his spirit and ruled his attitude and feelings, guided his steps toward the truth and enlightenment. He was never known to have prostrated to an idol at any time in his life.

Ahmad¹ Has Emerged as a Prophet in Makkah

One day, while returning from Syria, ʿUthman sat in a shady place and was overcome by sleep. In a dream, he saw a herald standing near them, calling out to those sleeping: “Wake up! Ahmad has emerged in Makkah!”

ʿUthman (may Allah be pleased with him) returned to Makkah, and on that same night, while he was in the courtyard of the Kaʿbah, he learned that Muhammad ibn ʿAbdullah (PBBUH) had married his daughter Ruqayyah to her paternal cousin, ʿUtbah ibn Abu Lahab. He was saddened by this news and deeply regretted that he had not proposed to marry her before him, to be blessed with her noble character and distinguished family.

ʿUthman entered upon his family, distressed. He found his maternal aunt, Saʿdi bint Kurayz, had come to visit them. She was a resolute, wise woman. Before Islam, she used to tell the future to her people. When she saw ʿUthman looking distressed, he confided in her the reason for his distress and told her about the vision he had seen. She relieved him of his distress and gave him the

¹ The names Muhammad and Ahmad are both the names of the Prophet (PBBUH).

good news of the emergence of a Prophet who would abolish the worship of idols and call people to the path of the One God. She encouraged him to embrace that religion and foretold him that he would attain what he sought through it.

“Respond, O ‘Uthman, to Allah’s Caller”

‘Uthman left his house, pondering what his maternal aunt had said. He met Abu Bakr and narrated to him what his maternal aunt had said. Abu Bakr said: “By Allah, your maternal aunt spoke the truth in what she told you and the glad tidings she gave you, O ‘Uthman. You are a resolute man; the truth is not hidden from you, nor is falsehood something obscure to you. What your maternal aunt said has come true. Allah has sent His Awaited Messenger to all humankind with the religion of guidance and truth.” ‘Uthman asked: “Who is he?”

Abu Bakr replied: “He is Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullah.”

‘Uthman asked: “*Al-Saddiq Al-Amin* (the Honest and Trustworthy One)?”¹

Abu Bakr said: “Yes.”

‘Uthman did not hesitate for a moment; he acted as if he had found something precious, something that was long lost. He asked Abu Bakr: “Can you accompany me to him?” He said: “Yes,” and they both went to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Once the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) saw

¹ The Prophet’s noble character stood him out as the most impeccable one ever, to the point that his polytheist people used to call him ‘*Al-Saddiq* (the Honest One)’ and ‘*Al-Amin* (the Trustworthy One)’ long before he was commissioned with prophethood.

ʿUthman, he said to him: **“Respond, O ʿUthman, to Allah’s caller to His Paradise. I am the Messenger of Allah to you specifically and to all people universally.”**

ʿUthman said: “By Allah, when my eyes fell upon him (i.e., his noble face) and I heard his words, my heart opened up to him and believed in his Message. I then testified that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.”

One of the Forerunners to Embrace Islam

Thus, ʿUthman was one of the early converts to Islam. He was one of the first five or seven persons to embrace Islam. At the time, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was calling to Islam in secret. Even the house of Al-Arqam, where he (PBBUH) used to meet with his Companions, away from Quraysh, had not yet existed. Therefore, ʿUthman embraced Islam before anyone started to visit the house of Al-Arqam ibn Abu Al-Arqam.

The Challenges and Consequences That ʿUthman Faced After Embracing Islam

As already mentioned, there were conflicts, discord, and rivalries between Banu Umayyah and Banu Hashim. It was difficult, even impossible, for any of the Umayyads to follow a Hashemite Prophet. Some of them even said: “We were like two racehorses, shoulder to shoulder. As for their having a prophet from among them, how can we ever catch up with them.” The Umayyads did not oppose the Message of Muhammad (PBBUH) for any reason other than the fact that its preacher was from the Hashimites. Herein lies the greatness, excellence, and virtue of ʿUthman (may Allah be pleased with him). He defied

all such fanaticism, listened to the voice of truth, and embraced Islam early in the call. This caused a resounding earthquake among his people, the Umayyads. Their anger against him was so great that it was the most intense anger ever directed at a Muslim at that time.

The Torture Inflicted on ʿUthman for His Faith

ʿUthman was subjected to all kinds of torture by his relatives, despite his high standing among his people.

- His paternal uncle, Al-Hakam ibn Abu Al-ʿAs, bound him with ropes and chains and shouted in his face: “Are you abandoning the religion of your forefathers for a new religion? By Allah, I will never untie you until you abandon this new religion.” ʿUthman responded with the determination of a staunch believer, fully confident in his Lord: “By Allah, I will never abandon the religion of Allah or leave it.” His paternal uncle continued to torture him, and ʿUthman continued to be persistently steadfast in his faith.
- The torture was not limited to physical abuse. His people also tried to turn Quraysh against him, viewing him with feigned contempt and craving to humiliate his honorable character and undermine his dignity. However, ʿUthman had already totally cast aside their world, with all its vanity and falsehood.
- His people continued their siege, but this time it was an economic siege. They tried to prevent merchants from dealing with him and also affected his trade in a bad way, hoping that he would renounce his religion and follow theirs.

ʿUthman responded to all this with indifference, for he had found the path of truth and tasted the sweetness of faith, which mere business transactions could not affect. The matter was far greater and nobler than that.

ʿUthman’s Relatives Inflict Torture on the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)

ʿUthman’s relatives did not limit their harm to him alone; they were the people who inflicted the greatest harm on the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

- ʿUthman’s paternal uncle, Al-Hakam ibn Abu Al-ʿAs, opposed the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and used to walk behind him, imitating his gait.
- ʿUqbah ibn Abu Muʿayt, who had married ʿUthman’s mother after his father’s death, would lie in wait for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to prostrate during prayer. Once ʿUqbah saw that the Messenger (PBBUH) had prostrated himself, he would throw the sheep’s intestines on his head.

These are besides other forms of abuse that have been mentioned in detail in the first book of this series: *A Biography of the Best Man in Creation*.

Despite all this abuse and oppression from ʿUthman’s relatives, it did not deter him from following the truth and the light that guided him. The virtue of his conversion to Islam was unmatched by any of the early converts to Islam. He defied all difficulties and harassments and triumphed over feelings of partisanship for the sake of his faith.

`Uthman Marries Ruqayyah

Abu Lahab ordered his son `Utbah to divorce Ruqayyah to vex the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). As soon as `Uthman heard about Ruqayyah's divorce, he was overjoyed. As mentioned earlier, he had longed to marry her and regretted not marrying her before Abu Lahab's son.

`Uthman hastened to ask for her hand in marriage from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), who agreed and married her to him.

The First of the Emigrants

Just as `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) was among the first to embrace Islam, he was the first of the emigrants for Allah's Sake (Exalted be He). When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) saw that most of his Companions could no longer tolerate the abuse Quraysh had inflicted upon them, he ordered them to emigrate to Abyssinia, which was ruled by a just king at the time.

`Uthman was the first of the emigrants to Abyssinia, along with his wife, Ruqayyah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) stood, with a compassionate gaze and loving heart, to bid them farewell, saying: **"You are the first to emigrate with his family for Allah's Sake after Prophet Lut (Lot)."**

`Uthman stayed in Abyssinia until he returned to Makkah with his family when their longing for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) became intense. He remained in Makkah until Allah permitted His Prophet (PBBUH) and his Companions to emigrate to Madinah. `Uthman and his wife were among the

emigrants. Thus, `Uthman performed two emigrations, the first to Abyssinia and the second to Madinah.

`Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) lived through the emigration in the noblest sense. It was an emigration of spirit before it was a departure from his place of abode.

The Man with Two Lights

After `Uthman emigrated with his wife to Madinah, which coincided with the day of the Battle of Badr, Ruqayyah fell seriously ill. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) allowed `Uthman to stay with his wife to look after her. On the day the news arrived in Madinah announcing the defeat of Quraysh and the victory of the Muslims, Ruqayyah died.

Deep was `Uthman's gratitude and joy at being related by marriage to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), but deeper still was his grief at the severance of this bond by his wife passing away.

After Ruqayyah's death, `Uthman was always seen sad and distressed by the loss of his wife and the severance of his connection with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) saw him in that state, he asked him: **"Why do I see you so distressed?"** He replied: "Has anyone else experienced what I have experienced, O Messenger of Allah? The daughter of the Messenger of Allah, who was with me, has died. My back is broken, and the bond of kinship between you and me has been severed."

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) comforted him and married him to her sister, Umm Kulthum. She remained with him until her death in the ninth year of the Hijrah. When Umm Kulthum died, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **"If I had a third daughter, I would have married her to `Uthman."** In

another narration, he (PBBUH) said: **“If I had forty daughters, I would marry them to `Uthman, one after the other.”**

For this reason, `Uthman ibn `Affan was called “the Man with Two Lights” because he married the two daughters of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum. No one is known to have married two daughters of a prophet other than him.

Remarkable Deeds of `Uthman from the Time of His Conversion to His Caliphate

From the moment `Uthman declared to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH): “I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that you are His servant and Messenger,” he dedicated himself, his wealth, and his entire life to Allah (Glorified be He) and this religion of Islam.

`Uthman’s declaration of belief in Allah’s Oneness and adherence to the religion of Islam was not merely verbal, but rather it was expressed with his heart, his soul, and all his limbs. In pursuit of this goal, he fought all odds and prejudices and endured torture and humiliation. He sacrificed everything precious and dear. He remained loyal to Islam from the first moment of becoming a Muslim until his last breath.

Here are some of `Uthman’s glorious deeds and contributions, written in letters of light:

1. The Well of Rumah

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and his Companions had hardly settled in Madinah when they were unexpectedly faced with the problem of securing their drinking water. They found only one well in the city, called the Well of Rumah, which flowed with fresh, delicious water. This well was owned by a Jewish man who sold a full waterskin for a *Mudd* (a type of dry measure of half a bushel, 543 grams).

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) wished that one of his Companions would buy the well so that its water would flow freely to the Muslims. Here, ‘Uthman, the Man with Two Lights, rushed to fulfill the Messenger of Allah’s (PBBUH) wish.

Business Genius

‘Uthman offered to buy the Well of Rumah from the Jew, who asked fifty thousand dirhams for it. ‘Uthman bargained with him. The deal ended with him buying half of the well for ten thousand dirhams, on the condition that the Jew would have one day to sell the water and ‘Uthman would have the other. The Jew agreed, hoping to make a lot of money on his day. However, ‘Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) obstructed his plan. He made the Muslims take enough water for two days, without payment.

Thus, the Jew found himself losing his once-thriving market. He returned to ‘Uthman and offered to sell the other half for ten thousand dirhams, which ‘Uthman accepted. The well overflowed with fresh water, quenching the thirst of the people of Madinah for free, without any expense. ‘Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) won the reward for everyone who drank or performed ablution with this water.

2. Expansion of the Prophet’s Mosque

The number of Muslims increased, and the mosque became too small for them. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) wished that one of his Companions would buy a plot of land adjacent to the mosque so that it could be incorporated into it. Once again, none other than ‘Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) was able to fulfill the Messenger of Allah’s wish. He hurried to realize it with all joy and diligence. He went to the owners of the land and

purchased it from them for twenty-five thousand dirhams. This was the first expansion of the Prophet's Mosque, undertaken by the forerunner in doing good deeds and the first of the emigrants, `Uthman ibn `Affan (may Allah be pleased with him).

3. Expansion of the Sacred Mosque

After the Liberation of Makkah, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) decided to expand the Sacred Mosque. He (PBBUH) suggested to the owners of a house adjacent to the mosque to donate their house for the purpose of expanding the mosque. They apologized, saying that this was all they owned, and they lacked the money to buy anything else.

A third time, the only one who had the ability to provide in order to expand the Sacred Mosque was `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him). As soon as he heard the news, he rushed to the owners of the house and bought it from them for ten thousand dirhams.

4. `Uthman's Striving in Allah's Cause

`Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) participated in all the battles with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), except for the Battle of Badr due to the illness of his wife Ruqayyah, as mentioned earlier. When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) returned from the battle and learned of Ruqayyah's death, he consoled him by awarding him a share of the booty and telling him he would receive the same reward as though he had participated in the fighting, making him feel as if he had witnessed the Battle of Badr. Apart from Badr, `Uthman witnessed all the battles: Uhud, Al-Ahzab, Khaybar, the Liberation of Makkah, Hunayn, and Tabuk.

5. `Uthman's Mission on the Days Leading Up to the Hdaybiyah Treaty (Resulting in the Ridwan Pledge)

In the sixth year of the Hijrah, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) resolved to go with his Companions to Makkah to visit the Sacred House. When Quraysh learned of this, they set out in their war clothes to fight him.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) resumed his journey until he reached the lower part of Hdaybiyah on the outskirts of Makkah, where he and his Companions camped. Quraysh began sending envoys and representatives to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to discourage him from continuing on his journey and to persuade him to return. However, their representatives always returned with different faces than those they had gone with; after listening to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), their hearts softened and felt humble in his presence. On the other hand, Quraysh, as usual, were overcome by arrogance and pride, which pushed them to sin and immersed them deeper into obduracy.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) decided to send an envoy from among his Companions to reassure Quraysh that they had not come as invaders, but rather as visitors to the Sacred House. Khirash ibn Umayyah Al-Khuza`i was summoned and assigned to this mission. However, Quraysh had barely seen him and heard his words when they hamstringed his camel. They intended to kill him, but the Abyssinians protected him and saved him. Khirash returned and told the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) what had happened. The next day, Quraysh sent fifty of their most valiant men to harass the Muslims, striking their camp with stones and arrows.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) saw the situation was tense and threatening. He (PBBUH) decided to send another envoy to bring Quraysh back to their senses. He (PBBUH) summoned `Umar ibn Al-Khattab to

dispatch him to the leaders of Quraysh, but ‘Umar declined, saying: “O Messenger of Allah, Quraysh know my hostility and harshness toward them. There is no man among them from Banu ‘Adiy (my clan) who will support me. If you send ‘Uthman to them, he holds a stronger position among them than I do (meaning he has a strong kinship that will protect him).”

“I Will Not Circumambulate the House Until the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) Circumambulates It”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) summoned ‘Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) for this dangerous mission. Quraysh had previously attempted to kill the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). They were not satisfied with that attempt and had sent fifty of their men to provoke the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and his Companions.

Amid these dangers, ‘Uthman executed the command given by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and went to Quraysh, not caring whether he returned alive or died there as a martyr. Indeed, he would not have been spared the foolishness and brutality of Quraysh, once they learned he had entered Makkah, had it not been for the resistance put up by his relatives and clan.

‘Uthman began a conversation with Quraysh. He conveyed the message entrusted to him by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) concerning them. Their response was: “If you wish to circumambulate the House, do so. As for Muhammad and his Companions, no.” ‘Uthman replied: “I will not circumambulate the House until the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) circumambulates it.”

“This Is ʿUthman’s Pledge of Allegiance”

ʿUthman remained in Makkah for three days, trying to convince Quraysh, but to no avail. In the meantime, rumors spread in the Muslim camp that ʿUthman had been killed. Consequently, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) decided to show the polytheists his strong determination and capability to stop their tyranny. He called his Companions to a pledge of allegiance, and there, under the tree, the “Ridwan Pledge” was sworn. This pledge was immortalized by Allah Almighty through a Qur’anic passage that will be recited until the Day of Resurrection: ﴿Indeed, Allah was pleased with the believers when they gave their pledge to you (O Muhammad) under the tree. He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down tranquility upon them, and He rewarded them with a near victory﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Fath 48:18).

After the Muslims finished pledging allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), the Messenger (PBBUH) placed his right hand over his left and said: **“This is ʿUthman’s pledge of allegiance.”** Not a single Muslim remained who did not wish to be the recipient of this honor and privilege.

ʿUthman returned safe and sound, and Quraysh sent a new ambassador, Suhayl ibn ʿAmr, who concluded the Treaty of Hudaibiyah with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).¹

7. ʿUthman’s Outstanding Position in the Battle of Tabuk (*Al-ʿUsrah Army*)

In the ninth year of the Hijrah, the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius revealed his evil machinations against the Arabian Peninsula, driven by a sinister desire

¹ For more information, please refer to the first book of this series: *A Biography of the Best Man in Creation* by the author.

to attack and devour it. This was after the new religion, with its great Messenger, had filled him and the Byzantines with anxiety and fear. Heraclius, elated by his victory over the Persians, decided to march with his vast army against this new nation. Indeed, his forces for this march were well prepared.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), on hearing the news of this anticipated attack, decided to attack them before they could attack him. He (PBBUH) called out to his Companions. The summer was sweltering, and the land was suffering from drought and hard conditions. He (PBBUH) ascended the pulpit and urged Muslims to give generously and bountifully to contribute to equipping a great army. Each gave according to his ability, and women rushed to offer their jewelry to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). However, all the donations were not sufficient to meet the vast demands the great army needed, which became known as *Al-‘Ushrah* (Hardship) Army. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **“Whoever equips these (men), Allah will forgive him.”**¹

***Al-‘Ushrah* (Hardship) Army Receives Generous Funding From ‘Uthman**

As soon as ‘Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) heard the call of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), he hastened to obtain Allah’s Forgiveness and His Good Pleasure. He (may Allah be pleased with him) provided the army with the following aid:

- He equipped the entire army, leaving it without need of even a bridle or halter.
- He supplied the army with nine hundred and forty camels and sixty horses, thus completing a thousand mounts.

¹ Reported by Al-Nasa’i, hadith no. 3607.

- He brought ten thousand dinars to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and placed them between his hands. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) turned them over in his hands, saying: **“May Allah forgive you, O `Uthman, for whatever you have kept secret and for whatever you have made public, and for all that will be until the Day of Resurrection.”**¹

1. He donated seven hundred ounces of gold.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), seeing all this generosity from `Uthman, said: **“Nothing that `Uthman does will harm him after today. Nothing that `Uthman does will harm him after today.”**²

Thus, *Al-`Usrah* (Hardship) Army found relief through `Uthman and his generosity.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) advanced at the head of his Muslim army until they reached Tabuk (halfway between Madinah and the Levant). There, news arrived of the flight of Heraclius with his army, relinquishing this desperate attempt of his upon learning of the departure of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and his Companions. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) praised his Lord, and Allah spared the believers the fight. The Muslim army returned with all its equipment, with nothing missing.

The Most Generous of the Rich...and the Richest of the Generous

*Al-`Usrah* (Hardship) Army returned with all the equipment that `Uthman had provided. `Uthman did not think of taking anything back. On the contrary, he remained as he always was; quick to respond to every gesture from the

¹ Reported by Ahmad, hadith no. 736.

² Reported by Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 3701.

Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) that signified the need for other generous acts and more giving. He did not fail to provide whatever assistance he could in times of hardship or famine, responding willingly to any call for help and generosity. No one among his peers could match his generosity. Of all the rich, he was truly the most generous, and of all the generous, he was truly the richest.

Writing Down the Divine Revelation (Confidant of the Messenger of Allah, PBBUH)

ʿUthman was the confidant of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), due to the honesty, courtesy, and gracious manners he displayed while carrying out messages entrusted to him and representing his tribe.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) relied upon ʿUthman as his trustworthy confidant as proved by the following facts:

- The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) would assign ʿUthman to write down the divine revelation when it was revealed. He would affectionately address him, while dictating to him: **“Write, O ʿUthaym.”**¹
- The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent ʿUthman to Yemen when it was under ʿAli’s rule to follow up and ensure that matters were well in hand.
- The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) appointed ʿUthman as his successor in Madinah during the Battle of Dhat Al-Riqāʿ.
- ʿUthman was the confidant of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) in the Messenger’s final days. It was narrated that during his terminal illness,

¹ This is a diminutive form of ʿUthman’s name used to show affection.

the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) often fainted. On one of these occasions, after he (PBBUH) regained consciousness, he (PBBUH) said: "Open the door for him." They opened the door, and it was `Uthman. When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) saw him, he said: "Come closer." `Uthman leaned over him and the Prophet (PBBUH) whispered something to him. Then, raising his head, he (PBBUH) asked: "Did you understand what I said to you?" `Uthman replied: "Yes, O Messenger of Allah. My ears heard it, and my heart retained it." Then the Messenger (PBBUH) ordered him to leave.

8. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) Died Being Pleased With `Uthman

There was a special rank of glory that was recognized and held by the Companions, and that was the rank of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) being pleased with the person until the day of the Messenger's death. It was listed among the praiseworthy attributes of a person: "The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was pleased with him when the Messenger (PBBUH) died." `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) was the object of the Prophet's trust and love until the day of his death. When the Prophet (PBBUH) died, he (PBBUH) was pleased with `Uthman.

`Uthman's greatest shock came on the day of the Prophet's death, as happened with the rest of the Companions. `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) did not speak to anyone or return their greetings for several months after the Prophet's death. `Umar even said to Abu Bakr: "I fear for `Uthman! He does not return greetings [addressed to him]."

9. `Uthman's Deeds During the Caliphate of Abu Bakr

The caliphate passed to Abu Bakr, at whose hands `Uthman had embraced Islam. Their friendship started before Islam, and their character and morals were very similar. It was not surprising that `Uthman was the closest of those close to the new Caliph, whether in political affairs or bonds of trust and affection.

“If You Were to Write Yourself as the Future Caliph, You Would be Worthy of It”

Just as `Uthman was a confidant of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), he was also a confidant of the Caliph of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). When Abu Bakr was on his deathbed and wanted to write his final commandment, he said to `Uthman: “Write down: This is the entrustment that Abu Bakr ibn Abu Quhafah has made during his last hour of this world, from which he is departing [forever], and just before his first hour of the Hereafter, into which he is entering. I have appointed for you...”

At this point, Abu Bakr fainted.

`Uthman completed writing: “I have appointed `Umar ibn Al-Khattab as the Caliph for you.” Upon regaining consciousness, Abu Bakr said: “Read to me who you wrote?”

`Uthman said: “`Umar ibn Al-Khattab.”

Abu Bakr said: “I see that you feared that people would disagree if my soul were to perish while I fainted (i.e., I had died).”

`Uthman replied: “Yes.”

Abu Bakr said: “May Allah bless you. May my father and mother be sacrificed for you. If you had written yourself, you would have been worthy of it.”

The caliphate of Abu Bakr ended. When he died, he was pleased with `Uthman.

10. `Uthman’s Deeds During the Caliphate of `Umar

Then the caliphate passed to `Umar, who had no close assistants, except those whose deeds brought them closer to Allah. People had no standing with him other than their standing with Allah and His Messenger (PBBUH). `Umar would keep the senior Companions with him to seek their advice. `Uthman was among those who remained with `Umar. He kept him as a close consultant.

The following are some of `Uthman’s deeds during the era of `Umar:

1. Being Part of `Umar’s Consultative Body

`Umar relied on `Uthman for advice and acted upon his advice in the following issues:

- Registering people’s names and the amounts of their grants.
- Differentiating between leadership and command on the battlefield.

2. “I Have Been Given More Than This!”

A famine struck the people during the caliphate of `Umar, devastating everything, so much so that this year was called the “Year of *Ramada* [Ashes]”. When the people came to `Umar in alarm, complaining of their poor condition, he said to them: “By Allah’s Will, before tomorrow night, relief from Allah shall arrive to you.”

In the morning, a caravan belonging to ʿUthman, made up of one thousand camels laden with barley, olive oil, raisins, and many other good things, arrived from the Levant. The merchants approached ʿUthman and said: “Sell to us what you have received, O Abu ʿAmr.” He asked: “How much profit will you give me?” They replied: “Twelve for every ten dirhams.” He said: “I have been given more than this.” They replied: “Fifteen for every ten dirhams.” He said: “I have been given more than this.”

The merchants exclaimed: “O Abu ʿAmr, there are no merchants in Madinah other than us, and no one has met you before us. Who has given you more?” ʿUthman replied: “It is Allah. He has given me ten for every dirham. Is there anyone among you who can give more?” They said: “No, Abu ʿAmr.”

ʿUthman said: “I call Allah to bear witness that I have given all the load of this caravan as charity for the poor. I do not seek dirhams or dinars, but rather I seek reward from Allah and His Good Pleasure.”

The Group of Men with Whom the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) Was Pleased When He (PBBUH) Died

At first, ʿUmar refused to appoint anyone as his successor when death approached him. But when people insisted, he reconsidered his decision to appoint a successor, saying: “I do not want to bear this burden, alive or dead. You have these people whom the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said would be among the people of Paradise and whom the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was pleased with when he (PBBUH) died: ʿAli, ʿUthman, ʿAbdul Rahman, Saʿd, Al-Zubayr, and Talhah. Let them choose one of them. If they appoint one of them as ruler, support him well and assist him.”

In this manner, ʿUmar absolved himself of the responsibility of choosing a successor.

11. Pledging Allegiance for the Caliphate

ʿUmar departed this world after placing the trust in the hands of these men whom he named. They gathered for consultation. ʿAbdul-Rahman ibn ʿAwf suggested that one of them should stand down, withdrawing his candidacy for the position of caliph, so that his vote would be decisive in the event of a dispute. He asked them: “Which of you will withdraw?” No one responded, so he took the initiative and stood down, saying: “I will withdraw.” He knew that it would be difficult for the people to be satisfied with any caliph after Abu Bakr and ʿUmar. Then Al-Zubayr stood down, along with Saʿd ibn Abu Waqqas, while Talhah was absent.

Thus, the choice was narrowed down to ʿUthman and ʿAli. ʿAbdul-Rahman ibn ʿAwf was delegated the task of choosing one of them.

ʿAli and ʿUthman, Each Favors the Other

ʿAbdul-Rahman met ʿAli and ʿUthman each separately. He said to ʿAli: “If this matter was to be removed from you, which of these men do you think would be more deserving of it?” He replied: “ʿUthman.” Then he met ʿUthman and asked him the same question: “Which of these men do you think would be most deserving?” He replied: “ʿAli.”

The General Referendum

ʿAbdul-Rahman ibn ʿAwf had to complete his mission in three days, as ʿUmar ibn Al-Khattab had instructed him. During this short period, he was

required to conduct broad consultation and a general referendum among all the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

‘Abdul-Rahman rose and consulted the people, including those outside the circle of consultation. He gathered the opinions of the Muslims, both the common people and chiefs, individually and in groups, secretly and publicly. He even reached the women in their homes and questioned the children and the travelers arriving in Madinah. Some of them chose ‘Uthman, while some chose ‘Ali.

The Decisive Judgment

‘Abdul-Rahman sent for ‘Uthman and ‘Ali. When they came to him, he said to them: “I have asked the people about you, and I have not found anyone who is an equal to you.” Then he took a solemn promise from each of them that if he appointed him, he would be just, and if someone was appointed over him, he would listen and obey him.

‘Abdul-Rahman took them both out to the mosque. ‘Abdul-Rahman had put on the turban that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had given him and carried a sword. He sent for the most prominent people among the Muhajirun and the Ansar, and an announcement was made to all the people: “*As-Salatu Jam‘iah* (Gather for congregational prayer).” The people lined up until the mosque was filled. There was no place left for ‘Uthman to sit except behind the people. He was a very shy and modest man.

‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf ascended the pulpit of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), praised Allah, and then said: “O people, I have questioned you secretly and openly, but you said no one is on a par with ‘Ali and ‘Uthman. So stand up, O ‘Ali.” After he stood up, ‘Abdul-Rahman took him by the hand

and asked him: “Will you pledge allegiance to me based on the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger, and the actions of Abu Bakr and ʿUmar?” ʿAli replied: “I will adhere to the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger, and my own independent judgment.”

Then ʿAbdul-Rahman said: “Stand up, O ʿUthman.” He stood up, and ʿAbdul-Rahman took his hand and said: “Will you pledge allegiance to me based on the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger, and the actions of Abu Bakr and ʿUmar?” ʿUthman replied: “Yes, by Allah.”

ʿAbdul-Rahman raised his head to the ceiling of the mosque, his hand in ʿUthman’s, and said: “O Allah, hear and bear witness. By Allah, I have placed what is on my neck regarding this (matter) on the neck of ʿUthman.”

The people stood up around ʿUthman to pledge allegiance to him. The first hand that firmly grasped the hand of ʿUthman giving allegiance to him was that of ʿAli ibn Abu Talib. All the Muslims followed him, pledging allegiance to ʿUthman.

Thus, ʿUthman (may Allah be pleased with him) bore the responsibility of the caliphate. What a heavy responsibility it was!

12. Political Education

Unlike any caliph before or after him, ʿUthman (may Allah be pleased with him) had received an extended period of political education. It was longer than the period that Abu Bakr had experienced with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and longer than the period that ʿUmar had experienced with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and his Caliph, Abu Bakr. Moreover, it was longer than the period given to the fourth caliph, ʿAli ibn Abu Talib, who embraced

Islam as a young boy and for whom years passed before he participated in any public opinion, action, or accomplishment.

‘Uthman’s closeness to the decision-making process during the era of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), in addition to the close relationship, affection, and kinship between them, as well as with the two sheikhs (Abu Bakr and ‘Umar) after him, enabled ‘Uthman to become familiar with the affairs of the *Da‘wah* and the concerns of the caliphate, with all the myriad of obstacles, problems, and challenges involved therein. His awareness of all these aspects of governance equipped him with a comprehensive aptitude to assume the caliphate and manage the affairs of Muslims.

Performing the Tasks of the Caliphate

Thus began the third caliphate, bringing with it new realities, new circumstances, and new challenges, along with a new era of early Islam.

Let us examine the nature of these circumstances and challenges and how the third Caliph (may Allah be pleased with him) dealt with them.

First Sermon

As soon as `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf announced `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) as the Caliph and after the pledge of allegiance was completed, `Uthman headed to the pulpit. His face expressed a sense of fear at the weight of the enormous responsibility that he now carried on his shoulders.

`Uthman stood on the pulpit and said:

1. “O people, I have been entrusted with a responsibility, and I have accepted it. However, I am a follower, not an innovator.”
2. “Verily, after the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (PBBUH), there are three duties I must fulfill toward you:
 - To follow those who came before me regarding what you have agreed upon and established as a way.
 - To introduce the practices of the good people in matters for which you have not publicly established a specific way.
 - To refrain from doing anything against you except regarding the duties and responsibilities that you owe.”

3. “Behold, the world has become desirable to people and many of you have inclined toward it; do not rely on it or seek its protection.”
4. “Know that you are in a temporal abode and have only a short time remaining, so hasten to end your lives doing the best deeds you can perform.”
5. “Behold, the world is wrapped in deception, so do not be deceived by the life of this world and let not the chief deceiver (Satan) deceive you about Allah.”

In this manner, `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) laid out the broad outlines of his rule.

His Letters to Governors and Army Commanders

Then `Uthman sent messages to the governors, commanders, and trustees of the treasury, telling them:

- “You are the protectors and trustees of the Muslims. `Umar has set rules for you, of which I am not ignorant. Let no change or alteration be reported to me about any of you.”
- “I urge you to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, and to obey Allah and His Messenger.”

The Challenges that Faced the Third Caliphate

`Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him), approaching seventy years of age, began his caliphate, bearing heavy burdens.

Amid many foreboding signs, the most difficult caliphate ever undertaken by a caliph in early Islam arose. `Uthman began his caliphate fearful for himself and his nation, as there were enormous challenges to overcome, specifically the following three issues:

- He followed two peerless caliphs, especially the ten years of `Umar's rule during which he imposed his strict method and standards on everyone. `Umar forced his governors to adopt the same level of asceticism and austerity as he had himself adopted.
- The Muslim state expanded, and diverse races, with varying natures and aims, clashed under its banner.
- The world had opened up widely to the Muslims, to the point that their income from trade, booty, and grants far exceeded their needs. Many of them moved into the wealthy and elite classes.

General Unrest and Violation of Covenants

Just as the rebellion of the apostates at the beginning of the caliphate of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) was a severe ordeal, to which all Muslims rose in unity and solidarity, so too was the unrest that `Uthman endured at the beginning of his caliphate. He faced a similar tumult, compounded by internal discord and the aforementioned changes that had taken place within the nation.

No sooner had the news of `Umar's assassination and `Uthman's accession to the caliphate spread throughout the east and west than turmoil erupted from every direction, as if `Umar's assassination had been the signal for the beginning of raids and attacks.

The leaders of these attacks were tempted by the fact that the new Caliph was a man in his seventies. `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) was not known for his heroic deeds like Khalid ibn Al-Walid or `Ali ibn Abu Talib. His name was not widely known outside of Madinah. This was solely because his modesty and calm nature always kept him in the shadows.

The combination of all these factors incited the troublemakers to take up arms:

- The Byzantine Empire broke its previous covenants, and an armed uprising broke out. The Byzantines raided Alexandria and Palestine by land and sea with their fleet.
- Riots erupted in unison in Azerbaijan and Armenia.
- This turmoil spread to many Persian provinces and beyond, among the Asian peoples.

The unrest in these regions was not an uprising of the people, for people's joy at Islam was great. Islam arrived and liberated them from the tyranny of the Persians and Byzantines. Rather, the unrest was a collaborative attack by the remnants of those collapsed powers that had ruled and prevailed before Islam but whose kingdom and influence had been lost.

How the Seventy-Year-Old Caliph Reacted to the Turmoil

The seventy-year-old Caliph disappointed the expectations of these foolish troublemakers. He showed them that large bodies or number of years are not the criteria by which the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) are to be judged; but rather they are judged by the depth of their faith in Allah and His Promise, and their adherence to His Messenger and to His religion.

The third Caliph did not take much time to think before he immediately issued orders to extinguish the fire of unrest and subdue the troublemakers. Not only that, but he also ordered that the liberation of lands should extend beyond the borders of those rebellious regions. This would ensure that those regions would not remain peripheral to the state, thereby facilitating for them to attack whenever they wished. `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) personally selected the commanders of the armies that would undertake these missions.

It was a trial similar to, or even greater than, the apostasy crisis, due to the vast fields and far lands that stretched between its borders. `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) proved himself capable of smothering this turmoil with his strong resolve, insight, and agility in handling matters. He entrusted every task to the one who was an expert and capable of accomplishing it in the best manner. Hence history recorded the conquests that dazzled everyone, near and far, friend or foe.

Conquests During the Era of `Uthman

The elderly Caliph began to face these challenges with extraordinary determination and resolve, as if the spirit of youth had pervaded him. He decided to confront all fronts. Commanders and soldiers were amazed by the brave and brilliant spirit of their elderly Caliph, which heightened their own courage, strength, and determination.

Below, dear readers, is a summary of the conquests achieved during the reign of the Man with Two Lights, `Uthman ibn `Affan (may Allah be pleased with him).

1. The Eastern Front

ʿUthman (may Allah be pleased with him) began by confronting the rebellious forces in Azerbaijan and Armenia, which had broken the treaty he had previously concluded with them.

As for Azerbaijan, ʿUthman sent troops to it under the leadership of Al-Walid ibn ʿUqbah. He was the governor of Kufa, as Azerbaijan was subject to the rules of the province of Kufa. Allah granted him victory, and he gained booty. The people of Azerbaijan requested peace and a treaty under the same terms that Hudhayfah ibn Al-Yaman had granted them when he liberated it.

As for Armenia, ʿUthman sent Salman ibn Rabiʿah with twelve thousand men, who succeeded in dispersing the forces of the troublemakers and in gaining booty. Like the people of Azerbaijan, the people of Armenia sought peace.

The advance did not stop at the rebellious lands but extended beyond to other territories. Saʿid ibn Al-ʿAs assumed command of Kufa after Al-Walid ibn ʿUqbah. During his reign, Tabaristan was liberated. He had six thousand soldiers with him. When Saʿid asked ʿUthman for more troops, ʿUthman replied: “I will send you six men; each one of them is worth a thousand.” So he sent to him: Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn, the sons of ʿAli, ʿAbdullah ibn Al-Zubayr, ʿAbdullah ibn ʿAmr ibn Al-ʿAs, ʿAbdullah ibn ʿUmar, and Hudhayfah ibn Al-Yaman. It was as if he had doubled the strength of his army with these six. He fought the people of Kufa, who then sought peace and a covenant.

Adopting this same spirit and method, ʿUthman (may Allah be pleased with him) sent ʿAbdullah ibn ʿAmir, the governor of Basra at that time, to the Persians when they rose up and rebelled along with those who rebelled. He

fought them, and they were defeated, accepting the peace and covenant. `Abdullah ibn `Amir continued his march beyond the dens of rebellion, as the Caliph had ordered him. He liberated Istakhr, moved on to liberate Khorasan, and then advanced from there to Quhistan until he reached Khwarazm. During his reign, Yazdegerd, the last Persian king, was killed.

When `Abdullah ibn `Amir returned, after Allah had granted him these spacious lands, he was told: "Allah has not liberated such vast areas of lands as He liberated through you." He replied: "Indeed, I will show my gratitude to Allah for that by departing as an `Umrah pilgrim from my current position." So he assumed the *Ihram* (ritual state) for `Umrah from Nishapur.

The Western Front

While the Muslim army was returning victorious, heading on its way to Kufa, news arrived that the Romans were harassing the Levant. Caliph `Uthman ordered Al-Walid ibn `Uqbah, the governor of Kufa at the time, to dispatch an army of ten thousand fighters. He chose for this mission a brave and trustworthy man, Habib ibn Maslamah Al-Fihri.

The Byzantines approached with an army of eighty thousand. Despite the small Muslim army, their faith in Allah and their confidence in His victory gave them the strength and courage to surpass their enemy.

Habib resolved to attack the enemy at night, before dawn broke. When his valiant wife, Umm `Abdullah, who was a soldier in the Muslim army, heard him, she asked him: "Where shall I meet you when the battle intensifies?" Her husband, the commander, full of faith and confidence in Allah's victory, replied: "Inside the tent of the Maurianos—the Byzantine commander—or in Paradise."

The battle began with a few ten thousand men fighting against eighty thousand or more. By Allah's Help, it ended with the clear victory of the smaller group over the larger. Habib went to the tent of the Byzantine commander, Maurianos, to find that his wife had already arrived.

The liberation of the lands continued after that, extending beyond the dens of rebellion and penetrating into the Byzantine territories, conquering fortress after fortress, until they reached Amorium, Tartus, and Antioch.

The Caliph, stationed in Madinah, received important news from Egypt that Alexandria was being attacked by land and sea by the Byzantines. He quickly instructed ʿAmr ibn Al-ʿAs, the governor of Egypt at the time, to head with his army to Alexandria. There, he inflicted a crushing defeat on the raiders and was able to impede their progress and eradicate their influence.

The liberation of the lands continued. The Muslim army, under the orders of their Caliph, ʿUthman ibn ʿAffan, advanced to North Africa. He sent a large army led by ʿAbdullah ibn Saʿd ibn Abu Sarh, along with ʿAbdullah ibn ʿUmar and ʿAbdullah ibn Al-Zubayr. The Berber armies arrived in huge numbers, estimated by some historians as many as two hundred thousand fighters. The Muslims performed admirably in this battle, especially ʿAbdullah ibn Al-Zubayr, who displayed unparalleled bravery. The Muslim army reached Tripoli and from there to Tangier and Ifriqiya (Tunisia).

3. The Emergence of the Muslim Navy

ʿUmar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) had rejected the idea of launching military expeditions by sea, due to the risk involved. Attempts to do so had occurred during his time, but they were unsuccessful and resulted in the deaths of many. This only increased ʿUmar's insistence and rejection of

this idea whenever one of the Companions importuned him about this matter. The most persistent of these was Mu`awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan, who wished to attack the Byzantines by sea, but `Umar declined to grant him permission.

Then the era of `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) began. He saw that the Byzantine naval fleet, which used Cyprus as a launching platform for its aggression, had become a threat to the Levant, Palestine, Egypt, and Kairouan. The Caliph had to make a decision that was long opposed by his great predecessor, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab. It had become a necessity after the changes in overall circumstances and facts had taken place. It was difficult for `Uthman to inhibit fighting by sea, but, at the same time, it was difficult for him to permit it.

Again, the great, elderly Caliph dazzled the entire world with his steadfast determination and indomitable spirit, emerging from both difficulties in the best possible way. He wrote to Mu`awiyah, authorizing him to build the first Muslim naval fleet. But `Umar's fears still lingered in his heart. He told Mu`awiyah: "Do not select people or draw lots among them. Whoever willingly chooses to fight by sea, take him on board and support him."

Thus, the emergence of the first naval fleet in Islam was announced.

The Battle of Cyprus

The island of Cyprus, as was mentioned earlier, posed a constant threat to the Muslim State by acting as a meeting point where the Byzantine fleets lay in wait. Caliph `Uthman ibn `Affan authorized Mu`awiyah to invade Cyprus by sea, supplying him with a large army led by `Abdullah ibn Sa`d ibn Abu Sarh. The two overwhelming Muslim forces surrounded this island, which surrendered, and a peace treaty imposed by the Muslims was signed.

Thus, Cyprus came under the command of the Muslims, and the threat it represented for the Muslims ended.

The Prophecy Regarding the Righteous Woman

In this battle, an old prophecy of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was fulfilled.

One day, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was taking a nap in the house of `Ubadah ibn Al-Samit. He (PBBUH) woke up smiling. Umm Haram bint Milhan, the wife of `Ubadah ibn Al-Samit, asked him what had made him smile. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied: **“Some people from among my followers were displayed before me as warriors in Allah’s Cause, sailing in the midst of the seas like kings on thrones.”** Umm Haram said: “Supplicate to Allah to make me one of them, O Messenger of Allah.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **“You are one of them.”**

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) slept again, then woke up smiling and said: **“Some people from among my followers were displayed before me as warriors in Allah’s Cause, sailing in the midst of the seas like kings on thrones.”** Umm Haram said: “Supplicate to Allah to make me one of them, O Messenger of Allah.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied: **“You are among the first ones.”**¹

Days passed and the Battle of Cyprus occurred. The Muslims boarded their large, victorious ships like kings on thrones. ‘Ubadah ibn Al-Samit and his wife, Umm Haram bint Milhan, set out with the army on this sea expedition in which the prophecy made by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was fulfilled, as he had predicted. Umm Haram died after the battle and was buried in Cyprus. Her grave later became known among the people as “the grave of the righteous woman”. She was, as the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had told her, among the first ones on the naval ships, and she did not live to board the ship once again on the return journey.

¹ Reported by Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 6282.

The Battle of the *Sawari* (Masts)

The Battle of the Masts confirmed the strength of the Muslim State under the leadership of the third Caliph, `Uthman ibn `Affan.

Constantine, the Byzantine Emperor, assembled a massive army. He set out with a fleet of five hundred ships, advancing toward the Maghreb to encounter `Abdullah ibn Sa`d ibn Abu Sarh. `Abdullah assembled his army and sailed their ships across the sea. The two armies met in an unequal battle. The Muslims lacked the numbers and equipment which the Byzantines possessed. The Muslim commander called out for the two armies to go ashore and fight the battle on solid ground, where they were skilled. The Byzantines refused.

The Muslims thought of turning the sea into solid ground to undermine the naval superiority of the Byzantines. A division of the Muslim army quickly tied their ships to the Byzantine ships, after bringing their ships close to the Byzantines, creating a floating battle platform. They then engaged in swordfights as if they were on land. The Muslims were victorious, and Constantine fled.

Muslims continued their naval conquests, becoming increasingly advanced and superior over time. `Abdullah ibn Qais, the commander of the naval fleet, led fifty battles, both in winter and summer, on land and sea, and not a single member of his army drowned.

The Expansion of the Muslim State During the Era of `Uthman

Thus the armies of the third Caliph, `Uthman ibn Affan (may Allah be pleased with him), marched everywhere under the victorious banner. They even knocked on the gates of Constantinople in the west, and Persia, Kerman, and Khurasan in the east. These conquests paved the way for the Muslim advance, reaching Sudan and Abyssinia in the south, and India and China in the east.

Those brilliant years of `Uthman ibn `Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) proved that all the suspicions the enemies of Islam had cast upon him were false. The elderly Caliph shouldered his enormous burdens in the best possible way under extremely difficult circumstances. He undoubtedly played a major role in reinforcing the prestige and integrity of the Muslim State after it had been weakened and shaken by the assassination of `Umar. It became firmly established in the minds of the surrounding nations that they were fighting a people whose strength could not be diminished by the death of a caliph or the change of a leader. They would inevitably emerge victorious, despite the different leaders and rulers that led them.

Moreover, the speed and determination with which `Uthman ibn `Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) handled external dangers was an effective solution to the challenges and internal affairs of the state.



Domestic Achievements During the Era of `Uthman

Continuous *Jihad* and successive conquests did not distract `Uthman ibn `Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) from domestic concerns.

History lists the following as being some of the achievements attributed to `Uthman:

1. Architecture

- `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) continued the construction and development of cities begun by his predecessor, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him).
- He paved roads to connect cities and revive trade and communication between them.
- He managed public facilities in each city and facilitated trade by building markets and developing the transportation system and similar services.
- He established police stations to protect facilities and organize markets.
- He beautified the city of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), expanding its buildings and bringing excellence to its architecture. He began with the Prophet's Mosque by expanding it. He was the first to incorporate engraved stones and inlaid columns into the construction and beautification of the Prophet's Mosque. After the expansion, the mosque had six gates.

2. Jeddah Port

The era of `Uthman witnessed the transformation of Jeddah into a seaport, which had a significant impact on enriching trade and transportation.

3. Prosperity for All

During the reign of `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him), people experienced unprecedented prosperity, affluence, and ease, the like of which no people on the face of the earth had experienced. Countries were liberated, and income from trade, booty, and gifts increased. A crier would call out:

- “O people, come to receive your gifts!” They would come to collect them.
- “O people, come to receive your provisions (salaries)!” They would come to collect the provisions, which were abundant and plentiful. Every individual in the nation had their own salary.
- “O people, come to receive your clothing!” They would come to collect the finest garments.
- “O people, come to receive your food.” They would come to take ghee, honey, and other kinds of delicious food.

It comes as no surprise that `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) spent his own money, both before and after his caliphate, on public affairs that were within the jurisdiction of the public treasury.

The *Mushaf* of `Uthman

Today, after the elapse of more than a thousand and four hundred years, a certain work stands out among the deeds of `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him), balancing the sum of all his other deeds. He is mentioned by name wherever the Noble *Mushaf* (copy of the Qur'an) is mentioned. Everybody knows that the `Uthmanic Codex is attributed to him.

Few people today know about the conquests that `Uthman made and the invasions that he suppressed. As for his achievement of compiling the *Mushaf*, it is evident and known wherever the *Mushaf* is read and whenever it is referred to as "the *Mushaf* of `Uthman". Every *Mushaf* today is produced from the Qur'an copy of `Uthman.

If history had not mentioned any of `Uthman's great deeds other than his compilation of the Qur'an and the unification of Muslims upon a single *Mushaf*, it would have been enough honor and glory for him. It will weigh heavy in his scale of deeds as the most sublime good deed in the history of Islam.

The Journey of the Qur'an from Palm Leaves to the *Mushaf* of `Uthman

1. The Qur'an was revealed to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) as separate ayahs, according to specific circumstances and reasons for revelation. Among the Companions were a group that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) chose to write down the ayahs as soon as they were revealed.

2. The Companions would pass on the revealed ayahs. Some relied on their memory to retain them, while others wrote them down on palm fronds, stone slabs, and pieces of leather to preserve them.
3. Caliph Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him), acting upon the strong advice of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him), decided to collect all the Qur'an on papers after many memorizers had been killed in the Battle of Yamamah, as was earlier stated. Abu Bakr entrusted Zayd ibn Thabit with this task, as he had memorized the entire Qur'an and was the scribe who constantly stayed with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to write down the divine revelation. Zayd collected all the Qur'an from the Companions' memories and from written tablets, forming a single copy, with all chapters and ayahs arranged in order and the beginning and end of each chapter clearly specified. This Qur'an copy was preserved by Abu Bakr and later passed to `Umar, who instructed that it be transferred upon his death to the house of Hafsa bint `Umar, the Mother of the Believers.
4. The liberation of lands began during the reign of `Umar and stretched to even further areas during the reign of `Uthman. Great conquests caused Islam to spread to people with different languages. Because of their various languages and dialects, people differed in their style of reciting the Qur'an, each according to their own dialect. Not only that, but the different dialects also became a source of discord and disagreement.
5. Hudhayfah ibn Al-Yaman witnessed a terrifying disagreement between the people of Syria and the people of Iraq when he and the people of Iraq were liberating Armenia and Azerbaijan. Upon his return from the

conquest, Hudhayfah did not return to his home but directly headed to Caliph `Uthman to tell him: “O Commander of the Believers, save the people before they differ over the Book (the Qur’an) as the Jews and Christians differed.”

6. The Caliph did not hesitate for a moment. He sent a message to Hafsa asking her for all the pages of Qur’an that her father had entrusted to her safekeeping. Then he ordered Zayd ibn Thabit, who had collected the Qur’an during the reign of Abu Bakr, along with `Abdullah ibn Al-Zubayr, Sa`id ibn Al-`As, and `Abdul-Rahman ibn Al-Harith ibn Hisham, to transcribe the Qur’an.
7. After they had completed their noble work, `Uthman reviewed the Qur’an copy based on what he had memorized. `Uthman was one of the scribes of the revelation, as was mentioned earlier. He had also memorized the entire Qur’an. He then reviewed it based on what the rest of the Companions had memorized. Thus, the agreed-upon version of the Qur’an and the order of its ayahs were completed.
8. `Uthman then ordered these venerable Companions to write several copies of the Qur’an, sending a copy to each province of the caliphate. He then ordered all the other copies of the Qur’an to be gathered and buried between the Prophet’s grave and pulpit. According to some accounts, he ordered them to be burned.
9. Scribes in each region proceeded to make for themselves and others more copies of the Qur’an from this *Mushaf*, which was at that time, and even to this day, called “the *Mushaf* of `Uthman”.

Outstanding Traits of ‘The Man with Two Lights’

`Uthman ibn `Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) possessed many virtues, all of which were accompanied with benevolence and magnanimity and exuded the fragrance of mercy. Perhaps the greatest honor he had ever received was the words the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) uttered when his second wife, Umm Kulthum, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), passed away. He (PBBUH) said: **“If I had a third daughter, I would have married her to you.”**

So what were the virtues that earned ‘The Man with Two Lights’ such honor and grace?

Let us examine some of `Uthman’s outstanding virtues:

1. *Haya*¹: A Man Before Whom the Angels Are Modest

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **“*Haya*’ is a branch of faith.”** *Haya*’ was the most characteristic feature of the personality of ‘The Man with Two Lights’. If *haya*’ became a man walking on the earth, it would have been `Uthman ibn `Affan (may Allah be pleased with him). `Uthman was defined by *haya*’ just as *haya*’ was defined by him.

The Mother of the Believers, Lady `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her), narrated: “The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was sitting in a reclined position in my house and his cloak had fallen away from one of his legs. Abu Bakr asked

¹ *Haya*’ can mean many good things. The most popular definition of it is modesty, but it also means humility, decency, and self-respect.

permission to enter upon him, and he (PBBUH) granted him permission while he (PBBUH) was in that state. Abu Bakr spoke and then left. Then `Umar asked for permission to come in and he (PBBUH) gave him permission, remaining as he was. Then `Uthman asked permission to enter, and the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sat up after lying down on the bed and arranged his clothes. `Uthman entered, spoke, and then left.

Shortly after his departure, Lady `Aishah asked the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH): “Why did I not see you prepare yourself to receive Abu Bakr or `Umar as you did for `Uthman?” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied: **“`Uthman is an extremely modest man. If I were to give him permission while I was lying down, he would be too modest to enter and would leave without me fulfilling what he wanted from me. O `Aishah, should I not be modest before one whom the angels are modest?”**¹

Uthman’s modesty was genuine and profound. His modesty was a powerful force within him, earning respect from everyone around him, even the angels.

Therefore, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **“The most merciful of my followers to my followers is Abu Bakr. The one who adheres most sternly to Allah’s Religion is `Umar. The one who possesses the sincerest *haya*’ is `Uthman. And the best judge is `Ali.”**²

2. His Justice

His justice was enveloped in mercy.

¹ Reported in Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, hadith no. 603.

² Reported by Ibn Majah, hadith no. 154.

“Retribution in This World Is Easier Than Retribution in the Hereafter”

One day, merciful ʿUthman became angry with his servant, rubbing his ear until it hurt. ʿUthman quickly felt distress at the servant’s pain. He summoned him and ordered him to retaliate by rubbing his ear, but the servant refused. He ordered him firmly, so the servant obeyed. ʿUthman then said to his servant: “Be hard, O my servant, for retribution in this world is more merciful than retribution in the Hereafter.”

No Kinship in Allah’s Prescribed Penalties

ʿUthman (may Allah be pleased with him) applied the prescribed punishments to both relatives and non-relatives. He paid no regard to kinship whenever a prescribed penalty had to be executed.

For instance, Al-Walid ibn ʿUqbah, his maternal brother, who was the governor of Kufa, was proven to have drunk alcohol. Consequently, ʿUthman ordered that the prescribed penalty for drinking alcohol be applied to him. Al-Walid received forty lashes. ʿUthman also removed him from his position.

3. ʿUthman’s Asceticism

Although ʿUthman (may Allah be pleased with him) was the wealthiest and most affluent of his people in both the pre-Islamic era and during Islam, he was also the most ascetic.

Here are some examples of ʿUthman’s asceticism and renunciation of this world, despite his abundant wealth and abundant riches:

- Some Muslims entered the mosque of Madinah and saw a man sleeping on stones with his cloak folded under his head. When he woke up, they noticed the marks of the stones on his side. They said in amazement: “The Commander of the Believers! The Commander of the Believers!” Indeed, he was no other than the ascetic worshiper, `Uthman ibn `Affan, the Caliph of the Muslims.
- He would offer the people the food of the caliphate and would enter his house and eat vinegar and oil.
- `Abdullah ibn Shaddad said: “I saw `Uthman ibn `Affan delivering the Friday sermon wearing a worn-out garment worth four dirhams. He was the Commander of the Believers at that time.”

4. `Uthman’s Generosity

‘The Man with Two Lights’ (may Allah be pleased with him) demonstrated immense generosity and benevolence. His generosity was overwhelming. Wealth in his eyes was nothing but chaff scattered by the winds unless he spent it in Allah’s Way, which transformed it into immortal deeds of everlasting great reward.

Here are some instances of `Uthman’s generosity:

- As aforementioned, `Uthman, alone, bought the Well of Rumah, and he equipped the entire Army of Hardship, at enormous expense. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said on this occasion: **“Nothing that `Uthman does will harm him after today.”** During the Year of the Ashes, when famine struck, he generously donated a full caravan of one thousand camels, laden with wheat, olive oil, and raisins, so that people could eat and enjoy themselves.

- `Uthman made a promise with himself that would be binding on him for the rest of his life: that he should free a slave every Friday. He would buy a slave from the slave's master at any price and then emancipate him and grant him his full freedom, seeking thereby the Pleasure of his Lord, the Most High.
- He would set up tables filled with food every day near the Prophet's Mosque for people to eat.
- During Ramadan of each year, he allocated one dirham per day to every citizen, and two dirhams to nursing mothers—in addition to their regular salaries. This was paid from his own money.
- Whenever he noticed that the merchants were attempting to hoard provisions or sell them at exorbitant prices, he would send out his caravans to return laden with goods that would ruin monopoly and bring joy to the people.

5. `Uthman's Mercy

Mercy pervaded the life of `Uthman just as water pervades a lush, green tree. His mercy existed in all his actions, from the mundane to those fateful steps on which life or death depended.

Here are some instances of `Uthman's mercy:

- When the elderly Caliph rose at night to pray, he refused to wake any of his servants to prepare his ablution. He tolerated the difficulties of his old age and prepared his own ablution.

- `Uthman, the merciful Caliph, refused to be saved from the swords of his killers if the price of this salvation was shedding the blood of an innocent Muslim.
- Zayd ibn Thabit entered upon Caliph `Uthman after seeing the troublemakers had gathered to lay siege on his house. He said: "O Commander of the Believers, the Ansar are present at your door, saying, 'If you wish, we will be the Ansar (supporters) of Allah twice over.'" But the merciful Caliph replied: "As for fighting...no. I implore you by Allah and ask you by Him that not a single drop of blood be shed because of me."

`Uthman's merciful character encompassed all his subjects, showing sympathy and kindness to people in proportion to the loftiness of his soul, including both significant and small events. The servant had his share and right to enjoy a comfortable sleep, even if old age exhausted the Caliph in the darkness of the night. Also, the inviolability, safety, and security of the people had their share, even if the alternative was the Caliph's own life.

- Among the situations in which `Uthman's mercy was manifested was that narrated by Musa ibn Talhah, who said: "I heard `Uthman ibn `Affan while he was on the pulpit, and the muezzin was announcing the prayer, asking people about their concerns, about prices, and about those sick."
- It was only natural for a man whose mercy extended to all people to be merciful to his relatives and kin. Imam `Ali said about him: "The one who maintained ties of kinship the best among us was `Uthman."

6. `Uthman's Manner of Worship and Deep Fear of Allah

`Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) was unique in his worship:

- His contemporaries described his worship, saying: “He would fast all day and pray at night, except for a short nap at the beginning of the night.”
- He (may Allah be pleased with him) would recite the entire Qur'an in a single *Rak`ah*, which he performed as *Witr* (prayer with an odd number of units).
- He would pray at night and not wake any of his servants—as was mentioned earlier.
- Regarding this ayah: ﴿Is one who is obedient to Allah, prostrating himself or standing in prayer during the hours of the night, fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the Mercy of his Lord (like one who disbelieves)?﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Zumar 39:9), `Abdullah ibn `Umar said: “This (ayah) refers to `Uthman ibn `Affan.” This was a testimony from Ibn `Umar, which sheds brilliant light on the persevering worship of `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him). He would prostrate and stand in prayer during the night, hoping for the mercy of his Lord.
- `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “If I were between Paradise and Hell, not knowing which of the two I would be ordered to go to, I would choose to be ashes before I knew which of the two I would end up in.”

- Such was his fear and piety. He carried a great concern for the Hereafter. This was evident in many of the sermons he delivered to the Muslims. He would say:
 1. “O people, fear Allah, for fearing Allah is a valuable prize. The most intelligent of people is he who brings himself to account, does that which will benefit him after death, and obtains light [guidance] from Allah for his grave.”
 2. “Allah has given you this world so that you may seek the Hereafter with it. He has not given it to you so that you may be content with it.”
 3. “This world will perish but the Hereafter will last, so prefer what lasts over what perishes.”

ʿUthman (may Allah be pleased with him) was not a hermit. Rather, he was a worshiper, filling life with continuous striving, diligent work, and generosity to others. His fear of Allah and his awareness of Him were constantly present in every action he took.

7. The Glad Tidings Given by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to ʿUthman of Dying as a Martyr

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) gave ʿUthman the glad tidings of Paradise—as was aforementioned—along with the ten who were promised Paradise. He (PBBUH) chose him to be one of the scribes of the revelation. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) also gave him the glad tidings of martyrdom. One day, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was standing on the high mountain of Uhud with Abu Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthman. The mountain they were standing on started shaking. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) struck it with his foot,

saying: **“Be firm, O Uhud. Upon you there is none but a Prophet, a Siddiq, and two martyrs.”**¹

8. A Cultured Man

It is essential when discussing the virtues of ‘The Man with Two Lights’ to become acquainted with how cultured he was, as it is closely related to his way of thinking and understanding.

‘Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) was well-versed in pre-Islamic Arab knowledge, including genealogies, proverbs, and chronicles (history). He traveled extensively, his travels including the Levant and Abyssinia, and interacted with non-Arabs. He learned about their different natures and ways, which gave him knowledge that not every Arab in his own country had. During his travels, he also renewed his knowledge of the desert, such as celestial navigation and wind forecasting. This domain of knowledge was specific to Bedouins in caravans.

After ‘Uthman’s Acceptance of Islam

Because ‘Uthman was a skilled writer, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) relied on him to record the divine revelation. Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) also relied on him to write important documents, including the document in which he entrusted the caliphate after him to ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him).

‘Uthman was the most knowledgeable of Muslims regarding religious rulings. He also excelled in memorizing the Qur’an and Sunnah and narrated nearly one hundred and fifty hadiths from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

¹ Reported by Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 3697.

Muhammad ibn Sirin said: “‘Uthman was the most knowledgeable of the Companions regarding the Islamic rituals, followed by Ibn ‘Umar.”

‘Uthman’s Excellence in Speech

‘Uthman’s solid knowledge of history and genealogies, as well as his travels throughout the lands, provided him with a wealth of material for conversation with men of letters. ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn Hatib said: “I have never seen anyone among the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) more proficient or better in terms of speech than ‘Uthman, except that he was a man who feared narrating hadith.” It is only natural that he was at awe of narrating hadith, as he was the most modest of people.

His speech was neither idle talk nor mere chatter. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) longed for his speech. Lady ‘Aishah narrated that she heard the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) say one night: **“If only we had someone to speak to us.”** She said: “O Messenger of Allah, should I send someone to Abu Bakr?” He (PBBUH) remained silent. Then she said: “Should I send someone to ‘Umar?” He (PBBUH) remained silent. Then he (PBBUH) sent a servant of his to bring him ‘Uthman. He came, and the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) conversed with him for a long time.

‘Uthman’s Excellence in Writing

‘Uthman would send letters to his workers, governors, commanders of armies, and the trustees of the treasuries.

His style of writing letters spoke of his personality perfectly. His writing was free of affectation, flattery, or prolixity. It was purely a call to righteousness, characterized by straightforwardness, easiness, and simplicity.

`Uthman's Excellence in Public Speaking

`Uthman's public speaking was the same as his style of writing, intelligible and smooth, but at the same time it did not lack eloquence and elegance. It reached hearts before reaching ears and minds.

Briefly, these were `Uthman's characteristics:

1. He would stand in prayer at night, earnestly supplicating and imploring Allah (Exalted be He).
2. He would fast during the day in humility.
3. He would generously spend his money without limit.
4. He would carry his sword whenever called for *Jihad*.

May Allah bless you, 'O Man with Two Lights'

The Sedition

Islam brought about a tremendous change in the map of the surrounding world and in its beliefs and systems. This change could not pass without its effects being reflected, in one way or another, on Islam itself, namely in its society and its state, and especially on the leaders and pioneers who bore the burdens of achieving this great transformation.

The vast Islamic victories during that time tore apart the kingdoms of Persia and Byzantium. In less than forty years, more than half the globe was illuminated by the light of truth, and its people embraced the religion of Islam and welcomed it with joyful hearts, having been freed from the oppression and enslavement of the Persians and Byzantines.

However, the resentment of the remnants of these collapsed powers remained: a fire simmering beneath the ashes.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) could discern these ominous repercussions from behind the veils. It was narrated on the authority of Ibn `Umar that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **“When my *Ummah* walks with arrogance—i.e., with pride—and its servants are the children of kings, the children of Persians and Byzantines, the vilest of them will be set against the best of them.”**¹

In this hadith, the Prophet (PBBUH) was pointing to the inevitable reactions that would follow the great liberation of lands, preparing Muslims to be on their guard.

¹ Reported by Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 2261.

The First Signs of Sedition

The assassination of the great Caliph, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, was the first sign of this dangerous repercussion. It was a clear warning that the adverse reactions to these Islamic victories had begun.

As Umar's sun set, fierce conspiracies found a wide outlet, which broke out in the form of several armed wars that confronted the Muslims in many regions during the early caliphate of `Uthman ibn `Affan (may Allah be pleased with him), as discussed earlier. Even though the Muslim armies had successfully disciplined the troublemakers, crushed their armies, and shattered their hopes of breaching the borders of the Muslim State, resulting in them laying down their weapons submissively defeated, they did not relinquish the rancor in their hearts. After their failure on the battlefield, they decided to resort to another method: to undermine the Muslim State from within and instigate discord and seditions into the front ranks of the Muslim leaders, including the most prominent Companions, and then among the ranks of the masses in the various provinces of the state. These were the initial portents of the great sedition and the plotting that surrounded it.

Factors Provoking the Sedition

The forces of evil gathered to sow the seeds of sedition and weave its threads. These provocative forces were the following:

1. The Byzantine Empire

Islam dissipated this empire's once mighty strength and reduced its territories to just some narrow borders.

2. The Persian Empire

The Persian Empire suffered the same fate as the Byzantine Empire. It lost all its advantages and benefits because of Islam, as well as its vast treasures and influence.

In the Byzantine Empire, as in Persia, the priests, consuls, court nobles, and feudal lords used to own the land and monopolize trade and wealth. All these people harbored a hatred for the Arabs and Muslims that matched the vast treasures, influence, and power they had lost.

3. The Jews

These were the Jews who were expelled from Madinah and became a dispersed population due to their treachery. They included the Jews of Banu Qaynuqa` and Banu Nadir, who were exiled to the Levant, which they turned—even after the Islamic liberation of it—into a center for creating and spreading sedition everywhere.

Just as the Byzantines and Persians acted from outside the Muslim State, the Jews acted from within. It was neither a vain whim nor a coincidence that a Jew came to Madinah from Yemen during the reign of `Uthman, claiming to have studied and loved Islam and declaring his conversion. This Jew, under the guise of his conversion to Islam, played the most dangerous and devastating role in tearing apart the unity of the Muslims and preparing for armed sedition. This man was `Abdullah ibn Saba, whose destructive activities will be discussed in some detail.

4. The General Climate

In addition to the aforementioned main and driving factors for sedition, there were other secondary factors that shaped or provided the climate in which sedition would flourish.

Prominent among these factors were the following:

1. The emergence of tendencies to certain fanaticism, tribalism, and demagoguery in many regions of the Muslim State.
2. Frequent complaints from the masses. When complaints are easy to make, calamities become imminent. Turning away from people's complaints is a trial, and responding to them is a double trial, because they encourage further complaints and deepen the calamities.
3. Affluent living conditions and people's enjoyment of worldly pleasures. Whereas worldly blessings and pleasures were once subject to the desire of elevating oneself above worldly attachments, they then became subject to the will of the self, which yearns for more worldly pleasures and luxury.
4. Mistakes committed by some governors.

Although these factors were not the primary drivers of the sedition, they created the general climate exploited by the organizers of the sedition.

These forces sharpened their fangs during the reign of `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him). They all focused their evil efforts on fueling doubts, weakening loyalty to the state, escalating crises, and transforming tension from a constructive force driving people to seek a path toward enhancement into a destructive force and ruinous chaos.

The Emergence of Opposition

It was natural, after the aforementioned changes in the Muslim community, namely the shift in moods and priorities and the mistakes some governors committed, that some forms of opposition would emerge.

This opposition can be divided into two types:

First: Wholesome Opposition

This was an opposition that aimed at achieving the good of the nation and worked for the good of the country and its people. It kept within the bounds of truthful speech and honest advice. It was led by a group of the best of the Companions, including `Ali ibn Abu Talib, Abu Dhar Al-Ghifari, `Ammar ibn Yasir, and others.

Second: Malicious or Conspiratorial Opposition

This form of opposition concealed its true intentions behind the guise of acting for the welfare of the public. Actually, it worked to undermine the state and destabilize it from within by inflicting devastating blows on the religion, the state, and the *Ummah*. It was led internally by a group of hypocrites, supported and incited by the aforementioned forces of evil, both internally and externally.

Perhaps we should call it a conspiracy, not an opposition.

First: The Wholesome Opposition

Some Companions expressed some objections to Uthman's rule.

These objections centered around the following themes:

1. The governors: The Caliph was criticized for dismissing a number of Companions and appointing a number of his relatives in their place.
2. His attitude toward some Companions: A great deal of controversy arose over some measures taken against some of the Companions.
3. His stance on the *Ijtihad* (juristic effort to infer expert legal rulings) exercised by some jurists to address certain issues and his own *Ijtihad*.

The primary subject here is not concerned with defending, refuting, or responding to these objections. They have been thoroughly debated between defenders and critics. Rather, the purpose here is to shed light on the opposition of the venerable Companions—the wholesome opposition—and the sincere respect and desire for reform it carried. On the other hand, there was the opposition, or the conspiracy, directed by the hypocrites: the malicious opposition, and the desire for devastation and ruin it carried.

Etiquette of Opposition

Some Companions disagreed with their Caliph, but no matter how intense the opposition or the extent of the disagreement between the noble Companions was, it never deviated from the spirit of respect, friendship, and lofty manners.

1. Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him), along with some of the noble Companions, believed that *Al-Tulaqa* were not entitled to the leadership of the Muslims. *Al-Tulaqa* referred to those individuals who embraced Islam on the day of the Liberation of Makkah, when the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) looked upon their trembling crowds and gave them a general amnesty, saying: **“Go, for you are free.”** Among these people were the Umayyad emirs, around whom the dispute revolved.

In contrast, Caliph `Uthman ibn `Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) believed that Islam erases whatever came before it and that repentance erases whatever came before it. Despite this, he did not hesitate to dismiss anyone proven to be convicted or guilty of a major sin, even if they were his relatives. This was the case, as was previously mentioned, regarding Al-Walid ibn `Uqbah, the governor of Kufa and his maternal brother, when it was proven that he had drunk alcohol. `Uthman ordered that he should receive the penalty of flogging, and he dismissed him from his position despite the victories Al-Walid had achieved.

2. The eminent Companion Abu Dhar Al-Ghifari derived, from the fundamental principles of Islam, a method of asceticism and a way for distributing wealth. He believed that wealth is entrusted by Allah into the safekeeping of His servants. Each should spend of that whereof Allah has made them trustees according to their needs and necessities, and no more. He regarded the caliphate of `Uthman as an extension of the days of divine revelation (i.e., the era of the Prophet, PBBUH) and the days of the two Sheikhs (Abu Bakr and `Umar).

On the other hand, many of the Companions believed that there was nothing wrong with enjoying the pleasures of life, as long as they were lawful. `Uthman permitted this. However, Abu Dhar, while he was tolerant of moderate enjoyment of pleasures, was not tolerant of extravagance, luxury, and the accumulation of wealth. Thus, the clash between the two ways of thinking occurred.

In the Levant, where there was much luxury and comfortable living, Abu Dhar raised the banner of opposition, reciting to the people the ayah: ﴿And those who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in Allah's Way—announce unto them a painful torment﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Tawbah 9:34), and other ayahs that discourage extravagance. His call was well received by the people. Mu`awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan, the governor of Syria, tried to calm his anger, but to no avail. However, Mu`awiyah's conduct remained marked by reverence and respect for the noble Companion Abu Dhar. Mu`awiyah wrote to `Uthman notifying him that Abu Dhar was inciting the people of Syria. `Uthman summoned Abu Dhar, and after Abu Dhar returned to Madinah, a conversation took place between them. However, neither was able to convince the other of his view. The matter ended with Abu Dhar asking the Caliph to allow him to live in Al-Rabadha, where he remained to die alone, as the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) foretold him.

3. A disagreement arose between `Ammar ibn Yasir and the Caliph over some issues. The situation escalated between `Ammar and one of the Caliph's workers, who harmed and beat `Ammar, without permission or knowledge of the Caliph. When the Caliph learned of this, he said: "By Allah, I did not order him [to beat you], nor did I approve of his beating. Here is my hand for `Ammar, let him take revenge on me."

4. ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ud disagreed with the Caliph, and the dispute between them escalated. In the meantime, Ibn Mas‘ud fell terminally ill, but the Caliph was unaware of his illness. Once the Caliph learned of his illness, he went to Ibn Mas‘ud’s house, overcome with deep remorse. He apologized deeply, several times, to Ibn Mas‘ud. When Ibn Mas‘ud died, the Caliph stood at his grave, tears streaming down his cheeks, saying: “By Allah, you have buried the best among those who remained of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).”

Thus, the wholesome opposition continued its path, insisting on change and transformation toward what it deemed best. It resorted to constant dialogue with the Caliph. But this dialogue did not undermine faith or corrupt friendship.

Second: The Pernicious Opposition (Conspiracy)

Amid this climate, another type of opposition emerged, finding the right time to spew its venom. While the opposition shown by the Companions aimed to build and develop everything, this opposition aimed to destroy and demolish everything—the state along with its foundations, institutions, and leadership. Hence, it is more proper that it be called ‘the pernicious conspiracy’.

‘Abdullah ibn Saba’

The leader of this sedition and conspiracy was a man named ‘Abdullah ibn Saba’, also known by the nickname of Ibn Al-Sawda’. He was a Jewish man who came to Madinah from Yemen under suspicious circumstances and declared his conversion to Islam. Not only that, but he also feigned intense zeal for Islam, its values, and its sanctities.

Ibn Saba’ Plans His Evil Conspiracy

From the very first moment of his arrival at Madinah, Ibn Saba’ began planning his evil conspiracy:

- He listened attentively throughout Madinah to every word and every piece of news. With his keen ears, he heard about the disagreements taking place between the Companions and the Caliph.
- He silently and shrewdly studied every aspect of life in Madinah, examining its points of strength and weakness.

- He began searching for news from the different regions and cities, scrutinizing the great reputation of the Companions and the influence and status of each of them.

Ibn Saba' Works on His Malicious Plan

Having gathered his material, decided on his path, and completed his plan, Ibn Saba' immediately set to work to realize it:

- He began by directing his initial attack against the Caliph himself and the legitimacy of his position as Caliph. Therefore, it was necessary for him to choose a figure from among the Companions who was equal in stature to the Caliph. He claimed that `Ali was the rightful successor of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and that he was the most deserving of the caliphate, claiming that `Uthman had seized this position and stole this right from its rightful owner. He supported his call with numerous hadiths in which the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had praised `Ali. However, there are also many hadiths in which the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) praised `Uthman.
- His call fell on deaf ears in Madinah. Even Imam `Ali, upon learning of his malicious claims, rebuked him and warned the Muslims of his evil intentions.
- Despite this, Ibn Saba' did not despair; he set out, hurrying like the wind, igniting the fires of discord throughout the lands of Islam. He went to Basra, and when `Abdullah ibn `Amir, the governor of Basra at the time, learned of his presence and the unacceptable views he was spreading, he summoned him to ask him: "Who are you?" He replied: "I am a man of the People of the Book. I desire Islam and your

protection.” Ibn `Amir rebuked him and said: “This is not what has been reported to me. Depart from me (i.e., leave this land).” Consequently, he left Basra for Kufa but was expelled from there also. He went to Syria but was also expelled. Then he went to Egypt, where his claims nested, laid eggs, and hatched offspring.

- During his travels, Ibn Saba’ succeeded in selecting supporters from among those who became infatuated with him, whom he then unleashed to sow the fire of discord across the globe. And so, the conspiracy started to produce influence and gain followers.

A Conspiracy, Not a Revolution

These hostile movements began, seemingly committed to protecting the state. However, in reality, they were deeply destructive and vengeful toward everything around them.

Many writers refer to these movements as a ‘revolution’ and describe those who initiated them as ‘revolutionaries.’ This is an inappropriate description. These people were not revolutionaries, and their movement was not a revolution. It was none other than a conspiracy. ‘A group of conspirators’ would be the accurate description for those who organized this movement.

If a corrective movement against the Caliph was inevitable, the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), who disagreed with him, would have been more proper persons to carry it out. But, as we shall see, they remained loyal to the Caliph and were sincerely concerned for his life, despite their difference in opinions.

Matters, therefore, should be called by their true names. These people were defiant conspirators, and their movement was nothing but a conspiracy, devised and driven by the external forces of evil that have been previously mentioned.

The Beginning of the Conspiracy and the Plan Devised by the Conspirators

ʿAbdullah ibn Saba’ began to form the plan and ways for his followers to begin executing the conspiracy.

The plan revolved around the following points:

1. Pretending to enjoin good and forbid evil. The conspirators adopted this slogan to attract the largest possible number of followers.
2. Turning people against the governors. They began to attack the officials and governors, either exaggerating their mistakes, ignoring their achievements, refusing their presence, or inciting rebellion against them.
3. Demanding the removal of the Caliph. They challenged his legitimacy and began spreading the claims of Ibn Saba’ that ʿAli was the successor of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). People, therefore, had to rise in revolt to restore justice to its rightful owner.

Ibn Saba’ and his advocates skillfully exploited the disagreements between the Caliph and some of the Companions—as mentioned above—as well as the mistakes and behavior of some officials and governors.

The Plan Applied by Caliph ʿUthman to Overcome the Conspiracy

When news of these movements reached Madinah, ʿUthman consulted with the Companions and began preparing to quell this sedition.

The plan revolved around three axes:

First: Sending Envoys to the Trouble Spots

ʿUthman chose a group of Companions whose integrity, trustworthiness, and piety were unquestionable. He sent them to the trouble spots to investigate the situation and determine what went wrong.

ʿUthman chose Muhammad ibn Salamah, whom ʿUmar ibn Al-Khattab had entrusted with inspecting his governors and officials and ensuring their compliance with the set standards and rules. He sent him to Kufa.

He chose ʿAbdullah ibn ʿUmar, the pious and devout imam, and sent him to the Levant.

He also chose ʿAmmar ibn Yasir, the great striver, and sent him to Egypt.

Please note that ʿAmmar had a disagreement with ʿUthman, but it was a wholesome disagreement, as was outlined earlier.

He chose Usamah ibn Zayd, the beloved and the son of the beloved one to the Prophet (PBBUH), and he sent him to Basra.

The envoys set off, each to his own destination, and as soon as they set foot in the country assigned to them, the conspirators disappeared from the scene. The Caliph's envoys continued to investigate the situation and gather people's opinions. They found absolutely no complaints. All the envoys returned to their homeland, and upon their return, they said to the Caliph: "By Allah, we learned nothing but good about your governors."

Second: Sending Messages to the Provinces

The Caliph was not satisfied with the reports he received from his envoys. He sent messages to all provinces, saying: "I have heard that some of you have been insulted, and others have been beaten. Whoever has a grievance, let him come to me during the Hajj season and take their due, whether from me or from my officials." He sent a decree to his governors, stating that anyone with a grievance should come, at the expense of the public treasury, during the Hajj season to present their grievance. The Hajj season arrived, and not even one person came forward with a single grievance, indicating that the matter was not as serious as the conspirators described.

Third: Inviting the Governors of All Provinces to Debate the Issue

Then Caliph `Uthman sent messages for his governors in all provinces to come during the Hajj season to discuss the issue, consult together, and take the necessary measures.

When they arrived, `Uthman assembled them and said to them: "Woe to you! What are these grievances? By Allah, I fear that they may be truthful."

They replied: "Did you not send your envoys? Did you not hear the common people? Did your envoys not return to you without receiving any

complaints from them? By Allah, those who claim there are such grievances neither spoke the truth nor acted righteously. We do not know any grounds for this issue, and it is not permissible to accept this rumor.”

ʿUthman then consulted them on how to calm this turmoil. Their opinions were as follows:

- Saʿid ibn Al-ʿAs said: “The heads of the turmoil, ʿAbdullah ibn Saba’ and his supporters, should be cut off.” ʿUthman (may Allah be pleased with him) responded: “That is an opinion, but I will not do it. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) refused to execute ʿAbdullah ibn Abu Salul, who was the chief of the hypocrites.”
- ʿAbdullah ibn Saʿd ibn Abu Sarh said: “Use money to reconcile with them.” ʿUthman rejected this proposal as well.
- Muʿawiyah said: “This is a deliberate conspiracy, and there is no basis for these rumors.” He offered to accompany ʿUthman to the Levant until things would settle down. The Caliph refused, saying: “I choose no place over being close to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).”

The meeting ended with ʿUthman saying to them: “I have heard everything you have suggested. Every matter has a door through which it can be approached. This fate that is feared for this *Ummah* will come to pass. Its door, which is now closed, will surely be opened. Let us try to keep it ajar through leniency and compromise, as long as things remain within the boundaries set by Allah. The millstone of sedition is starting to turn, so blessed is ʿUthman if he dies without moving it.” The governors returned to their countries. Muʿawiyah escorted Caliph ʿUthman because his route to the Levant passed through Madinah.

In Madinah, ‘Uthman met with the senior Companions, including ‘Ali, Talhah, and Al-Zubayr, in the presence of Mu‘awiyah. Mu‘awiyah again offered the Caliph either to escort him to the Levant or to send an army from the Levant to stay in Madinah to protect the Caliph’s life. The Caliph refused, saying: “I fear that they will fill Madinah and make it too crowded for the Companions of the Messenger of Allah, the Muhajirun and Ansar.” Mu‘awiyah replied: “Then they [the conspirators] will fight you.”

The great Caliph replied steadfastly: “Allah is Sufficient for me, and He is the Best Disposer of affairs.”

Mu‘awiyah left Madinah and advised the senior Companions, saying: “I have left a venerable sheikh behind with you, so treat him well and support him. You will be more fortunate than him [if you do so].” Then he departed.

The Troublemakers March to Madinah

The conspirators continued to mobilize people and spread venom to carry out their plot.

In Shawwal of the year 35 A.H., the troublemakers began their march. Six thousand men left Egypt, along with a similar number from Kufa and Basra. They left, pretending to be on Hajj. Their armed caravans proceeded until they all camped on the outskirts of Madinah, intent on deposing the Caliph by force.

The Hard Search for Legitimate Leadership

In search for a legitimate cover for their sinful movement, the conspirators settled on the opinion that one of the prominent Companions must be their leader. However, they disagreed over who this leader should be and who would succeed `Uthman. The people of Kufa wanted Talhah ibn `Ubaidullah, whereas the people of Basra wanted Al-Zubayr ibn Al-`Awwam, and the Egyptians wanted `Ali ibn Abu Talib. They expected to find acceptance from these Companions, relying on the disagreements that occurred between them and the Caliph.

They sent a delegation to present the matter to Imam `Ali. As soon as Imam `Ali learned of their intentions and saw their crowds gathered, he shouted at them with all his might, saying: "The righteous have learned that you are cursed by the tongue of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Return to your countries! May Allah not grant you morning!" The delegation then went to

both Talhah and Zubayr, only to receive the same response, in the same words and with the same force. Little did they realize that all these men were drawn from the same source, ‘the school of the beloved Chosen Prophet (PBBUH)’. They would never ratify such an act, even if they disagreed with their Caliph.

Abu Dhar Teaches the Conspirators a Tough Lesson

After their hopes and expectations were dashed by these firm and decisive responses from `Ali, Talhah, and Zubayr, the conspirators considered presenting the matter—the leadership of their movement—to the Companion who most disagreed with `Uthman, namely the one living in self-imposed exile in Rabadha: Abu Dhar Al-Ghifari. As soon as they presented this matter to him, he taught them an extremely tough lesson. He stunned them and shook their foundations when he responded with these rebuking words:

“By Allah, if `Uthman were to crucify me on the tallest piece of wood or the longest rope, I would listen, obey, be patient, and anticipate a reward from Allah, and I would see that this is best for me.”

“If he were to order me to travel to distant lands across the horizon, I would listen, be patient, and anticipate a reward from Allah, and I would see that this is best for me.”

“If he were to bring me to my home, I would listen, obey, be patient, and anticipate a reward from Allah, and I would see that this is best for me.”

The conspirators returned, dragging their disappointment.

Negotiations

After their plan to attract the senior Companions completely failed, the conspirators returned to Imam `Ali for him to present their demands to the Caliph:

- The dismissal of Marwan ibn Al-Hakam, the head of the caliphate's office.
- The dismissal of the provincial governors against whom complaints had been raised.

But the Caliph believed that if he complied with their demands, the state's prestige and future influence would be damaged, which was a matter that concerned him greatly. He stipulated that, in order to resolve the crisis, these men must first leave Madinah. After they had returned to their country, he would dismiss Marwan and the provincial governors who were the subject of complaints. He gave `Ali a sincere promise and a firm covenant to this effect.

Imam `Ali went to the intriguers, accompanied by Muhammad ibn Maslamah and Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas. The Imam was able to convince them to return to their countries and depart from Madinah.

The Alleged Letter

Everyone left, pretending to return to their homelands, only to terrorize Madinah, three days later, by returning in the morning, marching into the city to occupy its streets.

Amid the astonishment and bewilderment of the people of Madinah, Imam `Ali went to meet the schemers to find out why they had broken their promise and returned. He spoke to the Egyptian leaders. They spread out a

letter before him, saying: “We arrested a man on the road carrying this letter, bearing the Caliph’s seal. It contained an order to the governor of Egypt to kill and crucify us.”

The Imam then turned to the Basrans and Kufians, asking them why they had returned. They replied: “We came to support our Egyptian brothers.” The Imam wondered: “But you went by a different route. How did you know about this letter?” This was a plot hatched in the dark—meaning that this was a premeditated act.

The Imam went to the Caliph to inquire about the matter. ʿUthman replied: “By Allah, I did not write, order, or know about this letter.” ʿAli said: “ʿUthman spoke the truth.”

These troublemakers had a history of forgery. When they decided to march on Madinah, some of their leaders devised a ploy to persuade as many Muslims as possible to march with them. They forged letters using the names of the Mother of the Believers, Lady ʿAishah, Talhah, and Al-Zubayr calling on the Muslims to march on Madinah to fight against ʿUthman. The truth about these false letters and their message was not revealed until after the event had occurred and the Caliph was assassinated. It would not seem strange that those who forged these letters were the same ones who fabricated the letter allegedly from ʿUthman.

But this was not the time for conversation and discussion. This was a sedition, surging toward its peak, and its ugly face had now been fully exposed. The conspirators—as referred to earlier—began to complete the plot, which they had masterfully planned and executed.

The Beginning of the Siege

The conspirators proceeded with their plan, their ears and minds deaf. They reached the residence of Caliph `Uthman, the venerable Companion of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), ‘the Man with Two Lights,’ the devout and humble worshiper. They proceeded to his residence to besiege him, demanding either his removal or his execution.

With amazing steadfastness, the Caliph refused to abdicate. Not out of a desire for the glory and prestige of the position he held, even though he was over eighty years old; rather, he was a uniquely committed man who honored his responsibilities, never backing down from challenges. This quality of his was hidden beneath his extreme humility and modesty. We would never have seen it so radiant except in a crisis and tribulation like this one. As `Uthman saw the conspiratorial tide clearly creeping its way up and reaching the residence of the Caliph, with his keen insight, he realized that his most important and sacred duty was to preserve the prestige and authority of the state. This destructive sedition and mutiny aimed to devastate the entity of the state and undermine its sovereignty. Preserving the prestige of the state became a sacred duty. The great Caliph bore all the responsibilities and consequences that came with it.

“I Would Not Like to Meet Allah Almighty Guilty of Having Shed a Drop of Muslim blood”

The Muslims prepared themselves to defend their Caliph and take up arms against these inciters, to deter them from their transgression and wrongdoing. They asked the devout and repentant Caliph to choose one of two measures:

1. Fighting these troublemakers:

- The Caliph replied: “As for fighting, no. By Allah, I will not be the first, after succeeding the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) in his nation, to shed blood. I would not like to meet Allah guilty of having shed a drop of Muslim blood.”

2. Opening an exit door at the back of his house from which to set out to Makkah or the Levant:

- The Caliph replied: “No, by Allah, I will never leave the abode of my emigration and my proximity to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) as long as I should live.”

Thus, the great Sheikh stood firm with pride, facing his inevitable fate. He persevered to prevent bloodshed, even if his own blood would be spilled. He preserved the prestige of the state, even if the price would be his own life.

Addressing the Conspirators

The conspirators tightened their siege around the Caliph’s house, preventing his visitors from seeing him and denying him water: the water flowing from the Well of Rumah which he had purchased early after the *Hijrah* and gifted to the Muslims. They not only prevented visitors and denied the Caliph water, but they also prevented him from going out to the mosque. They attacked him with vulgar insults in public. The Caliph remained steadfast, doing his utmost to ensure that not a single drop of blood would be shed for his sake.

‘Uthman continued to address the conspirators. After he was denied water, he said to them: “I ask you by Allah, do you know that I bought the Well of Rumah with my own money so that people could drink fresh water from it?”

They replied: “Yes.” He asked: “Then why do you forbid me from drinking from it?”

Then `Uthman said: “I ask you by Allah, do you know that I bought such-and-such land and added it to the mosque?” They replied: “Yes.” He said: ‘Do you know of anyone who was forbidden to pray in it before me?’ They found no response.

Then `Uthman said: “I ask you by Allah, do you know that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said such-and-such about me?” and he stated some of his praiseworthy deeds.

`Uthman’s words had an impact on many of them to the point that they said: “Do not be hard on the Commander of the Believers!” To this, Ibn Saba’ and his supporters—the devils who were fueling the sedition—replied by shouting at them and rekindling the fire of turmoil. `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) never tired of addressing them; but whenever he closed one door to sedition, they opened another.

Some Memorable Stances That the Companions Took While Defending Caliph `Uthman

During this great ordeal that befell the *Ummah*, the genuinely excellent character of the Companions appeared, both those who expressed support and those who had earlier expressed opposition—the wholesome opposition—as has been described. All the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) stood united against these conspirators.

Here are some of the stances which the Companions made, written in letters of light:

As was previously mentioned, `Ali ibn Abu Talib, Al-Zubayr ibn Al-`Awwam, and Talhah ibn `Ubaidullah unequivocally rejected to assume leadership of this unrest. They all gave a decisive and rebuking refusal to these conspirators. The harshest response came from the Companion who most strongly disagreed with `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him): Abu Dhar Al-Ghifari.

Imam `Ali

- Imam `Ali was the peace envoy between the Caliph and the conspirators from the beginning until the end of the problem.
- Imam `Ali stood up to the conspirators when they prevented the Caliph from drinking water and from going out to the mosque, saying to them: “O people, what you are doing is not the way of any human, believers or disbelievers. Do not cut off the water supply from him.”

They responded stubbornly and arrogantly: “By Allah, not a single drop of water [will be allowed for him].” So Imam ʿAli left angrily.

- When the siege intensified, Imam ʿAli came to ʿUthman’s house, having ordered his two sons, Al-Hassan and Al-Husayn, not to leave ʿUthman’s door. He said to Al-Hassan: “Enter upon the Commander of the Believers and tell him: I have only come to support you, so command me to do what you want.” Al-Hassan entered, and then he exited, saying to his father: “The Commander of the Believers tells you: ‘I have no need for fighting and bloodshed.’” Imam ʿAli took off his black turban, threw it in front of the door, and began calling out: ﴿This is so that he may know that I have not betrayed him in secret. And verily, Allah does not guide the plot of the betrayers!﴾ (translated meaning of Yusuf 12:52).

ʿAbdullah ibn ʿUmar

ʿUthman summoned ʿAbdullah ibn ʿUmar to consult him about the matter, saying: “These people want to depose me. If I comply, they will leave me alone. If I refuse, they will kill me. What do you think?”

ʿIbn Umar replied: “Tell me, if you abdicate, will you remain in this world forever?”

The Caliph replied: “No.”

Ibn ʿUmar asked: “Tell me, if you do not abdicate, will your lifespan be reduced in any way? Do they possess Paradise or Hellfire?”

The Caliph replied: “No.”

Ibn ʿUmar said: “Do not be the one who initiates such a practice in Islam. Do not take off the garment that Allah has clothed you with.”

The Caliph was pleased with Ibn ʿUmar’s opinion and recalled the advice of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to him when he said: **“O ʿUthman, Allah will clothe you with a garment. If the hypocrites want you to take it off, do not take it off until you meet me.”**¹ The garment meant the position of the Caliph in which Allah placed him.

Abu Hurairah

Abu Hurairah stood with his weapon drawn, defending the Caliph of the Muslims. The devout and repentant Sheikh, ʿUthman ibn ʿAffan, said to him: “Would you be pleased to kill all of humanity and me with them? By Allah, if you kill one man, it is as if you have killed all of humanity.”

ʿAbdullah ibn Masʿud

Some of those conspirators visited ʿAbdullah ibn Masʿud during his terminal illness, and during their conversation, they threatened to kill the Caliph. Despite the disagreement between him and the Caliph, ʿAbdullah rebuked them, saying: “If you kill him, you will never have someone [as righteous] as him.”

ʿAmmar ibn Yasir

After the conspirators besieged the Caliph and denied him water, ʿAmmar—despite his profound disagreement with ʿUthman—became enraged and shouted at them: “*Subhan Allah* (Glory be to Allah)! Are you denying water to someone who bought the Well of Rumah and gifted it to the Muslims?” He

¹ Reported by Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 3705.

carried the waterskin himself to the Caliph's house, defying the siege, unconcerned by the dangers around him. He brought the water to the Caliph for him to drink and perform ablution. He continued to do this every day until the Caliph was martyred.

There are many examples of the steadfast support shown by the Companions for their Caliph. Had it not been for the Caliph's persistence and concern for the safety of the people and for preventing their blood from being shed, the situation would have been totally different.

These, and other incidents, manifested that the disagreement between the Caliph and these noble Companions had not overwhelmed the glorious companionship that brought them together as brothers in Islam.

The Final Chapter in ʿUthman’s Life

The siege dragged on and on until, due to the familiarity with its presence, the people of Madinah started coming and going, living their normal lives after having resumed their familiar routine. The siege lasted forty days. There were more than seven hundred Muhajirun and Ansar who visited the Caliph’s house, along with many of his other supporters. Had he permitted them to proceed, they would have been capable of defending him.

The Caliph said to them: “I beseech everyone on whom I have a claim to restrain his hand and go home.” He also said to his slaves: “Whoever sheaths his sword is free.”

The people headed home, complying with the Caliph’s insistent request to refrain from fighting and from bloodshed.

However, a group of young Companions remained at the gates of his house, concealing their weapons, ready to ransom the Caliph with themselves. At their head were Ali’s sons, Al-Hassan and Al-Husayn, along with ʿAbdullah ibn Al-Zubayr, ʿAbdullah ibn ʿUmar, and others.

As for the conspirators, they feared that the siege would drag on too long, and in the meantime soldiers from other provinces would join those in Madinah, as news arrived that an army sent by Muʿawiyah was advancing from the Levant. As a result, they began to prepare for the final blow.

“Break Your Fast with Us Tomorrow, O ‘Uthman”

‘Uthman received an honest invitation to Paradise. On the evening before his martyrdom, after praying all night, reciting the Qur’an, and prostrating himself before his Lord, he went to bed and slept. In his dream, he saw the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) saying to him: **“Break your fast with us tomorrow, O ‘Uthman.”**¹ In the morning, ‘Uthman began to narrate to the people what he had seen and heard, delighted by the vision. He was sure it was true. He fasted that day. Only a short time separated him from his appointment with the beloved Prophet (PBBUH) to embark on his journey to eternity.

Attacking the Caliph’s House

When the leaders of the unrest lost patience and feared that the situation would turn against them, they ordered an attack on the Caliph’s house. However, the group of pure young men under the command of Al-Hassan, Al-Husayn, Ibn Al-Zubayr, and Ibn ‘Umar performed admirably until they repelled them from the Caliph’s doors in humiliation.

Here, the foolishness of the conspirators increased, and their devil conjured up another idea in their minds: to climb over the wall of the house adjacent to the Caliph’s house. From there, they would then sneak into the Caliph’s house.

“I Will Not Take Off the Garment that Allah Has Clothed Me With”

Some of the inciters who succeeded in sneaking into the Caliph’s house said to ‘Uthman: “Take it (the position of the caliph) off, and we will leave you alone.” The Caliph replied: “By Allah, I will not take off the garment that Allah has clothed me with.” This man left, and another came in and said the same thing as the first, but then returned. Then ‘Abdullah ibn Salam came to them

¹ Reported in *Al-Mustadrak ‘ala Al-Sahihayn* by Hakim al-Nishapuri, hadith no. 4610.

to advise them, saying: “O people, do not draw Allah’s sword among you. By Allah, if you draw it, you will not sheathe it. Woe to you, your authority today is imposed [merely] by a whip; if you kill him (your Caliph), it will not be imposed except by the sword. Woe to you, your city is surrounded by angels; if you kill him, they will leave it.”

But they became deaf, blind, and void of understanding.

“Leave My Beard Alone; Your Father Revered It”

Only a few moments later, the plan was accomplished. Suddenly, the Caliph saw those who had sneaked in before him. Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr was leading them. He was among those who were deceived and tricked by these conspirators. He held `Uthman’s beard in his hand and shook it threateningly. The Caliph said to him with the calmness of those who fully trusted and believed in Allah and His Decree: “O my nephew, leave my beard alone. By Allah, your father revered it. If he saw you in this position, he would be ashamed of what you are doing.”

These words shook Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr, and his hand recoiled in awe, as if he had awakened from his slumber. He quickly left the house, pushing aside those who had sneaked into it before him, trying to dissuade them from their error. The leaders of the sedition went wild with anger, frustrated by the stance taken by Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr, which signified for them a foreboding fate.

Winning Martyrdom

They climbed the Caliph’s house and stormed into his private chamber, committing their heinous crime. The Caliph was sitting peacefully and serenely,

reading the Qur'an. He did not resist, did not move from his seat, and did not abandon his copy of the Qur'an. Perhaps he did not even feel their intrusion!

`Uthman only said, when they struck his palm: "By Allah, it was the first hand to write down the *Mufasssal* (the shorts chapters of the Qur'an) and inscribe the ayahs of the Qur'an." Blood trickled down the Qur'an, which he held close to his chest so that the blood would not obliterate any of its ayahs as he gave up his soul. After more strikes of the sword, his pure body fell back, and on top of him was Allah's Book, his constant companion and friend.

The third Caliph was martyred on the eighteenth of Dhul-Hijah in the year 35 A.H. at the age of eighty-two. The assassination occurred between the afternoon and evening hours, allowing his pure soul enough time to reach the appointed time at the *Iftar* table in Paradise with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and his two close Companions (Abu Bakr and `Umar).



The life of the third Caliph thus ended. His primary concern was that the banner of the caliphate should not fall from his right hand while he was still alive and that he would not meet Allah with a single drop of Muslim blood on his hand or around his neck. He achieved his aim, meeting Allah with a clean heart.

The truth is that the assassination of `Uthman ibn `Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) fully exposed the reality of the conspiracy and the true nature of its leaders. It also revealed the deceived masses who did not lack good intentions but were deceived and misled. They followed a handful of those who were lying in wait to attack Islam. The calamity not only caused the

assassination of the Caliph, but also opened the doors of turmoil, which Muslims suffered from at that time and have been suffering from to this day.

There is no power or strength except with Allah, the Most High, the Almighty.

May Allah have mercy on you, O ‘Man with Two Lights’ O the one before whom the angels of the Most Merciful are modest.

May Allah have mercy on you, O ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan.

4. `Ali ibn Abu Talib



May Allah Be Pleased with Him

`Ali ibn Abu Talib

Now, dear readers, let us cross into another garden of this fragrant company of the Ten Given Glad Tidings of Paradise. This time, the garden we are visiting is unlike any other. It is a garden of lush flowers and a pleasant scent, filling the universe with its fragrance. We continue to smell its fragrance to this day. And it will continue to spread its fragrance all around, throughout the ages.

He was the pious and pure one, raised by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), who later became his father-in-law. He was the father of the two grandsons, Al-Hassan and Al-Husayn. He was an epitome of chivalry, courage, and knowledge. Indeed, he was the dutiful son of Islam.

Let us live the coming pages in the company of the last of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, Imam `Ali ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him and please him.

`Ali's Lineage

He was `Ali ibn Abu Talib ibn `Abdul-Muttalib ibn Hashim ibn `Abd Manaf. He was the paternal cousin of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). His mother was Fatimah bint Asad ibn Hashim ibn `Abd Manaf.

He combined all virtues, being the first Hashemite of two Hashemite parents. All the dignities and good qualities for which this noble family was famous were concentrated in him, namely nobility, courage, chivalry, and intelligence.

ʿAli's Father, Abu Talib

Abu Talib was regarded by the entire Quraysh as a leader who was loved, feared, and respected by everyone, not only for his status among Quraysh but also for his lofty soul and sublime qualities. Abu Talib took heroic stands for Islam. He shouldered the burden of supporting the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and resisting the evil that Quraysh threw the Messenger's way. None of the Prophet's paternal uncles, or even the entire tribe of Banu Hashim, contributed with him in this kinship obligation.

Abu Talib stood firm against Quraysh and thwarted all their plots. Desperate to dissuade the Prophet of Allah (PBBUH) from calling people to Islam and dissuade Abu Talib from supporting him, Quraysh resorted to an action that Arab values and morals disdained. They resorted to boycotting Banu Hashim and Banu ʿAbdul-Muttalib.

Banu Hashim and Banu ʿAbdul-Muttalib sided with Abu Talib and stayed with him in the mountain pass in which they were besieged. They endured the unjust siege for nearly three years, until they had to eat tree leaves to stave off hunger. Abu Talib remained steadfast, rejecting every attempt made by Quraysh to make him abandon the Prophet (PBBUH).

Abu Talib admired all the virtues in his nephew (PBBUH) that he cherished. After Abu Talib's death, the persecution practiced by Quraysh against the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) intensified to the point that he (PBBUH) said: **"Quraysh never harmed me in a way I disliked until Abu Talib died."**

From the lineage of this great father came ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him). ʿAli was not only the son of this hero but the grandson of another hero: his grandfather.

ʿAli's Grandfather, ʿAbdul-Muttalib

ʿAbdul-Muttalib was the one who dug the Well of Zamzam, which Allah, out of His Mercy and Grace, had granted to ʿIsmaʿil (Ishmael, PBBUH) and his mother Hajar (may Allah be pleased with her) in the midst of a scorching desert. Rocks and sand then buried the well.

ʿAbdul-Muttalib was the remarkable man whom people described as the one who provided food for people in the plains and beasts in the mountains. The greatness of his faith in Allah was demonstrated through his stance against Abraha¹, when Abraha invaded Makkah with his army to destroy the Kaʿbah. It was then that ʿAbdul-Muttalib said to him his famous words: “As for the camels, they belong to me. As for the House (the Kaʿbah), it has a Lord Who shall protect it.” He then went to the Kaʿbah and supplicated to Allah with the trust of one very confident in Allah’s victory and relief.

ʿAbdul-Muttalib’s faith in Allah was pure and genuine. There were more than three hundred idols huddled around the Kaʿbah. ʿAbdul-Muttalib did not call upon any of them to save the Kaʿbah. He did not call upon Hubal, Al-At, or Al-ʿUzza. Rather, he called upon Allah and beseeched Him. Allah answered ʿAbdul Muttalib’s supplication immediately. He (Glorified be He) unleashed upon Abraha and his army the weakest of His soldiers, namely flocks of birds.

¹ Abraha was an Ethiopian king who led an attack on Makkah with the intention of destroying the Kaʿbah. According to the Glorious Qurʿan, Abraha’s forces were thwarted by a divine intervention: Allah sent flocks of birds carrying stones from Hell to rain down on the army, causing them to be reduced to ‘straw eaten up,’ effectively destroying them. This event is known as the Year of the Elephant and is recounted in the Surat Al-Fil (105th chapter) of the Qurʿan.

It was `Abdul Muttalib who, when he received the good news of the birth of his grandson, Muhammad ibn `Abdullah (PBBUH), carried the baby in his arms, went to the Ka`bah, and prayed in thankfulness to Allah. He named the baby Muhammad, meaning ‘the Praised One.’ He treated him like a companion during the boy’s childhood. With his hand placed on his grandson, he would say to Abu Talib: “O Abu Talib, this son of mine will have an important future, so protect him and do not let any harm reach him.” Abu Talib kept his promise and took good care of his nephew to the very last moment of his life.¹

Thus, `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) acquired all the virtues and inherited all the noble qualities from his father and grandfather. From them, he inherited the spirit of generosity, determination, and faith in the Supreme Power. He came from the loins of a people known for safeguarding faith in the Creator, upholding the standards of moral conduct and righteousness, and espousing benevolence. However, `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) surpassed them as he knew the true God and was guided to Him.

`Ali’s Upbringing

`Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) was born thirty years after the birth of the Prophet (PBBUH). He was the youngest among the offspring of Abu Talib’s family. His eldest brothers were Ja`far, `Aqil, and Talib. He remained in his father’s house until the age of seven. When a famine struck Quraysh, Abu Talib was advanced in age and could no longer earn a living. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) urged his paternal uncle, Al-`Abbas, to take one of his paternal cousins and rear him, thus relieving his uncle of this burden. `Aqil was the

¹ For more information on Abu Talib and `Abdul-Muttalib, please refer to the first book: “A Biography of the Best Man in Creation” by the author.

most beloved of Abu Talib's sons, so when they presented the matter to him, he told them: "Leave ʿAqil and take whoever you wish." Al-ʿAbbas took Jaʿfar, and the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) took ʿAli, who was seven years old at the time.

In the House of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)

ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) moved into the house of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to grow and flourish under the guidance of the best teacher and educator and with the best mother, Lady Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her). The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) made up for his father's care, and Khadijah also granted him love and affection, as much as she granted her own children.

ʿAli lived in the house of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). His life thereafter proceeded in full accordance with the Messenger of Allah's (PBBUH) style of living. It was a life free of caprices, lusts, or lapses. Even childish playfulness was not part of ʿAli's life. It was as if fate had reserved his hearing and conscience for other words that would change the face of the earth and alter life in all ways.

ʿAli's Physical Description

During His Childhood

A correct description of ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) in his childhood would be a precocious child, ahead of his peers in understanding and in using his abilities to the fullest. At the age of ten, he had grasped something of the prophetic mission, which is difficult for anyone of such a young age to understand and comprehend.

During His Early Adulthood

Those who described ‘Ali as a young man said that he was of medium height, leaning toward shortness, dark-skinned, having a very dark complexion, and bald. He had a white head and a long heavy beard, wide eyes, a handsome face, a cheerful countenance, and broad shoulders. He had strong calf and arm muscles and leaned forward when walking, with a gait similar to that of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

‘Ali possessed immense physical strength. He could grab a man’s arm so strongly it made the man hold his breath, causing him to gulp for air. He could move a stone which could not be moved except by several men. Once he carried a huge door which the strongest of men would find hard to carry.

‘Ali was known for being indifferent to heat and cold, and they did not bother him at all. When he was asked about the reason behind this robustness, he said: “The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent for me on the Day of Khaybar while I was suffering from sore eyes. I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, I have sore eyes.’ He said, **‘O Allah, take away from him heat and cold!’** I have not felt any heat or cold since that day.”¹ This is not a lack of sensitivity to summer and winter, but rather a strong immunity with which Allah endowed him.

¹ Reported by Ahmad, hadith no. 1117.

ʿAli ibn Abu Talib Embraces Islam

ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) grew up in the house of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), imbibing all the noble morals from the best of Allah’s creation. When he was ten years old, divine revelation began to descend upon the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Lady Khadijah was the first to embrace Islam.

One day, ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) entered upon the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and found him praying, with Lady Khadijah praying behind him. After they finished praying, ʿAli asked the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH): “What do I see you doing?” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied: **“I am praying to the Lord of the worlds.”** ʿAli asked him: “And who is the Lord of the worlds?” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied: **“He is One God, with no partner. To Him belongs creation, and all are subject to His Command. He gives life and causes death, and He is able to do all things.”** The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) invited ʿAli to Islam, and he replied: “Let me think.”

ʿAli spent the rest of the night reflecting on what his paternal cousin, his educator and his role model, had told him. In the morning, ʿAli stood before the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to declare: “I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that you are the Messenger of Allah.” He became the first boy to embrace Islam, or, as Anas ibn Malik described him: “the first son of Islam”.

Thus began the journey of `Ali ibn Abu Talib—the strong, trustworthy Muslim who never prostrated to an idol. The first prostration he ever made was to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

The Remarkable Deeds and Honorable Positions That ʿAli Made at the Beginning of the Islamic Call

The Islamic call began in its infancy. ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) was a witness to it, along with a group of early true believers. The house of Al-Arqam on Mount Al-Safa became their assembly place where they would meet secretly. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) would recite to them the divine revelations that had been sent down upon his heart. He (PBBUH) would also lead them in prayer and teach them about Islam. ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) was always an attendant at the house of Al-Arqam. He did not miss a single meeting.

ʿAli's heart was imbued with the beauty, majesty, and secrets of the Glorious Qur'an. He witnessed its revelation, ayah by ayah, until he, truthfully, became worthy of his saying: "Ask me! Ask me whatever you wish about Allah's Book. For by Allah, there is not a single ayah of it that I do not know whether it was revealed during the night or during the day."

A Guide for Everyone Who Seeks the Door of the Beloved Prophet (PBBUH)

Since his early childhood, ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) carried Islam in his heart and bore with it the burdens that only a noble man would undertake. He would meet every stranger he saw who wanted to know the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and hear from him. He would direct him to his place, as he did with Abu Dhar Al-Ghifari when he came to Makkah wanting to meet the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) after hearing about him. Abu Dhar kept

his purpose a secret. When `Ali met him, he took him to his house as a guest. Abu Dhar stayed with `Ali for three nights. He would go out every day looking for someone to guide him to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), but he did not tell `Ali about his intention and `Ali did not ask him. When it was the third night, `Ali asked him: "Will you not tell me what brought you to Makkah?" Abu Dhar replied: "Only if you give me a promise to guide me to what I want." `Ali gave him his promise, just as he had asked. Abu Dhar informed him of his intention and that he sought to meet the new Prophet. `Ali said: "By Allah, he is truly the Messenger of Allah. When it is morning, follow me wherever I go. If I see anything dangerous for you, I will halt where I am as though I want to pour some water. But if I go on, follow me until you enter where I enter." In the morning, `Ali and his guest went to meet the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Abu Dhar embraced Islam, followed by the entire tribe of Ghifar and the tribe of Aslam.

How brave and intelligent the young man was, `Ali ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him)!

"O My father, I Have Believed in Allah and His Messenger"

The valleys of Makkah often witnessed the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and `Ali praying together, far from the eyes and harm of Quraysh. One day, Abu Talib came across them praying. He asked `Ali: "My son, what is this religion that you follow?" He replied: "O my father, I have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and I have believed in what he brought. I have prayed with him and followed him." His father said: "He only calls you to good, so adhere to him."

“I Am Your Supporter, O Messenger of Allah”

After three years of secretly calling people to Islam, Allah (Exalted be He) commanded His Messenger (PBBUH) to proclaim Islam openly. It started when Allah commanded His Messenger (PBBUH) to call his kindred and tribe: ﴿And warn (O Muhammad) your nearest kindred﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Shu`ara' 26:214). The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) invited his tribe, Banu Hashim, who numbered about forty-five persons, to a meal with him. When they had eaten, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) stood up and said to them, after praising and thanking Allah: **“A guide never lies to his people. By Allah, other than Whom there is no god, I am the Messenger of Allah to you specifically and to all people generally. By Allah, you shall die the same as you sleep, be resurrected the same as you wake up, and be recompensed for your deeds, good for good and evil for evil. Then it is either Paradise forever or Hellfire forever.”** Abu Lahab objected, saying: “This, by Allah, is a disgrace! You must stop him before others (outsiders) do.”

Here, `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) stood up, although he was still a boy. His early childhood had not prevented him from realizing that he could be a protective force for those seeking protection. He was not awed by the elders and dignitaries of his people, whom the Bedouin tribal customs had elevated to a state of veneration, holding them in high regard. He did not hesitate to stand up and shout: “I am your supporter, O Messenger of Allah. I am your helper. I will fight against whom you fight.” The audience let out a laugh of ridicule and derision. Allah alone knew at that moment that the support of that young boy was greater and more influential than any other support.

‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) was, at that young age, just as he was when he was fifty or sixty years of age, a staunch supporter of Allah and His Messenger.

The Day of Emigration from Makkah to Madinah

The Day of *Hijrah* came to reveal the strength, bravery, and sacrifice of Imam ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) in a situation that few would want to experience.

The Great Volunteer

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) planned his *Hijrah* based on some man taking his place in his house. The man’s movements inside the house would distract the besieging polytheists of Quraysh, temporarily delaying them until the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had exited his house safely and, along with his Companion, had passed the danger zone.

Who was the man best fit for this role? Who would replace the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) in this difficult and intricate situation? The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) examined most of his Companions and found no one more suitable for this mission than the ‘Great Volunteer,’ ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him).

Mission Details

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to ‘Ali: **“Sleep on my bed and cover yourself with this green *Hadrami* cloak of mine. Sleep in it, for nothing you dislike will reach you from them.”** This was the first mission.

As for the second mission, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered him to stay in Makkah until he had returned all the trusts and deposits that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had safeguarded. He (PBBUH) entrusted ʿAli to return all the valuables to their proper owners among the people of Makkah. ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) received all these deposits from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) as well as the names of their owners.

Carrying Out the Mission

Brave ʿAli ibn Abi Talib carried out the mission without the slightest hesitation, sleeping in the bed of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) until morning. When the besiegers discovered the clever trick which had been played on them, they entered the Prophet's (PBBUH) house, found ʿAli there, beat him severely, and set out in search of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

ʿAli then accomplished the second part of his mission, as the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had instructed him. He went to the owners of the deposits, house by house, handing back each individual the valuable item which he had left for safekeeping with the Prophet (PBBUH), without giving Quraysh the opportunity to prevent him from completing his mission.

“I Have Never Slept a More Peaceful Night Than That Night”

Just imagine, dear reader, a man sleeping on a bed, knowing that there were men at the door who were obsessed with the desire of killing the person sleeping on that bed. How would he have felt that night?

When Imam ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) was later asked about that night, he said: “By Allah, I have never slept more peacefully or comfortably than that night.” When he was asked: “How could you have slept peacefully and

comfortably while the besiegers were at the door, wanting nothing but the head of the one sleeping on this bed?” He replied: “The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had said to me, **‘Nothing you dislike will reach you from them.’**”

This was the outstanding degree of courage ʿAli had, sacrificing his safety while having absolute faith in Allah and His Messenger (PBBUH).

To Madinah

After three days spent by ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) in Makkah, returning the trusts to their owners, he ventured into the desert, emigrating for Allah (Exalted be He) and His Messenger on foot. He did not have the money to buy a mount to aid him on his journey.

He set out alone, not fearing the Qurayshi forces pursuing the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He set out alone, with composure and absolute conviction, which only strengthened his already strong will and resolve.

He joined the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) in Quba’ before entering Madinah. When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) saw his swollen feet, he (PBBUH) embraced him and stroked his feet. ʿAli’s condition was cured, and he never suffered any pain in his feet again.

“And This Is My Brother”

After the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and the Muslims emigrated to Madinah, the Messenger (PBBUH) established brotherhood ties between the Muhajirun and the Ansar, assigning each Ansar a brother from among the Muhajirun. When he (PBBUH) finished uniting the Muslims through this great form of brotherhood, relating all Muslims together, his gaze shifted toward

`Ali. He (PBBUH) beckoned `Ali to come toward him. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) seated `Ali next to him, patted him on the shoulder, and taking his hand, he (PBBUH) said: **“And this is my brother.”**

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) chose `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) to be his brother in this brotherhood that he (PBBUH) established among the members of the Muslim community. This was an unparalleled honor for `Ali, and an honor that only `Ali attained. This honor only deepened his sense of responsibility toward and commitment to Islam and the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

`Ali's Marriage to the Prophet's Daughter, Fatimah Al-Zahra'

After `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) attained this great honor of brotherhood with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), he attained another superb honor, namely, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) married him to the dearest person to his heart, his daughter and the virtuous, pure Fatimah Al-Zahra'. This marriage took place in the second year of the *Hijrah*.

"Allah Has Commanded Me to Marry Fatimah to `Ali"

Some of the prominent Companions had proposed to Fatimah Al-Zahra', seeking the honor of being related to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Abu Bakr asked the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) for her hand in marriage, but the Messenger (PBBUH) graciously rejected him, saying: **"I am waiting for Allah's Decree regarding her."** Abu Bakr mentioned this to `Umar, who said: "He turned you down, O Abu Bakr." Abu Bakr then said to `Umar: "Propose to Fatimah, O `Umar." When `Umar asked the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to marry Fatimah, the Messenger (PBBUH) said to him the same as he had said to Abu Bakr. He (PBBUH) added: **"Allah has commanded me to marry Fatimah to `Ali."**

News of this spread throughout Madinah. A slave girl informed `Ali of the Prophet's (PBBUH) statement, then she added: "What is preventing you from going to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) so that he may marry her to you?"

`Ali Proposes to Fatimah Al-Zahra'

The girl's words encouraged `Ali, as did those of a group of Banu Hashim and some of the Companions. `Umar ibn Al-Khattab gave him confidence, saying: "You deserve it, O `Ali." So he gathered his courage and approached the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

Now let us hear what happened in this historic encounter from `Ali's own lips:

`Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) radiated majesty and inspired awe. When I came before him, I was overwhelmed. By Allah, I was unable to speak. He (PBBUH) said: **'What brought you here, O `Ali? Do you need anything?'** I remained silent, unable to speak. Then he (PBBUH) said: **'Perhaps you have come to propose to Fatimah?'** I said: 'Yes, O Messenger of Allah.' He (PBBUH) said: **'Do you have anything to offer to make her lawful for you (to marry)?'** I said: 'No, by Allah, O Messenger of Allah.' He (PBBUH) asked: **'What did you do with your armor?'** I said: 'I have it, and by Allah, it can break swords.' He (PBBUH) asked: **'How much is it worth?'** I said: 'Four hundred dirhams.' The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) agreed to marry him to Fatimah, after consulting with her, and he (PBBUH) accepted this armor as her dowry.

The Wedding Trousseau of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Daughter

In the presence of the prominent Companions, Abu Bakr, `Umar, `Uthman, Talhah, and Al-Zubayr, and a large number of the Ansar, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) concluded the marriage contract of `Ali (PBBUH) to Fatimah Al-Zahra'. One of the best women of this *Ummah* was then joyfully escorted to her husband's house.

What do you think, dear readers, were the belongings that made up the trousseau of the Messenger of Allah's (PBBUH) daughter?

Her trousseau was made up of the following items:

- **Bedroom**

A bed made of ram's hide, which they slept on at night and which she placed on the camel which was used for carrying water during the day. A pillow made of leather and stuffed with palm fibers.

- **Kitchen utensils**

A water skin, a sieve, a cup for drinking, a millstone for grinding, and two jugs.

Thus began the married life of the daughter of the best of Allah's creation (PBBUH), with simplicity, ease, and happiness.

Perhaps this event is an occasion to call the attention of our sons and daughters who are about to get married, and their families as well, to make things for the marriage easy, not difficult. Happiness is not built on a set of cups and lined cushions, but rather on simplicity, mutual understanding, and closeness to Allah (Exalted be He).

“I Marry You to the Dearest of My Family to Me”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to `Ali: **“Do not approach your family until I come to you.”** The Messenger (PBBUH) went to them shortly after they had arrived at their home. He (PBBUH) called for a vessel of water and said whatever supplications Allah willed him to say while moving his blessed hand in the water. He (PBBUH) wiped Ali's chest, shoulders, and face

with this water. Then he (PBBUH) called Fatimah, who stood up, stumbling over her garment out of shyness. He (PBBUH) sprinkled some of that water over her. Then he said to ʿAli: **“Verily, I have married you to the dearest of my family to me.”**

“Shall I Tell You of Something Better Than What You Have Asked Me For?”

The blessed marriage between ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) and Fatimah Al-Zahra' (may Allah be pleased with her) continued, filled with simplicity and happiness. Fatimah was her own servant—she had no servant. One day, ʿAli saw the marks of grinding on her hands, so he advised her to ask the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to provide her with a female servant from the captives.

She went to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), who said to her: **“What brought you here, my daughter?”** She replied: “I came to greet you;” she was too embarrassed to ask him for a servant and returned. The next day, they both went to him—she and her husband. ʿAli explained their situation to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), who said: **“By Allah, I will not give this to you and leave the People of the *Suffah*¹ starving, not finding anything that I can spend on them. Rather, I will sell them (the captives) and spend the price on them.”** So the couple returned.

But the compassionate and merciful father (PBBUH) was not pleased to see his daughter like this. He (PBBUH) came to their home and gave her, and all

¹ *Al-Suffah*: Literally, the shaded place. It was a roofed section in the back portion of the Prophet's Mosque in which the poor homeless Emigrants could find shelter and live. The inhabitants of it became known as the People of the *Suffah*. All needy Emigrants stayed there and were kindly provided for by the Muslim community.

other women of the *Ummah*, valuable advice. He (PBBUH) said to them: **“Shall I tell you something better than what you asked from me?”** They said: “Yes.” He (PBBUH) said: “When you go to bed, say ‘*Subhan Allah* (glory be to Allah)’ thirty-three times, ‘*Al-Hamdulillah* (all praise be to Allah)’ thirty-three times, and ‘*Allahu Akbar* (Allah is the Greatest)’ thirty-four times.” That formula which the Prophet (PBBUH) gave them was a substitute for a servant. Through these glorifications, Allah granted Fatimah the strength that enabled her to do all the home chores without suffering fatigue or exhaustion, thanks to her father’s (PBBUH) advice to her and to all the women of the *Ummah*.

“Rise, O Abu Turab (Man Covered with Dust)”

The lives of the noble married couple were not free of disagreement and complaints, as usually happens in marriage. However, whenever such a matter happened, it would quickly dissipate, just like a summer cloud. This was due to the care and support they received from the merciful father, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), who kept a loving and caring eye on them.

It was narrated that something happened between them that angered `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him), so he left Fatimah and went to the mosque. Then the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) came, asking Fatimah: **“Where is your paternal cousin?”** She replied: “There was something between us, and he became angry with me and left.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) learned that he was at the mosque. The Messenger (PBBUH) came to him and found him lying down, sound asleep. His cloak had fallen off his shoulders, and dust had reached his back. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) began wiping the dust off him, kindly jesting with him, saying: **“Rise, O Abu Turab (Man Covered with Dust)! Rise, O Abu Turab.”** `Ali forgot everything because of this

compassionate touch from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Afterwards, ‘Abu Turab’ became ʿAli’s favorite nickname.

ʿAli’s Offspring

Ten months after their blessed marriage, Allah (Exalted be He) blessed ʿAli with his first son from Fatimah. When his first child was born, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) came and said: **“Show me my son. What have you named him?”** ʿAli replied: “I have named him Harb (war).” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **“Rather, he is Al-Hassan** (handsome, good, or excellent).” Al-Hassan was ʿAli’s first son, and the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) loved him greatly.

A year later, Allah blessed them with a second child. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **“Show me my son. What have you named him?”** ʿAli replied: “I have named him Sakhr (rock).” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **“Rather, he is Al-Husayn** (the diminutive of Hassan, meaning good, handsome, or beautiful).”

Fatimah then gave birth to a child whom the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) named Al-Muhsin (meaning benevolent, beneficent, charitable); however, he died in infancy. After that, she gave birth to her daughter, whom the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) named ‘Zaynab’, in honor of his own daughter. She then gave birth to her second daughter, whom the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) named ‘Umm Kulthum’, in honor of his other daughter from Khadijah.

ʿAli’s Sons: Abu Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthman

Imam ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) remained with Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra, and he did not marry anyone else throughout her life. After her death,

he married several times, and Allah blessed him with sons and daughters from his wives. However, the most renowned and honorable of all `Ali's descendants were his children from Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' (may Allah be pleased with her).

In this context, it is useful to point out and shed light on the names of three sons of `Ali, whom he named:

- Abu Bakr, who was his son from Layla bint Mas`ud Al-Tamimiyyah.
- `Umar, who was his son from Umm Habibah bint Zam`ah Al-Taghlibiyah.
- `Uthman, who was his son from Umm Al-Banin bint Huzam Al-Kilabiyyah.

Perhaps this is the best response to those who claim that there was disagreement, discord, and division between Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) and these noble Companions. It is unreasonable for a person to name his children after someone he dislikes. Parents name their children after figures for whom they hold the utmost affection, appreciation, and respect, wishing that their children be like them.

Perhaps this signal will be a decisive response to those who advocate sedition and extremism. May Allah protect the nation from all trials.

The Chivalrous Hero and Knight

The etiquette of chivalry, which can be summed up in one word: gallantry, was the key to Imam Ali's character, as Professor `Abbas Al-`Aqqad said in his book, *The Genius of Imam `Ali*.

Perfect combination of heroism and courage, along with adhering to the ethics and etiquette of chivalry, is a combination that is difficult to find in one person.

The relevance of this point will become clear during the discussion of some stances and heroic deeds that Imam `Ali made during the battles in which he participated.

The Battle of Badr

The heroic knight went out with the Muslim army to battle. As was the custom among the Arabs before the start of any battle, men from both sides were always called to a duel. The outcome of this duel often determined the outcome of the whole battle.

Three members of the same extended family emerged from the ranks of the *Mushrikin*: `Utbah ibn Rabi`ah, his brother Shaybah, and his son Al-Walid, and they asked for a duel of swords. Three Ansari men, also from the same extended family, came out to them: `Awf and Mu`auwidh, the sons of Al-Harith (and their mother `Afra'), and `Abdullah ibn Rawahah.

When the disbelievers of Quraysh learned who stepped forward for the duel, they objected arrogantly: “We have nothing to do with you. We only want our cousins (i.e., tribesmen).” Then one of the Qurayshi fighters called out: “O Muhammad, send out against us our peers from our own tribe.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **“Rise, O Hamzah! Rise, O ʿAli! Rise, O ʿUbaydah ibn Al-Harith.”** They were all from the same extended family—Banu ʿAbdul-Muttalib.

The duels began and did not last long. In no time, Hamzah killed Shaybah. ʿAli fought Al-Walid, killing him immediately. ʿUbaydah and ʿUtbah clashed, seriously injuring each other, and both fell to the ground. After that Hamzah and ʿAli rushed toward ʿUtbah and gave him a fatal blow.

The outcome of these duels had a significant impact on bringing about a clear victory over the disbelievers of Quraysh; it boosted the morale of the Muslims and demoralized the disbelievers. The battle began, in which ʿAli ibn Abu Talib performed excellently, and Allah granted a mighty victory to the Muslims.

The Battle of Uhud

The Battle of Uhud took place. Quraysh had mustered all their might for another combat to avenge their slain at Badr. The Muslims marched out to encounter them. ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) filled the battlefield with his heroism. The standard fell from the hand of Musʿab ibn ʿUmayr, the standard-bearer, after he had displayed extraordinary heroism. Then the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) gave the standard to ʿAli ibn Abu Talib, who carried it with one hand and held his sword *‘Dhul Fiqr’* with the other.

Etiquette of Chivalry

While `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) was carrying the standard and fighting brilliantly, the standard-bearer of the *Mushrikin* saw him and cried out: "Is there anyone willing to fight?" None of the Muslims responded to him, as they were so engrossed in the battle, which had reached its peak. The standard-bearer of the *Mushrikin* shouted once more: "Let one of you come out against me!" `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) soon shouted: "I am coming against you, O Abu Sa`id ibn Abu Talhah!"

The two fighters met at a point amid the clashing ranks of the warriors. `Ali struck Abu Sa`id once, causing him to fall to the ground. `Ali then attempted to deal him a decisive blow to kill him, but Abu Sa`id's private parts became exposed before `Ali. Here, the Imam's ethics of chivalry became evident. Instead of delivering the decisive blow to kill him, he averted his eyes out of modesty and turned away. What a strong sense of morality and chivalry did this valiant knight possess!

The Battle of Uhud ended with a lesson that Muslims carried with them forever: the religion of Allah should not be a path to worldly gains. Those who step forward to carry Allah's Word and lift His banner should not be distracted from this task by spoils, profits, or positions.

The Battle of Al-Khandaq (the Trench)

Imam `Ali also played a major role in the Battle of Al-Khandaq. He demonstrated heroism and chivalry, rooted in noble manners.

Quraysh and their confederates set out to attack Madinah in large numbers that were unprecedented in Arab history. The idea of digging the trench was

suggested by Salman Al-Farsi (the Persian). As soon as the confederates arrived, they were surprised by the trench, which they had never seen before in war.

Exhausted by trying but failing to break through the trench defenses, a group of Qurayshi fighters, led by ʿAmr ibn ʿAbd Wudd, set out from the Qurayshi camp. They found a narrow space through which their horses stormed. ʿAmr ibn ʿAbd Wudd, known among the Arabs for his fierce strength and power, stood challenging the Muslims to a duel. He was known for his strength in vanquishing any opponent he faced.

A Shout of Defiance and ʿAli Announces Readiness for the Challenge

Ibn ʿAbd Wudd stood up, shouting in defiance and arrogance: “Who will fight a duel with me?” ʿAli rose and said: “I am ready for it, O Messenger of Allah.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) looked at him with compassion and said: **“This is ʿAmr. Sit down, O ʿAli.”** ʿAmr called out a second time, repeating the challenge. ʿAli rose and said: “I am ready for it, O Messenger of Allah.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **“Sit down.”** When ʿAmr called a third time, ʿAli rose and said: “O Messenger of Allah, I am ready for it. If he is ʿAmr, I am ʿAli.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) granted him permission to fight, and ʿAli walked toward him.

When ʿAmr saw ʿAli, he said to him arrogantly: “O my nephew, among your uncles there are those who are older than you, and by Allah, I do not want to kill you.” ʿAli said: “But by Allah, I want to kill you.” ʿAmr became infuriated and, overwhelmed by the passion for fighting and killing, he attacked ʿAli, who met him with even greater ferocity. They engaged in a most fearful duel in which ʿAli soon raised his victorious sword, with ʿAmr ibn ʿAbd Wudd lying dead on the ground. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) heard cries of *Takbir*

(saying '*Allahu Akbar* [Allah is the Greatest]'), and the people realized that `Ali had killed `Amr ibn `Abd Wudd.

Khaybar

More about this heroic knight was revealed during the Battle of Khaybar. On the Day of Khaybar, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asserted that `Ali was a man who loved Allah and His Messenger, and that Allah and His Messenger loved him.

In front of its impregnable fortress, the Muslim forces withdrew on the first and second day. However, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) did not feel discouraged. Instead, he (PBBUH) looked at his Companions with optimism, saying: **"Tomorrow I will give the standard to a man who loves Allah and His Messenger and whom Allah and His Messenger love. Allah will grant victory through his hands."** The Companions spent the night, each wishing to be the person who would bear the standard. `Umar ibn Al-Khattab said: "I never desired leadership except on that day, hoping to be someone whom Allah and His Messenger love."

Morning came and the Muslims approached the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), all of them hoping to be given the standard. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **"Where is `Ali ibn Abu Talib?"** They said: "He is suffering from pink eye (also known as conjunctivitis, a common eye infection), O Messenger of Allah." He (PBBUH) said: "Send for him." `Ali was brought to him, and when the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) saw his sore eyes, he (PBBUH) moistened his fingertips with his pure saliva and touched the hero's eye with it. He recovered, as if he never had an ailment. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) gave him the standard and said: **"Proceed and do not look back until Allah grants you victory."**

ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) walked a little distance and then stopped without looking back—as the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had commanded him. He said in a loud voice: “O Messenger of Allah, for what purpose should I fight the people?” He (PBBUH) said: **“Invite them to Islam and inform them of the rights they owe to Allah according to it. By Allah, if Allah guides just one person through you, that is better for you than having red camels (the most valuable wealth at that time).”**

The hero set out, carrying the optimistic news he received from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) of the great upcoming victory. At Khaybar he met Marhab, one of the Jewish valiant warriors who was renowned for his extreme courage and strength. They had a duel in which ʿAli smote his neck and killed him.

The Hand of Allah Is Over Their Hands

The fighting continued around the fortress of Naʿim, the strongest of Khaybar’s fortresses. ʿAli received a powerful blow that did not harm him, but it knocked his shield from his hand. He found himself facing an entire division of the fortress’s guards, without any armor. He cried out: “By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, I will surely taste what Hamzah tasted (i.e., martyrdom) or Allah will grant victory through me.”

ʿAli rushed toward one of the fortress’s gates, shouting: “*Allahu Akbar*”. Shortly after this, the people saw the door in Ali’s hand, and then the victorious force that had marched into the stronghold began chanting the slogan of victory from the balconies of the conquered fortress, saying: “*Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar!*”

Indeed, the Hand of Allah was over their hands. Abu Rafi`, a freed slave of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), who was part of Ali's battalion, said: "I, and seven men along with me, wanted to move this gate from its place on the ground after our triumphant entry into the fortress, but we could not."

The prophecy of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) came true, and Khaybar was conquered by a man who loved Allah and His Messenger and whom Allah and His Messenger loved.

Signing Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty

On the Day of Hudaibiyah, after the terms of the peace treaty were agreed upon, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked `Ali to write the treaty document. The Messenger (PBBUH) dictated to him: **"In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful."** Suhayl ibn Amr, the representative of Quraysh, objected, saying: "We do not know who 'the Most Gracious' is. But write 'In Your Name, O Allah.'" The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered `Ali to do so. Then he (PBBUH) dictated: "This is what Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, has settled (with the Makkans)." Suhayl said: "If we had known that you were the Messenger of Allah, we would not have prevented you from the House (the Ka`bah) nor would we have fought you. But write: Muhammad ibn `Abdullah." The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **"I am the Messenger of Allah, even if you deny me,"** then he (PBBUH) ordered `Ali to erase the words "the Messenger of Allah" and write instead: "Muhammad ibn `Abdullah". But Ali's hand could not erase the words "the Messenger of Allah". The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) took pity on him, and after `Ali showed him the place of these words on the document, he (PBBUH) erased them with his own hand.

Heroism and Noble Morals

After outlining some heroic deeds of Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him), it can be concluded that his heroism, despite displaying eminence and power, was peaceful and just, combining fierce courage with gentleness. For this reason, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) would appoint him to undertake missions of war and combat which required a great deal of both self-control and gentleness.

“I Found `Ali the Most Lenient of People”

There is no better evidence of this than the testimony given by Abu Sufyan—before he entered Islam—when Quraysh broke their covenant with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). The Messenger (PBBUH) decided to set out to liberate Makkah. News about his plans reached Quraysh, so they sent Abu Sufyan to Madinah to apologize to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and ask him to agree to renew the covenant between them. Abu Sufyan went to Madinah and met with its leaders, hoping that they would endorse his mission to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). They all refused, and even his daughter Umm Habibah (the Prophet’s wife) refused to let him sit on the bed that belonged to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Abu Sufyan also visited Abu Bakr and `Umar, but they refused to help him.

When Abu Sufyan went to `Ali, `Ali gently informed him that no one could prevent the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) from a matter he (PBBUH) had decided to undertake. The situation became difficult for Abu Sufyan, and he asked `Ali for advice. `Ali said: “By Allah, I do not know anything that may help you, but you are the chief of Banu Kinanah. Stand up and proclaim protection (on behalf of Quraysh) among the people, and then return to your

land.” Abu Sufyan did as ʿAli advised and then returned to his land. When he returned to Makkah, he sat and told the people about his unsuccessful attempts, saying: “I looked for Ibn Abu Quhafah (meaning Abu Bakr) but found no support. I looked for Ibn Al-Khattab and found him the most hostile of enemies. He said to me, ‘Do you want me to intercede for you with the Messenger of Allah? By Allah, if ants were all I had to fight you with, I would have fought you with them.’” I looked for ʿAli and found him the gentlest of people.

Such is heroism governed by noble and sublime morals.

“Put the Affairs of the Age of Ignorance Under Your Feet”

Another event that introduces us to the beautiful and humane values underlying ʿAli’s heroism took place after the Liberation of Makkah. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent expeditions to the surrounding tribes, calling them to believe in Allah—peacefully, without any fighting or war. Khalid ibn Al-Walid was at the head of one of these expeditions. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered him to march through the lower part of Tihamah region as a preacher, not a fighter. When Khalid reached Banu Jadhimah, he invited them to Islam. But they could not express themselves by saying: “*Aslamna* (i.e., we have embraced Islam).” They started saying “*Saba’na! Saba’na* (i.e., we have come out of one religion to another),” instead. As a result of [misunderstanding this as a rejection of Islam], Khalid killed some of them and took others as captives. This was reported to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), who raised both his hands and said twice: **“O Allah! I disavow what Khalid has done.”**

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) decided to send an ‘envoy of peace’ to remedy what happened to these people. ʿAli ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) was the chosen envoy for this mission. The Messenger of

Allah (PBBUH) summoned him and said: **“O ʿAli, go to these people and look into their situation, and place the affairs of the Age of Ignorance (i.e., pre-Islamic time) under your feet.”** The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) gave him enough money to pay the blood money for those killed and to compensate their families for any losses they had suffered. ʿAli carried out this mission in the best possible manner.

The Battle of Tabuk

“You Are to Me as Harun (Aaron, PBBUH) was to Musa (Moses, PBBUH)”

ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) continued to fight under the banner of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He did not miss any of the battles, except Tabuk. Despite not participating in the Battle of Tabuk, he received a matchless honor from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) that time can never take away.

When the Battle of Tabuk approached, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) left ʿAli as his deputy in Madinah and set out with the army. The hypocrites said: “He left him behind because he considered him too much of a burden and wanted to be rid of him.” The hero’s spirit was troubled for not participating in the battle. He took his weapon and horse and marched until he caught up with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) as he was camping at Al-Jurf. ʿAli informed him of the allegations that the hypocrites had made against him. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to him: **“They have lied. I have appointed you to take care of what I have left behind. So return and be my successor over my family and yours. Would it not please you to be to me as Harun (Aaron, PBBUH) was to Musa (Moses, PBBUH)? [However, the difference is] there will be no prophet after me.”**

Ali's anxiety quickly subsided into relief, and he returned to Madinah.

`Ali's Role in the Pilgrimage Headed by Abu Bakr

In the ninth year of the Hijrah, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent Abu Bakr as the leader of the Hajj pilgrimage. Abu Bakr set out with a large number of the Companions, and they brought sacrificial animals with them. Several days after their departure, Surat Al-Tawbah (also known as Surat Bara'ah) was revealed. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) decided to send an envoy to join the Hajj assembly and inform the people of the important rulings and matters the surah contained. He (PBBUH) found `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) the best person suitable for this task. `Ali took the message and joined Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him). When Abu Bakr saw him, he asked him: "Are you a commander or a person under command?" `Ali replied: "Rather, a person under command," and he informed Abu Bakr of the information he was entrusted with. Then they set out together. When the pilgrims gathered at Mina while performing the Hajj rituals, Abu Bakr asked `Ali to stand up and recite to the people the ayahs from Surat Al-Tawbah, including the important rulings contained therein: "After this year no *Mushrik* (an individual who commits *Shirk*, which is the act of associating partners with Allah in His Divinity or worship) may perform the pilgrimage and no naked person may circumambulate the House," and other rulings. Thus, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) delegated `Ali to recite the first ayahs of Surat Al-Tawbah, which announce a declaration of disavowal by Allah and His Messenger of the *Mushrikin*.

The Death of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)

ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) remained close to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to the last moments when Allah took the Messenger's soul, and he (PBBUH) departed to the Supreme Companion (Exalted be He).

ʿAli grieved deeply over the death of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), with a grief that nearly tore his heart apart. The Messenger (PBBUH) was his educator, teacher, role model, and ideal in life. ʿAli drew invaluable lessons from the Messenger's knowledge, asceticism, and sublime morals. The Messenger (PBBUH) showered him with abundant mercy and compassion. Not only that, but he (PBBUH) also gave him the apple of his eye and the most beloved person to him, Fatimah Al-Zahra', to be his wife and his shelter in this life.

In the Company of the Rightly Guided Caliphs

After the death of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) remained close to his successor, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him). Abu Bakr recognized ʿAli's status and standing and consulted him on important issues. He would often say: 'Give us your fatwa, O Abul-Hassan.'

After Abu Bakr's death, ʿUmar became the Commander of the Believers. ʿAli pledged allegiance to him and married him to his daughter, Umm Kulthum. ʿUmar recognized his worth and consulted his opinion when important decisions had to be made. He often relied on his deep knowledge, intelligence and insight, saying: "Had it not been for ʿAli, ʿUmar would have been ruined." ʿUmar would often appoint him as his deputy in Madinah when he was absent.

When `Umar was martyred and `Uthman assumed the leadership of the *Ummah*, the new Caliph would seek `Ali's help and advice. `Ali's honorable and courageous stances in confronting the conspirators fighting `Uthman have already been mentioned.

`Ali named three of his sons after the first three Caliphs: Abu Bakr, `Umar, and `Uthman, out of love, appreciation and affection for them.

Outstanding Traits of Imam `Ali

Now, dear readers, let us draw closer to the Imam and delve deeper into his qualities and characteristics. It is not surprising to find many of these qualities were possessed by his predecessors: Abu Bakr, `Umar, and `Uthman. And why would this not be the case? They all acquired gracious values from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) that molded their character and shaped their view of the world.

1. `Ali's Justice

`Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) spoke virtuously and judged between people justly.

`Ali's Office as a Judge During the Time of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) discerned in `Ali the capacity for justice and sagacity, so he (PBBUH) sent him to Yemen as a judge. Commenting on his new role, `Ali said: "O Messenger of Allah, are you sending me there although I am young and have no experience in dispensing justice?!" The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied: **"Indeed, Allah will guide your heart and keep your tongue firm. When two litigants sit in front of you, do not pass judgment until you hear what the other has to say just as you heard what the first had to say. This results in it being more likely that your decision will be based on clear grounds."**¹ `Ali remained in Yemen, administering justice among the people and protecting their rights.

¹ Reported by Abu Dawud, hadith no. 3582.

ʿAli Serving as a Reference for the Rightly Guided Caliphs

During the era of the Caliphs, ʿAli’s judgment and fatwas on many issues was always sought. Abu Bakr would often say, as was mentioned earlier: “Give us your fatwa, O Abul-Hassan.” ʿUmar would also say: “I seek refuge with Allah from living among a people who you are not among, O Abul-Hassan.” The same eagerness for his company and participation was shown during the era of ʿUthman.

The Caliph Appears Before the Judiciary

Once, when Imam ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) became the Caliph and Commander of the Believers, he lost his armor. He found it with a Christian man. When he asked him for the armor, the Christian refused to return it, claiming it was his own.

The Caliph brought the case before Judge Shuraih, requesting litigation on the matter. He said to the judge: “This armor is mine. I neither sold it nor gave it away.” Shuraih asked the Christian: “What have you got to say regarding the claim advanced by the Commander of the Believers?” The man replied: “The armor is none other than mine.”

Judge Shuraih turned to the Commander of the Believers, ʿAli, and said: “Do you have any evidence?” ʿAli said: “I have no evidence.” He asked him: “Do you have any witnesses [who can corroborate your account]?” He replied: “I have my son Al-Hassan with me.” He said: “It is not valid for your son to testify for you.” Shuraih decided that the armor should be given to the Christian.

The Christian took it, walked a few steps, then returned and said: “I testify that these are the rulings of prophets. The Commander of the Believers

brought me before his judge, and his judge gave judgement against him!? I testify that there is no god but Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. The armor, by Allah, is yours, O Commander of the Believers.” The Imam said: “Since you have embraced Islam, it is yours.”

These are just few of many examples exhibiting `Ali’s justice.

2. `Ali’s Asceticism

Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) never relied on this world for a moment. For him, it was gone and past, and the Hereafter was the eternal abode. He used to repeat the Prophet’s (PBBUH) statement: **“Verily, this world is transient and fast, from which both the righteous and the wicked partake (i.e., make use of and enjoy). But the Hereafter is a true promise, in which a Powerful Sovereign will pass judgment.”**¹ This was not a mere statement; it was reflected in all his actions.

Here are some examples of `Ali’s asceticism:

“I Will Never Reside in This Palace of Lunacy”

When Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) assumed the caliphate and came to Kufa, he was invited to stay in the emirate palace—a grand palace whose summit rose in majesty and allure. As soon as `Ali saw it, he quickly turned away, saying: “This palace of lunacy, I will never reside in it!” He preferred a humble home in an empty land.

¹ Reported by Al-Bayhaqi, hadith no. 5873.

“This Garment Protects Me from Vanity”

Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) used to wear rough garments. When his companions asked him to take a share of good things for himself, he replied: “This garment protects me from vanity and helps me be humble in my prayer. It sets a righteous example for people so that they will not be extravagant or wasteful.”

“Let Me Humiliate Worldly Life”

While `Ali was the Caliph, he used to wear a garment he bought from the market for three dirhams and ride a donkey with his legs dangling on both sides, as if he were one of the poor people of the desert. His companions urged him to use a horse worthy of the Commander of the Believers as his means of transportation, to which he replied: “Let me humiliate this worldly life.”

“I Took This Velvet Cloak from My House”

A man entered upon Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) and found him wearing an old velvet cloak and shivering from the cold. He said to him: “O Commander of the Believers, Allah has allocated to you and your family a share of this (Muslim treasury) wealth, and you are shivering from the cold.” He said: “By Allah, I do not take anything from your wealth (public wealth); rather I took this velvet cloak from my house.”

“O Worldly Life, Tempt Someone Other Than Me”

Once, when night had let down its curtains and stars had set, Imam `Ali stood in his place of prayer, weeping in grief as he said: “O worldly life! Is it me

you have come to seduce? Is it me you long for? This is not possible! This is not possible! O worldly life, tempt someone other than me! I have divorced you thrice, irrevocably. Your life is short, your livelihood is insignificant, and your danger is great. Alas! My provisions are scarce, the distance is long, and the journey must be made alone!”

Statements of Later Scholars Regarding `Ali's Asceticism

- `Umar ibn `Abdul `Aziz (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “The most ascetic of people in this world was `Ali ibn Abu Talib.”
- Al-Hassan Al-Basri (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “May Allah have mercy on `Ali. He was the godly man of this *Ummah*. He appropriated nothing of Allah's Wealth, nor was he neglectful of Allah's Commands.”

“This World Is an Abode of Truth for Those Who Carefully Consider Its Importance”

Imam `Ali's asceticism and renunciation of this world was not the kind that meant fleeing from the consequences of his existence and the responsibilities of life. Rather, the asceticism he practiced made the righteous fulfillment of the responsibilities of life an obligation upon him and the righteous deeds an act of worship and closeness to Allah (Exalted be He). He heard a man criticizing this world, but it was out of his own helplessness and reliance on others. Imam `Ali responded by saying to him: “This world is a place of truth for those who look into it truthfully; a place of salvation for those who grasp its ways and true value; and a place of wealth and supply for those who want to take provisions (of rewards for the Hereafter) from it. It is the

place where Allah’s Revelation descended, His prophets prayed, and His servants purchased [salvation and eternal life]. They gained mercy from it and acquired Paradise through it.”

This is how Imam ‘Ali understood this world. The same meaning was also expressed by Sheikh Al-Sha‘rawi (may Allah bestow mercy on him); he used to say: “This world is a vehicle for the Hereafter.”

These were just a few of the many examples of ‘Ali’s asceticism.

3. ‘Ali’s Humility

Imam ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) was extremely humble, as the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) educated him to be. No arrogance or vanity ever overtook him in anything he said or did.

Here are some examples of ‘Ali’s humility.

- One day, while ‘Ali was the Caliph, he stood in the marketplace selling a sword that belonged to him. He said: “Who will buy this sword from me? By the One Who causes the seed to split [and spout], I have often used it to defend the face of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Had I the price of a waist-wrapper, I would not have sold it.”
- He would walk through the markets of Kufa while he was the Caliph, guiding those who lost their way and assisting those who were weak. Whenever he met an elderly person, he would carry their loads for them.

- He insisted on grinding his own flour, eating only dried bread mixed with bran, and patching his clothes until there was no room for new patches.

4. ‘Ali’s Piety and Fear of Allah

‘Ali’s piety was evident from the time ‘Ali prayed behind the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) as a young boy, at the beginning of the revelation, until the end of his life in this world. His piety and fear of Allah (Exalted be He) were his primary concern.

“Are You Guarding Me from the Inhabitants of Heaven or the Inhabitants of Earth?”

Imam ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) would go out at night to the mosque to perform voluntary prayers. Once, when he finished his prayer, he saw some of his companions sitting, guarding him. He asked them: “Why are you sitting here?” They replied: “To guard you.” He replied: “Are you guarding me from the inhabitants of heaven or the inhabitants of earth?” Then he said: “Nothing on earth will exist until it is decreed in heaven. Every person has two angels assigned to protect and guard him until his fate approaches. When the time of his fate comes, they leave him alone for him to meet his fate. Verily, Allah has made for me a strong shield. When my decreed time comes, it will be removed from me. By Allah, a person will not taste the sweetness of faith until he knows that what befell him could not have missed him and what missed him could not have befallen him.”

Such was his absolute faith and fear of Allah Almighty.

ʿAli's Profound Statements on Piety and Fear of Allah

Imam ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) often remembered the days when divine guidance was being revealed and when the Islamic message was preached to all the neighboring peoples, saying:

- “By Allah, I have seen the Companions of Muhammad (PBBUH), but I do not see anyone today who resembles them. They would wake up with traces between their eyes of their previous night’s worship spent in prostrating to Allah, reciting His Book, alternating between sometimes lying on their foreheads (prostrating) and other times standing on their feet. Whenever they remembered Allah, they would sway like trees on a windy day and their eyes would shed tears until their clothes would become wet.”

This is a scene of the glorious past—the days of divine revelation and the beginning of the message of Islam. Imam ʿAli lived in it forever. No matter how far its days and years passed, time could never tear the devout Imam from it. It was his place of worship and mihrab (praying area).

Imam ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) used to say, as if describing himself: “Behold, there are servants whose hearts are sad and from whose evil people are safe. They endure patiently for a few days, only to be followed by a long rest. You see them at night, standing with their feet lined up together and tears streaming down their cheeks. They beseech Allah to free their necks (from the Hellfire). By day, they are thirsty, patient, pious, and devout (i.e. because of fasting), as a result they are like an arrow (as they were so thin). Anyone who looks at them may say, ‘They are sick.’ But they are not sick. Rather, the matter is grave.”

Yes indeed, it is a grave matter. It is the religion of Allah, and the day on which people will stand before their Lord to receive a reward or punishment.

5. ʿAli's Generosity

Imam ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) was extremely generous, despite his meager possessions due to his extreme asceticism—as was mentioned earlier. He never turned away a beggar. He always hastened to meet the need of every needy person.

- Among his in-laws and acquaintances were some who were not entitled to a share in the booty, so he gave them from his own wealth.
- Following the ways of his teacher and role model, the Prophet (PBBUH), Imam ʿAli would borrow to meet people's needs, until he died owing seventy thousand dinars. Al-Hassan ibn ʿAli sold some of his wealth until his father's debt was paid off. He then used to free fifty slaves on his father's behalf every year.

6. ʿAli's Patience in the Face of Adversity

Imam ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) set an example of patience, tolerance, and self-control.

A Servant Who Disobeys Orders

Imam ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) had a servant who used to disobey him and argue a lot. When they asked him why he kept him, despite his faults, he replied: "He teaches me patience."

“I Do Not Seek Revenge for Myself”

During one of the battles, ‘Ali fought a duel with an enemy. When that enemy fell to the ground, and the Imam was about to deal him a fatal blow, the enemy spat in his face. Instead of finishing him off and killing him, Imam ‘Ali let him go and left. When ‘Ali was asked about this, he replied: “When I was fighting a duel with him, I was fighting for Allah and His Messenger. But when he spat in my face, I wanted to avoid killing someone to avenge myself.”

One of ‘Ali’s Sayings on Patience

- “Patience is to faith as the head is to the body. He who has no patience has no faith.”

May Allah bless you, O Abul-Hassan. You behaved with sublime morals and lofty values, which you so strongly upheld, practiced, and remained true to.

7. ‘Ali’s Courage and Adherence to the Ethics of Chivalry

The matchless courage of Imam ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) has already been outlined. His courage was aligned with the ethics of chivalry, as evident in his contribution on the day of the *Hijrah* and his sleeping in the bed of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) instead of the Messenger. His courage and noble morals continued to be evident throughout all the battles he fought and important events in which he participated, as previously mentioned in detail.

Some of `Ali's Commands to His Soldiers

`Ali's chivalric ethics were evident in the commands he gave to his soldiers before the battle. Let us listen to some statements of this brave commander.

- Do not fight the enemy until they attack you first.
- If you fight them and defeat them, do not kill those who flee. Do not finish off the wounded. Do not uncover private parts. Do not mutilate those who have been killed.
- If you reach their encampment, do not violate their privacy. Do not enter any dwelling without permission. Do not take anything from their belongings.
- Do not harm women, even if they revile you and your leaders and righteous people.
- Remember Allah often that you may be successful.

From the above commands to his soldiers, we can envision what kind of knight Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) was.

8. `Ali's Honesty and Loyalty to His Predecessors

Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) was characterized by honesty and loyalty to his predecessors.

- One day, he was asked who was the bravest of people. He answered without hesitation: Abu Bakr. He recounted the day when the disbelievers of the Quraysh surrounded the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). The Muslims were so weak and outnumbered that none of

them dared to advance to defend the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Abu Bakr advanced alone and pushed the disbelievers away, saying: “Would you kill a man because he says, ‘My Lord is Allah?’”

Such was the character of the Imam and his loyal attitude toward the predecessors. Even if he had said: “I am the bravest of people,” he would not have lied. He was worthy of that description. Indeed, he was a model of virtue, self-denial, and loyalty to those who preceded him.

- A man entered upon Imam `Ali and said: “You are the best of people.” He asked him: “Have you seen Abu Bakr?” The man replied: “No.” He asked him: “Have you seen `Umar?” The man replied: “No.” He asked him: “Have you seen `Uthman?” The man replied: “No.” The Imam said: “By Allah, you have not seen the best of people.”
- One day, Imam `Ali heard a man cursing `Uthman. He said to him: “Take it easy. Tell me, if you had a daughter and wanted to marry her to someone, would you do so without consulting Allah?” The man said: “No.” `Ali said: “What about the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), who consulted Allah and married his two daughters to him (`Uthman)?”
- As aforementioned in this book, `Imam Ali had deep love, loyalty, and devotion to those who came before him, such that he named three of his sons: Abu Bakr, `Umar, and `Uthman.

Truly, the Companions were strong role models. They had very high levels of morals and values. How much we need to recall them and imitate their conduct in our days when people forget or pretend to ignore the merits of others or do not give each worthy person their due!

May Allah bless you, O Abul-Hasan.

9. `Ali's Intelligence, Eloquence, and Knowledge

Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) was a knowledgeable jurist. Allah (Exalted be He) endowed him such acumen and intelligence that he was the most knowledgeable person of his time in jurisprudence and Islamic law. No one among the Muslims was more capable of deriving rulings from the Qur'an, Hadith, and established custom than him. In difficult matters for which no text in the Qur'an and Sunnah was mentioned, he would use *Qiyas* (analogical reasoning) whenever exercise of *Ijtihad* (juristic effort to infer expert legal rulings) was required based on sound judgment and correct analogy.

Examples of this include the following incidents:

- It was narrated that a woman came to the Caliph complaining that her brother had died leaving behind six hundred dinars and that only one dinar had been allocated to her. He asked her: "Perhaps he left behind a wife, two daughters, a mother, twelve brothers, and you?" She replied in astonishment: "Yes," confirming that his estimation was true.
- During the caliphate of `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him), a man came to the Caliph complaining that his wife had given birth to a child six months after their marriage. He, therefore, doubted the child's lineage, saying that he could not be attributed to him. `Uthman asked `Ali about this issue, and he replied: "It is possible that the child is his own." `Uthman asked: "What is your evidence?" He replied: "Allah Almighty says, ﴿And We (Allah) have enjoined on the human to be dutiful and kind to his parents. His mother bears him with hardship and she brings him forth with hardship, and the bearing of him and the weaning of him is thirty months﴾" (translated meaning of Al-Ahqaf 46:15).

Elsewhere, Allah says: ﴿And We (Allah) have enjoined on the human (to be dutiful and good) to his parents. His mother bore him in weakness and hardship upon weakness and hardship, and his weaning is in two years﴾ (translated meaning of Luqman 31:14). Accordingly, a woman may deliver her baby after only six months of gestation [30 months (pregnancy and childbirth): 24 months (breastfeeding) and 6 months (pregnancy)].

These, and other answers from `Ali, are evidence of his intelligence and quick wit. They also clearly indicate his depth of knowledge of the Qur'an, the laws of inheritance, and arithmetic.

Establishing the Science of Arabic Grammar

No one contributed more to the establishment of the science of Arabic grammar than Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him). It was reported by a significant number of narrators that Abul-Aswad Al-Du'ali¹ complained to him about the prevalence of incorrect pronunciation among the Arabs. He told Abul-Aswad: "Write down what I dictate to you." Then he dictated some principles of grammar, including the following:

- The speech of the Arabs is composed of a noun, a verb, and a particle.
- The noun is that which informs about a named person, place, or thing.
- The verb is that which informs about the movement of a named person.

¹ He was often known as the founder of Arabic grammar.

- The particle is that which signifies a meaning that is neither a noun nor a verb.
- There are three types of things: apparent, hidden, and things that are neither apparent nor hidden. This refers to the demonstrative pronoun, according to some grammarians.

Then he said to Abul-Aswad: “Follow this way, O Abul-Aswad.” From that day, the science of Arabic grammar became known as *Nahw* (literally, way).

***Nahj Al-Balagha* (The Path to Eloquence¹)**

Imam `Ali (peace be upon him) was not the first among the Muslims to write letters, deliver admonitions, or give lengthy sermons. However, he was undoubtedly the first to imbue these arts with a literary quality and the first to give diction a special flavor.

He learned to write at a young age and studied eloquent speech from oral traditions (i.e., those transmitted orally from one to another) and from the writing of letters. His eloquence evolved with time from its first steps to a stage of artistry and refinement, developing a natural, customized style. This was the first style of composition in the Arabic language. It was also the first style that was affected by the study of the Qur'an, utilizing its context and content.

The collection of sermons, letters and short sayings of Imam `Ali, entitled “*Nahj al-Balagha*”, gives, between their lines, a glimpse of the personality of the Imam. When you comprehend the underlying wisdom of this collection, you feel that you are listening to the Imam himself.

¹ A collection of sermons, letters, and miscellaneous sayings attributed to Imam `Ali.

Fragrant Scents More Valuable than Gold

Now, dear readers, let us listen to some of the Imam's famous sayings and pieces of wisdom. This array of words exudes profound knowledge, magnificence, and eloquence. They are truly words more valuable than gold.

Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

- “Knowledge is better than wealth. Knowledge protects you, while you protect wealth. Knowledge grows when it is spent, whereas wealth decreases when it is spent.”
- “Those who amass wealth are dead, even though they are alive; whereas those who acquire knowledge will live as long as the world lasts. Their bodies are absent, but they (their knowledge and teachings) are present in the hearts.”
- “Indeed, the true Muslim jurist is he who does not make people despair of Allah's Mercy, nor does he make them feel secure from Allah's Punishment. Moreover, he does not give them concessions to disobey Allah, nor does he abandon the Qur'an seeking another standard.”
- “There is no good in worship without action, in action without understanding, or in reading without contemplation.”
- “There is no good in this world except for two types of people: a person who compensates for his sins through repentance; and a person who hastens to do good deeds and strives to attain higher degrees of success.”
- “Beware, this world has departed and turned its back, leaving you, and the Hereafter has arrived, approaching you. Each one of them will have

children. So be among the children of the Hereafter, and do not be among the children of this world.”

- “Verily, whoever longs for the Hereafter will disregard desires. And whoever fears the Fire will abstain from forbidden things.”
- “Whoever seeks Paradise will hasten to perform acts of obedience, and whoever renounces this world will find calamities easy to endure.”

Those were tiny drops from the ocean of Imam Ali’s abundant knowledge. Some of these valuable statements of the Imam were mentioned in the context of our discussion of his asceticism and piety.

10. The Love that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) Had for ‘Ali

Surpassing all the above notable eminence of Imam ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) was the love that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had for him. Indeed, it was his highest honor and greatest privilege. ‘Ali was one of the most beloved of all people to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) showered his love on everyone around him, both strangers and relatives. It is no wonder, then, that his paternal cousin whom he (PBBUH) reared, educated, and protected would hold a special place in his heart. ‘Ali was the husband of the Prophet’s (PBBUH) most beloved daughter, and the one who risked his life by sleeping in the Prophet’s (PBBUH) bed on the night of the *Hijrah* (the Prophet’s PBBUH emigration from Makkah to Madinah). ‘Ali remained his loyal supporter who fought brilliantly and bravely by his side in all the battles.

Here are some testimonies of how much the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) loved ‘Ali:

“Paradise Longs for Three (Men)”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **“Paradise longs for three (men): `Ali, `Ammar, and Salman.”**¹

“`Ali Is of Me, and I Am of Him”

Following one of the expeditions, some of the Companions complained about `Ali to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). They pointed out that he was blameworthy in a certain situation. But the Messenger (PBBUH) turned away from them. They took turns, one after the other, explaining to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) what `Ali had done. When the fourth of them finished speaking, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, with anger visible on his face: **“What do you want from `Ali?”** He (PBBUH) repeated this three times, then he (PBBUH) added: **“`Ali is of me, and I am of him. He is the *Waliy* (friend, supporter, helper) of every believer after me.”**²

“I Am Peace for Those with Whom You Make Peace”

Zayd ibn Arqam narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to `Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husayn: **“I am peace for those with whom you make peace, and I am war for those with whom you make war.”**³

“Three Things More Precious Than This World”

Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas said: “There are three things that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said (regarding `Ali), for which my having only one of them would be more beloved to me than (having) red camels (meaning the most precious possessions):”

¹ Reported by Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 3797.

² Reported by Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 3712.

³ Reported by Ibn Majah, hadith no. 145.

- “I heard the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) speaking to ʿAli when he had left him behind in Madinah during one of his battles. ʿAli said to him, ‘O Messenger of Allah, you leave me behind with the women and children!?’ The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to him, **‘Are you not pleased to be to me as Harun (Aaron) was to Musa (Moses), except that there will be no prophet after me?’**”
- “On the Day of Khaybar, I heard the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) say, **‘Tomorrow, I will give the standard to a man who loves Allah and His Messenger and whom Allah and His Messenger love.’** So we competed for it, but the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, **‘Summon ʿAli for me.’** He (PBBUH) handed the standard to him, and Allah granted him victory.”
- “When this ayah was revealed: ﴿Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves—then we pray and invoke (sincerely) the curse of Allah upon those who lie﴾ (translated meaning of Al ʿImran 3:61), the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) summoned ʿAli, Fatimah, Hassan, and Husayn and said: **‘O Allah, these are my family.’**”¹

The dimensions of the Prophet’s (PBBUH) love for Imam ʿAli was as wide and deep as ʿAli’s love for him (PBBUH), of which several examples have been provided in this book.

¹ Reported by Muslim, hadith no. 2404.

The Caliphate of Imam `Ali and the Disastrous Discord That Came with It

The Pledge of Allegiance and the Burden of Responsibility

Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) was pledged allegiance to as the Caliph after one of the most tragic events in Islamic history: the assassination of Caliph `Uthman ibn `Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) in his venerable old age. This took place at the hands of some conspirators against the Muslim State, as was recounted earlier.

Thus, the caliphate came to Imam `Ali burdened with hardships and filled with storms. When the position of the Caliph was offered to him, and he accepted it, it did not represent any earthly gain for him; rather, it was a burden. It was as though his destiny in this life was to hold enormous, persistent responsibilities.

Eruption of Discord and Conflict Between Different Authorities

Imam `Ali's caliphate began amid an atmosphere of tensions and contradictions, with a change of moods and characters. These contradictions and paradoxes were burdens that weighed on him.

The major phenomenon that marked the era of Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) was civilian in nature, particular to him. It did not exist in the eras of the caliphs that preceded him. The steadfastness of the Muslim State, which began during the era of Abu Bakr and was firmly established during the era of `Umar, was followed by the formation of the Muslim society during the

era of ʿUthman, following the emergence of the new state. However, after that a new system based on wealth emerged. The era of Imam ʿAli arrived, and the society became divided into two opposing parts—or better said: two systems between which conflict arose. A conflict between the religious caliphate, represented by Imam ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him), and the political state, represented by Muʿawiyah ibn Abu Sufyan.

The situation between the caliphate and the political state was ambiguous and intertwined during the era of ʿUthman. However, during the era of Imam ʿAli, the ambiguity was removed. The two irreconcilable opposites confronted each other, and the conflict between them reached a peak.

The Measures that Imam ʿAli Took Upon Assuming the Caliphate

Recruiting the Powers of the Religious Caliphate

From the first moment of his caliphate, Imam ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) began recruiting the powers necessary for the religious caliphate, without which he had no authority.

Accordingly, Imam ʿAli took the following corrective measures:

1. Dismissing the Governors

He began by dismissing the governors who had appropriated the booty, who became covetous for the money of the Muslim treasury and caused their subjects to become covetous too. In the Imam's opinion, they were not worthy of this position. They were the direct cause of the anger that built up against ʿUthman (may Allah be pleased with him) and the terrible sedition that led to his death. He replaced them with a group of companions in whose piety and integrity the Caliph had confidence.

The new governors assumed their positions peacefully, except for Sahl ibn Hunayf, the governor of the Levant, who was appointed in place of Muʿawiyah ibn Abu Sufyan. Muʿawiyah had sent a detachment from his army which prevented Sahl from entering the country.

2. ʿAli's Economic Policy

In continuation of `Ali's approach to revive the religious caliphate, he carried out the following procedures:

- He returned the land parcels that had been distributed before him to the associates and chiefs who were close to the previous Caliph. He seized them from their holders and returned them to the Muslim treasury for equal distribution. He said: "Indeed, justice is liberating. One who feels confined by justice shall find injustice even more confining."
- He adopted the approach of Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq of distributing grants to people from the Muslim treasury. Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq used to give an equal amount to everyone, without discrimination based on whether they had embraced Islam early or late. When `Umar assumed the caliphate, he applied a different approach, giving those who embraced Islam early more than those who had embraced Islam late. He said: "I will not treat those who had fought the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) as those who always fought alongside him." Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) was more inclined toward Abu Bakr's approach, explaining that the state would not reward people for their faith and give them a price for their religious commitment; the reward for that is solely with Allah (Exalted be He). He said: "We only give them what they basically need so that they may live." Furthermore, disparity in giving creates opportunities for some people to accumulate wealth, which, over time, will lead to temptation and worldly corruption.
- He went to the Muslim treasury, took out all its contents, and distributed them among those who deserved them. When the treasury was empty, he ordered that the ground be sprinkled and washed with water. Once this was complete, he stood up and prayed two *Rak'ahs*

(units of prayer) on the washed ground. This prayer was a symbol of a sublime meaning; it heralded a new era in which the afterlife would dominate this world. This was the main characteristic of a religious state.

- His method for collecting taxes from the people was based on the principle of doing what would be profitable for the development of the land rather than just collecting taxes. He used to write to his governor: “Check the matter of the taxes in a way that contributes to the welfare of its people. Indeed, uprightness in (collecting) the taxes and the uprightness of their people lead to the uprightness of everyone else. Let your attention be on the development of the land more than your attention on collecting the tax. Anyone who collects the tax without developing the land has ruined the country and destroyed the people.”

3. Strict Adherence to Kind Treatment of the Subjects

Following the same approach, Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) enjoined on every governor to be kind to the subjects; there should be no overburdening or exploitation.

Here are some of `Ali's commandments to his governors:

- “Be fair to people. Be patient with their needs. You are the fiduciary working for the subjects.”
- “Do not deprive anyone of [having] his need [met] nor refuse to give them [what they deserve due to] a necessary demand. Do not force people to sell any of their summer or winter clothing or animals needed for their work (in farming and carrying crops) in order to pay the land tax. And do not beat anyone to collect a dirham.”

- Among his commandments regarding the method of collecting land tax and charities, he said: “Approach people with calmness and dignity, until you stand among them. Greet them and then say, ‘Servants of Allah, Allah has sent me to you as His servant and viceregent, to receive from you the right due to Allah in your wealth. Is there a right due to Allah in your wealth that you should pay to His servant?’ If someone replies, ‘No,’ do not argue with him. If someone bestows a favor upon you, proceed with him. Do not frighten anyone, do not oppress anyone, and do not burden or exhaust anyone.”

4. Moving the Capital of the Caliphate to Kufa

Imam ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) moved the capital of the caliphate from Madinah to Kufa. He was the first to move the capital from Madinah to a land other than the Hijaz, although he was a descendant of the Hijazi people. Kufa was the most suitable city for the capital because it was a meeting place for people of all races, being the center of trade between India and Persia as well as Iraq and the Levant. It was also the cultural capital, where schools of writing, language and genealogy flourished. It was, therefore, the capital most befitting for that era.

5. Foreign Policy

The days of Imam ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) passed, and the Islamic government had no foreign policy that worked for the liberation of lands, resistance to external dangers, or exploration.

The caliphate’s preoccupations at that time concerned governance, or as we call it nowadays, domestic policy. There were many seditions and tribulations that prevented Imam ‘Ali from pursuing any external liberations.

Fate decreed that `Ali would be the one who would try to redeem the religious caliphate and the one who would be the final struggle against the political state.



Tribulations from Every Side

When Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) was pledged allegiance to as a Caliph, this pledge of allegiance signaled the split between the two rivals—the caliphate and the political state—and set the stage for the final struggle between them.

This inevitable struggle had no purpose other than putting an end to either the caliphate or the political state (which later became a kingdom). The end of the kingdom at its inception was remote and, indeed, difficult at that time, just as it is difficult to extinguish a fire while it is raging. As for the end of the caliphate, that is what eventually happened—and what was destined to happen.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) foresaw this fate when he said: **“The caliphate will last for thirty years, then it will be kingship.”**¹

After Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) implemented new policies, including the dismissal of governors, the introduction of economic policies, and other measures, these policies angered his rivals and those seeking worldly gain. From here, seditions and discord began to engulf the Imam from every direction, in waves like mountains.

In our discussion of seditions, let us not forget about the instigators of these seditions, who were previously introduced in this book, `Abdullah ibn Saba' and his supporters. Certain events and their consequences helped them

¹ Reported in *Mishkat Al-Masabih*, hadith no. 5395.

reignite these agitations, just as they had started them the first time. This will be clear as we go over the sequence of events.

Disagreement with Mu`awiyah

The first sedition to rage on Imam ʿAli was his disagreement with Mu`awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan, who refused to pledge allegiance to the Imam. He objected to his caliphate, believing that he had been lax in supporting ʿUthman against his killers. Mu`awiyah believed he had a right to exact retribution from Uthman's killers because he was his *Waliy* (guardian who owes the duty of seeking retribution for ʿUthman's blood).

When the Imam decided to dismiss Mu`awiyah, he rejected this decision and prevented Sahl ibn Hunayf, whom the Caliph had appointed governor of the Levant, from entering.

Imam ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) wrote to Mu`awiyah, saying, "Surely, you have been informed of the calamity that befell ʿUthman and the unanimous agreement of the Muslims for me (to be the Caliph) and their pledge of allegiance to me. Enter into peace or declare war." He hoped that these words would terrify Mu`awiyah and make him incline toward peace. But how Mu`awiyah responded was astonishing!

After Mu`awiyah sent the Caliph's envoy back, he sent a letter with a man from Banu ʿAbbs. It was a long piece of paper, containing only this phrase: "From Mu`awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan to ʿAli ibn Abu Talib." He asked his envoy to present it upon his arrival in Madinah, so that people would know that he was a dissident. The man did as he was ordered, which meant for Imam ʿAli that there was no escape from confrontation with Mu`awiyah.

The tribulations did not stop there. More serious and dangerous tribulations were awaiting the Imam.

Disagreement with Lady ʿAishah, Talhah, and Zubayr

While Imam ʿAli was preparing to confront Muʿawiyah, he received unexpected news: Talhah, Al-Zubayr, and the Mother of the Believers, Lady ʿAishah, had headed to Basra at the head of a large multitude of Muslims to incite the people of Iraq to avenge the killers of ʿUthman.

They believed that the primary duty at that time was to pursue and punish the killers of ʿUthman. The Imam, however, believed that the situation of the state had to first be stabilized, leaving the matter of the killing to the ruler to resolve.

But these were the seditions that the Imam was destined to confront. It crossed his mind: What would be the fate of this nation if one group demanded the revenge for the killing of ʿUthman while another group refuted and resisted such a demand? A civil war would break out. So he decided to turn his attention to Basra, instead of the Levant, to confront this urgent threat.

In Basra

Imam Ali's assumptions proved true. No sooner had Lady ʿAishah's procession arrived in Basra than a clash erupted between them and a large multitude of the Basrans, who refused to surrender their relatives and kinsmen who had participated in the murder of ʿUthman. They entered into an argument with Talhah, Al-Zubayr, and the Mother of the Believers, Lady ʿAishah. The discussion became so heated that Jariyah ibn Qudamah Al-Sa'di said to Lady ʿAishah: "O Mother of the Believers, by Allah, the killing of ʿUthman is less grievous than you leaving your home on this camel and getting

yourself exposed to weapons.” The matter ended in armed confrontations between the two groups, in which many were killed.

Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari Urges the Kufans to Avoid Sedition

When news of the clash in Basra arrived, Imam `Ali sent a message to the people of Kufa calling on them to support him. But Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari, the Governor of Kufa at the time, believed that the people should refrain from participating in turmoil, so no one came out. This news reached Imam `Ali, who sent Al-Hassan ibn `Ali and `Ammar ibn Yasir to Abu Musa. Al-Hassan said to him: “Why are you discouraging the people from (supporting) us? By Allah, we only want reform, and the Commander of the Believers (having his level of piety and devotion) is not the kind to be feared for any reason.” Abu Musa said: “You are right, my nephew. However, the one who is consulted is in a position of trust [and expected to give good, sincere advice]. I heard the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) say, **‘There will be turmoil. The one who will sleep [during it] will be better than the one who will be awake. The one who will be awake will be better than the one who will stand. The one who will stand will be better than the one who will run [toward it]. Anyone who finds refuge or shelter should take that refuge or shelter.’**¹ Allah has made us brothers, and He has declared that our blood and property are inviolable and sacred to each other.”

At this point, arguments intensified and escalated. Some were inciting people to set out and join the Commander of the Believers, and others discouraging them. Here Al-Qa`qa` ibn `Amr stood up and said: “O people of Kufa, I am your sincere advisor, and I am concerned about you. I will speak a truthful statement. As for what the governor (Abu Musa) said, it is the truth; but there is no way to achieve it. There must be a leadership that organizes the

¹ Reported by Muslim, hadith no. 2886.

people, restrains the oppressor, and upholds the oppressed. This is the Commander of the Believers, who has been appointed to that position [and is carrying out such functions and duties from the position to which he has been appointed]. He has been just in his call, calling for reform. Go forth and support him.” Al-Hassan ibn `Ali added: “Respond to the call of your Commander! March forth to your brothers. Assist us in this affliction of ours and yours!”

This statement resonated with the people of Kufa, and they agreed to go out. When they arrived and joined the ranks of the Imam, they shook the horizon with their shouts, urging Imam `Ali to hasten to confront the Basra army.

The Wisdom with Which the Imam Treated the Situation

Amid this enthusiasm and motivated multitude ready for combat, Imam `Ali's sagacity manifested itself. It was evident from the fervor of the people of Kufa that they were about to go out to Basra, armed to join the armed resistance that had arisen there against Talhah and Al-Zubayr. From among the people of Kufa, as from the people of Basra, were some who participated in the killing of `Uthman. The wisdom of the Imam was evident; he sought to calm the enthusiasm of the people of Kufa, guide them on the right path, and teach them that truth can be attained in many ways, the last of which was armed confrontation.

A Message of Peace

Here, Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) summoned Al-Qa`qa` ibn `Amr and sent him with a message of peace to the Mother of the Believers, Lady `Aishah, as well as Talhah and Al-Zubayr. In Basra, Al-Qa`qa` sat with the three of them and began a conversation that softened their hearts and

persuaded their minds. He convinced them that there was no way to avenge the death of ʿUthman at that time; six hundred of ʿUthman’s killers from Basra were killed, and six thousand became enraged for their sake, which only worsened the situation. The Mother of the Believers asked: “What do you suggest, O Qa`qa`?” He replied: “I suggest that you should prioritize the outcome (of these armed confrontations), give the pledge of allegiance, and be the keys to goodness, as you have always been.”

The conversation ended with them being persuaded. They agreed that the Imam would come to Basra to conclude a peace and reconciliation agreement. When Al-Qa`qa` returned to the Imam and informed him of the results of the discussions, he rejoiced greatly and praised Allah that the blood of Muslims had been preserved.

“I Am Departing Tomorrow”

Imam ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) addressed his soldiers. He praised and glorified Allah, and he reminded them of fierce pre-Islamic disputes and wars. Division and armed strife had continued to plague them until Islam came and united the people, and they became brothers under the leadership of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), then under the leadership of his Caliph, the next Caliph, and also the following Caliph. After that, this calamity occurred, which was brought down upon the *Ummah* by some people who sought worldly gain and wanted Islam to decline. But Allah would certainly accomplish His Purpose. “Behold, I am departing tomorrow (toward Basra), so depart (all of you with me). Let no one who aided in the killing of ʿUthman, even with half a word, depart (with me).”

The Imam departed for Basra with those with him. They set up camp there, where each group began preparing for peace.

Eyes That Never Sleep and Bitter Conspiracies That Never Cease

Peace and rapprochement between the noble Companions displeased those who wished harm upon the *Ummah*. They planned and ignited sedition, starting with incitement against `Uthman, then his murder, followed by spreading tribulation and discord among the noble Companions. Everything had proceeded according to their whims and as they had planned. For such a peace treaty to come to fruition would be a major catastrophe for them; if it were to happen, the price would be their lives.

Here, the leader of the sedition, `Abdullah ibn Saba' and his followers, the 'Saba'in', mobilized themselves. When they heard Imam `Ali's statement, they consulted among themselves about what they must do to thwart this peace initiative. Ibn Saba' said to them: "O people, your glory lies in putting people into tumult. So if the two groups meet tomorrow, start a fight between them. Do not allow them to consider what is happening. This will distract the people and obstruct the plans you dislike (meaning the peace treaty) from taking effect."

The Meeting of the Beloved Companions, and a Reconciliation That Would Not Be Completed

As dawn of the day fixed for beginning the reconciliation broke forth in light, the two armies met. Imam `Ali sent a message to Talhah and Al-Zubayr, stating: "If you are still as you were (holding the same views as you had) when Al-Qa`qa` left you, then wait before doing anything until we descend and consider this issue." They agreed.

The following conversation took place between them, in which gentle breezes from the time of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) blew, extinguishing the fire and calming their angry souls.

Imam `Ali (peace be upon him) exclaimed: “By my life, you have prepared weapons and men. If you have prepared an excuse before Allah, then fear Allah. Do not be like the woman who unraveled her spun thread after it had been strong. Am I not your brother in faith? Do you consider my blood inviolable, and do I consider yours inviolable? Has there anything happened that made my blood lawful for you?”

Talhah said: “You incited the people against `Uthman.”

Imam `Ali replied: “May Allah curse the killers of `Uthman. I did not incite the people against him. In fact, I defended him.” He continued, saying to Talhah: “You have brought the Messenger of Allah’s wife to make her fight while you hide your wife at home?”

Then `Ali turned to Al-Zubayr and said to him: “Do you remember that day when you saw me approaching the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and he laughed, so you laughed back and said, ‘The son of Abu Talib never relinquishes his pride (i.e., he is always proud).’ He (PBBUH) asked you, **‘Do you love him, O Zubayr?’** You said, ‘Yes.’ He (PBBUH) said to you, **‘You are going to fight him, and you will be the aggressor.’**”¹

Al-Zubayr said: “Yes, you have reminded me of something I had forgotten.”

The Companions embraced; their beards wet from weeping. They laid down their swords, and Talhah and Zubayr departed, having resolved not to fight `Ali after what they had heard from him. They learned that `Ammar ibn Yasir was on `Ali’s side, and they remembered the words that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) spoke to `Ammar: **“The transgressing group will kill you.”**²

¹ Reported by Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah Wan-Nihayah*.

² Reported by Muslim, hadith no. 2915.

ʿAli returned to his soldiers' ranks, happy with the understanding they had reached and the cessation of bloodshed.

The Execution of the Conspiracy

Here began the conspiracy, devised overnight. ʿUthman's assassins gave Talhah and Al-Zubayr no respite. A sinister group lay in wait for them and killed them both. Unnoticed, approximately one thousand culprits [guilty of the killing of ʿUthman] emerged, rushed into the Basra army's tents, and used their swords on the people. They created chaos and also spread rumors in both camps. In the Basra camp, they spread the rumor that ʿAli had broken his covenant and would not rest until blood was shed. In ʿAli's camp, they spread the rumor that Talhah and Al-Zubayr would not rest until blood was shed.

The peace agreement ended before it had even begun, and the conspirators succeeded in fueling the fire of discord after it had nearly diminished.

The Battle of the Camel

Fighting raged between the two sides. None of the leaders who were directing the Basra army remained, as Talhah and Al-Zubayr had been killed. The Basra army fought only briefly before it was defeated. There, those who wanted to continue the fight found no one but the Mother of the Believers in her palanquin, atop the camel she was riding overseeing the battle.

The fighting continued around the camel palanquin of the Mother of the Believers, and many, prompted by their strong fervor for the Prophet's family, gathered around it. They held onto the camel's reins, and many died in its defense.

The Imam Evinces Sagacity and Promptitude That Help End the Battle

Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) saw that his opponents had surrounded the camel as if it were a sacred object (i.e., the camel that Lady `Aishah was riding had become the center of fighting). He was alarmed by the large number of Muslims being killed. With every head that was struck, every soul that was lost, and even with every drop of blood that was shed, the Imam's heart almost left his chest. His fear and anxiety increased when he saw the barrage of arrows targeting the camel palanquin of the Mother of the Believers. He feared that she might be harmed. Therefore, he decided to hamstring the camel by shooting an arrow that would kill it. Once the camel was hamstrung, the Muslims would disperse. The Imam ordered some of his soldiers and companions to be as close as possible to the camel so that when it was hamstrung and fell, they would rush to the palanquin of the Mother of the Believers, surround it, and receive it before it could fall to the ground and cause any harm to her.

The plan was successfully executed, and the Mother of the Believers was safe and unharmed. The Imam approached her and asked: "How are you, O mother?" She replied: "Fine, may Allah forgive you." He replied: "You too." The fighting ended, and the bloodshed stopped.

Imam `Ali then ordered the Mother of the Believers to stay in a house prepared to receive her so she could rest until the means were in place for her safe and peaceful return to Madinah.

The Imam's Chivalrous Orders

Then Imam `Ali stood among his soldiers to give his new orders, which reflected the knightly morals that never left him.

The Imam said to his soldiers:

- Do not pursue a fleeing person.
- Do not kill a wounded person.
- Do not plunder property.
- Anyone who lays down his weapons is safe.
- Anyone who closes his door (i.e., stays inside his house) is safe.

It was recounted that whenever the Imam's followers passed by gold and silver lying around on the ground, no one would touch them. One of them even exclaimed: "How is it lawful for us to fight them but not take their captives and property?!" The Imam replied: "No captives or property should be seized from believing monotheists, nor is there any spoils of war to be taken from them."

He sent all the spoils to the Basra Mosque and said: "Anyone who recognizes anything [of the spoils belonging to him], let him take it."

The Imam Grieves for His Companions Killed During the Battle of the Camel

After the battle ended, the Imam walked among the dead. When he passed by Talhah's body, he wept and said: "I am so sorry to see you like this, O Abu Muhammad! To Allah we belong, and to Him we shall return. By Allah, I hate to see you slain. Perhaps Allah will unite us, and we will be among those about whom Allah Almighty says, ﴿And We shall remove from their breasts any sense of injury (that they may have), (so they will be like) brothers facing each other on thrones﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Hijr 15:47)."

Imam `Ali led the funeral prayer for those killed from among the people of Basra and Kufa and ordered their burial.

“Give the Killer of Al-Zubayr the Tidings of Hellfire”

The Imam entered Basra to receive the pledge of allegiance from its people, and he appointed `Abdullah ibn Abbas as its governor. The Imam remained there for several days.

One day, while Imam `Ali was sitting with his companions, one of his followers entered and announced: “`Amr ibn Jurmuz, the killer of Al-Zubayr, is at the door asking for permission to enter.” The Imam granted him permission. The assassin entered, proud and boastful, thinking the Caliph would welcome him as a hero. But no sooner had he confronted the Imam than he shouted at him: “Does this sword you are carrying belong to Al-Zubayr?” He replied: “Yes, I took it from him after I killed him.” The Imam took the sword from him, kissed it reverently and said, with tears streaming down his cheeks: “A sword by which, by Allah, its owner many times dispelled distress from the Messenger of Allah.”

The Imam then looked at the assassin and said: “As for you, O killer of Safiyyah’s son (Al-Zubayr), receive the bad tidings of Hellfire.” The man left, astonished, saying: “How strange; we kill your enemies, yet you give us the bad tidings of Hellfire!”

The Mother of the Believers Returns to Madinah

After matters settled in favor of `Ali, the Imam made all necessary preparations for Lady `Aishah, the Mother of the Believers, to be ready to depart to Madinah. He chose forty prominent women from Basra to accompany her. He also ordered her brother, Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr, to escort her.

When the day of her departure arrived, the people gathered around her. She said: “O my son”—referring to Imam `Ali—“Let us not blame one another.” Then she addressed the people and said: “By Allah, there was nothing between

me and `Ali in the past except what usually happens between a woman and her male in-laws. He is, despite my criticism, one of the best men.” `Ali replied: “By Allah, she has spoken the truth. There is nothing between me and her except that. She is the wife of your Prophet (PBBUH) in this world and the next.”

The Mother of the Believers left Basra, headed to Makkah, performed the Hajj, and then returned to Madinah.

Imam `Ali returned to Kufa, which he made the headquarters of the caliphate, the capital of the caliphate, as was mentioned earlier. All Muslim lands pledged allegiance to him except for the Levant.



The Battle of Siffin

Imam ʿAli extinguished the sedition that arose from the disagreement with Talhah, Al-Zubayr, and the Mother of the Believers, Lady ʿAishah. But another sedition persisted, a series of critical agitations that besieged the Imam: namely, the conflict with Muʿawiyah.

After several unsuccessful attempts to persuade Muʿawiyah to change his position—as was mentioned earlier—the confrontation with him became inevitable. This confrontation was not desired or sought by either party. However, the agitations had inciters behind them, responsible for igniting and perpetuating them.

Imam ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) was destined to emerge from one crisis to fall into another, without respite or time for recovery. Hardships continued to come at him from every direction—as was described earlier.

Attempts to Arrive at Peace and Reconciliation

After the significant victory achieved in Iraq, Imam ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) found no opponent standing in the way of the caliphate except Muʿawiyah's army in the Levant. He employed the same strategy he had used with all his opponents, wherever they were and whatever their status and power may have been. This was the policy of reconciliation along with earnest attempts at persuasion, hoping that Allah would spare bloodshed.

Imam ʿAli wrote a message to Muʿawiyah after the Battle of the Camel, one of the many letters he sent from Madinah urging Muʿawiyah to pledge

allegiance to him and unite the Muslims. Mu`awiyah's response was that there would be no pledge of allegiance before retaliation against the killers of `Uthman had been carried out. The situation remained this way with Muslim delegations traveling back and forth between the Imam in Iraq and Mu`awiyah in the Levant, but to no avail. After several unsuccessful attempts, the Imam realized that confrontation between them was inevitable.

Last Attempts to Defuse the War

Imam `Ali advanced from Kufa toward the Levant. When Mu`awiyah learned of this movement, he marched toward him. The two armies met at the Siffin plain located on the Euphrates River, east of Aleppo. The Imam continued his approach of peace and reconciliation, and in a final attempt to defuse the war, he sent several messengers to Mu`awiyah. The delegations continued to go back and forth without success until the month of Muharram of the year 37 A.H., when the two sides concluded a one-month truce—during the month of Muharram¹. During this truce, correspondence and negotiations continued to be fruitless. The month of truce elapsed, and the inevitable confrontation began.

Confrontation Takes Place and the Imam Adheres to His Ethics

Before the confrontation began, the Commander of the Believers instructed his soldiers to maintain righteousness, saying:

- Do not fight them until they fight you.
- If you defeat them, do not kill those who flee.

¹ One of the sacred Islamic months in which fighting is prohibited.

- Do not finish off the wounded.
- Do not uncover the private parts.
- Do not mutilate the dead.
- When you reach their encampment, do not violate their privacy.
- Do not enter their dwellings.
- Do not take anything from their wealth.

The Imam always firmly adhered to these knightly Islamic ethics in all the battles he fought.

The fighting began and the two sides clashed in various [minor] battles, ventured on by one group belonging to this or that side, but rarely did the two armies clash in a full-scale battle. Confrontations continued in this manner until the tenth of Safar in the year 37 A.H., when the realities of war started to leave their toll on both groups. The army of the Imam advanced until it approached Mu`awiyah, who was said to have been deliberating the decision of fleeing; the army of the Levant had started to lose force and was overwhelmed by weariness and frustration.

The Affliction of Arbitration

Fighting had exhausted the army of the Levant, and a sure victory was only a few hours away for the Imam's army when the Imam was hit with another tribulation. It was a tribulation that continued to flood him in waves like mountains, from every direction: the affliction of arbitration.

When Mu`awiyah and `Amr ibn Al-`As realized that defeat was imminent and observed the pervasive feelings of despair and resignation that had come upon their soldiers, `Amr said: "We must call them to Allah's Book to judge between us and them." Mu`awiyah ordered the copies of the Qur'an to be raised on spears, and a herald proclaimed: "This is Allah's Book between us and you. Who will protect the fortified borderlands of Syria after the people of Syria [perish], and who will protect the fortified borderlands of Iraq after the people of Iraq [perish]?"

Arbitration under these circumstances would not stir up discord among the defeated; rather, it would give them hope and an opportunity to regroup and regain their strength. However, among the victorious ranks, who were only hours away from victory, it would spark intense disagreement and conflicting views. This was what actually happened within the ranks of the Imam's army.

Fragmenting Unity and Using Subterfuge Tactics

No sooner had the copies of the Qur'an been raised than a dispute erupted within Imam `Ali's camp. One group saw this demand as a deception and that they must continue fighting. This was the Imam's view. However, the Imam followed the opinion of those who held the opposite view, as they were the majority.

Consequently, arbitration began. Mu`awiyah was represented by `Amr ibn Al-`As, and Imam `Ali was represented by Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari. Discussion and debate continued between the two arbitrators, and the arbitration ended without a solution to the crisis; rather, it further complicated the situation, especially within the Imam's camp. They agreed to depose both `Ali and Mu`awiyah, but they failed to agree on their successors.

Abu Musa rose to announce the deposition of both `Ali and Mu`awiyah, in which case the nation must choose a new caliph. As for `Amr, he stood up and said: "Abu Musa has deposed his companion, as you have seen. I too, like Abu Musa, will depose his companion and affirm Mu`awiyah's fitness for the position (of caliph). He is the Commander of the Believers and the one who demands the blood of `Uthman, so pledge allegiance to him."

Abu Musa was infuriated by this trickery, and the arbitration ended in vain, with no resolution to the dispute. The Imam returned to Kufa to reorganize his situation.

The Emergence of the Khawarij (the Kharijites)

Imam `Ali decided to resume fighting, but another sedition, or rather another affliction, spread among his soldiers: the Khawarij revolt. May Allah be with you, O Abul-Hasan!

After employing the stratagem of 'arbitration', disagreement tore the Imam's followers apart, transforming them into factions fighting one another. In addition to the two groups supporting and opposing arbitration, another group emerged: the Khawarij, who viewed arbitration as a violation of Allah's religion. They proclaimed that both `Ali and Mu`awiyah were disbelievers [who no longer belonged to Islam]. Not only that, but they took up arms against the Commander of the Believers. They set out, wandering through the countries and villages, killing everyone who disagreed with them. News of this reached the Imam [in Kufa], and people sent messages from everywhere seeking his help and pleading with him not to head to the Levant before he secured their safety from this plague.

The Imam decided to fight this deviant sect, but as was his custom, he refused to fight them until he had totally despaired of their repentance and change of behavior. He encountered them with his soldiers, preferring to have a conversation with them before actually fighting them.

Neither argument nor conversation proved fruitful, as they insisted on declaring the Imam and his companions to be disbelievers in Islam who must be treated in war and peace as disbelievers. Despite all this, the Imam left room for peace and reconciliation. He hoisted a banner in the battlefield and called out: "Anyone who comes under this banner is safe. Anyone who refrains from fighting is safe. And anyone who returns to Kufa is safe." Many of the Khawarij left peacefully, but approximately two thousand—out of an initial total of eight thousand—remained, determined to fight. The Imam fought them, and the fight lasted only an hour before most of them were killed while the rest fled.

A Truce with Mu`awiyah

When the Commander of the Believers resolved to march to the Levant to encounter Mu'awiyah's army, he found no men around him to support him. The soldiers had slipped away from their camp, and some of them said: "O Commander of the Believers, our arrows have run out and our swords have become blunt. Let us return to our garrison town so that we may make the best possible preparations." The Imam was certain that the people were rebelling against his rule and that they would not obey his command if he called them to battle.

As for Mu'awiyah, his star kept rising and circumstances and events supported him, while the Khawarij unwittingly aided him. He continued sending expeditions and detachments to every region where he saw an opportunity to widen his power. Within two years, Egypt, the Hijaz, Yemen, and

other lands supported him. The Imam stayed at Kufa, and only Iraq and its environs remained committed to his pledge of allegiance. Within his community, there were divisions, conflicts, and disputes. One group were his followers, others were Khawarij who did not want ʿAli or Muʿawiyah, and another group were hypocrites who showed obedience to the Imam, but in reality, had definite but concealed hostility toward him. Eventually, the Imam grew tired of them all and weary of being their ruler.

The matter ended with the Imam accepting a truce between him and Muʿawiyah on the condition that he would have Iraq and Muʿawiyah would have the Levant. No more conflict, no more fighting, no more bloodshed, and no more lives lost.

The Final Chapter in the Imam's Life

Now, after many years of *Jihad*, constant confrontations, conspiracies, all kinds of trials and tribulations, and intractable disagreements, Iman `Ali's life neared its end. It was time for the Imam's body to rest and for his pure soul to ascend to its Creator to join the prophets, the truthful ones, and the martyrs.

Winning Martyrdom

There was a prophecy regarding Imam `Ali. The Prophet (PBBUH) foretold that he would attain martyrdom, and the prophecy was fulfilled. Three extremists from the Khawarij gathered, namely, `Abdul-Rahman ibn Muljam, Al-Burak ibn `Abdullah, and `Amr ibn Bakr. They recalled the deaths of their own group and the deaths among all Muslims, and placed the blame for this bloodshed on three men: `Ali ibn Abu Talib, Mu`awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan, and `Amr ibn Al-`As. They decided to eliminate them.

Ibn Muljam said: "I will rid you of `Ali ibn Abu Talib."

Al-Burak said: "I will rid you of Mu`awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan."

`Amr ibn Bakr said: "I will rid you of `Amr ibn Al-`As."

Multiple Motivations at Play

The three conspirators had ample motivation for revenge. It was strong enough to carry out their plan, needing no further incitement to murder and

exact retaliation. By a strange coincidence, Ibn Muljam's resolve was sharpened by another impulse besides avenging his comrades: passionate love, which could only be quenched by the blood of that noble martyr.

Ibn Muljam loved a girl from Taym, whose father, brother, and other relatives had been killed in the battle against the Khawarij. She was described as a woman of extreme beauty and strong will. When Ibn Muljam proposed to her, she would not accept him as a husband unless he sated her passion for revenge. He asked her: "What will satisfy you (to accept my proposal)?" She replied: "Three thousand dirhams, a slave, a singing girl, and the killing of `Ali ibn Abu Talib. Wait until he is off his guard. If you get him, you will have satisfied yourself and me, and life with me will be pleasant. If you are killed, what is with Allah is better than this world and its adornments." It was important for her that Ibn Muljam would succeed in this task, and she assigned someone from her tribe who would assist him in the assassination mission.

Executing the Assassination Plot

On the night agreed upon, the three assassins came out, each one to kill the man he had been assigned to kill at the appointed place and time.

In Egypt, `Amr ibn Al-`As had a stomach complaint that night and did not leave his house. He ordered Kharijah ibn Hudhafah, his chief of police, to lead the people in prayer. `Amr ibn Bakr struck him, mistaking him for `Amr. He killed him, was arrested, and then ordered to be executed.

In the Levant, Al-Burak ibn `Abdullah struck Mu`awiyah, but the blow landed on his buttocks. Mu`awiyah did not die, and he ordered Al-Burak's execution.

`Abdul-Rahman ibn Muljam headed for Kufa and waited for the Commander of the Believers while he was leaving for the *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer. After `Ali had crossed the streets, awakening the people for prayer, and as he approached the door of the mosque, Ibn Muljam struck him on the top of his head with a poisoned sword, saying: "Judgment belongs to Allah, not to you, O `Ali, nor to your companions." Those in the mosque were alarmed, and the people rushed toward Ibn Muljam and seized him.

The Imam and the Model He Set

This tragic crime occurred on the night of Friday, the 15th of Ramadan, 40 A.H. The Imam was carried to his home. He ordered his bearers and those surrounding him to go to the mosque to join the *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer. When they finished praying and returned to him holding the killer, he opened his eyes and saw him. He shook his head, recognizing him, and said: "Is it you? I have always been kind to you."

The Hero and the Morals of a Knight

As the noble hero looked at the faces of his sons and companions, it was clear to him that they were flamed up with rage. He felt the chill of death creeping through his limbs, almost foreseeing the fate that would befall his killer and the terrible revenge that his sons and companions would exact. Here the greatness of the heroic knight revealed itself, as he called out to his sons, at the head of whom was Al-Hassan, and said to them:

- Treat him (my killer) well.
- Make his stay (in detention) honorable.

- If I live, I am more entitled of his blood, whether I decide just retribution or pardon.
- If I die, kill him as he killed me, so that I may contend with him before the Lord of the Worlds.
- Do not kill anyone other than him (the murderer) because of me, for Allah does not like the transgressors.

Last Commandments

Imam ʿAli proceeded to dictate his commandments to his sons:

- I advise you to fear Allah and do not die except as Muslims.
- Fear Allah! Fear Allah regarding the Qurʿan. Do not let anyone suppress you in acting upon it.
- Do not let the fear of blame stop you from carrying out Allah's Command.
- Do not abandon enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong.
- Be opponents to the oppressors and supporters for the oppressed.

Imam ʿAli continued to remember Allah (Exalted be He) until his soul departed to its Creator. His two sons, Al-Hassan and Al-Husayn, and his nephew, ʿAbdullah ibn Jaʿfar, washed his body for burial. His son, Al-Hassan, led the Funeral Prayer for him.

Finally, the wayfarer returned to his homeland, to his real abode, and departed this world. Every situation in his life became a sun, illuminating the darkness of misguidance and oppression and drawing into its orbit the values of truth, heroism, faith, righteousness, and honor. True, his body departed, but the beliefs and ideals that he upheld will always inspire others.

May Allah's Mercy and Blessings be upon you, O Abul-Hassan.

Al-Hassan ibn ʿAli

After Imam ʿAli (may Allah be pleased with him) was martyred, the people of Kufa pledged allegiance to his son, Al-Hassan. Having received the pledge of allegiance, Al-Hassan decided to fulfill his father's resolve, who had prepared an army to fight the people of the Levant. He thus ordered the army to depart.

“I Hope That Allah Will Reconcile Two Muslim Groups Through Him”

Allah Almighty fulfilled the prophecy given by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) regarding Al-Hassan when he said: **“This son of mine is a *Sayyid* (i.e. chief or leader), and I hope that Allah will bring reconciliation between two Muslim groups through him.”**¹ Allah (Exalted be He) inspired Al-Hassan with the right decision. After deliberating on the pledge of allegiance he had received, he realized that it was not as strong and reliable as that given to his father. He knew that the soldiers of Iraq could not support a state due to the discord and conflict between them.

Therefore, Al-Hassan wrote a message to Muʿawiyah ibn Abu Sufyan, asking Muʿawiyah for a peace settlement depending on certain conditions Al-Hassan wanted to stipulate. Muʿawiyah sent a sealed document, without any written text, and asked Al-Hassan to stipulate whatever conditions he wanted.

Al-Hassan wrote down several conditions, the most important of which was ensuring the security of his army and all ʿAli's community. Muʿawiyah

¹ Reported by Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 7109.

accepted all the conditions that Al-Hassan demanded. He then went to Iraq, where Al-Hassan met him and pledged allegiance to him as Caliph.

Thus was fulfilled the prophecy that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had made regarding the *Sayyid*, Al-Hassan ibn `Ali (may Allah be pleased with them both), and the peace and reform that, through him, would supplant the division and tension that had occurred in the nation.

At last, the period of seditions that had lasted ten years ended. If this had happened to any other nation, it would have meant its total and irrevocable downfall. However, Allah Almighty watched over His upright religion with a Caring Eye, uniting its people and preserving His religion as He had promised.

That Was a Nation That Has Passed Away

Now, dear readers, before we leave this important era in the Islamic history, the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphate, and the trials and tribulations that plagued it in the final ten years, I want to shed light on several important topics.

First: All the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) were just and upright. They did not covet worldly possessions, nor did they follow their own whims. Rather, they all sought Allah's Good Pleasure and the universal reign of His religion. They differed in opinion and exerted their utmost effort and capacity to reach the right legal judgment. Some of them exerted themselves to formulate legal decisions and were correct, while others exerted themselves and came to the wrong conclusion. Each group would receive the reward for their exercising *Ijtihad* (juristic effort to infer expert legal rulings). As for those whose juristic reasoning was correct, they would receive a double reward, as the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) informed us.

Second: Recently, it has been noted that people have differed regarding the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). One group supports this Companion, while the other opposes him. There is also a noticeable bias against some of them, even sinking to the level of insulting the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

Such people have forgotten that they are speaking about those who the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) described by saying: **“Do not revile my Companions. For by the One in Whose Hand is my soul, if any one of you**

were to spend the equivalent of Mount Uhud in gold, it would not equal a *Mudd* (i.e., a handful) spent by anyone of them, nor even half a *Mudd*.”¹

Third: What benefit will the *Ummah* gain now from such discord and disagreement, delving into events that occurred more than 1,400 years ago? We know that plenty of accounts have been falsified, and truths distorted by depraved people whose corrupt standards led them to deny or distort what happened and lie about Allah (Exalted be He).

It is more appropriate for us nowadays, as the *Ummah* faces enormous challenges that are obvious to everyone, to occupy ourselves with confronting these challenges, improving and advancing the *Ummah*, and drawing closer to Allah (Glorified be He). We should thank Allah for having saved us from the tribulations which affected the Companions. We have been saved from them physically, with our bodies, so why do we go into this issue with our tongues and pens today?

Let us all remember Allah’s Saying: ﴿That was a nation who have passed away. They shall receive the reward of what they earned and you of what you earn. And you will not be asked of what they used to do﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Baqarah 2:134).

Trials Continue to Plague the *Ummah*

If ‘Abdullah ibn Saba’ died, there are thousands, even millions, who imitate his example and follow his path today, stirring strife and unrest among Muslims here and there. This is an obvious matter that does not require much research.

¹ Reported by Ibn Majah, hadith no. 161.

Look around you. You will see the *Ummah* torn apart and divided into different sects, parties, groups, factions, and organizations, calling them countless names for which Allah has sent down no authority. These warring factions have no concern other than fighting among themselves. Regretfully, both the killer and the killed are followers of Muhammad (PBBUH); a condition that makes hearts bleed. Is there no wise person left who can restore the *Ummah* to common sense? Why do you disagree with one another? What are you fighting about? May Allah have mercy on us!

“Come to a Word That Is Just Between Us and You”

Allah Almighty says, teaching His beloved Prophet (PBBUH) and his followers: ﴿Say, “O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians). Come to a word that is just between us and you, that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords besides Allah”﴾ (translated meaning of Al `Imran 3:64).

If this is the manner that Allah (Exalted be He) commands us to use in our dialogue with the People of the Scripture, so why do we not say, along the same lines and in the same spirit: “O you who love the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)! O you who follow the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)! O people who hold the same faith! Come to a word that is just between us and you?”

A modest study of the points of disagreement and the points of consensus among all Muslims has been conducted with the conclusion that the area of consensus among Muslims is more than 90%. God is one, the Book is one, the Prophet is one, the *Qiblah* is one, the prayer is one, and fasting is one; all are one and the same. All this and much more unite us.

As for the area of disagreement, it is less than 10%. What unites us is far greater than what divides us.

Has not the time come for this nation to awaken from its slumber, for us to cast aside these differences, come together on a common cause, and reunite?

The challenges facing us today are massive and dangerous and could annihilate everything!

I have conveyed the message. O Allah, bear witness.

5. Talhah ibn `Ubaidullah



May Allah Be Pleased with Him

Talhah ibn `Ubaidullah

Dear readers, we are still enjoying the company of the Ten Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) who were promised Paradise.

Let us welcome a Companion who was one of the Ten Given Glad Tidings of Paradise, one of the eight who were the first to embrace Islam, one of the five who were guided to belief by Abu Bakr, and one of the six members of the *Shura* Council who elected the next Caliph after `Umar ibn Al-Khattab.

Welcome to the living martyr, Talhah ibn Ubaidullah Al-Taymi Al-Qurashi.

Talhah's Upbringing

Talhah (may Allah be pleased with him) was raised by his father, `Ubaidullah, who was one of the dignitaries of Makkah. His mother, Al-Sa`bah bint Al-Hadrami, came from a family known for its generosity and love of giving to others. Talhah grew up as a young man with core values and ethics instilled in him by his parents. When he reached adulthood, he married Hamnah bint Jahsh, the sister of Zaynab bint Jahsh, the Prophet's (PBBUH) wife. He learned archery and the skills of spear-throwing. He engaged in trade and was known to be an honest merchant and an easygoing seller.

The Story of Talhah's Embracing Islam

“O Young Man, Beware Not to Let Anyone Outrun You to Him”

Talhah (may Allah be pleased with him) set out for Busra (a city in Syria) with a trade caravan of Quraysh. Despite his young age (only fifteen years old), he possessed a keen intellect and penetrating insight.

While they were in the markets of Busra, buying and selling, a monk called out to the people: “O merchants, is there among you anyone of the people of the Sacred Sanctuary?” Talhah (may Allah be pleased with him), who was close by, answered: “Yes, I am one of the people of the Sacred Sanctuary.” The monk proclaimed: “The last of the Prophets will emerge from your land, the one prophesied by the righteous prophets. This is his time; beware not to let anyone outrun you to him, O young man.”

Talhah proceeded to Makkah, traveling the distance as fast as he could. The monk's words resonated with him. When he arrived in Makkah, he found its people talking about ‘Muhammad, the Trustworthy One’ and the revelations that he (PBBUH) received from heaven. He asked about Abu Bakr and learned that he had become a follower of Muhammad (PBBUH). Talhah thought to himself: “Muhammad and Abu Bakr? By Allah, they will never agree on error [i.e., they cannot both accept something false as being true].”

Talhah hurried to Abu Bakr's house. The conversation between them did not take long before he accompanied him to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to testify before him (PBBUH) that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was pleased when Talhah told him the story of the monk of Busra.

Thus, Talhah was the fourth of three persons guided to Islam by Abu Bakr. Indeed, he was one of the first and early believers.

The Persecution and Harm That Talhah Endured from Quraysh for His Faith

Despite his important status among his people and his immense wealth, Talhah (may Allah be pleased with him) had his share of persecution and harm from Quraysh. As soon as the young man declared his faith in the new Prophet, his people tried very hard to dissuade him from following the religion of Islam. However, they found him as firm as a mountain. When they despaired of convincing him that he was in the wrong, they resorted to torturing him.

Here are some of the torture and ill treatment Talhah was subjected to:

- It was narrated that they would tie his hands to his neck and then rush from behind him, pushing him in the back and hitting him on the head. His mother stood behind them, inciting them to beat and abuse him.
- It was also narrated that Nawfal ibn Khuwaylid, nicknamed ‘The Lion of Quraysh’, confronted Talhah and bound him tightly with a rope. He then tied him to Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, with the same rope, and handed them both over to the violent mob of Makkah for the mob to inflict upon them the severest torture. For this reason, Talhah and Abu Bakr were called ‘The Two Tied Together’.

Talhah's Most Remarkable Actions and Morals

Days passed, and events continued to unfold, until Allah lifted the affliction and persecution from Talhah. His effective service and contribution to Allah's Cause and His Messenger's mission increased. His devotion to Islam and compassion toward the Muslims grew stronger.

Later, Talhah emigrated to Madinah to enjoy the company of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), away from the eyes and tyranny of Quraysh.

Talhah participated in all the battles with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), except for Badr. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had charged him with a task outside Madinah. When he returned to Madinah, the Muslims had already returned from the site of combat. It pained him to miss the first battle with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). However, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) reassured him, informing him that he would have the same reward and merit as those who had witnessed the battle. The Messenger (PBBUH) even allotted to him a share of the spoils, just like those who had fought at Badr.

“That Was Entirely Talhah's Day”

On the Day of Uhud, when Quraysh came with all their might to avenge the Battle of Badr, the fighting began and the tide turned against the *Mushrikin*. However, when the Muslims saw the *Mushrikin*'s forces withdrawing, they laid down their weapons and the archers dismounted to claim their share of the spoils, despite the strict orders from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) that they must not leave their positions, regardless of victory or defeat.

The Quraysh army then took control of the battle, and the tide turned against the Muslims. The fighting raged around the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), who had become the target for the *Mushrikin*. As soon as Talhah (may Allah be pleased with him) saw the fierce attack being made on the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), he rushed to his aid, unmindful of the swords pointed at the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and the arrows raining down on him and those around him.

When Talhah arrived at the side of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), he found nine men from the Ansar around him, and among the Muhajirun, there was Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas. Talhah therefore joined them.

The nine Ansari men fought valiantly in defense of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) until they were all killed. Only Talhah and Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas remained. Sa`d continued shooting arrows, while Talhah stood guard and defended the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), slashing right and left with his sword. He deflected the arrows that were flying towards the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), and then he turned back to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and helped him a little further up the mountain. He repelled the disbelievers again, striking with his right hand and defending the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) with his left. He kept repelling the attacks of the *Mushrikin* and protecting the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) while shouting: “[I sacrifice] my throat for yours, O Messenger of Allah!” He continued to fight off the enemy until he beat them back. Abu Bakr and Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah arrived at the spot of combat and found the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) in this state. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to them: **“Leave me and hurry to [assist] your brother (meaning Talhah)!”**

They went to Talhah to find him lying unconscious, with ninety-odd sword or spear wounds and his finger cut off. When he awoke, he thought nothing of

his wounds or pain; he just asked: “What happened to the Messenger of Allah?” He was assured that he was still alive.

Talhah forgot his injuries and pain and rushed to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to find him surrounded by some Companions. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) began to retreat. When the Messenger (PBBUH) tried to climb a rock but was unable to, Talhah would sit beneath the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)—despite his injuries—until he (PBBUH) was able to lean on Talhah and so stand on the rock. This occurred several times, whenever the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) wanted to climb. On one occasion, Talhah had to carry the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Despite the lameness that had affected one of his legs, Talhah had to walk upright so as not to make retreat difficult for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

Talhah continued striving in this manner until the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was safe from the attacks of the disbelievers of Quraysh. Paradise became certain for Talhah on that day for the heroic assistance he gave. His heroism was to the extent that whenever the Battle of Uhud was mentioned, Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq would say: “That was entirely Talhah’s day.”

‘The Living Martyr’

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) conferred upon Talhah ibn `Ubaidullah the highest honor a human being can receive. He (PBBUH) said: **“Whoever would be pleased to look at a martyr walking upon the face of the earth, let him look at Talhah ibn `Ubaidullah.”**¹

For this reason, the Companions gave him the title ‘The Living Martyr’. Talhah remained with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), participating in all the

¹ Reported by Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 3739.

battles with him. He was always at the forefront of the fighting lines, seeking Allah's Good Pleasure and heroically defending the standard of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) during the battles.

Talhah Recognizes Abu Hurairah's Merit and His Devotion to Knowledge

A man came to Talhah ibn `Ubaidullah and said [to him]: "O Abu Muhammad, do you see this Yemeni—meaning Abu Hurairah? Is he more knowledgeable of the hadiths of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) than you? We hear from him what we do not hear from you. Or does he attribute to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) what he did not say?" Talhah, a wealthy man with extensive business and a high status, responded by recognizing Abu Hurairah's merit and devotion to knowledge, even though he was a poor man with neither wealth nor status. Talhah said: "As for his having heard from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) what we did not hear from him, that is because he was poor, possessing nothing, a guest of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH); his hand was in the hand of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). We used to be people busy with properties and wealth [that we owned]. We used to come to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) at the two ends of the day (i.e., at morning and sunset). I do not doubt that he (Abu Hurairah) heard from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) what we have not heard, and you will not find anyone in whom there is goodness attributing to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) what he did not say."¹

Let us hope that we take heed of this lesson and always think well of others, to actively contribute to the integrity of our community.

¹ Reported by Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 3837.

‘Talhah the Good’, ‘Talhah the Generous’, ‘Talhah the Giver in Abundance’

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) gave Talhah (may Allah be pleased with him) several titles, including ‘Talhah the Good’, ‘Talhah the Generous’, and ‘Talhah the Giver in Abundance’ in praise of his lavish generosity and ample benevolence. Every day, after performing the duties owed to his Lord, Talhah would travel through the land seeking of Allah’s Bounty and increasing and expanding his business. He was one of the wealthiest and most prosperous of Muslims. His wealth, despite its vastness, was entirely in the service of Islam. He would spend from it without measure, and Allah would also increase it without measure.

“What Would a Man Expect of His Lord if He Sleeps Having This Wealth in His House?”

Talhah was a merchant with extensive trade business and enormous wealth. One day, profits from Hadhramaut, amounting to seven hundred thousand dirhams, came to him. He spent the night anxious and sad. His wife, Umm Kulthum bint Abu Bakr, entered upon him and asked him: “What is wrong with you, O father of Muhammad? Perhaps I did something that has upset you.” He replied: “No, you are a wonderful wife. But I have been thinking to myself, ‘What would a man expect of his Lord if he sleeps having this wealth in his house?’” She asked: “Why should that distress you? What about all the needy people among your relatives and friends? When you get up in the morning divide it among them.” Talhah said: “May Allah have mercy on you! Truly, you are a successful woman, daughter of a successful man.”

When morning came, he put the money into small purses, each containing a thousand dirhams, and divided it among the poor Muhajirun and Ansar. Before the distribution was finished, and when only one purse remained, his wife said to him: "O father of Muhammad, what share do we have of this money? There is not a single dirham in our house!" He said to her: "Where have you been since the beginning of the day? Do as you like with the remainder." There was one purse left containing a thousand dirhams.

A Gentle Whisper to the Ears of the Wealthy

There is an overwhelming sense of both pain and pride whenever I come across this story from the life of this venerable Companion. Many similar stories of Talhah's generosity or that of his brothers can be found in their biographies, since they were all graduates of the school of the beloved Chosen Prophet (PBBUH).

I feel pride in all these shining stars, the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), whom we emulate and whose patterns we follow. They spent of the wealth and provisions that Allah (Exalted be He) bestowed upon them without fear of having them diminished in any way. They were completely sure that Allah would compensate them with greater blessings, just as their teacher and the teacher of entire humanity (PBBUH) had taught them.

It is possible to do a simple calculation of how much Talhah spent on that day: a dinar is equal to 4.25 grams of gold, a dirham is one-tenth of a dinar, and the price of one gram of gold at that time was approximately \$40 (according to the price that was in force at the time of writing this book; it may later be more or less). With these values, it is possible to calculate that Talhah spent 700,000 dirhams that day, which is equivalent to approximately 12 million US dollars.

Yes, He spent 12 million dollars, in one day, in one lump sum, without hesitation and with a contented soul.

As for the pain and disappointment that I also feel, they are due to the gross dereliction that our nation, particularly the wealthy among us, exhibit toward the poor and the needy. Perhaps we can whisper this story in the ears of the wealthy Muslims. I hope they will follow the example of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and his noble Companions and spend from the wealth Allah has bestowed upon them to meet the needs of their poor and needy brothers and sisters. They will realize that no wealth is diminished by charity. Indeed, it is a profitable trade with Allah (Exalted be He).

Another Gentle Whisper to My Believing Sisters

Did you notice what Talhah's wife, Umm Kulthum bint Abu Bakr, did when she saw Talhah distressed because of the large sums of money that he had in his possession? She did not say to him: "Do not worry, my dear husband. Tomorrow we will spend this money on our children, buy a new house, or buy some jewelry," and so on with an endless list of purchases. Rather, she said to him: "What about all the needy people among your relatives and friends? When you get up in the morning, divide it among them."

This is how, my dear sisters, a righteous wife should behave, helping her husband to do righteousness and be pious and racing together to perform good deeds. May Allah Almighty guide us all to the right path.

Talhah's Dutifulness to His Entire Kindred

This was not the only time Talhah, the good man, gave with such generosity of spirit and magnanimity. There are many more instances.

A Very Generous Act of Kindness to a Distant Relative

One day, a man Talhah was acquainted with came to him, asking for financial help, and he mentioned a distant kinship relationship that connected them. Talhah said: “This is a kindred tie that no one before you has asked me with.” Then Talhah said to his kinsman, as if he wanted to apologize for not knowing about this kinship relationship all these years: “I have a piece of land worth three hundred thousand. If you wish, take it. Or if you wish, I will sell it and give you its worth (in cash).” The man replied: “I will take its worth.” Therefore Talhah gave the sum to him.

Talhah was the most dutiful person to his kindred. Despite their large number, he supported them all. He would not leave a single family member of the Banu Taym tribe without providing for their needs as well as the needs of their families. He would financially help their children to marry, serve their families, and pay off the debts of debtors and relieve their distress. There are numerous examples of his compassionate generosity, benevolence, and magnanimity.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) attested to this when he bestowed upon him such titles as: ‘Talhah the Good,’ ‘Talhah the Generous,’ and ‘Talhah the Giver in Abundance’—as was mentioned earlier.

Many of the Companions also bore witness to his munificence. Jabir ibn `Abdullah said: “I have never seen anyone who gives more generously, without being asked, like Talhah ibn `Uбайдullah.”

The Battle of the Camel and Earning Martyrdom

Toward the end of `Uthman's reign, seditions began to spring up on every side, ignited and fueled by `Abdullah ibn Saba' and his supporters—as was previously recounted. There were some objections to Uthman's policies; some of the Companions formed a benign opposition, whereas the conspirators led a malicious unrelenting opposition to his rule, as was detailed earlier in the delineation of `Uthman's life and character.

Talhah (may Allah be pleased with him) aligned with this benign opposition, unaware that there were hidden hands tampering with the nation, determined to tear it apart by sowing discord and division. The sedition escalated nationwide, exactly as the conspirators had planned. Its fires flared up, and several senior Companions were burned by its flames. Talhah had his share of these unfortunate consequences.

When `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) was killed, Talhah was overcome with deep remorse and guilt for supporting the opposition against `Uthman, even though he was unaware that these people were secretly plotting against the nation. Talhah believed that immediate revenge against `Uthman's killers was necessary. On the other side, `Ali ibn Abu Talib, the new Caliph, believed that the Muslim state must be stabilized first, and then revenge could be sought against `Uthman's killers.

Talhah headed to Basra along with Al-Zubayr and the Mother of the Believers, Lady `Aishah, demanding that revenge be exacted upon `Uthman's killers. The conflict and tensions that divided the people escalated into a full-scale confrontation at the Battle of the Camel, as was mentioned in detail earlier.

Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) sought every means to save the Muslims from this impasse. When he spoke to Talhah and Al-Zubayr and reminded them of the love, fraternity, and affection that had existed between them, everyone wept and resolved not to wage war and to choose peace. Talhah (may Allah be pleased with him) even said, in tears: “Yesterday we were united against everyone else; but today we have become two mountains of iron, one advancing toward the other.” Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) said the same thing, and so did Al-Zubayr.

Talhah and Al-Zubayr withdrew from the battlefield, but martyrdom was in store for them. Indeed, martyrdom was Talhah’s destiny. He would face it, and it would happen to him no matter wherever he went. Did the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) not say: **“Whoever would be pleased to look at a martyr walking upon the face of the earth, let him look at Talhah ibn `Uбайдullah”?**

The martyr thus met his preordained fate. Talhah was killed by the conspirators who sought to cause unrest and rebellion in the Muslim nation.

`Ali Mourns Talhah

Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) stood still when he reached Talhah’s body after his martyrdom. He wiped the dust from his face and said: “I am very sorry to see you like this, O Abu Muhammad! I wish I had died before this. By Allah, I hate to see you slain. Perhaps Allah will unite us, and we will be among those about whom Allah Almighty says, ﴿And We shall remove from their breasts any sense of injury (that they may have), (so they will be like) brothers facing each other on thrones﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Hijr 15:47).”

May Allah have mercy on you, Talhah, the Good.

6. Al-Zubayr ibn Al-`Awwam



May Allah Be Pleased with Him

Al-Zubayr ibn Al-`Awwam

Dear readers, let us move on and be inspired by another guiding star in our constellation of the honorable Companions; whoever among them you follow for guidance, you will be rightly guided.

Al-Zubayr was the paternal cousin of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). His mother, Safiyyah bint `Abdul-Muttalib, was the Prophet's (PBBUH) aunt. He was one of the Ten Given Glad Tidings of Paradise and one of the early Muslims. He was the husband of `Asma, the daughter of Abu Bakr, and the sister of Lady `Aishah. He was one of the six members of the *Shura* Council who elected the next Caliph after `Umar ibn Al-Khattab and the first to draw his sword to fight in Allah's Cause.

The Story of His Embracing Islam and the Persecution Al-Zubayr Endured for His Faith

Al-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with him) was among the first seven people to take the initiative to embrace Islam. He was then a youth of sixteen years. Despite his honorable status among his society, he endured a painful share of persecution and torture by Quraysh, who attacked all those who followed the religion of Muhammad (PBBUH).

The torture Al-Zubayr suffered was different from that inflicted upon his fellow believers. His paternal uncle was the one in charge of torturing him. He would wrap him in a mat of palm leaves and fill the palm leaves with smoke to cause him to suffocate. He would call out to him while he was in this state and

under the pressure of torture: “Declare disbelief in the Lord of Muhammad and I will stop this torture.” Al-Zubayr would answer him with defiance and courage, despite his young age, saying: “By Allah, I will never return to disbelief again.”

The Self-Sacrificing Fighter

What distinguished Al-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with him) most was his courage and fearlessness. From a young age, he was a dauntless knight, unafraid of death. His actions and stances bear witness to this, from his youth until his martyrdom.

The First to Draw a Sword for Islam

During the early days of Islam, the Muslims were few in number, hiding in the House of Al-Arqam and lacking the strength to withstand confrontation with Quraysh. One day, a rumor spread that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had been killed. Despite his young age, the brave fighter, Al-Zubayr ibn Al-`Awwam, drew his sword and walked through the streets of Makkah to verify the news. He intended, if he found the news to be true, to fight all Quraysh and either defeat them or be defeated by them.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) encountered him in this state and asked him: **“What is the matter?”** Al-Zubayr replied: “I was informed that you had been killed.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **“What would you have done?”** Al-Zubayr replied: “I would have struck the one who killed you with this sword of mine.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) smiled and supplicated Allah to grant Al-Zubayr well-being and for his sword to prevail. Al-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with him) was thus the first person in Islam to draw a sword in defense of the religion of Allah and His Messenger (PBBUH).

“Who Will Volunteer to Bring Us News of the Ongoing Battle?”

Al-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with him) emigrated to Abyssinia with those who had emigrated, following the advice of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to flee Makkah and seek asylum with the Negus, whom he (PBBUH) described as a just Christian king. They remained residing under his protection, in the best of dwellings and next to the best of neighbors. Then a man from Abyssinia appeared and contended with the Negus, trying to usurp the Negus' sovereignty and rule. The Muslims were saddened by this, fearing that this man would prevail over the Negus and would not recognize their rights as the Negus did. What would their fate be? The Companions were very anxious to know the outcome of the ongoing battle between the Negus and this man, which was being fought on the other side of the Nile.

The Companions asked: “Who is the man who will go out [to the site of the conflict] to witness the battle between the people and then bring us the news?” The courageous volunteer, Al-Zubayr ibn Al-`Awwam, stepped forward and said: “I will bring you the news.” Al-Zubayr was the youngest in the group. They inflated a water skin for him, which he tied to his chest and swam on until he reached the other side of the river. While the Companions were busy supplicating to Allah to grant victory to the Negus over his enemy, Al-Zubayr returned with the good news: the Negus had triumphed, and Allah Almighty had destroyed his enemy.

Angel Jibril (PBUH) Joins the Battle of Badr in the form of Al-Zubayr

The Battle of Badr took place, and the brave fighter, Al-Zubayr, was at the forefront of the fight, wearing his yellow turban. He fought bravely, killing a

great number of polytheists. Angel Jibril (Gabriel, PBUH) came down in the form of Al-Zubayr, wearing a yellow turban like his and clothed in the same garment as his, to support the believers.

“Those Believers Who Responded to Allah and the Messenger”

After the *Mushrikin* withdrew from Uhud, on which the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and his Companions sustained several injuries, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) feared that the enemy forces might turn back and resume fighting, so he (PBBUH) said: **“Who will volunteer to pursue them so that they may know that we (still) have strength?”** The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) chose the brave and courageous Al-Zubayr for this mission, along with Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq. Abu Bakr and Al-Zubayr led seventy Muslim men. Despite the fact that they were pursuing a victorious army and despite the wounds and pain they bore from the battle, they succeeded in casting terror in the hearts of the *Mushrikin*. Quraysh began to think that this powerful advance was merely the prelude to a larger army coming to fight them. Therefore, Quraysh hastened their march to Makkah. The Muslims returned under the leadership of Abu Bakr and Al-Zubayr, with Allah’s Grace and Favor, and no harm having touched them.

Lady `Aishah said, addressing the son of Al-Zubayr: “O my nephew, your father and Abu Bakr were among those about whom Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴿Those [believers] who responded to Allah and the Messenger after injury had struck them. For those who did good among them and feared Allah is a great reward﴾ (translated meanings of Al `Imran 3:172).

The Sincere Disciple of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)

The brave volunteer, Al-Zubayr, continued his giving and sacrifice for Allah's Sake, in constant support of His religion. On the Day of the Trench, when the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) learned of the betrayal of Banu Qurayzah (a Jewish tribe that inhabited Madinah) and their alliance with the Confederates, the Messenger (PBBUH) wanted to verify the matter. He said: **"Who will bring us the news of Banu Qurayzah?"** Al-Zubayr said: "I will, O Messenger of Allah," and he rode his horse and brought clear and definite information [i.e., that Banu Qurayzah had betrayed their alliance with the Muslims]. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked him to bring news about them a second time. Al-Zubayr replied: "Yes, I will, O Messenger of Allah." After he (PBBUH) asked a third time and upon Al-Zubayr's return, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) awarded him the highest distinction, saying: **"Every prophet has a disciple, and my disciple is Al-Zubayr."**¹

On the Day of Hunayn

On the Day of Hunayn, Malik ibn `Awf, the leader of the *Mushrikin* army, remained in ambush with his soldiers after their defeat, lying in wait for the Muslim leaders returning from the battle. Malik saw Al-Zubayr ibn Al-`Awwam, who was resting his spear on his shoulder and wearing a red turban. Malik said to his soldiers: "This is Al-Zubayr ibn Al-`Awwam. He will attack you, so stand firm against him." Al-Zubayr charged into their crowd, alone, dispersed them, and drove them away from their ambush site.

Imam `Ali said of Al-Zubayr: "He becomes enraged like a tiger and attacks like a lion."

¹ Reported by Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 4113.

Al-Zubayr, Alone, Was an Army

In the Battle of Yarmouk, during the era of Caliph Abu Bakr, Al-Zubayr saw some fighters under his command retreating before the advancing mountain: the Byzantine army. Al-Zubayr stood up and shouted: “*Allahu Akbar*,” and penetrated the Byzantine army as if he, alone, were an army. He continued like this until he emerged from the other side and returned to his comrades. Then, with a shout that shook the huge advancing Byzantine army, he pierced their ranks again, just like he had done the first time. He returned, fighting his way back through the same terrifying ranks with his sword blazing brightly in his right hand, striking to his right and left.

His awakening shouts, his self-sacrifice, and his courage were the reason for instilling plenty of energy, enthusiasm, and confidence into his soldiers and striking fear into the enemy’s ranks. Ultimately, Allah (Glorified be He) granted victory to the believers.

“We Have Come (Ready) for the Stabs and the Plague”

When `Amr ibn Al-`As decided to liberate Egypt, he wrote to Caliph `Umar ibn Al-Khattab asking for reinforcements. `Umar dispatched Al-Zubayr at the head of four thousand men. When Al-Zubayr arrived, he found that the forces of `Amr were besieging the fortress of Babylon. He inspected the trench surrounding the fortress, dispersing his men around it. But the siege dragged on, and Al-Zubayr was informed that there was a plague there. This statement did not weaken the resolve of Al-Zubayr, the valiant, self-sacrificing fighter, who replied: “We have come (ready) for the stabs and the plague.” He placed a ladder, leaning it against the side of the fortress, and then climbed up it. He ordered his soldiers to respond to him once they would hear him shout “*Allahu Akbar*”.

Only a few moments later, Al-Zubayr was at the top of the fortress shouting “*Allahu Akbar*”, with his sword in his hand. The people rushed up the ladder and entered the impregnable fortress. Victorious entry into the fortress brought this decisive battle aimed at liberating Egypt to an end. The courage and daring displayed by Al-Zubayr were the direct reason for the great victory that the Muslims obtained.

Al-Zubayr Names His Children After Martyrs

All the above-mentioned acts of heroism and sacrifices bear witness that Al-Zubayr ibn Al-`Awwam (may Allah be pleased with him) was truly a brave, self-sacrificing striver who did not fear death and was always willing to take risks to achieve success. Moreover, he was so passionate about martyrdom that he named his children after martyrs.

Al-Zubayr said: “Talhah ibn `Ubaidullah names his sons after the prophets, knowing that there would be no prophet after Muhammad (PBBUH). I name my sons after the martyrs, hoping that they will be martyred.”

He named his son `Abdullah after the martyred Companion, `Abdullah ibn Jahsh.

He named another son Hamzah after his martyred maternal uncle, Hamzah ibn `Abdul Muttalib.

He named a third son Ja`far after the martyr Ja`far ibn Abu Talib.

He named a fourth son Mus`ab after the martyr Mus`ab ibn `Umair.

Talhah and Al-Zubayr

Whenever Talhah is mentioned, Al-Zubayr is mentioned alongside him. And whenever Al-Zubayr is mentioned, Talhah is mentioned alongside him. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) often spoke of them together, such as his saying: **“Talhah and Al-Zubayr are my neighbors in Paradise.”**¹

Both were the most fortunate of people in terms of affluent upbringing, strength of faith, and amazing courage. Both were early believers in Islam, among the ten to whom the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) gave glad tidings of Paradise, and among the six members of the *Shura* Council to whom `Umar ibn Al-Khattab entrusted the selection of the next caliph.

Even their fates were the same, as they were both martyred together at the Battle of the Camel.

“O My Son, If You Are Unable to Repay Any Portion of My Debt, Seek Help From My Master.”

Al-Zubayr was a man of lofty character with outstanding personal qualities. His courage and generosity were like two racehorses, intensely competitive. His wealth was vast, but he spent it all for the sake of Islam, to the point that he died in debt.

His strong reliance on Allah (Exalted be He) was the basis and incentive of his generosity, his courage, and his self-sacrifice. Even as he was dying, he instructed his son, `Abdullah, to pay off his debts, saying to him: “My son, if you are unable to pay any portion of my debt, seek help from my Master.”

¹ Reported by Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 3741.

`Abdullah asked him: “O father, who is your master?” He replied: “Allah is my Master and the Best Supporter.”

`Abdullah ibn Al-Zubayr later said: “By Allah, whenever I faced difficulty in repaying his debt, I would say, ‘O Master of Al-Zubayr, pay off his debt,’ and He would pay it off.” He meant Allah (Glorified be He) would arrange the means for the repayment of his debt.

The Battle of the Camel and Earning Martyrdom

The fire of sedition overtook Al-Zubayr, just as it had overtaken his brother, Talhah. The Battle of the Camel—which has already been stated in detail—occurred, in which Al-Zubayr was treacherously killed by the conspirators, who had ignited the fire of sedition and refused to let it subside. They stood in the way of the reconciliation between `Ali ibn Abu Talib on the one side and Talhah and Al-Zubayr on the other.

Al-Zubayr attained the martyrdom he so dearly desired; he joined the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and his noble Companions in the Gardens of Bliss.

Imam `Ali wept for his brother Al-Zubayr, offered the Funeral Prayer for him, and permitted his burial. The man who killed Al-Zubayr then entered upon `Ali, thinking he was bringing him good news. But the Imam, upon seeing him, proceeded to shout in his face: “The killer of Safiyyah’s son (Al-Zubayr) will be in Hellfire.”

**May Allah have mercy on you, O disciple of the Messenger of Allah
(PBBUH)**

7. Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas



May Allah Be Pleased with Him

Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas

As we move from one beautiful garden to another, we meet the best humans ever after the Messengers. Those chosen few whom Allah (Exalted be He) singled out to be the Companions of the best of His creation.

Let us welcome the maternal uncle of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), one of the first early believers. He once represented one third of the Muslims, was one of the ten promised Paradise, and one of the six members of the *Shura* Council that chose the third Caliph. He was the hero of the Battle of Al-Qadisiyyah who extinguished forever the fire worshipped by the Magians. Let us welcome the lion and hero Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with him).

Sa'd's Lineage

His full name was Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas 'Malik' ibn Uhayb ibn 'Abd-Manaf. His grandfather, Uhayb ibn 'Abd-Manaf, was from the Banu Zuhrah tribe. Uhayb was the paternal uncle of Lady Amina, the Prophet's (PBBUH) mother. Therefore, Sa'd's father was her cousin, and Sa'd was like a brother to her. This made Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas a maternal uncle of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Whenever Sa'd entered upon the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) while he was among his Companions, he (PBBUH) would greet him and boast about him, saying: **"This is my maternal uncle; show me a man with an uncle like him."**¹

¹ Reported by Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 3752.

Sa`d Embracing Islam

Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with him) was approaching his seventeenth year when he saw in a dream that he was immersed in layers of darkness, one layer upon another. As he wandered through the darkness, a moon shone before him, so he followed it. He saw a group of people ahead of him who had preceded him to the moon. He saw Zayd ibn Harithah, `Ali ibn Abu Talib, and Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq. He asked them: "How long have you been here?" They replied: "We just came."

When morning came, Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas learned that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was secretly calling people to Islam. He felt that the dream he had seen was a sign from Allah (Exalted be He), and that He intended good for him and wanted to bring him out of darkness into the light. Sa`d quickly went to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and embraced Islam. No one preceded him to Islam except the group he had seen in his dream.

Thus, Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas was among the first to embrace Islam. He was the third of three men, or the fourth of four people, who converted to Islam. Therefore, he often boasted: "For seven days I was one-third of Islam (i.e., I was one of only three believers in Islam)."¹

The Torture Sa`d Endured for His Faith

Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas' conversion to Islam was not an easy, trouble-free step. Rather, the young believer faced one of the toughest experiences. Sa`d faced an extremely challenging situation, which was so hard that Allah Almighty revealed Qur'an concerning it.

¹ Reported by Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 3858.

As soon as his mother heard the news of his conversion to Islam, she became very furious. Sa`d was a very dedicated, dutiful, and loving son to his mother. She came up to him and said: "O Sa`d, what is this religion that you have followed that has taken you away from the religion of your fathers? By Allah, either you forsake your [new] religion, or I will not eat or drink until I die. Your heart will burst with grief for me, and you will be filled with regret for what you did. People will forever reproach you for it." Sa`d tried to dissuade her from this hunger strike, saying: "Do not do it, mother! I will never abandon my religion."

His mother carried on with her threat of refusing to eat or drink, showing unwavering determination until she was on the verge of death. Hour after hour, Sa`d would visit her, pleading with her to take some food or drink, but each time she stubbornly refused.

The faithful young man struggled to confront this adversity and the inner conflict that tore him between his intense love for his dying mother and his firm faith that he valued above everything else. His faith overcame his emotions, and he decisively said to his mother: "O Mother, despite my strong love for you, my love for Allah and His Messenger is stronger. By Allah, if you had a thousand souls, and one soul after another was to depart from you (your body), I would not abandon this religion of mine for anything."

When his mother saw his seriousness, she yielded and reluctantly ate and drank. Concerning this occurrence, Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) revealed His saying: ﴿But if they (both parents) strive with you to make you associate with Me that which you have no knowledge of, do not obey them. Yet treat them kindly in the world, and follow the path of him who turns to Me in repentance and in obedience. Then to Me will be your return, and I shall tell you what you used to do﴾ (translated meaning of Luqman 31:15).

Sa`d's Nourishment for Three Days

Sa`d's resolve did not falter. Rather, his faith grew stronger and firmer. He remained with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), accompanying him like his shadow and joining him in the unjust boycott imposed by Quraysh on Banu Hashim. Abu Talib decided to enter the valley called the Valley of Abu Talib, showing solidarity with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). All members of Banu Hashim, both Muslims and non-Muslims, joined him—except for Abu Lahab (the Prophet's, PBBUH, paternal uncle), who sided with Quraysh. Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas and many other Muslims joined them, willingly participating in the protection of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

The boycott lasted three years, during which the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and those with him suffered greatly. Whenever they felt extremely hungry, they would resort to eating the leaves of trees.

One day, when Sa`d went out to relieve himself, he heard a crackling sound beneath him. He found it was a dry piece of camel hide, which he took, washed, burned, and crushed into fine dust. He then swallowed it with some water. This was his nourishment for three days.

This and other challenging situations helped Muslims grow stronger and more steadfast.



Sa`d's Untiring Effort and Dedication in Serving Allah's Cause

The First to Shoot an Arrow in Allah's Cause

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) dispatched `Ubaidah ibn Al-Harith at the head of a squadron of sixty horsemen, including Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with him), to a region in the Hijaz called Rabigh. The polytheists attacked the Muslims, but Sa`d used his archery skills to shield and defend the Muslims from danger, until the polytheists fled the field and turned their backs.

Thus Sa`d was the first to shoot an arrow in Allah's Cause. He used to boast about this, saying: "I was the first Arab to shoot an arrow in Allah's cause."

"O Allah, Direct His Shots to the Target and Answer His Supplications"

On the Battle of Badr, Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with him) performed admirably, along with his younger brother, `Umair ibn Abu Waqqas. Sa`d kept shooting his arrows in front of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Each time Sa`d placed an arrow in the bowstring, he would say: "O Allah, shake the earth beneath their feet, cast panic into their hearts, and do such-and-such to them." The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) would say: **"O Allah, direct his shots to the target and answer his supplications."** According to another narration, he (PBBUH) said: **"O Allah, respond to Sa`d when he**

supplicates You.”¹ Sa`d was one of the best archers among the Muslims, and he became one of those individuals whose supplications and pleas were granted by Allah, due to the supplication of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) for him.

The battle ended with a clear victory for the Muslims. Sa`d’s brother, `Umais, was martyred in this battle.

“Shoot, O Sa`d! May My Father and Mother Be Sacrificed for You”

On the Day of Uhud, when the archers disobeyed the commands of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) by abandoning their positions [before the battle was surely won], the polytheists were able to reassemble their forces and renew their attack upon the Muslims. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) became a target, within the reach of the enemy’s attacks. Nine men from the Ansar and two from the Muhajirun, namely Talhah ibn `Ubaidullah and Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas, stood steadfastly protecting the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). The nine Ansar were killed defending the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), and only Talhah and Sa`d remained. Talhah defended the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) with all his strength, as mentioned earlier. Sa`d stood guard, defending the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) with his bow and killing, with every arrow he released, one of the attacking polytheists. When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) saw how often his aim precisely hit the target, he (PBBUH) said to him: **“Shoot, O Sa`d! May my father and mother be sacrificed for you.”** This achievement became a source of pride for Sa`d throughout all his life.

About this exceptional honor, Imam `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “I have never heard the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) mention both his parents together for anyone except Sa`d ibn Malik (also known as Sa`d ibn

¹ Reported by Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 3751.

Abu Waqqas). He said to him on the Day of Uhud, **‘Shoot, O Sa`d! May my father and mother be sacrificed for you!’**¹

On the Day of Uhud, Sa`d (may Allah be pleased with him) saw angels. He described this amazing experience by saying: “I saw the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) on the Day of Uhud with two men, clad in white garments and fighting in his defense. I had never seen such men before [the battle] and never saw them after it either.”² He learned from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) that they were Jibril (Gabriel, PBUH) and Mika’il (Michael, PBUH).

The Lion and Hero...Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas

After Yazdegerd was crowned king of the Persians, he decided to launch a fierce attack on the Muslims to reclaim what had been lost from the Persian kingdom and restore its prestige. He assembled a massive army of one hundred thousand soldiers and began the advance.

Upon learning about this large Persian army, Caliph `Umar said: “By Allah, I shall defeat the kings of the Persians using the kings of the Arabs.” He addressed a message to all his governors that they should send everyone who could participate with strength, horses, weapons, or good advice. Large groups assembled at Madinah.

`Umar went out leading the Muslim armies himself, and he left `Ali ibn Abu Talib in charge of Madinah. He stopped at Dharar, a site near Madinah, and camped there. The Muslims still did not know `Umar’s plans, but when he informed them, the senior Companions advised him to return and appoint another one of his companions as leader of this mission. The Commander of the Believers accepted this opinion and asked his companions: “Who do you

¹ Reported by Ibn Majah, hadith no. 129.

² Reported by Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 4054.

think we should send to Iraq to encounter the Persians?” `Abdur Rahman ibn `Awf suggested: “Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas,” whom they likened to a lion for his bravery, agility, and sharp archery skills.

The Commandments of `Umar to Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas

The lion Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas was summoned in the presence of the Commander of the Believers, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, who handed him the banner and assigned him leadership of this difficult, decisive mission.

`Umar stood to bid farewell to his soldiers and advised their commander, saying: “O Sa`d, do not be deceived by being called the maternal uncle of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and the Companion of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). There is no kinship between Allah and anyone except through obedience to Him.

- “I command you, and the soldiers with you, to fear Allah, for fearing Allah is the best way to prepare yourself to fight against the enemy.”
- “I command you, and those with you, to be more cautious (about sinning) than you are of your enemy, for the sins of the army are more harmful to them than their enemy itself.”
- “The Muslims are victorious only because of their enemy’s disobedience to Allah. This is because our number is not like their number and our equipment is not like their equipment. If we are equal in sin, they will be superior to us in strength. If we do not defeat them because of our advantage (i.e. of fearing Allah and being close to Him), we will not defeat them because of our strength.”

These commandments of the Commander of the Believers and the current state of the nation at the time were fully explained in our discussion of the life of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab.

The Battle of Al-Qadisiyyah

Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with him) advanced with an army of thirty thousand men, armed with spears—just spears—but with deep faith in Allah and in His victory for the believers. He encountered a Persian army of one hundred thousand trained fighters, armed with the most destructive weapons and equipment known at the time. The Muslim army, led by the lion and hero Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas, arrived at Al-Qadisiyyah—a village near Kufa—to find a massive Persian army led by one of their most well-known and dangerous commanders, Rostam.

The Lion Organizes His Ranks

At Al-Qadisiyyah, Commander Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas began organizing his army and mobilizing it for war:

1. He appointed a group leader for every ten men. He entrusted the banners to men who were the first to embrace Islam, and appointed other men known for their courage and boldness to command the vanguards and flanks.
2. Sa'd did not neglect administrative issues. He ensured that administrative tasks were handled adequately by appointing a judge and also made him responsible for the spoils of war. He appointed a translator fluent in Persian and a scribe, to whom all written matters would be referred.

3. He did not forget advice and guidance. He appointed a man of knowledge and piety to lead each group, to be responsible for preaching and guiding them.

What excellent men you brought up, O my beloved Messenger of Allah!
May my father and mother be sacrificed for you!

Correspondence Between the Two Sides

Before the battles began, Sa`d sent a group of his companions to Rostam (the Persian commander) and Yazdegerd (their king), inviting them to Islam and peace. However, the arrogance and conceit of the Persians hindered them from responding to the call to Islam and peace. This meant there was war. The two commanders (Sa`d and Rostam) agreed to fight.

Adverse Circumstances Tested the Hero

Illness tested the hero, Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with him), afflicting him with boils that covered his body. His condition intensified and started to burden him, to the point where he was unable to sit, let alone mount his horse and engage in an extremely fierce and brutal battle.

Nevertheless, illness and suffering did not diminish the lion's resolve. Braving his own pain and suffering, Sa`d climbed to the balcony of the dwelling where he was, which he had made his command center. On the balcony, he leaned his chest on a pillow, keeping the door of his dwelling place open. In such a vulnerable condition, the slightest attack from the Persians could bring him into their hands, dead or alive. But he was strong and fearless... he was a lion in his den.

And so, the decisive battle began, under the leadership of Sa'd, who was seriously ill but too busy to treat himself.

The Beginning of the Battle and the Elephant Challenge

The lion directed the battle from his den.

Sa'd began to address his army, urging them on and instilling in them the spirit of fighting and sacrifice, while lying face down on his balcony. He said to them: "Do not move (i.e., stay in your positions) until you pray the *Zuhr* (Noon) Prayer. Once you have prayed the *Zuhr* Prayer, I will proclaim *Takbir* (saying: *Allahu Akbar*). Proclaim the same and prepare yourselves. When I proclaim *Takbir* for the second time, proclaim the same and put on your arms. When I proclaim *Takbir* for the third time, proclaim the same and encourage the people. When I proclaim *Takbir* for the fourth time, advance together until you mingle with your enemy and keep repeating, '*La hawla wala quwwata illa billah* (there is neither might nor power except with Allah).'"

The battle began, lasting three and a half days. The greatest challenge that faced the Muslim army at first was the presence of elephants in the Persian army. The horses of the Muslim cavalry panicked and fled from the elephants in terror, which resulted in many casualties among the Muslim ranks. Sa'd ordered some of his archers to shoot at the elephants' riders and other fighters to cut the elephants' saddles from behind. The elephants reared in terror, and their owners were killed.

The Muslims devised a strategy to eliminate, once and for all, the superiority the elephants afforded the Persians in the battle. Al-Qa'qa' ibn 'Amr made some men mount some camels, dressing them in coverings that made them resemble elephants. The next day, the horses of the Persians

experienced greater panic, because of these elephant-like creatures, than that which occurred to the horses of the Muslims the day before.

The fighting continued, and the Muslim horses no longer feared the sight of the elephants after they had grown accustomed to seeing them. Sa'd ordered the killing of the largest white elephant, followed by the rest of the elephants. The fighting continued, and the Muslims kept advancing.

The Night of Clangor

The fighting continued until the evening of the third day, when the two armies separated for a short time. Then Sa'd ordered the fighting to resume, proclaiming the battle cry: "*Allahu Akbar*". After he and his soldiers prayed the '*Isha*' (Night) Prayer, he uttered *Takbir* (*Allahu Akbar*) and all the Muslims marched together and made a single, powerful attack against the Persians. It was a dark night, with no sound other than the clangor—due to the intense clashing sound of the fighting—hence the name 'The Night of Clangor'.

The fighting continued until morning, then Al-Qa`qa` said: "The battle will turn in favor of those who show patience for an hour, so be patient for an hour."

The Killing of Rostam

The fighting proceeded until noon, when the Persians began to retreat in the face of the patience and fortitude shown by the Muslims. Their leader, Rostam, was killed. When the Persians saw that he had died, they began to retreat.

Allah granted victory to the believers, and the Persian soldiers collapsed, along with paganism and fire worship. This day was called the Day of Al-Qadisiyyah.

After achieving complete victory, Sa'd ordered the spoils and gains to be collected and distributed as Allah Almighty had commanded. He sent the one-fifth share and the news of victory to the Commander of the Believers, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab.

This battle was the greatest ever fought with the Persians. Many prominent Persian figures were killed in it. The Battle of Al-Qadisiyyah revealed the precious character of Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with him) and his extreme courage.

Sa'd stayed in Al-Qadisiyyah for two months, awaiting orders from `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, until he received instructions to march on to Al-Mada'in.

The Liberation of Al-Mada'in

The victorious Muslim army marched toward Al-Mada'in. The Muslims, led by Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas, moved from one victory to the next. Bursa was liberated, then Babylon. The remnants of the Persian army fled before them until they gathered in Al-Mada'in, preparing for a final and decisive battle. The Muslims continued their advance until they reached Behrasir (Veh-Ardashir), a city on the western bank of the Tigris River, opposite Al-Mada'in. When the Muslims saw the palace of Khosrau before them, they remembered the promise of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), when he (PBBUH) said: **"A small force of the Muslims will victoriously enter the White Palace—the house of the Persian Emperor or his descendants."**¹ This only increased their eagerness to

¹ Reported by Muslim, hadith no. 1822.

be the ones who would fulfill the promise made by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

The Great Crossing

The decisive battle of the Liberation of Mada'in began. It took place two years after the Battle of Al-Qadisiyyah, during which the aforementioned skirmishes and conquests occurred. These led to the arrival of the Muslim army at the western bank of the Tigris River and the confrontation within the palace of Khosrau.

The greatest challenge facing Commander Sa'd ibn Al-Waqqas was the river between him and Mada'in. Here, the genius of the lion-like hero, as he was described by 'Abdul-Rahman ibn 'Awf, displayed itself. Sa'd ordered the Muslim army to cross the Tigris. To ensure the successful crossing, he ordered a search for the most suitable spot on the river for this crossing, which they found. Before crossing, Sa'd realized the need to secure access to the other side of the river, where the enemy was entrenched. He prepared two battalions, the first led by 'Asim ibn 'Amr and the second by Al-Qa'qa' ibn 'Amr. Each battalion consisted of six hundred men known for their valor and exceptional firmness. When the situation was well arranged and managed and the other side of the river was secured, the great crossing took place.

“The Seas Are Subdued for Them Just as the Land Was Subdued for Them”

Sa'd ordered his soldiers to cross the river, saying: “Say, ‘We seek help from Allah and put our trust in Him. Allah is sufficient for us, and He is the best Disposer of affairs. There is no power or strength except with Allah, the Most

High, the Almighty.” With this dual strength of good preparation as well as faith in Allah and true reliance on Him, they stormed the Tigris River, fearing nothing. They kept repeating the words as they crossed the roaring river—although it was during its flood season. They kept repeating the words just as they had while they were marching on land. This was due to the deep reassurance, security, and confidence they felt in the help and near victory from Allah.

The plan that Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas devised was a success that astonished historians, Sa'd himself, and his companion and comrade in the battle, Salman Al-Farsi, who was overcome with amazement and joy. He said: “By Allah, the seas have been subdued for them, just as the land was subdued for them. By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, they will surely emerge from it in droves, just as they have entered it in droves.” It was as Salman said. The Muslim soldiers came out of the Tigris River in droves, just as they had stormed it in droves, without a single soldier being lost.

Yazdegerd's Escape and the Victorious Entry into Al-Mada'in

When the Persian soldiers saw this scene [of droves of Muslim fighters emerging from the river], they said to one another: “By Allah, you are not fighting humans, you are fighting nothing but jinn.” They fled without looking back or taking anything with them. Yazdegerd, the Persian king, was terrified and fled the city. Sa'd entered Al-Mada'in and reached the palace of Khosrau. He began to recite the ayah saying: ﴿How many of gardens and springs have they left behind; And green crops (fields etc.) and goodly places; And comforts of life wherein they used to take delight! Thus (it was)! And We (Allah) made other people inherit them﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Dukhan 44:25-28).

The Lion Continues His Victories

The lion, Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas, continued his relentless, self-sacrificing services and achievements. Through him, Allah (Exalted be He) brought about the liberation of Iraq, most of Persia, Azerbaijan, the Jazira, and some parts of Armenia. According to modern maps and borders, it can be said that he liberated Iraq, most of Iran according to its present borders, including the northern part of Iran bordering Russia, and the southern part of Turkey bordering Iran.

Governor of Kufa

When the liberations were completed, the Commander of the Believers, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, appointed Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas as governor of Kufa. Upon assuming the leadership of Kufa, Sa`d began building and developing the country, establishing the foundations of Islam across the vast, expansive lands.

Above all, Sa`d prepared Kufa for a leading position, making it the forward base for conducting Islamic liberations throughout the east as well as supplying the Muslim world with several influential leaders and important figures.

Member of the *Shura* Council

After the Commander of the Believers, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, was stabbed, he chose six men from among the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to be responsible for choosing the next caliph. He informed them: "I have chosen six men whom the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was pleased with when he died." Among them was Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas. Not only that, but `Umar praised him more highly than the others, saying to his companions as he

bid them farewell: "If Sa`d takes over (the position of Caliph), let it be so. If someone else takes over, let him seek Sa`d's help."

Someone else took over, namely `Uthman ibn `Affan, and after him, `Ali ibn Abu Talib. Sa`d was always sought for help in every matter of state.

Sa`d Withdraws Himself During the Turmoil

When strife broke out among the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with him) withdrew himself from it completely. He even ordered his family members and children not to convey any news of it to him.

The brave lion and hero preferred to tend the sheep and live far from these trials.

"I Want a Sword with Two Eyes and a Tongue"

During that critical time, people eagerly stretched their necks toward him, and his nephew, Hashim ibn `Utbah ibn Abu Waqqas, went to him to induce him to change his mind, saying: "O Uncle, here are one hundred thousand swords that see you as the most deserving of this matter (the caliphate)." Sa`d replied: "I want one sword, from among these hundred thousand swords, with two eyes and a tongue. It will tell me, 'This person is a believer, and this person is a disbeliever. When I strike a believer with it, it will do nothing. But when I strike a disbeliever with it, it will cut him.'"

His nephew realized the meaning Sa`d intended and left him in his seclusion and peace.

“Allah Loves the Pious Servant Who Is Self-Sufficient and Inconspicuous”

One of his sons came to him while Sa'd was tending his sheep. When he approached him, he said: “O father, are you content to be a Bedouin among your sheep while people are competing for kingship in Madinah?”

Sa'd patted his son on the chest and said: “Be quiet, my son, for I heard the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) say, **‘Allah loves the servant who is pious, self-sufficient, and inconspicuous.’**”¹

“Why Did They Not Do as My friend Sa'd Did?”

It was narrated on the authority of Husayn ibn Kharijah Al-Ashja'i that he said: “When `Uthman was killed, the tribulation became confusing for me. Therefore I said, ‘O Allah, show me the side of truth that I can adhere to.’ I saw the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and Ibrahim (Abraham, PBBUH) in a dream. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to Ibrahim, ‘Seek forgiveness for my nation.’ Ibrahim (PBBUH) replied, ‘Your nation has differed after you left. They have shed blood and killed their ruler. Why did they not do as my friend Sa'd did?’”

Ibn Kharijah said: “When I saw that vision, I went to Sa'd and related it to him. He was delighted and said, ‘He who does not have Ibrahim (PBBUH) as his friend has indeed failed.’ I asked: ‘Which of the two groups are you with?’ He replied: ‘I am with neither of them.’ I said: ‘Then what do you command me to do?’ He asked: ‘Do you have sheep?’ I said: ‘No.’ He said: ‘Then buy some sheep and take care of them until the sedition is over.’”

¹ Reported by Muslim, hadith no. 2965.

A Collection of the Virtues of Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas

Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with him) possessed many virtues, admirable qualities, and outstanding characteristics, including the following:

Sa`d's Love for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)

The love that Sa`d had for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) reached such a great depth that he wished to sacrifice himself, his wealth, and his children for him. His endeavors to protect the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) on the Day of Uhud have earlier been depicted—when he shot arrows in defense of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) who awarded him the highest honor when he (PBBUH) said: **“Shoot, O Sa`d! May my father and mother be sacrificed for you.”**

Lady `Aishah narrated: “The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was sleepless one night, and he (PBBUH) said, **‘I wish a righteous man from among my Companions would guard me tonight.’** Suddenly, we heard a clatter of arms. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked, **‘Who is this?’** The reply was, ‘I am Sa`d, O Messenger of Allah! I have come to guard you.’ So the Prophet (PBBUH) slept so soundly that we heard him snoring.”¹

¹ Reported by Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 7231.

Sa`d's Generosity—Donating One Third of His Property to Charity

Sa`d had immense wealth; he was one of the richest and most affluent Muslims. During an illness which brought Sa`d near to death, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) came to visit him. Sa`d said: "O Messenger of Allah, I am wealthy, but I have no heirs except a daughter. Should I give two-thirds of my wealth in charity and leave a third?" The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **"No."** Sa`d asked: "Should I give half of it and leave one half?" The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **"No."** Sa`d asked: "Should I give a third of it and leave two-thirds?" The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **"Yes, a third, and a third is a lot. If you leave your heirs wealthy, that is better than leaving them poor, begging from the people."**¹

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) placed his hand on Sa`d's forehead, wiped it and said: **"O Allah, heal Sa`d."** Sa`d was healed and lived a long life after that. Allah blessed him with other children besides his first daughter.

Sa`d's Faith, Piety, and Knowledge

Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with him) would cry often out of fear of Allah Almighty. Whenever he listened to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) admonishing or delivering a sermon, his eyes would fill with tears. He was a man who had been blessed with people's love for him as well as success.

¹ Reported by Muslim, hadith no. 5659.

“Allah’s Decree Is Better for Me Than My Sight”

Toward the end of his life, Sa`d lost his sight. People would rush to him, each asking him to supplicate Allah for himself, because he was a man whose supplications would be surely answered by Allah. It was said to him: “You supplicate for others, why do you not supplicate Allah for yourself so that your sight may be restored?” He smiled and replied: “Allah’s Decree is better for me than my sight.” This demonstrates his acceptance of Allah’s Decisions and the understanding that even in challenging times, there is wisdom and benefit in Allah’s Plan. Indeed, Sa`d’s patience in the face of adversity is a characteristic of the righteous who are close to Allah.

“When Sa`d Tells You Something, Do Not Ask Anyone Else”

`Umar ibn Al-Khattab loved Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas dearly and recognized his worth and status. One day, `Umar’s son, `Abdullah ibn `Umar, entered upon `Umar and said: “O Commander of the Believers, Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas says that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) wiped over his *Khuffs* (leather socks) [during ablution]. I wanted to ask you about this.” `Umar said to his son: “When Sa`d tells you something about the Prophet (PBBUH), do not ask anyone else about it.”

A Righteous Man Whose Supplications Are Always Granted

Sa`d (may Allah be pleased with him) was one of the bravest knights of the Arabs. He had two weapons: his spear and his supplications. Allah (Exalted be He) bestowed His Favor upon him by making his supplications answered, owing to the supplication of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH): **“O Allah,**

**answer Sa`d when he calls upon You.”<sup>1</sup>** Sa`d was known for his answered supplications. People feared and hoped for his supplications, which were like a sharp sword (against oppressors).

Here are some instances of Sa`d’s answered supplications:

- The people of Kufa complained about Sa`d to `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, who had appointed him as their ruler. They said: “He does not pray properly.” Sa`d responded to this complaint by saying: “As for me, I used to lead them in prayer, following the example of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) by prolonging the first two *Rak`ahs* while shortening the last two ones.” Umar said: “(You are telling the truth). That is what I think of you, O Abu Ishaq.”

`Umar then sent some men to Kufa to investigate the truth of this complaint. Every mosque they entered in Kufa, they heard the people praising Sa`d and saying good things about him. One of them even said: “He is humble in his tent, an Arab in his manner of dressing, and a lion in his den. He judges fairly, distributes equally, and goes on far expeditions. He is kind to us like a dutiful mother and delivers our rights to us with grain-like precision.”

When they reached the mosque of the Banu `Abs tribe, a man with the nickname of Abu Sa`dah said to them: “He did not conduct expeditions (i.e., he did not participate in *Jihad*). Moreover, he did not judge fairly, and he did not divide equally.” Sa`d replied: “By Allah, I shall make three supplications, ‘O Allah, if he is lying, prolong his life, prolong his poverty, and expose him to trials.’”

¹ Reported by Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 3751.

It was narrated that this man (Abu Sa`dah) reached a decrepit age. His eyebrows hung over his eyes because of his old age and he used to walk aimlessly, following young girls and winking at them (i.e., harassing them with obscene language). When asked about the cause of his affliction, he would say: "I am an old man who has been afflicted by Sa`d's supplication."

- It was narrated that Sa`d heard a man cursing `Ali, Talhah, and Al-Zubayr. Sa`d forbade him, saying to him: "You are cursing people who have already been granted by Allah that which is the best. By Allah, you must stop cursing them, or I will invoke Allah against you." The man replied: "I see you threatening me as if you were a prophet." Sa`d said: "O Allah, if he is cursing people who have already been granted by You that which is the best, make an example out of him today." Only a short time passed before a she-camel, which nothing could stop, emerged from one of the houses. It entered the crowd as if searching for something specific. Then it attacked that man, who fell between its legs. It continued to kick the man till he died.

This phenomenon speaks volumes about the transparency of his soul, the strength of his reliance on Allah, and the depth of his sincerity.



The Final Scene—Anxious to Meet Allah

In the fifty-fourth year of the *Hijrah*, after a long life of sacrifice, giving, and *Jihad* in Allah's Cause, Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with him), aged more than eighty, was in his home in Al-'Aqiq, ten miles from Madinah, preparing to meet Allah (Glorified be He).

The hero lay on his deathbed, his head resting in the lap of one of his sons, who was weeping. The hero, unafraid of death, said, comforting his son: "O My son, do not weep. Allah will never punish me, and I am one of the inhabitants of Paradise."

Such was the strength of his faith, a fundamental and unwavering part of his being, unshakable by anything, not even the fear of death. He was one of the Ten Given the Glad Tidings of Paradise by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), so why should he be afraid?

The hero wanted to meet Allah (Exalted be He), carrying the most beautiful memento of his connection to his religion and the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He ordered his family to open his closet, and there they found an old, worn-out cloak. He ordered them to shroud him in it, saying: "I encountered the polytheists in it on the Day of Badr. I have kept it stored away for this day"

His pure soul departed, and he was carried on the shoulders from his home in Al-'Aqiq to Madinah for the Muslims to offer the Funeral Prayer for him. The Mothers of the Muslims then prayed for him in their rooms. He was buried in Al-Baqi' Cemetery.

**May Allah have mercy on you, O maternal uncle of the Messenger of
Allah**

O Lion and Hero

8. `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf



May Allah Be Pleased with Him

`Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf

Let us, dear readers, walk to another garden and meet another Companion of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Let us welcome this eminent Companion:

- One of the eight who were the first to embrace Islam.
- One of the ten promised Paradise.
- One of the six members of the *Shura* Council formed to choose the third Caliph.
- One behind whom the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) prayed congregational prayer.
- One of those destined for happiness and forgiveness from Allah.

He was the man of Islamic economics, `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf (may Allah be pleased with him).

`Abdul-Rahman's Lineage

His full name was `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf ibn Zuhrah. His mother was Al-Shifa' bint `Awf ibn Al-Harith ibn Zuhrah. His father was from the noble ones of Banu Zuhrah (the maternal uncles of the Messenger of Allah, PBBUH). Lady Amina, the Prophet's (PBBUH) mother, was from Banu Zuhrah.

`Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf was born in the tenth year after the Year of the Elephant, which signifies that he was ten years younger than the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). His name was `Abd `Amr (literally, the salve of `Amr), and the

Messenger of Allah was the one who named him ‘Abdul-Rahman (literally, the salve of the Most Merciful) after he embraced Islam.

‘Abdul-Rahman’s Upbringing

Ibn ‘Awf was a clever child, showing signs of greatness and nobility, which only made his father more pleased. His father would take him to the gatherings of Quraysh, developing his talents and preparing him for a dignified life. He was keen to teach him from a young age various basic skills such as reading, writing, arithmetic, swordplay, spear throwing, and horse riding.

Seeing his intelligence and nobility despite his young age, his father began to take him on his travels to the Levant, Iraq, and Egypt.

Ibn ‘Awf demonstrated exceptional skill in buying and selling, attracting clients and winning friends through his honesty, gentleness, and chivalry. Despite his father’s admiration and pride in him, he was uneasy about his detachment from idols and his mockery of them and those who worshipped them. Despite his father’s constant advice, Ibn ‘Awf avoided idols and never prostrated to any of them.

Contrary to his dislike of the idol, Ibn ‘Awf was deeply attached to the personality of *Al-Sadiq Al-Amin* (The Truthful and Trustworthy One), Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullah (PBBUH), and had strong connections with Abu Bakr ibn Abu Quhafah, the honest merchant, who was similarly attached to *Al-Sadiq Al-Amin*.

`Abdul-Rahman Embracing Islam

Ibn `Awf was approaching the age of thirty when the light of guidance descended upon the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Abu Bakr was the first man to believe in the Messenger. As soon as Abu Bakr presented Islam to Ibn `Awf, his heart rejoiced and opened up to it, showing eagerness and a willingness to embrace its beliefs. They both went to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) for Ibn `Awf to announce his acceptance of Islam before him (PBBUH). When the Messenger (PBBUH) asked him his name, he replied: “`Abd `Amr (slave of `Amr).” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied: “**Rather, `Abdul-Rahman (slave of the Most Merciful),**” not the slave of a man. From that day on, his name became `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf.

`Abdul-Rahman was the first of eight persons to embrace Islam. He embraced Islam even before the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) commenced his teaching circles at Dar Al-Arqam.

The Harm and Persecution `Abdul-Rahman Endured for His Faith

`Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf (may Allah be pleased with him) received his share of harm from Quraysh and their leaders against all who followed the religion of Islam. Although they were unable to physically persecute him as they did with many of his fellow believers, they nevertheless began to fight his business. They agreed to cause his trade to stagnate, forbidding him from buying or selling and prohibiting any dealings with him. Not only this, but they also communicated with merchants in distant lands (Egypt, Syria, Yemen, and elsewhere) inducing them to refrain from dealing with him or anyone who followed the religion of Muhammad (PBBUH). However, all this harassment

and obduracy from Quraysh did not weaken ‘Abdul-Rahman’s resolve; rather, it strengthened his faith and certainty.

Emigration to Escape Persecution

Persecution of the Muslims by the disbelievers intensified and became intolerable, so the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) advised his followers to emigrate to Abyssinia. ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf (may Allah be pleased with him) emigrated with those who emigrated to Abyssinia, but he could not bear to be separated from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He soon returned to Makkah and remained by the side of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), enduring the same brutality and torture that the Messenger (PBBUH) and his Companions endured.

Then came the great emigration to Madinah. When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered his Companions to emigrate, they left in haste. Among them was ‘Abd Al-Rahman ibn ‘Awf. He left his home, relinquishing his property and business. He ignored the vast wealth and extensive trade he had left behind. It was pure faith and love for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) that gave him a sense of direction and fulfillment that cannot be matched by material possessions.

Forging the Ties of Brotherhood and Unity

In Madinah, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) established this ingenious relationship which was previously unknown to the Arabs: the relationship of brotherhood through faith. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) established brotherhood through Islam between the Muhajirun (the Emigrants from Makkah) and the Ansar (the Supporters of the Prophet PBBUH from the local

inhabitants of Madinah). Based on this bond, he (PBBUH) made ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf and Sa’d ibn Al-Rabi` two brothers in Islam.

Now, dear readers, let us listen to this elegant dialogue between ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf, the Emigrant from Makkah who left all his wealth and business and gave up all his possessions, and his brother Sa’d ibn Al-Rabi`, the Supporter from Madinah.

Sa’d said to ‘Abdul-Rahman: “O my brother, I am the richest of all the Ansar. I will divide my property into two halves between me and you, and I have two wives. See which of the two you like so that I may divorce her. When her *‘Iddah* (prescribed period after divorce) is over, you may marry her.”

‘Abdul-Rahman replied: “May Allah bless your family and your wealth. Show me the market.”

Sa’d ibn Al-Rabi` said: “What will you do in the market, my brother?”

‘Abdul-Rahman replied: “I will buy and sell and make a profit.”

Sa’d: “With no money for trading?! You need capital to start trading, and you left all your money in Makkah.”

‘Abdul-Rahman replied: “My capital is with me wherever I go. It is my mind, my perception, and my ability to give and take.”

All Sa’d’s attempts to convince ‘Abdul-Rahman were unsuccessful, and they directed him to the market of Banu Qaynuqa`. He bought, sold, made profits, and saved some money. It was not long before he had collected the dowry of a woman from the Ansar, and he married her.

One day, he came to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), bearing the traces of yellow perfume over his clothes. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to him: **“What is this for?”** ‘Abdul-Rahman replied: “I have married a woman from among the Ansar.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked: **“What dowry did you give her?”** He replied: “A date-stone weight of gold.”

Here ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf obtained the most valuable treasure that all Muslims long for. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to him: **“May Allah bless you. Give a wedding banquet, even if it is with one sheep.”**¹

This supplication from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was a great reason for prosperity and wealth to flow abundantly toward ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf.

‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf said: “Life opened up for me in amazing ways, to the point that if I lifted a stone, I would expect to find gold or silver beneath it.”

“The Upper Hand Is Superior to the Lower Hand”

This sublime dialogue between these two Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) leads us to two important observations:

First:

The extreme generosity, altruism, and self-denial exhibited by Sa’d ibn Al-Rabi’ Al-Ansari, which is what we lack in our communities nowadays. These traits are needed to uphold the spirit of solidarity, cooperation, and affection among people.

¹ Reported by Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 3781 and 6386.

Second:

On the other side, with the same level of loftiness of spirit, we notice that `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf, the Emigrant, had left everything behind in Makkah and no longer owned anything; however, he kept himself chaste by not exploiting his brother's generosity in a malicious manner—as some do these days. In order to not be a burden on his brother, he chose the more difficult path, which was hard work, diligence, and effort.

`Abdul-Rahman obtained blessings and abundant goodness, and he became one of the richest Companions. He even enabled himself to give rather than receive assistance, to have the upper hand, which is better than the lower hand, as the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) taught us in his saying: **“The upper hand is better than the lower hand; the upper hand is that which gives, and the lower hand is that which asks.”**¹



¹ Reported by Al-Nasa'i, hadith no. 2533.

`Abdul-Rahman Ibn `Awf Strives in Allah's Cause with His Wealth and Soul

`Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf distinguished himself by his complete dedication and sacrifice in Allah's Cause with his wealth and life. He simultaneously practiced the two types of *Jihad* (striving in Allah's Cause):

1. *Jihad* with his life on the battlefield.
2. *Jihad* with his wealth and all available resources he had in all aspects of life.

First: `Abdul-Rahman's *Jihad* on the Battlefield

On the Day of Badr

`Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf fought in Allah's Cause as fighting ought to be, and killed Allah's enemy, `Umais ibn `Uthman ibn Ka'b.

On the Day of Uhud

Ibn `Awf remained steadfast, maintained his stand, and did not waver in the face of enemy attacks when others who were defeated fled. He emerged from the battle with twenty-odd wounds. He sustained a leg injury, which made him limp. His front teeth were also injured, leaving a visible loss.

Ibn `Awf later witnessed the Battle of the Trench, Al-Hudaybiyah, and all major events with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

Moreover, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent him to lead a detachment of seventy men to Dumat Al-Jandal. He called its people to Islam, and they accepted it. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was keen to strengthen ties between him and the Arabs. He sent a message to `Abdul-Rahman asking him to marry Tamadir, the daughter of their chief, Al-Asbagh ibn `Amr Al-Kalbi.

Ibn `Awf married her and returned with her to Madinah. She bore him a son, whom he named Muhammad, in honor of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), thereby earning him the nickname of 'Abu Muhammad'.

Second: `Abdul-Rahman's *Jihad* with His Wealth

Despite the heroism and sacrifices that `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf (may Allah be pleased with him) made on the battlefield, they pale to insignificance compared to his *Jihad* with his wealth.

As mentioned earlier, the supplication that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) made for him was granted, and his wealth became blessed. His business continued to grow and prosper, and the Prophet's (PBBUH) supplication continued to shade him throughout his life like a canopy of blooming trees. He became one of the richest and most prosperous of the Companions. He devoted all his wealth to pleasing Allah and His Messenger.

`Abdul-Rahman heard and obeyed Allah's Words: ﴿Never will you attain the good (reward) until you spend (in Allah's Cause) from that which you love. And whatever you spend—indeed, Allah knows it﴾ (translated meaning of Al `Imran 3:92). He also heeded the Prophet's (PBBUH) words: **"O Ibn `Awf, you are among the rich, and you will not enter Paradise except by crawling. Therefore lend to Allah, and He will free your feet."**<sup>1</sup> Ibn `Awf began to

¹ Reported by Al-Hakim, hadith no. 5358.

provide interest-free loans and so had his reward multiplied many times over. Ibn ‘Awf (may Allah be pleased with him) was the master of his wealth, not a slave to it. He was not dominated or subjugated by it, but rather in control of it. He did not rejoice in hoarding it or in enjoying it by himself, but rather he enjoyed it together with his family, relatives, and the entire community.

Here are some instances of ‘Abdul-Rahman’s financial contributions and sacrifices:

‘Abdul-Rahman’s Donations to the Muslim Army

Ibn ‘Awf donated to the Muslim army on several occasions, including:

1. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) wanted to equip a military expedition, so he stood among his Companions and said: **“Give charity, for I want to send out a squadron [on a certain mission].”** ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf hurried home and returned quickly, saying: “O Messenger of Allah, I have four thousand; two thousand of which I have loaned to my Lord and two thousand I have left for my family.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **“May Allah bless that which you have given and that which you have kept.”**¹

2. He donated forty thousand silver dirhams, followed by one thousand gold dinars, for the Muslim army.

3. He provided the Muslim fighters with five hundred horses, and then provided another group with one thousand five hundred mounts.

4. The Day of Tabuk:

¹ Reported by Hafiz Abu Bakr Al-Bazzar, Tafsir ibn Kathir.

When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) decided to embark on the Battle of Tabuk (more widely known as the Battle of Hardship), he (PBBUH) ordered his Companions to give charity in Allah’s Cause. ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf (may Allah be pleased with him) was in the forefront of those who gave charity. He gave two hundred ounces of gold in charity. ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab said to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH): “I see that ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf is committing a sin, for he has left nothing for his family.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked: **“O ‘Abdul-Rahman, have you left anything for your family?”** He replied: “Yes, O Messenger of Allah, I left them more and better than what I spent.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked: **“How much?”** He replied: “What Allah and His Messenger have promised of provision, goodness, and reward.”¹

All People Are ‘Abdul-Rahman’s Dependents

The generosity and giving nature with which ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf supported his community was so great that it was said: “All the people of Madinah are his dependents.”

- He would give loans without interest to one third of his people.
- He would pay off the debts of another third.
- He would kindly maintain good relationships with the last third and financially assist them.

¹ *Siyar A‘lam Al-Nubala’* (Biographies of the Noble Figures) by Al-Dhahabi.

Seven Hundred Camels Laden with Provisions for Allah’s Sake

One day, a great clamor arose in Madinah, shaking the ground. A tremendous uproar was heard. People thought it was a stormy wind blowing over the city and wondered what produced these sounds?

But fear soon gave way to excitement as people saw that these sounds came from seven hundred camels loaded with everything they needed, including food and clothing. When the Mother of the Believers, Lady ‘Aishah, asked about the source of this commotion, she was told that it was a caravan belonging to ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf, loaded with wheat, flour, and food. She exclaimed: “May Allah bless him in this world, and the reward of the Hereafter is indeed greater. I heard the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) say to him, **‘You will enter Paradise crawling, so lend to Allah to set your feet free.’**”

Some of the Companions relayed the words of the Mother of the Believers to ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf, who remembered this statement of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) regarding him. Before the camels knelt, he rushed to Lady ‘Aishah and said to her: “You reminded me of a hadith I will never forget. Bear witness that these camels, with their loads and saddles, are for Allah’s Sake.” (Meaning the camels and everything they carried are a donation for Allah’s Sake, a voluntary act of charity given for the sole purpose of pleasing Allah).

If we were to translate this situation into the language of our time, we would say: ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf (may Allah be pleased with him) gave away seven hundred container trucks loaded with goods in one day, all at once, and with a contented soul. May Allah bless you, O Ibn ‘Awf!

`Abdul-Rahman's Compassion Toward the Mothers of the Believers

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to his wives: **“The one who will be compassionate toward you after me is the truthful and dutiful one. O Allah, give `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf to drink from the *Salsabil* (spring) of Paradise.”**¹ `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf was that truthful and dutiful man. After the Prophet (PBBUH) passed away, he was kind toward his wives, the Mothers of the Believers. He supported them and attended to their needs.

It was narrated that `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf sold a luxurious garden of his for four hundred thousand and distributed it among the Mothers of the Believers.

Spending and Giving to Others to the Last Breath

`Abdul-Rahman's generosity, compassion, and willingness to sacrifice his possessions continued until the very end of his life.

- Upon his death, he bequeathed fifty thousand gold dinars for Allah's Sake.
- He bequeathed four hundred gold dinars to each of the survivors of the Battle of Badr, numbering one hundred altogether. They all took them. Even `Uthman ibn `Affan took his share, despite his richness, and said: “The money of Ibn `Awf is earned lawfully and pure, and consuming it is a source of well-being and blessing.”
- When death approached, he manumitted many people.

¹ Reported by Shu`ayb Al-Arna'uti, hadith no. 26580.

Leaving Behind a Large Amount of Gold to Be Cut With Axes

After all these generous actions, Ibn `Awf left a massive inheritance for his heirs and a level of prosperity so vast that it was difficult to accurately track or enumerate it. He left the following assets:

- One thousand camels.
- One hundred horses.
- Three thousand sheep.
- He left eight thousand dinars (one-quarter of one-eighth) to each of his four wives.
- He left behind enormous amounts of gold and silver, which were divided among his heirs with axes, causing the men's hands to become sore from cutting them up.

All this was due to the Prophet's (PBBUH) supplication for him that Allah would bless his possessions.



The Outstanding Virtues and Morals that Distinguished ‘Abdul-Rahman

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) Praying Behind ‘Abdul-Rahman

When the Battle of Tabuk took place, ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf (may Allah be pleased with him) was granted a great honor, one that no other Muslim had ever attained, except Abu Bakr.

The time for the *Fajr* (Dawn) prayer came, but the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was absent—he was performing ablution. ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf, acting as the Imam, commenced the congregational prayer. After he completed the first *Rak‘ah* (unit of prayer), the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) joined the congregation, standing in the row side-by-side with other Muslims and praying behind ‘Abdul-Rahman. ‘Abdul-Rahman wanted to step back from the position of Imam, but the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) motioned for him to continue leading the congregational prayer. After ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf had finished, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) stood to complete his prayer. When he (PBBUH) had finished, he (PBBUH) turned to the people and said: “You have done well,” for having prayed on time.

Truly, the best of Allah’s creation and the Imam of all Messengers bestowed a great honor upon ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf by praying behind him.

The Trustworthy Advisor

‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf (may Allah be pleased with him) was known for his broad-mindedness, mature judgment, and trustworthiness.

- The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) trusted him with important information and consulted his opinion on all issues that required secrecy.
- When Abu Bakr assumed the caliphate, he chose him as his close advisor, along with a group of other Companions. He consulted him on the crisis of the apostates and the war against them. He also consulted him on whom to appoint after him. ‘Abdul-Rahman’s opinion inclined in favor of choosing ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab for the Caliph, due to the great confidence he had in him and due to ‘Umar’s unwavering commitment to religion and truth.
- After ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab assumed the caliphate, he appointed ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf as a member of the Muslim Consultative Council. ‘Abdul-Rahman offered many sound opinions on matters of war and peace, including the following:
 1. ‘Umar wanted to send armies against the Persians, which he intended to personally lead, as the public thought that he should go with the army. When ‘Umar convened the *Shura* Council to consult on this issue, ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf had a different opinion: ‘Umar should remain in Madinah as the Commander of the Believers and appoint a leader, known for his courage and audacity, for the army. ‘Abdul-Rahman nominated Sa’d ibn Abu Waqqas for this task, and ‘Umar accepted his advice. The Muslims achieved a clear victory.
 2. After the Levant was liberated, ‘Umar decided to go there to organize its affairs. In the meantime, a plague spread in the area claiming many lives. When ‘Umar learned of this epidemic while on the road, he halted, hesitating whether to go forth or return. He consulted his companions about what he should do. Some advised him to go ahead

and others advised him to return, each providing evidence of the validity of his opinion. The Commander of the Believers wanted something reliable based on the Book of Allah or the Sunnah of His Messenger.

While they were debating the subject, `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf approached them. Seeing them in a state of confusion, `Abdul-Rahman said: “The sound opinion is that we should return, for I heard the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) say, **‘If you hear of the plague in a land, do not go to it. If it breaks out in a land where you are present, do not leave fleeing from it.’**”¹

Umar’s face lit up, and he said: “The treasury of the trustworthy one, Ibn `Awf, is full of knowledge, literature, and wealth (i.e., vast accumulation of information, literary works, and material possessions).” Then he ordered the people to leave. He and those with him returned to Madinah, safe and sound, without venturing into any epidemic areas.

3. When `Umar was stabbed and was on the verge of death, he chose six of the Companions with whom the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had been pleased even until his death. Among them was `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf.

Renunciation of Authority and the Post of Caliph

After `Umar ibn Al-Khattab died, the six members of the *Shura* Council sat down to choose a successor from among themselves. Fingers pointed eagerly to

¹ Reported by Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 5730.

Ibn ‘Awf, to the extent that some of the Companions suggested to him that he was the most deserving of the six for the caliphate.

‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf strongly refused the post of caliph. Not only that, but his five other brothers also reported that he had withdrawn his candidacy for the caliphate. This withdrawal quickly qualified him for the position of judge for the five venerable figures. After consulting the opinions of the senior Companions and the public, Ibn ‘Awf chose ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan. The others agreed with him and endorsed his choice.

During the reign of ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan, ‘Uthman fell seriously ill and feared that he would die. He summoned one of the Companions and said: “Write a document of entrustment that ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf be the Caliph after me.” The man wrote the document and went to ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf to tell him: “Good news.” ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf asked: “What is it?” He replied: “‘Uthman has written a document entrusting you with leadership after him.” This news did not please ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf, so he continued to supplicate Allah, saying: “O Allah, if the person whom ‘Uthman has appointed to this position is me, O Allah, let me die before him (‘Uthman).” He remained for only six months until Allah took his soul, before the death of ‘Uthman.

‘Abdul-Rahman’s Humility and Fear of Allah

The wealth of Ibn ‘Awf did not make him ecstatic or tempt him to be proud and misuse his accomplishments. Rather, he was constantly afraid of this wealth.

Once, food was brought to him for *Iftar* (meal to break the fast), as he was fasting. As soon as his eyes fell on the food, he wept and said: “Mus‘ab ibn

‘Umair was martyred, and he was better than I. [When Mus‘ab died] nothing [of his material possessions] was found to shroud him in except his garment. When his head was covered with it, his feet became exposed. And when his feet were covered, his head became exposed. Then worldly wealth was lavished upon us. We are afraid that the reward of our good deeds has been given to us in this life, and we will have no share in the Hereafter.” ‘Abdul-Rahman then started weeping so much that he left the food untouched.

Immense wealth did not influence ‘Abdul-Rahman to become arrogant or haughty. It did not develop in him an overbearing or disdainful attitude toward others, but rather it evoked gratitude and cultivated humility. It was even said of him that if someone who did not know him before were to see him sitting with his servants, he would not be able to distinguish him from them due to his extreme humility. He kept himself as simple as them in his style of dress, food, and drink.



The Final Scene in `Abdul-Rahman's Life Journey

After a life characterized by continuous kindness, generosity, and sacrifice, Ibn `Awf lied on his deathbed, anticipating the end.

One of Those for Whom Allah Had Decreed Happiness and Forgiveness

Ibn `Awf fainted during his final illness. It was severe enough that those around him thought he had died. He then awoke, uttering “*Allahu Akbar*”, and his family joined him and uttered the same. Then he said to them: “Two men took me while I was unconscious. I found them to be harsh and severe. They said, ‘Let us bring you before the Almighty and Trustworthy for judgment.’ They went forth escorting me until they met a man who asked them, ‘Where are you taking him?’ They replied, ‘We will bring him before the Almighty and Trustworthy to receive judgment.’ He said, ‘Go back, for he is among those for whom Allah has decreed happiness and forgiveness while they were in their mothers’ wombs.’”

Ibn `Awf lived for a month after this incident.

`Abdul-Rahman's Commitment to the Promise He Had Made

The Mother of the Believers, Lady `Aishah, wanted to confer a special honor on `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf (may Allah be pleased with him). While he was on his deathbed, she offered that he be buried in her room, next to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and his two Companions, Abu Bakr and `Umar.

However, he was too modest to raise himself to their rank. Moreover, he was bound by a previous promise to ʿUthman ibn Madhʿun. The two companions agreed one day that whichever of them died last would be buried next to his companion. Ibn Madhʿun, having preceded ʿAbdul-Rahman, was buried in Al-Baqiʿ Cemetery.

In A.H. 32, the noble hero, aged seventy-five, breathed his last and his pure soul departed to its Creator.

His body was carried by the Prophet's (PBBUH) maternal uncle, Saʿd ibn Abu Waqqas, and ʿUthman ibn ʿAffan offered the Funeral Prayer for him. Imam ʿAli accompanied his funeral procession while saying: "Leave, Ibn ʿAwf, for you have maintained purity in this life and escaped any blemish (i.e., left this life unmarred). May Allah have mercy on you."

May Allah have mercy on you, O you behind whom the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) prayed.

May Allah have mercy on you, O Ibn ʿAwf.

9. `Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah



May Allah Be Pleased with Him

Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah

Now, my dear readers, let us explore another star. Let us fly to another fragrant flower to relish the nectar emitted while standing out in a group of beautiful flowers. Let us enrich our life and lift our spirit with another Companion of the best of Allah's creation, our Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH). Let us welcome one of the first persons to embrace Islam, one of the ten promised Paradise, and the first to be given the title 'Commander of All Commanders'. He was the 'Trustworthy One of This *Ummah*', Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah (may Allah be pleased with him).

Abu `Ubaidah's Lineage and Physical Appearance

Abu `Ubaidah's full name was `Amir ibn `Abdullah ibn Al-Jarrah Al-Fihri Al-Qurashi, better known as Abu `Ubaidah. He and the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) were related through the common ancestor, Fihr.

As for his physical description, Abu `Ubaidah had a radiant face, a handsome countenance, a tall stature, a thin body, and a light beard. Seeing him was pleasing to the eye, and meeting him was pleasing to the soul.

Abu `Ubaidah Embracing Islam

Abu `Ubaidah was guided to Islam by Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him). He became a Muslim just one day after Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq. Thus, he was one of the foremost to embrace Islam, having converted before Muslims started to meet with the Prophet (PBBUH) at Dar Al-Arqam during the early stages of Islam, when it was still being propagated in secret.

Abu `Ubaidah faced the same torture and suffered the same persecution as the early Muslims. But he was patient and persevered in the face of the adversities that came his way.

Abu `Ubaidah's Emigration

Abu `Ubaidah emigrated with the other Muslims who emigrated to Abyssinia. Despite the pleasant stay there and the hospitality with which the Negus treated them, Abu `Ubaidah could not tolerate being away from the beloved Prophet (PBBUH). He quickly returned to Makkah to enjoy seeing and being with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), despite the various forms of torture Quraysh inflicted upon him and his fellow believers.

`Abu Ubaidah, and other Muslims with him, did not stay in Makkah for long before they received permission from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to emigrate to Madinah. Abu `Ubaidah hurried to join the faithful group that fled for their faith. He reached Madinah, where the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) established a brotherhood between him and Sa`d ibn Mu`adh.

Badr and the Toughest Test

The Battle of Badr came in which Abu `Ubaidah was subjected to the most difficult test, or rather the most difficult trial, a human being could face.

The battle began, and Abu `Ubaidah moved boldly through the lines, fearing nothing. Rather, the polytheists feared him, and they began to retreat away from him whenever they confronted him. However, one man among them kept seeking out `Abu Ubaidah, aiming his arrows at the Companion. Abu `Ubaidah tried to avoid him, but he persisted in pursuing and attacking

him, blocking all paths before him. It was as if his sole purpose was to destroy Abu `Ubaidah. When Abu `Ubaidah became fed up with him, he killed him.

Who was this man? It was his own father, `Abdullah ibn Al-Jarrah!

Have you ever seen a greater ordeal than this? Abu `Ubaidah kept trying to evade his father and move away from him, but his father relentlessly pursued him in order to kill him. So Abu `Ubaidah killed him. It could be said that he did not want to kill his father, but when he was left with no choice, he destroyed the polytheism in the person of his father.

Abu `Ubaidah was deeply saddened about what had happened. It was a very disturbing experience that shook him severely and affected him profoundly. Then, an ayah of the Qur'an was revealed from Allah Almighty concerning him and his father, saying: ﴿You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those [are the people for whom] He (Allah) has inscribed faith in their hearts and supported with a spirit from Him. He will admit them to Gardens (Paradise) under which rivers flow, to dwell therein [forever]. Allah is pleased with them, and they with Him. They are Allah's party. Verily, it is Allah's party that will be the successful﴾ (translated meaning of Al-Mujadilah 58:22).

Despite Abu `Ubaidah's Teeth Being Broken He Remained Appealing

As the Battle of Uhud progressed, the battle shifted; the tides turned against the Muslims after the archers broke the orders of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) by abandoning their positions. The situation grew critical, with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) falling into a pit which the polytheists had dug

for him. His front teeth were broken, and two links of the iron helmet he (PBBUH) wore on his head penetrated his cheeks. Blood was streaming down his noble face.

Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah and Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq arrived at the site to find the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) in this state. When Abu Bakr wanted to remove the two links from the Prophet's (PBBUH) cheeks, Abu `Ubaidah pleaded with him to allow him to pull them out, saying: "I adjure you by Allah, O Abu Bakr, that you let me remove them." Abu Bakr let him. Abu `Ubaidah feared that pulling them out with his hand would cause pain to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), he bit down hard on the first of them with his front incisor, extracting it and, in the process, his own incisor fell out. Then he bit down on the other with his second incisor and extracted it, causing his second incisor to fall out.

Despite losing two of his own front teeth, Abu `Ubaidah's mouth became pleasant and appealing. Some people even said: "No one has ever seen a better mouth, without front teeth, than that of Abu `Ubaidah." Abu Bakr said, "Of all people, Abu `Ubaidah had the best-looking mouth with broken front teeth."

"A Provision That Allah Brought Out for You"

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent Abu `Ubaidah as a commander of a squadron that became known as *Al-Khabt*. He (PBBUH) provided them with a bag of dates. He (PBBUH) had found no other food for them. The mission was difficult and the journey long. Each man received a handful of dates per day. But when the dates were almost finished, their share was reduced to one date per day. When all the dates were finished, they began to collect '*Khabat*', which means tree leaves. They would crush them, swallow them, and drink some water with them—hence the name 'Al-Khabat Squadron.' Finally, after they had

become exhausted by hunger, a beast emerged from the sea, and they ate its meat for twenty days.

When they returned and told the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) what had happened, he (PBBUH) said to them: **“Eat! This is a provision that Allah brought out [for you]. Give us some to eat if you have any.”**¹

The Trustworthy One of This *Ummah*

Indeed, the most outstanding virtue and highest honor that Abu `Ubaidah received was when a delegation from Najran came to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). The Messenger (PBBUH) and the delegation exchanged some questions, then he (PBBUH) invited them to Islam. When they were about to depart, they said to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH): “O Abul-Qasim, send one of your Companions with us to arbitrate between us over some disputes we have among ourselves.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **“Come back to me this evening, and I will send a trustworthy man with you, a truly trustworthy man, a truly trustworthy man.”** He (PBBUH) repeated this statement three times.

After hearing this high praise from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), everyone among the Companions wished to be that person.

`Umar ibn al-Khattab said: “I have never loved leadership as much as I did that day, hoping to be the one who would fit this description (i.e., possess the necessary skills, experience, or characteristics to meet those expectations). Therefore, I went early for the *Zuhr* (Noon) Prayer. After the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) led us in the *Zuhr* Prayer, he kept looking to his right and left; I kept raising myself for him to see me. He (PBBUH) kept looking around at us until

¹ Reported by Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 4362.

he saw Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah. He (PBBUH) called him over and said, **‘Stand up, O Abu `Ubaidah.’** When he stood up, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, **‘This is the trustworthy man of this *Ummah*. Go with them and arbitrate between them with truth in matters wherein they differed.’** `Umar added: “Abu `Ubaidah won this honor.”

From that day on, Abu `Ubaidah was called ‘The Trustworthy One of the *Ummah*’. This title signifies how much he was worthy of trust and also signifies his great integrity and importance within the Muslim community.



Abu `Ubaidah's Heroic Deeds and Detachment from Worldly Positions

`Abu Ubaidah witnessed all the battles with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He was among those whom the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was pleased with when the Messenger (PBBUH) departed from this world.

Just as `Abu Ubaidah was worthy of trust during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), showing strong commitment to acting in the best interests of others, he was worthy of trust after the Messenger's death with his successor, Abu Bakr, and after him, the Commander of the Believers, `Umar. He marched under the banner of Islam wherever it marched, a soldier who, by his merit and courage, was more like a commander. When he was the commander, he appeared, through his sincerity and humility, as one of the common fighters.

Here we present some of these instances which pulsed with heroism and self-denial, showing how `Abu Ubaidah pursued Allah first, rather than chasing after worldly pursuits. His exemplary life will indeed continue to inspire reverence and admiration, as well as deep awe, for the one who taught him and was his role model was my beloved Prophet (PBBUH).

Here are some of these instances:

The Incident of Saqifah Banu Sa`idah

On the day on which the incident of Saqifah Banu Saqifah occurred, `Umar said to Abu `Ubaidah: "Extend your hand for me to pledge allegiance to

you, for I heard the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) say, **‘In every nation there is a man worthy of trust, and `Abu Ubaidah is the man in this nation worthy of trust.’**<sup>1</sup> `Abu Ubaidah replied: “By Allah, I would not place myself ahead of a man whom the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had ordered to lead us in prayers and had led us in prayers until the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) died (referring to Abu Bakr).” When allegiance was pledged to Abu Bakr, Abu `Ubaidah became his trusted advisor and one of his soldiers.

“We Are Not Seekers of Worldly Positions”

During the Battle of Yarmouk, Khalid ibn Al-Walid was the commander in chief of the Muslim armies by order of Caliph Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq. Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah was under Khalid’s command. After the death of Abu Bakr, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab commenced his reign by appointing Abu `Ubaidah as commander of the armies, deposing Khalid. No sooner had the trustworthy one of the nation received Umar’s envoy, who was bearing this recent order, than he concealed the news, keeping it to himself with an ascetic, intelligent, and trustworthy heart until the time was appropriate to announce it.

After Commander Khalid accomplished a great conquest, Abu `Ubaidah presented to him Umar’s letter, doing so with extreme politeness and sincerity. When Khalid read the letter, he said to Abu `Ubaidah: “May Allah have mercy on you, O Abu `Ubaidah. The letter of the Commander of the Believers reached you, and you did not inform me about it. You pray behind me (i.e., you leave me to act as the Imam in prayer), and the authority is yours.” The trustworthy one of the nation responded: “For you, too, may Allah have mercy on you, O Khalid. I hated to interrupt your attention during the war until all this was over.

¹ Reported by Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 7255.

We do not seek worldly authority, and we do not work for this world. We work for Allah, and we are brothers.” Abu `Ubaidah then led the march, with Khalid a soldier under his command; both were not working for temporary earthly gains.

Commander of All Commanders (Commander in Chief)

Abu `Ubaidah became the Commander in Chief (the highest-ranking commander) in the Levant. He was the first to be given this title. Under his command came the largest armies of Islam, in terms of length (physical dimension of the army), breadth (scope of the army’s operations), equipment (supplies and weapons), and number.

Despite his bravery and shrewdness on the battlefield, Abu `Ubaidah was known for his patience, gentleness, tolerance, trustworthiness, honesty, and love of peace. Therefore, the people of the Levant loved him and facilitated his mission. Many cities of the Levant surrendered to him peacefully, not through war. Thus, much bloodshed was spared, and many souls were saved.

Through his lofty spirit, the brilliance that marked him as a commander, and the shrewdness that marked him as a fighter, Fahl (a town in central Syria), Latakia, Damascus, and Homs (major cities in Syria) were entered triumphantly without any fight. These successes were concluded with the Liberation of Ilya’ (Jerusalem). Abu `Ubaidah went forward from one victory to another until Allah (Exalted be He) liberated all the Levant through him.

Calling People to Allah

The trustworthy one of this nation, Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah, never forgot to call people to Allah (Exalted be He). He always called the Byzantines

to Islam before beginning the battle with them. He would go himself or send one of his envoys to them. Many of them converted to Islam at his hands.



The Outstanding Virtues and Morals That Distinguished Abu `Ubaidah

“I Am Just a Muslim from Quraysh”

Abu `Ubaidah possessed a remarkable humility that showed itself clearly when he heard about the deep admiration the people of the Levant felt toward him and their amazement at the Commander of all Commanders. These accounts only increased his fear of Allah Almighty and his humbleness before Him. He gathered the people and stood before them as a preacher. He said to those who were fascinated by his strength, greatness, and honesty: “O people, I am just a Muslim from Quraysh. There is no one among you, red or black, who surpasses me in piety except that I would like to be in his place.”

Such was how the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) raised his Companions, genuine and sincere, free of boasting or arrogance. This was the trustworthy commander of the nation, introducing himself to the people as a Muslim from Quraysh, assuming no superiority to himself over others. Although he was the commander in chief of the most powerful and victorious armies, he did not make a display of his own power, rank, or advantages. Being a Muslim was the only attribute he used to identify himself, an attribute he was particularly proud of and valued...nothing else besides it.

“The World Has Changed Us All Except You, O Abu `Ubaidah”

We will catch another glimpse of Abu Ubaidah's lofty character, at the height of his asceticism and humility. Just as he had no interest in fame and

position, he had no interest in worldly pursuits and consciously avoided the complexities associated with the material world and its concerns.

When Ilya' (Jerusalem) was liberated, its people requested peace and that the Commander of the Believers, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, should come to personally ratify this agreement. When `Umar arrived, he asked those who greeted him: "Where is my brother?" They asked: "Who?" He replied: "Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah." Abu `Ubaidah came, greeted him, embraced him, and walked with him to his home. When `Umar entered his house and saw nothing but his sword, shield, and saddle, he asked him: "O Abu `Ubaidah, why do you not have some household articles?" Abu `Ubaidah replied: "O Commander of the Believers, this will suffice me to reach my resting place." `Umar asked: "Do you have any food?" `Abu Ubaidah rose and brought him some morsels of bread. `Umar wept and said: "The world has changed us all except you, O Abu `Ubaidah."

Brothers to Each Other

If you, dear readers, want to experience the peak of generosity, self-denial, and altruism, let us listen to this story concerning Abu `Ubaidah:

After the Commander of the Believers saw the poor condition that Abu Ubaidah was in, he sent him four hundred dinars and said to his envoy: "Wait a short time and see what he does [with the money]." The young man took the dinars and told Abu `Ubaidah: "The Commander of the Believers tells you to use these for your needs." Abu `Ubaidah replied: "May Allah have mercy on him." Then he said: "Come, O servant-girl! Give these seven dinars to so-and-so, and these five dinars to so-and-so," and he continued until all the money was distributed. Yes, he spent it all, four hundred gold dinars, like this.

The young man returned to the Commander of the Believers and informed him of what he had seen. `Umar took out the same amount for Mu`adh ibn Jabal and said to him: “Do with them (these dinars) as you did with Abu `Ubaidah.” The boy went to Mu`adh, and as soon as he gave him the money, he said: “Come, O servant-girl! Go to the house of so-and-so with this much, and to the house of so-and-so with this much.” Mu`adh’s wife came out and said: “By Allah, we, too, are poor.” There were only two dinars left in the purse, so he gave them to her.

The young man returned to the Commander of the Believers and told him what he had seen and heard. `Umar was delighted by the accounts that he received about them and said: “They are brothers to each other. All praise be to Allah Who has placed among the Muslims those who act like this.”

Certainly, dear readers, whenever you come across the biographies of any of the noble Companions, you will find similar stories of generosity, humility, and asceticism.

There is no wonder or surprise in this, for the Companions were all raised, educated, and graduated from the best school known to humanity...the school of the beloved Chosen Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.



The Final Scene in Abu `Ubaidah's Life Journey

Now we approach the final scene in the life of this exceptional hero, the trustworthy one of this nation, Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah (may Allah be pleased with him).

The time for his departure had arrived.

“He Wants to Preserve the Life of Someone Who Will Not Last”

The eighteenth year of the Hijrah came, and the plague struck the Levant, decimating the people. When `Umar ibn Al-Khattab learned of this terrible epidemic, he sent an envoy to Abu `Ubaidah with a letter saying: “I have an urgent need of you, and I cannot do without you. If my letter reaches you at night, I plead you not to wait until morning but ride to me immediately. And if it reaches you during the day, I plead you not to wait until evening but ride to me immediately.”

When Abu `Ubaidah read Umar's letter, he said: “I know why the Commander of the Believers needs me. He wants to preserve the life of someone who will not last.” Then he wrote back to him, saying: “O Commander of the Believers, I know why you need me [to come]. I am among a group of Muslim soldiers, and I find no desire to avoid what is befalling them, nor do I wish to leave them until Allah accomplishes a matter already ordained regarding us. Therefore, when this letter of mine reaches you, please release me from your request and permit me to stay.”

When `Umar read his letter, he wept until his eyes overflowed with tears. Due to the intensity of his weeping, those present asked him: “Has Abu `Ubaidah died, O Commander of the Believers?” He replied: “No, but death is near him.”

Abu `Ubaidah’s Last Commandments

Umar’s expectations proved true—Abu `Ubaidah soon contracted the plague. When death approached him, he advised his soldiers, saying: “I am giving you a commandment; if you accept it, you will continue to be well. ‘Establish prayer, pay *Zakah* (obligatory charity), fast the month of Ramadan, give charity, perform Hajj and `Umrah, advise one another, and be sincere to your leaders. Do not let this world distract you. Even if a person lives a thousand years, he will inevitably reach this fate that you see. Allah has decreed death for the children of Adam; they will die. Those most astute among them are those who are most obedient to their Lord and who work diligently for the day appointed [for their departure from this world].’ May Allah’s Peace and Mercy be upon you.”

Abu `Ubaidah turned to Mu`adh ibn Jabal and said: “O Mu`adh, lead the people in prayer.” Then his pure soul departed to its Creator. Mu`adh stood up and announced: “O people, you have been grieved by the loss of a man whom, I swear by Allah, had a heart freer from malice than anyone I have seen. I have never seen someone with a purer heart, who was further from evil, who had such great love for the Hereafter, and who cared much for the well-being of the people. So, ask Allah to bestow His Mercy on him, may Allah have mercy on you.”

`Umar Grieves Over Abu `Ubaidah and Keeps Remembering Him

A messenger came to the Commander of the Believers, informing him that Abu `Ubaidah had died. `Umar looked down with tears swelling up in his eyes. He then opened his eyes in submission to Allah's Will. He, compassionately and patiently, uttered a supplication for mercy upon his companion.

The memory of Abu `Ubaidah remained in `Umar's thoughts to the extent that one day, while sitting among his companions, his heart filled with grief over those who had departed this life. He said to those around him: "Make a wish." A man said: "I wish I had this house filled with gold so I could spend it in Allah's Way." `Umar again said: "Make a wish." Another man said: "I wish it were filled with pearls, emeralds, and jewels so I could spend them in Allah's Way or give them in charity." `Umar again said: "Make a wish." They said: "We do not know [what to wish for], O Commander of the Believers." He said: "I wish this house were filled with men like Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah," and he wept.

`Umar continued to remember Abu `Ubaidah, even as he was taking his last breaths. He said: "If Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah were alive, I would have made him my successor. If my Lord asked me about him, I would say, 'I have made my successor the one trusted by Allah, trusted by His Messenger, and worthy of the trust of this nation (i.e., he was entrusted by Allah and His Messenger with a special task and responsibility toward the people).'"

Thus ended the life of 'The Trustworthy One of This Nation,' Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah. It ended on the land he purified from Persian paganism and Roman oppression. There, beneath the soil of Jordan, the body of this trustworthy hero lay buried.

May Allah have mercy on you, O Trustworthy One of This Nation.

O Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah.

10. Sa`id ibn Zayd



May Allah Be Pleased with Him

Sa`id ibn Zayd

Dear readers, let us welcome the last personality in this bouquet of eminent Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) who were given glad tidings of Paradise. He was one of the first to embrace Islam, a lion on the Battle of Yarmuk, and the first to assume the leadership of the city of Damascus. He is Sa`id ibn Zayd (may Allah be pleased with him).

Sa`id's Lineage

His full name was Sa`id ibn Zayd ibn `Amr ibn Nufayl. His father, Zayd ibn `Amr, was the paternal cousin of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, from Banu `Adi tribe.

A Good Fruit from a Good Tree

Allah (Exalted be He) bestowed upon Sa`id ibn Zayd a distinction rarely found among the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH); his father, Zayd ibn `Amr, was among the few who rebelled against the worship of idols and turned to the worship of the One True God.

From his lineage came this blessed son, Sa`id ibn Zayd, who became one of the Ten Given Glad Tidings of Paradise.

Zayd's Journey in Search of Truth

Let us begin with his father Zayd ibn `Amr and explore his journey in search of truth, seeking monotheism and changing from believing in multiple gods to recognizing the existence of the one and only true God Who is worthy of worship.

Zayd's Opposition to Quraysh

Zayd used to condemn Quraysh for burying their baby girls alive. When any man wanted to kill his daughter, he would say to him: "Wait, do not kill her. I will take care of the expenses of raising her." Consequently, he would take her and provide for her. When she grew up, he would say to her father: "If you wish, I will return her to you. Or if you wish, I will take care of her expenses and all her needs."

Whenever Zayd saw his people taking some livestock and slaughtering them in front of idols, as offerings to them and as a means of worshipping these idols, he would become enraged and say: "Allah is the One Who created the sheep. It is He Who sent down water from the sky for the land to drink in the rain and produce grass for the sheep to eat until it is satisfied. Then you slaughter it to other than Allah?! By Allah, I see you are in manifest error."

The Torture and Persecution That Zayd Suffered Due to His Convictions

Because of his positions and opinions that conflicted with paganism, Zayd ibn `Amr suffered severe torture from Quraysh, especially from his paternal uncle, Al-Khattab, the father of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab. When he heard Zayd ibn

`Amr belittling and disparaging the idols, he slapped him and incited the knaves among his people to harm him. Zayd fled Makkah and sought refuge in the Cave of Hira.' To restrict any interactions with him, his paternal uncle, Al-Khattab, assigned a group of young Qurayshi men to inhibit him from entering Makkah, fearing that he would corrupt the religious beliefs to which the people clung. Zayd only entered Makkah secretly.

The Important Meeting with Other Individuals Who Rejected Idolatry

One day, Zayd ibn `Amr exploited the inattention of Quraysh and succeeded in meeting three other men who had rebelled against idol worship and were seeking the path of truth and righteousness. The four men met together, namely, Waraqah ibn Nawfal, `Ubaydullah ibn Jahsh, `Uthman ibn Al-Huwayrith, and Zayd ibn `Amr ibn Nufayl.

The four men began to discuss the misguidance into which the Arabs had sunk and how deeply immersed in error and sin their people were. Zayd ibn `Amr said to them: "By Allah, you know that your people are not following anything (i.e., any true path), and that they have deviated from and contradict the religion of Ibrahim (Abraham, PBBUH). Should we worship a mere stone that neither hears nor sees, nor harms nor benefits! O people, seek for yourselves a religion to which you will adhere. By Allah, you are not following anything (i.e., any true path)."

The four men rose up and dispersed to various countries. They joined rabbis and monks from among the Jews and Christians, besides adherents of other faiths, seeking thereby the true faith of Ibrahim (PBBUH).

- Waraqah ibn Nawfal embraced Christianity.

- `Ubaydullah ibn Jahsh remained confused about the true religion until he became a Muslim. He then emigrated with other Muslims to Abyssinia. His wife, Umm Habibah bint Abu Sufyan, was with him. But when he reached Abyssinia, he converted to Christianity and abandoned Islam. He died there as a Christian.
- `Uthman ibn Al-Huwayrith went to Caesar, the Roman king, converted to Christianity, and enjoyed a favorable status in his sight.
- Zayd ibn `Amr remained steadfast and did not convert to Judaism or Christianity. He totally abandoned the religion of his people—idolatry. He shunned all idols and all pagan practices, including eating carrion and blood and offering sacrifices to idols. He used to say: “I worship the Lord of Ibrahim.”

The Journey of Belief in Only Allah

The Journey of Zayd ibn `Amr in Quest of *Tawhid*

Zayd ibn `Amr left Makkah to begin his journey in search of *Tawhid* (belief in Allah's oneness and uniqueness), the true religion of Prophet Ibrahim (PBBUH). He kept asking different monks and rabbis until he reached Mosul. Then he traveled throughout the Levant until he came across a monk who possessed knowledge of the Scriptures.

The monk said: "I see you are seeking the religion of Ibrahim."

Zayd replied: "Yes, that is what I seek."

He said: "You seek a religion that does not exist today. But the time has come when a Prophet will emerge from among your people and the country from which you came (Makkah). He will be sent with the religion of Ibrahim (PBBUH), the upright true faith. If you live until his time (i.e., live to see his era), adhere to him."

Zayd returned quickly to Makkah after the meeting with this monk, hastening his steps to catch up with this promised Prophet.

While Zayd was on his way, a group of Bedouins attacked him and killed him before he entered Makkah. As Zayd was taking his final breaths, he raised his gaze to the sky and said: "O Allah, if You have deprived me of this good, do not deprive my son Sa'id of it."

The Journey of Sa`id ibn Zayd in Quest of *Tawhid*

The father's journey in search of *Tawhid* ended, and the journey of the dutiful son began, completing what his father had begun. Allah Almighty responded to the sincere supplication that Zayd ibn `Amr uttered before dying. He (Exalted be He) did not deprive his son Sa`id of this goodness (i.e. Islam). His son Sa`id ibn Zayd was among the first to embrace Islam, even before Dar Al-Arqam became the established gathering place for early Muslims. Allah bestowed abundant blessings upon him, and he was one of the Ten Given Glad Tidings of Paradise.

It is not surprising or unexpected that this should happen. Sa`id grew up in a household that rejected the erroneous beliefs and pagan practices that Quraysh upheld. He was raised in the care of a father who spent his life seeking the truth and died in the endeavor.

Fatimah Bint Al-Khattab and Umar's Conversion to Islam

Sa`id was not the only one to embrace Islam; his wife, Fatimah bint Al-Khattab (the sister of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab), also embraced Islam. The young man and his wife faced persecution from Quraysh. However, Allah compensated them for the harm they suffered by allowing them to be the cause for the conversion of one of the most influential and dangerous men for Quraysh, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab. Indeed, the primary reason for Umar's conversion to Islam was the supplication of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), when he (PBBUH) said: **"O Allah, strengthen Islam through the more**

beloved of these two men to You: Abu Jahl (`Amr ibn Hisham) or `Umar ibn Al-Khattab.” The one most beloved to Him was `Umar ibn Al-Khattab.¹

The full story of the conversion of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab and the role of his sister Fatimah and her husband Sa'id ibn Zayd have been mentioned in an earlier part of this book.

Zayd ibn `Amr Will Be Resurrected, Not as a Person, but as a Nation by Himself

Sa'id did not forget his father, Zayd ibn `Amr, nor did `Umar forget his cousin, Zayd ibn `Amr. They both went to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and asked him: “Should we ask forgiveness for Zayd ibn `Amr?” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied: **“Yes, for he will be resurrected as a nation by himself.”**²

Sa'id's Struggle and Exertion in Allah's Cause

Sa'id ibn Zayd devoted all his youthful energy to serving Islam, conforming his life with Allah's guidance. He witnessed all the battles with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), except for Badr, during which he had been assigned on a mission by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) allocated to him a share of the spoils as if he had witnessed the battle, thus recognizing his contribution or right to a share.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) died while he was pleased with Sa'id ibn Zayd, who remained a struggling soldier with his successor, Abu Bakr, and `Umar after him. He contributed, along with the Muslim fighters, to

¹ Reported by Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 3681.

² *Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyyah* by Ibn Hisham.

eradicating paganism and fire worship in Persia, ending Roman persecution and undermining the kingdom of Caesar.

Sa'id Fighting Like a Lion in the Battle of Yarmuk

Perhaps his greatest heroism was shown on the Day of Yarmuk. The Muslims set out to fight the Byzantines, who approached in huge numbers, advancing like mountains. When the Muslim army saw them in this mighty state, their great numbers startled the Muslims and a certain amount of fear crept into their hearts. At that moment, Abu 'Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah rose and urged the Muslims to fight, saying: "O servants of Allah, support Allah, and He will support you and make your feet firm. O servants of Allah, be patient, for patience saves you from disbelief and pleases the Lord. Point your spears, hide behind your shields, and remain silent except for the remembrance of Allah in your souls (i.e., mindful silence and focused remembrance of Allah) until I command you [to proceed], Allah willing."

At that moment, a man emerged from the ranks of the Muslims and said to Abu 'Ubaidah: "I have resolved to carry out my mission immediately. Do you have a message to send to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH in Paradise)?" Abu 'Ubaidah said: "Yes, convey to him greetings from me and from the Muslims, and tell him, 'We have found what our Lord promised to be true.'"

As soon as Sa'id ibn Zayd heard this man's words and saw him drawing his sword and charging into the enemy ranks, fearlessly, his enthusiasm was ignited. He knelt down, aiming with his spear, and killed the first knight who approached them. Then Allah removed all the fear from his heart, and he leapt upon the enemy in close combat.

Sa'id continued to fight with extreme courage that invigorated the Muslims and inflamed their enthusiasm. It was said that Sa'id was like a lion on the day of the Battle of Yarmuk. With such undaunted spirit and willingness to sacrifice, Allah's victory was for the believers.

The First Governor of Damascus

After this, Sa'id ibn Zayd participated in the Liberation of Damascus. When the city came under the control of the Muslims, Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah appointed him its governor. Thus, he was the first Muslim to assume the governorship of Damascus.

Sa'id Was a Man Whose Supplications Were Granted

During the Umayyad era, an incident occurred to Sa'id ibn Zayd which the people of Madinah continued to remember for a long time.

Arwa bint Uwais claimed that Sa'id ibn Zayd had seized a portion of her land. She brought the matter to Marwan ibn A-Hakam, who sent for Sa'id to address him about this issue. Sa'id found the charge difficult to bear and exclaimed: "How can I do that when I heard the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) say, **'Whoever wrongfully usurps land equal to a palm span will be yoked with it, together with the rest of the seven earths, on the Day of Resurrection?'**" Sa'id then supplicated, saying: "O Allah, if she is lying, blind her and kill her in her own land." She did not die until she had lost her eyesight, and [one day] as she was walking in her land, she fell into a pit and died.¹

This is not surprising, as the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said: **"Beware of the supplication of the oppressed, for there is no barrier between it and Allah."**² If this is the case for a normal person, how much more when the oppressed person was Sa'id ibn Zayd, the Companion of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and one of the Ten Given Glad Tidings of Paradise.

This incident continued to be cited as a moral example. `Abdullah ibn `Umar said: "When we were young boys, we would hear one man say to another, 'May Allah blind you as He blinded Arwa.'"



¹ Reported by Muslim, hadith no. 1610.

² Reported by Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 2448.

The Final Scene in Sa`id's Life Journey

After a long life brimming with giving and sacrifice, Sa`id ibn Zayd departed for the eternal abode to join the best of humankind (PBBUH) and his noble Companions.

He died in Al-`Aqiq, was carried to Madinah, and was washed for burial by Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas. He was buried in Al-Baqi` in the year 50 A.H., when he was in his seventies.

May Allah have mercy on you, O Sa`id ibn Zayd.

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