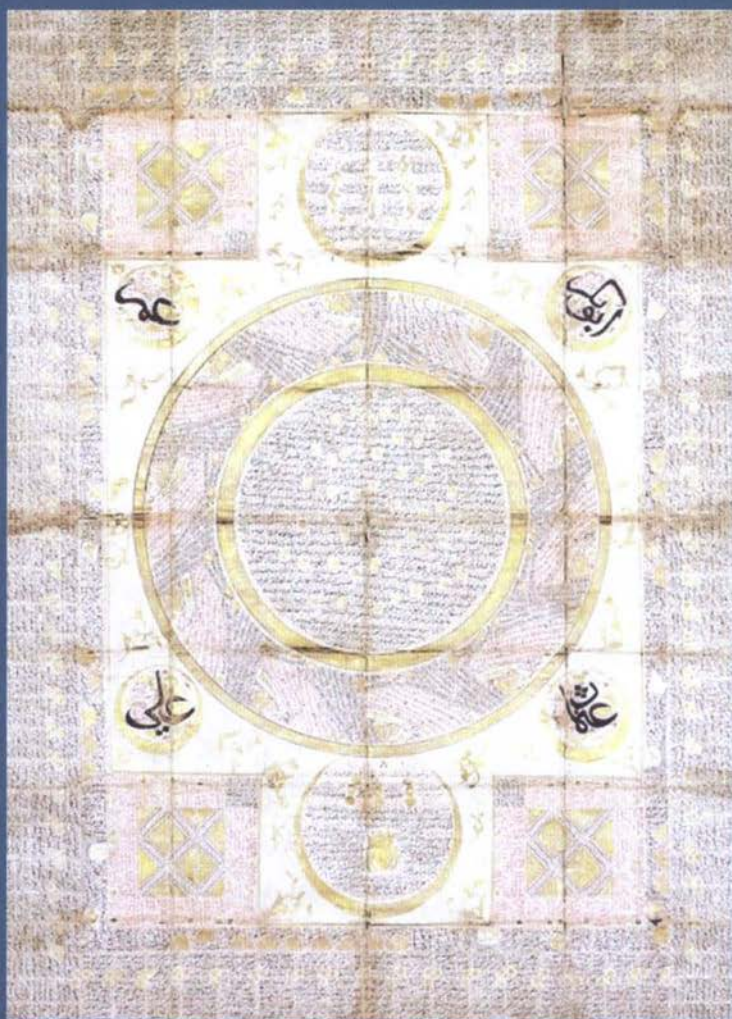


# The History of the Four Caliphs

*Itmām al-'Wafā' fī Sīrat al-Khulafā'*



SHAYKH MUHAMMAD  
AL-KHUDARĪ BAK AL-BĀJURĪ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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With full-colour maps



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The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

*Do not revile my Companions. By Him in  
whose hand is my life, if one amongst you spent  
as much gold as Uhud [in charity] it would not  
amount to even a small measure (mudd) spent  
by one of them or half of it.*

*(Bukhari, Muslim)*



# Contents



|                                                                   |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| FOREWORD                                                          | 13 |
| ABOUT THE AUTHOR                                                  | 15 |
| INTRODUCTION                                                      | 17 |
| THE CALIPHATE                                                     | 21 |
| The meaning of the caliphate                                      | 21 |
| The obligation of appointing the caliph                           | 22 |
| A single <i>imām</i>                                              | 22 |
| The person at the helm of the caliphate                           | 23 |
| The underlying reason for reserving the caliphate for the Quraysh | 25 |
| Prerequisites for the caliph                                      | 26 |
| Choosing the caliph                                               | 26 |
| Obedience to the <i>imām</i>                                      | 28 |
| Disobeying the <i>imām</i>                                        | 29 |
| Declaring war on the <i>imām</i>                                  | 29 |
| Punishment of those who wage war on the <i>imām</i>               | 30 |
| The duties of the <i>imām</i>                                     | 31 |
| PART 1: THE ERA OF UNITY                                          |    |
| THE CALIPHATE OF ABŪ BAKR ﷺ                                       | 33 |
| The profile of Abū Bakr ﷺ                                         | 35 |
| His services to Islām during his caliphate                        | 39 |
| Dispatching the army of Usāmah ibn Zayd ﷺ                         | 39 |
| Matters of apostasy                                               | 40 |
| ʿAbs and Dhibyān                                                  | 41 |
| Abū Bakr's ﷺ letter to the commanders                             | 43 |
| Abū Bakr's ﷺ letter to the apostates                              | 45 |
| Ṭulayḥah                                                          | 46 |
| Mālik ibn Nuwayrah                                                | 47 |
| Musaylimah                                                        | 48 |

|                                 |    |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Bahrain                         | 51 |
| Oman                            | 52 |
| Aswad                           | 53 |
| The Kindah                      | 55 |
| Iraq                            | 57 |
| The battle of Ubullah           | 58 |
| The battle of Thiny             | 60 |
| The battle of Walajah           | 60 |
| The battle of Ullays            | 60 |
| The conquest of Ḥīrah           | 61 |
| Beyond Ḥīrah                    | 62 |
| The conquest of Anbār           | 63 |
| The conquest of ‘Ayn at-Tamr    | 63 |
| The conquest of Dūmat al-Jandal | 63 |
| Ḥuṣayd and Khanāfis             | 64 |
| Firād                           | 65 |
| Khālīd ﷺ is sent to the Levant  | 65 |
| Bābil (Babylon)                 | 65 |
| The Romans                      | 66 |
| The battle of Yarmūk            | 70 |
| The death of Abū Bakr ﷺ         | 72 |

|                                                         |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| THE CALIPHATE OF ‘UMAR IBN AL-KHAṬṬĀB ﷺ                 | 77  |
| The profile of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ                   | 77  |
| The Iraqī campaign during the era of ‘Umar ﷺ            | 81  |
| The battle of Namāriq                                   | 82  |
| The battle of the Bridge ( <i>Jisr</i> )                | 83  |
| The battle of Buwayb                                    | 85  |
| Khanāfis and Sūq Baghdād                                | 86  |
| The crowning of Yazdajird                               | 86  |
| Sa’d is appointed commander and ‘Umar’s ﷺ advice to him | 87  |
| The descent to Qādisiyyah                               | 90  |
| Yazdajird is invited to Islām                           | 91  |
| The battle of Qādisiyyah                                | 93  |
| Discussions with Rustam                                 | 93  |
| Rustam’s address to his soldiers                        | 95  |
| The first day: the Day of Armāth                        | 96  |
| The second day: the Day of Aghwāth                      | 96  |
| The third day: the Day of ‘Ammās                        | 97  |
| The Night of Harīr and the Day of Qādisiyyah            | 98  |
| The conquest of Burs and Bābil                          | 99  |
| The conquest of Kūthā and Sābāt                         | 100 |

|                                                          |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| The conquest of Madāʿin                                  | 100 |
| Crossing over to east Madāʿin and the Īwān               | 103 |
| Yazdajird flees and the Muslims enter the White House    | 103 |
| The conquest of Jalūlāʾ                                  | 105 |
| The conquest of Tikrīt                                   | 105 |
| The conquest of Nīnawā (Nineveh) and Mawṣil (Mosul)      | 106 |
| The conquest of Māsabadhān, Hīt and Qarqīsiyāʾ           | 106 |
| Mapping out Kūfah                                        | 107 |
| Attacking the Persians from Bahrain                      | 108 |
| The conquest of Ahwāz                                    | 109 |
| Hurmuzān breaks the peace agreement                      | 110 |
| The conquest of Tustar and Sūs                           | 112 |
| Hurmuzān comes to ʿUmar ﷺ                                | 112 |
| The battle of Nahāwand                                   | 114 |
| The conquest of Hamadhān                                 | 118 |
| The conquest of Rayy and Qūmis (Hecatompylos)            | 118 |
| The conquest of Jurjān (Gorgan) and Ṭabaristān (Tapuria) | 119 |
| The conquest of Iṣfahān                                  | 120 |
| Spreading out in non-Arab lands                          | 120 |
| The conquest of Azerbaijan                               | 121 |
| The conquest of Bāb                                      | 121 |
| The conquest of Khurāsān                                 | 123 |
| The conquest of Fasā and Dārābjird                       | 125 |
| The conquest of Karmān and Sijistān                      | 126 |
| The conquest of Mukrān                                   | 127 |
| The conquest of the Levant (Shām)                        | 128 |
| The conquest of Damascus                                 | 129 |
| The conquest of Ḥimṣ (Homs)                              | 131 |
| The conquest of Qinnasrīn                                | 131 |
| The conquest of Ḥalab (Aleppo) and Anṭākiyah (Antioch)   | 132 |
| The conquest of Bayt al-Maqdis                           | 133 |
| The plague of ʿAmawās                                    | 134 |
| The conquest of Egypt                                    | 136 |
| The conquest of Alexandria                               | 137 |
| The office of the caliphate                              | 139 |
| The assassination of ʿUmar ﷺ                             | 142 |
| MAPS                                                     | 156 |
| THE CALIPHATE OF ʿUTHMĀN IBN ʿAFFĀN ﷺ                    | 157 |
| His achievements during his caliphate                    | 159 |
| In Kūfah and the Campaigns of Armenia and Azerbaijān     | 159 |
| In Baṣrah                                                | 163 |

|                                                    |     |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----|
| The Death of Yazdajird                             | 164 |
| The Reconquest of Khurāsān                         | 164 |
| Abdullāh ibn Saba' sowing the seeds of sedition    | 165 |
| In the Levant                                      | 165 |
| The Conquest of Cyprus (Qubruş)                    | 167 |
| In Egypt                                           | 169 |
| The Conquest of Ifriqiyya (North Africa)           | 169 |
| Part 2: The Era of Differences and Tribulations    |     |
| The movement Against 'Uthmān ﷺ                     | 170 |
| Ibn Saba': the spearhead of the sedition           | 171 |
| The start of the sedition                          | 174 |
| The alleged letter                                 | 175 |
| 'Uthmān ﷺ is surrounded                            | 176 |
| 'Uthmān's ﷺ letter to the Muslims                  | 179 |
| The assassination of 'Uthmān ﷺ                     | 183 |
| The false claims of the Rebels                     | 184 |
| THE CALIPHATE OF 'ALĪ ﷺ                            | 187 |
| The profile of 'Alī ﷺ                              | 188 |
| The achievements of 'Alī ﷺ                         | 190 |
| Mu'āwiyah's ﷺ opposition                           | 191 |
| The opposition of 'Ā'ishah, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr ﷺ | 192 |
| The battle of the Camel ( <i>Jamal</i> )           | 195 |
| The battle of Ṣiffin                               | 204 |
| The arbitration                                    | 209 |
| The arbitrators meet                               | 212 |
| but they could see no good until the next morning. | 214 |
| The Khārijites                                     | 214 |
| Some strange doings of the Khārijites              | 215 |
| The death of Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr                 | 220 |
| The Assassination of 'Alī ﷺ                        | 222 |
| ḤASAN IBN 'ALĪ ﷺ                                   | 225 |
| His achievements during his caliphate              | 226 |
| CONCLUSION                                         | 229 |

## Foreword



**I**N THE NAME of Allah. All praise is to Allah, Lord of the Worlds. May countless peace and blessings be showered upon our Master Muhammad, a Mercy for the worlds; the one who inspired his Companions and us to reach the pinnacles of excellence.

During the years I spent in Syria, I came across this work of the late Shaykh Muḥammad Khudārī Bak al-Bājūrī of Cairo (may Allah have mercy on him). I found it to be concise, yet comprehensive enough to provide a sufficient overview of the lives of the four rightly-guided caliphs ﷺ. There were two features that made it stand out for me. One was that it provided a clear and straightforward narrative of the first four caliphs, as well as that of the fifth, Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ﷺ. Written for the layman, it avoided long excursions into the variant narrations, technical intricacies and obscure historical detail found on many issues. Such excursions often become the source of disinterest for the non-academic reader.

The second notable point was the balanced and refreshing way in which the author dealt with contentious issues related to the four caliphs. This included issues exploited by sectarians to divide the Ummah, such as ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib’s ﷺ delay in giving the pledge (*bay‘a*) to the first caliph Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq ﷺ, the validity of the insurgency against the third caliph ‘Uthmān ﷺ, the battles of the Camel and Ṣiffīn, and the disputes between the fourth caliph ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiyah ﷺ. His analysis of these events leaves the reader with a clear and pure conscience regarding the great Companions of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, a religious demand on us, and an increase in love and respect for their achievements in the face of tremendous difficulty (may Allah be pleased with them all).

These factors, coupled with a shortage of high-quality analytical work on the four caliphs in English, compelled me to translate and publish this work. Unfortunately, I was unable to personally work on it through White Thread Press and suggested that it be undertaken by Turath Publishing. Our dear friend Yahya Batha of Turath is to be commended for taking up the request and seeing the work through to its final stages. The result of this endeavor is before you today. The translation strives to preserve the author's straightforward style, fast-paced account of the battles, and internal struggles of the four caliphs. The text has been enhanced with informative maps, not found in the original text, to illustrate the advances made by the various caliphs. A small section from the original Arabic, where the author included lengthy discussions on the underlying principles of Islam, has been omitted, retaining only the historical accounts for this publication.

We would like to thank and acknowledge the contributions of the following in this project: Maulana Mohammad Mohammadi for the original translation; Mufti Husain Kadodia and Mufti Ayyub Jeena for their revision; Aadil Wainwright for his thorough editing; Nauman Vania for the cartography of the maps; and Muhammad Ansa and Maulana Shoaib Shah for their assistance.

We pray that Allah accepts this work from the author and all of us as a sincere exercise of *da'wa* to the beautiful way of Islam and the glorious lives of these inspiring luminaries (may Allah be pleased with them all).

ABDUR-RAHMAN IBN YUSUF MANGERA

London UK

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> Rabī' al-Akhar 1433

2<sup>nd</sup> March 2012

## About the Author



**H**E IS MUḤAMMAD ibn ‘Afīfī al-Bājūrī, popularly known as Shaykh al-Khuḍarī. He was a scholar of Sharī‘ah, literature and Islamic history. He was born in Egypt in 1289 AH/1872 CE and lived in Zaytūn, a suburb of Cairo. He graduated from Madrasah *Dār al-‘Ulūm* and surpassed his contemporaries as a scholar, researcher, orator, educator and reformer. During the course of his life he was an Islamic judge in Khartoum, an educator in the Islamic Judicial School in Cairo for a period of twelve years, a Professor in Islamic history at the University of Egypt (now named The University of Cairo) the Deputy-Head of the Islamic judicial school and an inspector for the Ministry of Education.

He contributed to the literature of Islām with a collection of valuable books on history, literature and Sharī‘ah. He aimed to gather beneficial information in his compositions and relied on the authentic primary sources in each field.

He was keen to introduce the new generations to the Islamic tradition and to present it to them in its purest form, without interpolation, complexity, innovation and triviality. His writing style is distinguished by its purity, eloquence, and level-headedness is embellished with beautiful, tactful yet powerful admonition whenever he found the opportunity.

His power of oration and genuine feeling for the religion were displayed in his responses to important events related to the circumstances of Muslims at the time. He was as his friend, Professor Muṣṭafā Ṣādiq ar-Rāfi‘ī, described him: “A reformer and a caring educator.”

His written works are as follows:

*On Sharī'ah:*

- *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* ('The Sources of Islamic Jurisprudence')
- *Tārīkh at-Tashrī' al-Islāmī* ('The History of Islamic Law')
- *Al-Ghazālī: His Teachings and Views*

*On history:*

- *Nūr al-Yaqīn fī Sīra Sayyid al-Mursalīn* ('The Light of Certainty in the Biography of the Master of the Messengers')
- *Itmām al-Wafā' fī Sirat al-Khulafā'* ('The Perfection of Faithfulness in the Biography of the Caliphs')
- *Muḥāḍarāt fī Tārīkh al-Umam al-Islāmiyyah* ('Discourses on the History of Islām Communities in two volumes')
- *Durūs Tārīkhiyyah* ('History Lessons')

*On literature:*

- *Tahdhīb al-Aghānī* (A concise rendering of the literary work *al-Aghānī* in seven volumes)
- *Muḥāḍarāt fī naqd kitāb ash-shi'r al-jāhili li Ṭāhā Ḥusayn* ('Critical Discourses of Ṭāhā Ḥusayn's Book on Pre-Islamic Poetry')

He passed away in Cairo in 1345 AH/1927 CE and was buried there, May Allah shower His abundant mercy on him and forgive him.

## Introduction



**A**LL PRAISE BELONGS to Allah, as He ought to be praised and peace and salutations be upon our master Muḥammad, who made the ways clear and passed on the message exactly as he received it. May Allah be pleased with his noble and righteous Companions who followed his upright way, to which kings and nations yielded and submitted in awe.

Muḥammad al-Khuḍārī (the author), son of Shaykh ‘Afīfī al-Bājūrī says:

My brother, may Allah ﷻ inspire you and me. After I wrote a book on the life of the Prophet ﷺ which I named *Nūr al-Yaqīn*, you asked me to follow it with a book on the history of the Prophet’s ﷺ Rightly-Guided Caliphs. It was in their era that Islām expressed its highest manifestations and it was through their words and actions that it displayed its most beautiful jewels. My brother, you asked me to follow the style of my previous book in simplicity of expression, and to strive to gather the histories of these caliphs, scattered here and there in the voluminous works that would otherwise tire the reader. You mentioned to me that one of the greatest ways of disseminating a spirit of energy and endeavour in the ummah is to remain devoted to studying the history of its elders, so that it may know how they overcame the numerous hardships which almost came between them and their lofty goals and so it may know the fruits of following Islām and following its systems of regulation.

I realised your noble objective, your genuine faith, and your solicitude for your community. I therefore decided to help you in achieving your objective and to overcome the obstacles that prevent me from fulfilling this immense task

seeking the help of Allah ﷻ, and what an excellent helper He is! I have divided the book into two sections:

*One: The Era of Unity*

This era comprises the Islamic conquests during the time of the two caliphs, Abū Bakr ﷺ and ʿUmar ﷺ, and a major portion of the time of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān ﷺ. I follow this part with a small section on the system of regulations of the Muslim nation of that time, the exemplary brotherly interaction of the Muslims and the efforts they made to realise what the Messenger of Allah ﷺ spoke of regarding the spread of Islām in east and west.

*Two: The Era of Differences and Tribulations*

This era extends from the last days of the caliphate of ʿUthmān ﷺ until ʿAlī ﷺ was killed and his son Ḥasan ﷺ handed over the reins of the caliphate to Muʿāwiyah ﷺ (may Allah be pleased with all of them). I follow this with a small section illustrating the consequences of differences and schisms in the Muslim ummah. This I have done so that the book may be a valuable lesson, by the help of Allah, for the Muslims in general.

I precede these two sections with a small introduction on the subject of the caliphate and anything related to it.

I hope that this book is warmly received by my Muslim brothers, as they warmly received my previous book. All praise is due to Allah ﷻ that I have full confidence in my efforts, for I seek nothing thereby but the pleasure of Allah ﷻ. I ask that this book be a means for attaining wonderful treasure in the Hereafter, that it be an inspiration for the Muslims which increases their strength and that Allah ﷻ sends His help to them.

The following are the works I refer to in compiling this book:

- The *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī al-Juʿfī (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*); the places where he paid particular attention to information on the Companions ﷺ.
- The *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Abūʾl-Ḥusayn Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*).
- *Tārīkh ar-Rusul waʾl-Mulūk* ('History of Kings and Prophets'), Abū Jaʿfār Muḥammad ibn Jarīr aṭ-Ṭabarī, except for the section of Ṣiffīn because I did not have the volume which contains this information (*Tārīkh aṭ-Ṭabarī*).
- *Al-Kāmil fī ʾt-Tārīkh* ('The Complete History') Abū ʾl-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Abī ʾl-Karam Muḥammad, popularly known as Ibn al-Athīr al-Jazarī.

- *Tārīkh*, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Khaldūn al-Maghribī.
- *Tārīkh*, ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥasan al-Mas‘ūdī, a descendent of ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd , the Companion of the Messenger of Allah .
- *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm ad-Dīn* (‘Vivification of the Religious Sciences’), Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī.
- *Sirāj al-Mulūk* (‘The Lamp of Kings’), Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Fihri aṭ-Ṭarṭūshī.

I have taken upon myself to specify reference sources wherever I see it as important, as I am aware of your eagerness for it.

Allah is the giver of success.



## The Caliphate



### THE MEANING OF THE CALIPHATE

ALLAH ﷻ SENT His Prophet, Muḥammad ﷺ, with an upright religion and a straight path. Those who follow it will be successful and those who deviate from it will be destroyed. This religion comprises of rules upon which rest the integrity of human society in this world and the Hereafter. Muḥammad ﷺ conveyed the message exactly as he received it, and then passed on to his Lord, pleased with Allah ﷻ, and Allah ﷻ pleased with him. It was necessary for the people to have a leader (imām) who would succeed him in making the people adhere to this religion, so that every person may live within its limits; the strong and the weak, the eminent and the humble, each equal before the truth. Accordingly, such a leader would be the caliph (successor) of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, as far as safeguarding the religion and administering worldly affairs.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Khaldūn, in his *Muqaddimah*, concentrated on the study of human nature, civilization and systems of administration and rule. This he did to study history and extract lessons from it. He specifically set aside lengthy sections on the meaning of the caliphate and its prerequisites. Included in what he said about the meaning of the caliphate is this: "Political injunctions concern themselves with worldly advantages only: 'They know the outward of this worldly life.' (Sūrat ar-Rūm, 7) On the other hand, the objective of the Legislator [Allah ﷻ] is the well-being of the people in the Hereafter. It therefore becomes incumbent, according to the demands of the Shari'ah, to convey the injunctions of the Shari'ah to the masses in matters of their worldly life and their Hereafter. This was the order that was given to the people of the Shari'ah, that is to say the Prophets ﷺ and those who stood in their place, the caliphs. The caliphate entails conveying the injunctions of the Shari'ah to the masses for their benefit in this world and in the Hereafter. This is because the Legislator considers all worldly conditions in the light of their benefit in the Hereafter. In essence, the caliphate is therefore a representative office on behalf of the Legislator for the

## THE OBLIGATION OF APPOINTING THE CALIPH

After the demise of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the Islamic community unanimously agreed on the obligation of appointing this caliph.<sup>2</sup> The Muslims who came after them concurred with them in this regard. None deviated from this unanimous decision (*ijmāʿ*) except for a few Khārijites<sup>3</sup> and Aṣamm<sup>4</sup> from the Muʿtazilites.<sup>5</sup> These groups held that the caliphate in itself was unnecessary if the Muslim community was sufficiently sound to follow the upright religion and put the Qurʾān and Sunnah into practice. Their real stimulus however, was their flight from authority because of the tendency of its people to become presumptuous, overbearing and indulgent in worldly pleasures. They adopted this position because of the Sharīʿah itself holds such tendencies in contempt and reproaches and rejects such individuals.<sup>6</sup>

## A SINGLE IMĀM

Likewise, the Muslims unanimously agree that it is not valid to have two caliphs

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guardianship of religion and the administration of worldly affairs" (*Al-Muqaddimah*, pp.238–239; and *Al-Aḥkām as-Sultāniyya* of Māwardī, p. 5).

2 There is difference of opinion as to whether the caliphate is an obligation on the basis of intellectual or Sharʿī evidence (*Al-Aḥkām as-Sultāniyya*, pp. 5–6). Ibn Khaldūn is of the opinion that the appointment of the Imām is obligatory and this obligation is known in the Sharīʿah through the unanimous decision of the Companions ﷺ and the Followers (*Ṭābʿūn*). When the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ passed away, his Companions ﷺ hastened to pledge their allegiance to Abū Bakr ﷺ and hand their affairs over to him. The same thing happened in every era after that. The people were not left without a leader in any era. This firmly established position and unanimous decision shows the obligation to appoint an Imām (*Al-Muqaddimah*, pp. 239–240).

3 The Khārijites were of the opinion that it was lawful for the caliph to be from outside Quraysh. They opposed ʿAlī ﷺ after the battle of Siffin and rejected the arbitration. There are many sub-groups among them, the most well-known being the ʿIbāḍiyyah, the Ṣufriyyah and the Azāriqah (Shahrastānī, *Al-Milāl wa 'n-Niḥāl*, vol. 1, p. 114).

4 He is ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān ibn Kaysan Abū Bakr al-ʿAṣamm, a Muʿtazilite jurist. He wrote several articles on *uṣūl* (legal principles) as well as a unique *tafsīr* (exegesis of the Qurʾān) and was a highly eloquent person. However, he considered ʿAlī ﷺ to have erred in some of his actions and believed that Muʿāwiyah ﷺ was correct. He passed away in or around 225 AH (*Lisān al-Mizān*, vol. 3, p. 427 and *Al-ʿĀlām*, vol. 3, p. 323).

5 The Muʿtazilites are a group of scholastic theologians who reject predestination (*qadr*) and differ with the Ahl as-Sunnah in some beliefs. Their leader was Wāṣil ibn ʿAṭāʾ who, together with his followers, dissociated himself from the circle of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī ﷺ (*Al-Muʿjam al-Wasīṭ*).

6 In expounding on the view of some Khārijites vis-à-vis the Imāmate, Shahrastānī said: "The Imāmate is not obligatory in the Sharīʿah in the sense that the Muslim community would deserve censure if it were to abstain from it. Rather it is based on the interaction of the people. If they are just between themselves, and help one another on the basis of rectitude and righteousness with every person occupying himself with his responsibilities, then there is no need for them to have an Imām" (Shahrastānī, *Nihāyat al-Iqdām*, p. 431).

at the same time<sup>7</sup> because of the inevitable rivalry and mutual hatred which will ensue, both resulting in failure and damaging consequences. The events that have befallen the Muslims since fragmenting under several leaders are sufficient proof to disallow this. The enemies of the Muslims have been able to feign friendship with one leader to use him against the other. The kings of Rome used their favourable relations with the Andalusian kings to protect them against the advances of the Abbasids. In our times, the situation has deteriorated to such an extent that we attempt to befriend those who desire our fall and collapse. Muslim rulers would not sink to this low, had they been apprised of what was good for them, did away with arrogance and held on to Islām firmly. “Truly in this there is a lesson for those who see.” (Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān, 3:13).

#### THE PERSON AT THE HELM OF THE CALIPHATE

The caliph commands great power, and this has brought about conflicting ideas about it and differences in the Muslim community as to who is most eligible for it. Years and centuries have passed by with this question remaining in the forefront of the minds of the leading Muslim scholars. Disagreement first arose after the passing away of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, with the Companions divided into three groups:

1. Those who left the matter open to the Muslim community and considered them free choose whoever was deemed suitable as the imām, provided he was able to safeguard the religion and administer its affairs. In this, there is no difference between a Qurayshī and a non-Qurayshī. This was the opinion of the majority of the Anṣār (Helpers) who were the residents of Madinah, may Allah ﷻ be pleased with all of them. For this reason, they requested this office themselves and intended to give the pledge of allegiance to Sa’d ibn ‘Ubādah ؓ, the leader of the Khazraj. This opinion was adopted later on by the Mu‘tazilites and the majority of Khārijites. The evidence for this opinion is the statement of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: “Listen and obey even if an Abyssinian slave with [a head] like a raisin is appointed over you”.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Māwardī has a section in his book titled: “If the Imāmate is established for two Imāms in two different countries, neither Imāmate will be valid. This is because it is not valid for the Muslim community to have two Imāms at the same time. It is thus despite the fact that some people have permitted it” (*Al-Aḥkām as-Ṣultāniyyah*, p. 9).

<sup>8</sup> That is, with a wrinkled, contorted and unattractive appearance. Bukhārī (7142), Aḥmad: vol. 3, p. 114, and Ibn Mājah (2860).

2. Those who also said that the person is elected by the Muslim community, but that it can only be someone from Quraysh. This was the opinion of the majority of the Muhājirūn (Emigrants), may Allah ﷻ be pleased with all of them. Their opinion was adopted by the majority of the Ahl as-Sunnah. The evidence for this opinion is the statement of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ reported by Abū Bakr ؓ: "The imams are from Quraysh".<sup>9</sup>
3. Those who felt that the most eligible were those related to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the foremost of them 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ؓ, since he was amongst the first to embrace Islām and made an exceptional contribution to the religion. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to him when he left him behind with his family on his departure to Tabūk: "Would it not please you to hold the position which Hārūn held in place of Mūsā, except that there is no prophethood after me?"<sup>10</sup> This was the opinion of the majority of the Banū Hāshim and those who supported them. It was adopted by the Shī'a who followed them. This was the opinion of 'Alī ؓ as well, as his statement to Abū Bakr ؓ, recorded in a ḥadīth of Muslim, shows: "We were of the opinion that we had a right [to the caliphate] because of our relationship to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ."<sup>11</sup> 'Alī ؓ did not consider any factor that made him more eligible for the caliphate than this relationship. Had there been any testament in his favour or in favour of anyone else, it would not have been concealed from the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

The second opinion won out over the others shortly after the demise of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. However, the differences mentioned here led to unfortunate circumstances later on. Calamities befell the Muslim community one after another and it fragmented, becoming completely powerless. Had the underlying reason for reserving the caliphate for the Quraysh been considered there would have been neither differences nor disunity.

#### THE UNDERLYING REASON FOR RESERVING THE CALIPHATE FOR THE QURAYSH

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ singled out the Quraysh for the caliphate because of their strong tribal bonds and influence by which an individual secures protection. Their influence is sufficient to dissolve any division and opposition to the caliph,

<sup>9</sup> Aḥmad: vol. 3, p. 129, 183, and vol. 4, p. 421.

<sup>10</sup> Mūsā ؑ appointed Harūn ؑ as his deputy. See Sūrat al-'A'rāf 7: 142, Bukhārī (3706), Muslim (2404), Tirmidhī (3731), Ibn Mājah (121).

<sup>11</sup> See the *Muqaddimah* of Ibn Khaldūn, pp. 240–245.

leading to acceptance and unity. It is well established that the Quraysh enjoy status and prestige over all the Arabs and that the Arabs universally acknowledge their standing and honour.

Disunity is the likely outcome of placing the caliphate in the hands of anyone else, not least because the Quraysh will oppose and resist it. The disintegration of unity is precisely what the Sharī'ah warns against. However, when the caliphate is placed in their hands this is prevented from coming about. This is because they have the authority to lead the people to carry out their duties. There is no fear of opposition to them, nor any fear of secession, though if this were to happen they would be responsible for controlling it and protecting the people from it.

This is what Ibn Khaldūn writes in his *al-Muqaddimah* then says:

Once it is established that the requirement for a Qurayshī caliph is to prevent discord because of the influence which they enjoyed, and when we know that the Legislator [Allah ﷻ] does not ordain injunctions for a specific generation, time or community, we can conclude that this is merely for the sake of efficiency. We therefore confine it [i.e., this law] to efficiency, and generalise the underlying reason that includes the object behind specifying the Quraysh, which is 'influence'. So we posit the following as a prerequisite for a leader of the Muslims; that the leader be from a people that has influence and power over the other peoples of the time, so that other people follow and the Muslims are united through the protective influence of that people. This is not known of anyone as it was known of the Quraysh. The message of Islām which was revealed to them was universal. Arab tribal sympathies met well with Islām and the Quraysh therefore achieved supremacy over all other nations. Each region shall endow this position only to someone who enjoys this supreme tribal influence. Realising this secret of Allah ﷻ in the caliphate prevents one from trespassing it, since Allah ﷻ made the caliph His vicegerent who sees to the affairs of His servants and urges them to do what is to their advantage and prevents them from doing what is to their detriment. Such are the duties the caliph is charged with, and only someone with the capability to carry them out is addressed with these duties.<sup>12</sup>

At present, we do not know of any tribal influence sufficiently strong for the protection of the Muslim community other than that of those presently in charge; the Banū 'Uthmān<sup>13</sup> in Constantinople. May Allah ﷻ inspire them to struggle for His upright religion and to follow the way of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs ﷺ.

<sup>12</sup> *Al-Muqaddimah*, pp. 244–245.

<sup>13</sup> They are the Ottoman Turks who ruled Arab lands for almost four hundred years. The Arab lands were still under their rule at the time of writing.

## PREREQUISITES FOR THE CALIPH

It is essential for the person who holds this great position to possess the following four prerequisites:

1. Knowledge; because he is to implement the laws of Allah ﷻ and if he is ignorant of these laws he cannot put them into effect.
2. Justice; since the imamate is a religious office which involves dealing with all injunctions in which justice is a legal requirement, it is most appropriate that this be applied to the office of imamate as well.
3. Competence; in the sense that he must have the courage to uphold the *ḥudūd* (Islamic Penal Code) and embark on wars, to have full knowledge of them, and be responsible in leading the people into them. He has to have knowledge of the prevailing circumstances and the strength to overcome those who oppose his administration. He will be competent enough to undertake his responsibilities of protecting the religion, waging war against the enemy, upholding the rule of law and seeing to matters of public benefit.
4. To be physically and mentally sound; if he is lacking in either of the two, it will have an effect on his thinking and actions. A debilitating handicap such as childhood or being in a state of captivity are examples that would make a person ineligible in this regard.<sup>14</sup>

## CHOOSING THE CALIPH

In Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān, verse 159, Allah ﷻ addresses His Prophet ﷺ saying: “And take counsel from them in all matters.”<sup>15</sup> The entire Muslim community is addressed

<sup>14</sup> These four prerequisites are listed by Ibn Khaldūn in his *Muqaddimah*, pp. 241–244. He adds lineage as one further prerequisite, though there is a difference of opinion here. Māwardī adds to these prerequisites and lists seven (see *Al-Aḥkām aṣ-Ṣultāniyya*, p. 6). Qalqashandī (in his *Ma‘āthir al-Ināfah*, vol. 1, pp. 31–39) adds five more prerequisites: the caliph has to be male, must have reached the age of maturity, must be of sound intellect, must be a free person, and must be a Muslim. See also the *Tafsīr* of Qurtubī where he lists eleven prerequisites (vol. 1, p. 270).

<sup>15</sup> The commentators differ on the meaning of Allāh ordering His Prophet to consult his Companions. Some are of the opinion that it is in matters concerning war strategies and when meeting the enemy. This consultation is to please their hearts, raise their ranks and draw them further into their religion. Arab leaders by their nature feel upset if not consulted so Allāh ﷻ ordered His Prophet to consult them. This made them more favourably disposed to him and removed any ill-feeling they had, and they appreciated his honouring them. Others are of the opinion that this order to consult is in matters regarding which no divine revelation has come. There is also the opinion of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Ḍaḥḥāk who said: “Allāh ﷻ did not order His Prophet to consult them in order to find out their opinion, but to teach them the virtue of

in this verse. Based on this, consultation underlies all great tasks undertaken by the Muslims, and at the forefront is the appointment of the caliph. Consequently, he cannot be appointed without the consultation of the Muslims and winning their approval, and it is the approval of the influential people which is sought in this regard. These were the senior Companions رضي الله عنهم who were distinguished with lengthy companionship with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and had the insight to recognise eligibility for the leadership of the Muslim community.

This was in the first era. In latter eras the influential people were those who were prominent in Islām. However, the unanimous decision of these individuals is not necessary, rather consideration is given to the majority, i.e. more than half of those gathered. The proof for this is the end of the reign of ‘Umar رضي الله عنه. When they agreed on one of them, they pledged obedience to him, and to practise in accordance with the Book of Allah ﷻ and the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ.

Through this pledge of allegiance it becomes obligatory for Muslims to obey him and carry out his orders provided they are harmonious with the Book of Allah ﷻ and the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ. Obedience to the imām is not confined to his life alone, but continues after his death. Once another believer is made the next caliph by the acting caliph, the pledge of allegiance must be made and it becomes obligatory to obey him. Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه made ‘Umar رضي الله عنه caliph in this way, and the Muslims sanctioned it. If the consultation is confined to a limited number of influential persons, it is accepted and their selection (of caliph) will be valid, as ‘Umar رضي الله عنه did for ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه.

These three ways of choosing the imām (general consultation, specific consultation of a group chosen by the previous imām, or succession to the post) are the three ways which were practised in the first era of Islām. There is a fourth way which the scholars after the first era instituted for the establishment of the imamate, and that is by way of dominance. This happens when the Muslims have no imām, there are differences among them, and they cannot agree on a particular person. In such a situation, it is lawful for a person who knows that he has the capacity to lead the Muslim community because of his knowledge or the influence of his tribe, to demand this post of caliph. He would hence oblige the people to obey him, whether they responded willingly or by force. Once the situation subsides and his claim is accepted, his caliphate will be established and obedience to him will become obligatory.

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consultation and so that the Muslim community after him may emulate him in this regard” (Qurṭubī, vol. 4, p. 250). See *al-Aḥkām aṣ-Ṣulṭāniyyah*, pp. 6–8, and *Ma’āthir al-Ināfah*, vol. 1, pp. 39–58.

## OBEDIENCE TO THE IMĀM

Allah ﷻ says in Sūrat an-Nisā' verse 59: "O believers! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those of authority amongst you." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Listen and obey even if an Abyssinian slave with a head like a raisin is appointed over you."<sup>16</sup>

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "He who obeys me has obeyed Allah. He who disobeys me has disobeyed Allah. He who obeys the leader has obeyed me and he who disobeys the leader has disobeyed me."<sup>17</sup>

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to Abū Hurāyrah ؓ: "It is incumbent on you to listen and obey whether it is difficult or easy for you, whether it appeals to you or not, and even if the leaders give preference to others over you."<sup>18</sup> The "giving of preference" refers to preferential treatment in giving people their rights.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "If a slave is appointed over you and he leads you by the Book of Allah, then listen to him and obey him."<sup>19</sup>

Abū Dharr ؓ said: "My bosom friend [the Messenger of Allah ﷺ] advised me to listen to and obey [the leader] even if he is a slave and an amputee."<sup>20</sup>

ʿUbādah ibn aṣ-Ṣāmit ؓ narrates: "We pledged allegiance to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to hear and obey in difficulty and ease, whether we liked it or not, even when it is against us, to refrain from disputing with those with authority over us, and to say the truth for the sake of Allah wherever we are, without fearing the attacks of critics."<sup>21</sup>

Another narration states: "We pledged allegiance to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to hear and obey, whether in difficulty or ease and whether we like it or not, to obey even when it is against us, and to refrain from disputing with those with authority over us unless we see a clear act of unbelief."<sup>22</sup> A clear act of unbelief is a conspicuous, unmistakeable act that leaves no room for other interpretation.<sup>23</sup>

16 See Bukhārī (7143), Aḥmad: vol. 3, p. 114, Ibn Mājah (2860).

17 Bukhārī (7137), Muslim (1835), Nasāʾī: vol. 7, p. 154.

18 Muslim (1836), Nasāʾī: vol. 7, p. 140.

19 Muslim (1838), Aḥmad (vol. 5, p. 381, vol. 3, p. 114, vol. 6, p. 402), Nasāʾī (vol. 7, p. 154), Ibn Mājah (2861).

20 Muslim (1837), Aḥmad, vol. 5, p. 161, Ibn Mājah (2862).

21 Muslim (1709), Nasāʾī, vol. 7, p. 139.

22 Bukhārī (7056), Muslim (1709)

23 Obedience to the Imām is applicable as long as he discharges the rights of Allāh ﷻ and the rights of the populace. If he adheres to this, he is owed two rights from the populace; obedience and assistance. This is as long as his condition does not change, e.g. his justice, or physical impediments (with differences among the scholars in this regard). If he does commit an act of blatant unbelief his actions have the same status in the Sharīʿa as those of flagrant sinners, or he is held, imprisoned and so on (*Al-Aḥkām aṣ-Ṣulṭāniyyah*, pp. 17–21) and (*Maʾāthir al-Ināfah*, vol. 1, pp. 62–74).

## DISOBEYING THE IMĀM

This obedience to the imām is circumscribed by the limits set by the Sharīʿah. If he issues an order that accords with the teachings of Islām, is not openly in conflict with the Qurʾān, and does not violate the distinct and clear Sunnah, his order must be obeyed and carried out. Similarly, if [his command] is based on his own discretion which is substantiated by the Book of Allah or the Sunnah. But if he issues an order that clearly contradicts the Qurʾān or the Sunnah, he is not to be obeyed. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “There is no obedience to the creation if it entails disobedience to the Creator.”<sup>24</sup>

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “If he orders an act of disobedience, neither listen to him nor obey him.”<sup>25</sup>

For example, if he orders the drinking of alcohol or the abandoning of prayer, it becomes obligatory for a Muslim to disobey him. Instead, he should carry out the order of Allah ﷻ and not fear the criticism of anyone in doing so.

## DECLARING WAR ON THE IMĀM

If the imām goes beyond the limits of the Sharīʿah in his actions, meaning that he becomes oppressive, treats certain people preferentially in giving dues or commits an open sin like drinking alcohol or abandoning the prayer; it becomes obligatory for the Muslims to enjoin him to do good and to prohibit him from evil. They should not fear the criticism of anyone in this regard. This places them within the ḥadīth of ʿUḇādah ﷺ: “[And we pledged] to say the truth for the sake of Allah wherever we are, without fearing the attacks of critics.” This is on condition that it does not prevent them from obeying him. It is therefore unlawful to revolt against him and to draw weapons against him irrespective of how much preference (he shows to others), and no matter what he does unless he commits clear unbelief which cannot be explained away. The Ḥadīth of ʿUḇādah ﷺ states: “that we refrain from disputing with those with authority over us unless we see a clear act of unbelief.” In such a case, he can expect neither to lead nor be obeyed. In fact, it becomes incumbent on every Muslim to stand up against him until he is disgraced and dealt an exemplary punishment.

The majority of the Companions ﷺ during the era of Yazīd followed this course. Yazīd did what he did, none of the Companions ﷺ apart from Ḥusayn

24 Aḥmad, vol. 1, p. 9, with the words “If it entails disobedience to Allāh.” Haythamī said: “The narrators of Aḥmad are the narrators of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*” (of Muslim), *Majmaʿ az-Zawāʿid*, vol. 5, p. 226, *Fayḍ al-Qadīr*, vol. 6, p. 432. The narrations of Bukhārī (7144–7145), Muslim (1840) and Abū Dāwūd (2625) testify to this.

25 Ibid.

ibn ‘Alī ﷺ openly revolted against him. Ḥusayn ﷺ felt that he was indisputably entitled to do so, though he was unable to realise his objective. His brother Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyah, his cousin ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās, ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ﷺ, and ‘Abdullāh ibn az-Zubayr ﷺ all counselled him against revolting against Yazīd but he did not heed their advice. This was a matter already decided by Allah ﷻ. At that time, there were many Companions ﷺ in the Ḥijāz, the Levant (Shām), Baṣrah, Kūfah, and Egypt, none of whom revolted against Yazīd, either individually or by joining Ḥusayn ﷺ. At the same time they did not join Yazīd and instead avoided the tribulation.

It is possible that Ḥusayn ﷺ acted upon the words of Allah ﷻ: “There should be among you a group that continually invites towards good, and continually commands good deeds, and forbids the evil” (Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān, 3:104). What further prompted him was that the armies of Iraq sent messages asking him to come to them so that they may pledge their allegiance to him. He felt that he was entitled to this together with his close relationship to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. What was preordained therefore came to pass.<sup>26</sup>

#### PUNISHMENT OF THOSE WHO WAGE WAR ON THE IMĀM

The imām is the deputy of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ so he who disobeys the imām disobeys the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and he who disobeys the Messenger of Allah ﷺ disobeys Allah ﷻ. One who wages war on the imām wages war on Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ, and one who wages war on Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ bears a very grave sin.<sup>27</sup>

Allah ﷻ expounded the recompense for such people in Sūrat al-Mā’idah, verses 33–34: “Those who wage war on Allah and His Messenger and strive to spread corruption in the land should be punished by death, crucifixion, the amputation of a hand and foot on opposing sides, or banishment from the land. This will be their humiliation in this world, and they will face a terrible punish-

26 (*Muqaddimah*, pp. 269–271) The author then follows this with eloquent words of great benefit. He says: “It is obligatory to consider the actions of the Companions ﷺ and the Followers on the basis of their intense desire for the truth because they are the best of the Muslim community. If we are going to make them a target of criticism, who else is there with the quality of justice? The Prophet ﷺ said: “The best of people are those in my era, then those who follow them. . .” You should therefore be on your guard. You should realise that the person who impels us to disparage the Companions ﷺ actually wants to sever us from our roots.”

27 “Waging war” refers to showing one’s opposition and disobedience. It applies to unbelief, brigandage and terrorising travellers. In like manner, “causing corruption in the land” comprises different kinds of transgressions (Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, vol. 2, p. 50). Qurtūbī said something similar to this but confined it to a Muslim who wages war against the Imām even though the verse was revealed with regard to the apostates and the Jews (Qurtūbī, vol. 6, p. 150).

ment in the Hereafter, unless they repent before you overpower them: then you should know that Allah is forgiving, merciful.”

Allah ﷻ placed those who wage war into four categories: (1) The one who wages war and is guilty of killing. His punishment is death. (2) The one who wages war and is guilty of killing and theft. His punishment is crucifixion. (3) The one who wages war and is guilty of theft. His punishment is the chopping off of his hand. (4) The one who wages war and is guilty of terrorising travellers. His punishment is banishment. It is the pure Sunnah which laid down these categories.

Some jurists hold that there is no sequence in these punishments, rather the imām has the option to choose whichever one he feels appropriate. If those that wage war belong to a group of rebels then the rulings which apply to them are detailed in the books of jurisprudence. Allah ﷻ then promises His pardon for those who repent before they can be overpowered. It is therefore incumbent on the imām to invite them to obey him before fighting them,<sup>28</sup> and this is what ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib ؑ did with the Ḥarūrīyyīn<sup>29</sup> who had rebelled against him.

It is my observation that very few of those who rebelled against the imams in the past centuries had Islamic justifications for their revolt.<sup>30</sup> The majority had personal, egotistic reasons, thus we see that they were rarely successful in their objectives. The Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is the light by which the heart of a Muslim is illuminated, and the Sunnah vociferously prohibits rebellion against the imām for fear of causing division among the Muslims and breaking their ranks.

#### THE DUTIES OF THE IMĀM

We know that the responsibility of the imām is the protection of the religion and seeing to the needs of the Muslim community.<sup>31</sup> He is therefore obliged to keep the Shari‘ah as his guide. He should not deviate from the Book of Allah ﷻ which

28 Qurtūbī holds that it is the duty of the Imām to fight those who wage war without first inviting them to obedience, and that it is the duty of the Muslims to assist him in fighting them and stopping their mischief (Qurtūbī, vol. 6, p. 155).

29 This is a group from the Khārijites. They were given this name to connect them to the village of Ḥarūrā’ which was on the outskirts of Kūfah. This was the place where they held their first meeting and where they made their decision to rebel against ‘Alī ؑ.

30 According to Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, the Muslims unanimously agree that to remove evil is personally obligatory on those with the power to do so. If this action of his causes nothing to him except criticism, it should not stop him from changing the evil. If he is unable to change it physically, he must try to do so with his tongue. If he is unable to change it verbally, he must try to do so with his heart. He is not required to do any more than that (see Qurtūbī, vol. 4, p. 48).

31 Māwardī enumerates the duties of the caliph to the masses. He lists ten points, the first of which is the protection of the religion at its fundamental level and the last of which is to personally oversee the

is not touched by falsehood, nor the just and sound Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ and the unanimous decisions of the Muslims of the first era. If he is able to do this, following the guidance of the one who is the representative of Allah ﷻ (i.e. the Messenger of Allah ﷺ) and the way of his Rightly-Guided Caliphs, his rank will be that of the truthful, the martyrs and the righteous. And what excellent companions they are! Furthermore, he will be from among those whom Allah ﷻ provides with shade on a day when there will be no shade except His.<sup>32</sup>

If he turns away and deviates from the Shari'ah following his personal desires, the warning will be severe and the punishment shall be painful.<sup>33</sup> The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a leader takes charge of the affairs of the Muslims but does not strive for their well-being and does not give them counsel, he will not enter Paradise with them."<sup>34</sup>

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When Allah ﷻ puts a person in charge of the people and he does not protect them with his advice, he will not savour the fragrance of Paradise."<sup>35</sup>

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person is put in charge of the affairs of the Muslims and he does not protect them with his counsel just as he would with his own family, then let him take his place in the Hellfire."<sup>36</sup>

There are other similar ḥadīths warning leaders, so that their actions do not cause them to fall into the lowest pit of Hellfire, and we seek refuge in Allah ﷻ from that.

O Allah! Inspire our leaders to rectitude and make clear to them what is right so that they may emulate the way of Your Prophet ﷺ, the leader of the Prophets, and the way of his Rightly-Guided Caliphs ﷺ.

affairs of the populace, for there are times when a trustworthy person may act treacherously and an advisor may deceive by his advice (*al-Aḥkām aṣ-Ṣultāniyyah*, pp. 15–16 and *Ma'āthir al-Ināfah*, vol. 1, pp. 59–60).

32 The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "There are seven people whom Allah ﷻ will provide shade on a day when there will be no shade except that which He provides. They are: (1) a just leader, (2) a youth who grew up in the worship of Allah ﷻ, (3) a person whose heart is attached to the mosques, (4) two people who love each other for the sake of Allah ﷻ, meet for the love of Allah ﷻ and part ways for the love of Allah ﷻ, (5) a person whom a woman of nobility and beauty tries to seduce, but says: 'Truly I fear Allah', (6) a person who gives in charity and conceals it to such an extent that even his left hand does not know what his right hand spent, (7) a person who engages in the remembrance of Allah ﷻ in solitude and sheds tears" (Bukhārī, vol. 2, p. 143, and Muslim (1031)).

33 Allāh ﷻ says: "O Dāwūd! We have made you a vicegerent on earth, so rule with justice among the people and do not follow the desires of the soul for it will divert you from the path of Allāh" (Sūrah Ṣād, 38: 26).

34 Bukhārī (7151), Muslim (142), Aḥmad, vol. 5, p. 25.

35 Abū Dāwūd (2031).

36 Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabīr*, vol. 20, p. 221. He has other similar narrations from ḥadīth no. 449.

## *The Caliphate of Abū Bakr* ﷺ



WHEN THE MESSENGER of Allah ﷺ joined the Highest Companion<sup>37</sup> (Allah ﷻ), his Companions ﷺ from the Emigrants and the Helpers gathered in the bower (*saqīfah*) of Banī Sā'idah in order to choose a deputy (caliph) for him. The Anṣār ("Helpers"), the residents of Madīnah, wanted the caliphate themselves because of the help which they extended to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the refuge they gave him in their city. They did not consider the caliphate to be the sole right of the Quraysh. But when Abū Bakr ﷺ proved his point by the statement of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ "The leaders are from Quraysh",<sup>38</sup> they listened to him and gave up their claim of greater eligibility for the caliphate. As long as an opponent desists from personal desires, it is easy to direct him towards the truth. These Helpers were the senior Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Nothing but the unity of the Muslims and helping them to get back on their feet mattered to them and they did not look to this world and its splendour.

The Banū Hāshim wanted the caliphate for 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ because they felt he was more eligible for it due to his close relationship to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The majority opinion however was in favour of Abū Bakr ﷺ because

37 For further information about his illness, death, shrouding, burial and other important matters that occurred between his death and burial, see the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Bukhārī, The Book of Battles, "Chapter on the illness and death of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ," and the "Chapter on the death of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ." See also Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 199–223; *ad-Durar*, pp. 327–331; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 5, pp. 237–282; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 487–490; *Uyūn al-Athar*, vol. 2, pp. 418–425.

38 Aḥmad, vol. 3, p. 129 and 183, vol. 4, p. 421; Ibn Abī Shaybah in *al-Musannaf*, vol. 12, pp. 169–170 no. 12438, and p. 173, no. 12447.

the Messenger of Allah ﷺ appointed him to lead the prayer during his illness. The believers therefore said: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was satisfied with him for our religious affairs [i.e. the prayer], why should we not be satisfied with him for our worldly affairs [i.e. for the caliphate]?" And so he was given the pledge of allegiance on the 13<sup>th</sup> of Rabi' al-Awwal 11 AH. The first to pledge allegiance to him was 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ؓ.

'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ؓ delayed his pledge of allegiance until after the death of Fāṭimah ؓ. Imām Muslim ؓ narrates from 'Ā'ishah ؓ that Fāṭimah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, sent a message to Abū Bakr ؓ asking for her inheritance from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ which Allah ﷻ gave him as booty in Madīnah and Fadak (a village in Khaybar) and whatever remained of the one fifth of Khaybar. Abū Bakr ؓ replied saying: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'We do not leave anything as inheritance. Whatever we leave behind is for charity. The family of Muḥammad shall eat from this wealth [i.e., the wealth of Allah as everyone else].'<sup>39</sup> By Allah, I will not change the condition of any of the charities of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ from what they were during his era. I will not do anything with them apart from what the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did."

With this, Abu Bakr ؓ refused to give anything to Fāṭimah ؓ and it upset her. She kept away from him and did not speak to him until she passed away six months after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. When she died her husband 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ؓ buried her at night and prayed over her without informing Abū Bakr ؓ about it. As long as Fāṭimah ؓ was alive, people looked up to 'Alī ؓ with honour but after her death he found a change in their attitude, so he sought to reconcile things with Abū Bakr ؓ and pledge allegiance to him as he had not yet done so after the six months. He sent a message to Abū Bakr ؓ requesting him to come alone; 'Alī ؓ did not want 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ؓ to come with him. 'Umar ؓ said to Abū Bakr ؓ: "By Allah, you should not go to them alone." Abū Bakr ؓ said: "What can they possibly do to me? By Allah, I will go to them."

Abū Bakr ؓ went to them. 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ؓ gave the testimony and said: "O Abū Bakr! We were fully aware of your merit and what Allah bestowed you with. We do not envy you for what good Allah ﷻ gave to you. However, you did not give consideration to our opinion. We felt that we were eligible [for the caliphate] because of our family ties with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ." He continued speaking in this vein until Abū Bakr's ؓ eyes began flowing with tears. Abū Bakr ؓ then said: "I prefer maintaining ties of kinship with the relatives of

<sup>39</sup> Muslim (1759); Aḥmad, vol. 2, p. 463. For details on this subject see the commentary of Muḥibb ad-Dīn al-Khaṭīb on the book *al-Āwāṣim min al-Qawāṣim*, pp. 65–76. It is quite detailed and of great importance. Also see *al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah*, vol. 5, pp. 282–291.

the Messenger of Allah ﷺ over my own relatives. As for the dispute that arose between you and I about this wealth, I did not turn away from the truth and I did not leave out anything that I saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ doing, except that I did it.” ‘Alī ﷺ said to Abū Bakr ﷺ: “I will meet you tonight to pledge my allegiance.”

When Abū Bakr ﷺ performed the midday prayer (*ẓuhr*), he climbed the pulpit, gave the testimony (that there is none worthy of worship except Allah ﷻ and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah), and spoke about ‘Alī ﷺ, his holding back from pledging allegiance and his reasons for doing so. He ﷺ then sought forgiveness.<sup>40</sup> Thereafter ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ gave the testimony. He spoke highly of Abū Bakr ﷺ and stated that what he did was not out of envy towards Abū Bakr ﷺ nor out of disregard for the merit which Allah ﷻ bestowed him with. Rather, it was because he felt that they (the family of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ) were entitled to a share in the matter, but Abū Bakr went ahead with it alone and so they became upset with him. The Muslims were pleased by this statement and said: “You have done the right thing” and then again drew close to ‘Alī ﷺ after the affair was settled in a goodly way.

When the matter was settled by the pledge of allegiance to Abū Bakr ﷺ, he climbed the pulpit, and after praising and glorifying Allah ﷻ he said:

O people! I have been appointed over you though I am not the best of you. If I do good, help me. If I swerve, correct me. Truthfulness is a trust and lying is treachery. The weak of you is strong in my eyes until I secure his right, and the strong of you is weak in my eyes until I take the right from him, if Allah ﷻ so wills. None among you should give up jihād for as soon as a people gives up jihād, Allah ﷻ afflicts it with humiliation. Obey me as long as I obey Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ and if I disobey Allah ﷻ, I have no right to obedience from you. Now stand for the prayer, May Allah ﷻ have mercy on you.

### THE PROFILE OF ABŪ BAKR ﷺ

He is Abū Bakr ‘Abdullāh ibn Abī Quḥāfah ibn ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Amr ibn Ka‘b ibn Sa‘d ibn Taym ibn Murrah ibn Ka‘b ibn Lu‘ayy ibn Ghālib ibn Fihr at-Taymī al-Qurayshī.<sup>41</sup> His lineage meets with that of the Prophet ﷺ at Murrah ibn Ka‘b.

<sup>40</sup> Seeking forgiveness from Allah is a customary way of concluding a speech.

<sup>41</sup> He was also referred to as ‘Atiq (one who is freed). It is said that he was given this name because the Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave him the glad tidings that he was freed by Allāh from the Hellfire. (*Murāj adh-Dhahab*, vol. 2, p. 305) Others are of the opinion that he was given this name because of his handsome

His mother was Umm al-Khayr Salmā bint Sakhr ibn ‘Amr<sup>42</sup> ibn Ka‘b ibn Sa‘d ibn Taym ibn Murrah. Abū Bakr ﷺ was born two years after the birth of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.<sup>43</sup> He grew up with virtuous ways and a noble character. He was an affluent person who used to help the needy and give to those who had nothing.<sup>44</sup> He was a friend of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ from before prophethood<sup>45</sup> and when Allah ﷻ blessed Muḥammad ﷺ with His message Abū Bakr ﷺ was the first person to accept his call.<sup>46</sup> The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “Anyone I invited to Islām hesitated somewhat except Abū Bakr.”<sup>47</sup>

After embracing Islām, he began inviting his brothers and friends from the Quraysh towards the religion. A group from the Quraysh accepted his call, namely ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān ﷺ, az-Zubayr ibn al-Awwām ﷺ, Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubaydillah ﷺ and others. When the polytheists imposed hardships on their slaves who had embraced Islām Abū Bakr ﷺ played a major role in purchasing these slaves and freeing them. This he did solely for the pleasure of Allah ﷻ. Bilāl ibn Rabāḥ ﷺ, ‘Amir ibn Fuhayrah ﷺ and others were among those who were purchased and freed by Abū Bakr ﷺ.

He intended to emigrate to Abyssinia (Ḥabasha—present day Ethiopia) where other Muslims had gone but Ibn ad-Daghinah, the head of Qārah<sup>48</sup> stopped him from emigrating, saying: “A person like Abū Bakr cannot be expelled [from his city].” Ibn ad-Daghinah placed him under his protection and Abū Bakr ﷺ remained under this for some time before he gave it up for the protection of Allah ﷻ, as it does not befit a Muslim of strong faith to agree to the protection of anyone but Allah ﷻ.

When Allah ﷻ permitted His Prophet ﷺ to undertake the emigration to Madīnah, Abū Bakr ﷺ had the honour of accompanying him as the statement

face (*Majma‘ az-Zawā‘id*, vol. 9, p. 41; Ṭabarī, vol. 1, p. 52; Ya‘qūbī, vol. 2, p. 127). His name during the days of ignorance was ‘Abd al-Ka‘bah and the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ named him ‘Abdullāh (*Tārikh al-Khamīs*, vol. 2, p. 199).

42 The historians differ with regard to his mother’s lineage. The book, *al-Murūj*, states that it is Ibn ‘Amr ibn ‘Amir. *Al-Kāmil* states that it is Ibn ‘Amr ibn K‘ab. Ṭabarī states that it is Ibn ‘Amir ibn K‘ab (vol. 3, p. 424.)

43 As stated in *al-Iṣābah*, vol. 2, p. 333, from the ḥadīth of ‘Ā‘ishah ﷺ that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and Abū Bakr ﷺ spoke about their birth in my presence. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ was elder. It is stated in *Murūj adh-Dhahab*, vol. 2, p. 304, that he was born three years after the year of elephants.

44 *Al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, p. 419; Ṭabarī, vol. 3, p. 423.

45 It is stated in *al-Iṣābah* that he was a companion of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ before prophethood and remained with him throughout his stay in Makkah.

46 *Uṣd al-Ghābah*, vol. 3, p. 209; *al-Iṣābah*, vol. 2, p. 333.

47 As stated by Shawkanī in *Darr as-Saḥābah*, p. 142.

48 They are the Banū ‘d-Dīsh ibn Mulaḃh ibn al-Hūn ibn Khuzaymah ibn Mudrikah (*Nihāyat al-Arab*, p. 155).

of Allah ﷻ says: “and he said to his companion: ‘Do not grieve, surely Allah is with us.’” (Sūrat at-Tawbah, 9: 40)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ married his daughter ‘Ā’ishah when she was seven years old and consummated the marriage with her in Madīnah when she was nine years old. Abū Bakr ؓ joined the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in all the battles and carried his supreme flag in the last of them, the expedition to Tabūk. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also appointed him as the leader of the Muslims for *ḥajj* in the ninth year of the emigration. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed away, he ordered Abū Bakr ؓ to lead the people in prayer.<sup>49</sup> This was the greatest indication to his eligibility for the caliphate after him.

He had the following children: (1) ‘Abdullāh ؓ, who was injured at Tā’if and ultimately passed away during the first part of his father’s caliphate. (2) Asmā’ ؓ, the wife of az-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām ؓ and the mother of ‘Abdullāh ibn az-Zubayr ؓ. (3) ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ؓ. (4) The mother of the believers, ‘Ā’ishah ؓ. (5) Muḥammad ؓ, who was the governor of Egypt during the caliphate of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ؓ and was killed there. (6) Umm Kulthūm who was born after his death.

Abū Bakr ؓ was of fair complexion with a sparse beard. He had curved hips<sup>50</sup> due to which he could not keep his lower-wrap firmly tied. He had a gaunt face, a lean body, a hooked nose and deep set eyes.<sup>51</sup> He used to dye his hair with henna and *katm* (a shrub similar to myrtle).<sup>52</sup>

When he became the caliph, his house was in As-Sunḥ which was a district outside Madīnah. He would come to Madīnah every day on foot<sup>53</sup> and occasionally on horseback. He then moved to Madīnah with his family six months into his caliphate. He would spend the profits of trade on his family but gave this

49 *Al-Bidāyah wa ’n-Nihāyah*, vol. 5, pp. 232–233.

50 Ṭabarī, vol. 3, p. 424; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, p. 419.

51 Ṭabarānī, vol. 1, pp. 56–57; *Majma’ az-Zawā’id*, vol. 9, p. 42.

52 Bukhārī (5895), Muslim (2341), Abū Dāwūd (4209), Aḥmad (100, 108).

53 Abū Bakr ؓ was extremely humble before becoming the caliph and after as well. He was once seen in one of the markets of Madīnah with a sheep’s skin on his shoulders. Members of his family were alarmed at this and said to him: “You have embarrassed us before the Emigrants and the Helpers.” He replied: “Do you want me to be a tyrannical ruler before Islām and after Islām as well? By Allāh, obedience to the Lord cannot be accomplished except through humility before Allāh ﷻ and abstention in this world.” The kings and delegations that came to him all submitted themselves before him despite their previous pride, and humbled themselves before him despite their previous haughtiness (*Murūj adh-Dhahab*, vol. 2, p. 305).

It is stated in *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, p. 424, that he used to milk the goats for the people of his neighbourhood. When he was appointed caliph, one of the young girls from the neighbourhood said: “[Now] he will not milk our goats for us.” Abū Bakr ؓ heard this statement of hers and said: “I take an oath that I will most certainly milk them for you. I hope that this caliphate will not change me” and continued milking their goats for them.

up saying: "Being preoccupied with business matters brings no benefit for the affairs of the people, rather what will profit them is my being completely available to them and seeing to their affairs." He then took from the treasury of the Muslims (the Bayt al-Māl) what would suffice him and his family on a daily basis. He would also make the major and minor pilgrimages and the Muslim community allotted him 6000 dirhams annually to see to his needs.<sup>54</sup>

Among his attainments is the statement of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about him: "The person who has been the most generous to me with his companionship and wealth is Abū Bakr. Were I to take a bosom friend apart from my Lord, I would take Abū Bakr, but we share brotherhood and love in Islām. All the doors leading to the mosque [i.e. the Prophet's mosque] are to be closed up except the door of Abū Bakr."<sup>55</sup> Once a woman came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and he asked her to come later on. She asked: "What if I come back and do not find you?" it seemed that she was alluding to his demise. He replied: "If you do not find me, go to Abū Bakr."<sup>56</sup>

Abū ad-Dardā' ﷺ narrates: "I was sitting with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when Abū Bakr ﷺ came holding the hem of his garment so that his knees were exposed. On seeing this, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'This friend of yours has landed in some trouble.' He then greeted the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said: 'O Messenger of Allah! An argument took place between myself and 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. I was quite angry with him. I then regretted my action and asked him to forgive me but he refused so I came to you.' The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'May Allah forgive you, O Abū Bakr.' He said this three times. In the meantime, 'Umar ﷺ went to the house of Abū Bakr ﷺ and asked: 'Is Abū Bakr here?' The people of the house replied: 'No.' He then went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and greeted him. The face of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ changed colour [displaying his extreme anger] until Abū Bakr ﷺ became terrified; he sat up on his knees and said twice: 'O Messenger of Allah! By Allah, I was at fault.' The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'When Allah ﷻ sent me to you, everyone accused me of lying except Abū Bakr who said: 'He is speaking the truth' and he helped me with his life and wealth. So will you leave this friend of mine alone for my sake?' He said this twice. Abū Bakr ﷺ was never harmed thereafter."<sup>57</sup>

54 Abū Bakr ﷺ was the first ruler for whom the subjects allotted a sum for his needs. He was the first caliph to become caliph while his father was alive. He was the first person to see the Qur'ān written in the form of a *Muṣḥaf* and was the first person to be referred to as "caliph" (*al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, p. 424).

55 Bukhārī (3654), Muslim (2382), Tirmidhī (3660–3661), Aḥmad, vol. 1, p. 27; *Mushkil al-Āthār*, vol. 1, pp. 440–441.

56 Bukhārī (3659).

57 Bukhārī (3661), Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 223–227.

## HIS SERVICES TO ISLĀM DURING HIS CALIPHATE

## DISPATCHING THE ARMY OF USĀMAH IBN ZAYD ﷺ

Abū Bakr ﷺ began by dispatching the army of Usāmah ibn Zayd ﷺ which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had prepared to go to Ubnā.<sup>58</sup> He was not prevented from sending off this army by the unrest that prevailed in the Arab lands after the demise of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Some senior Anṣār, with ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ as their representative, requested Abū Bakr ﷺ to appoint someone older than Usāmah ﷺ as commander of the army. Abū Bakr ﷺ became so angry that he stood up before sitting down and saying: “O ‘Umar! The Messenger of Allah ﷺ appointed him and you are asking me to remove him from his post?”

Abū Bakr ﷺ went out in person to bid farewell to the army. He was walking while Usāmah ﷺ was riding his animal. Usāmah ﷺ said to him: “O caliph of the Messenger of Allah! Either you ride too or I will dismount.” He replied: “By Allah, you will neither dismount nor will I climb on. Why should I not soil my feet for a short while in the path of Allah ﷻ? In each step that a warrior makes in the cause of Allah ﷻ, there are 700 good deeds recorded in his favour, he is elevated 700 ranks, and 700 evils are wiped off his record.”

Abū Bakr ﷺ then advised Usāmah ﷺ and his companions saying: “Do not act treacherously, do not deceive nor steal from the booty. Do not mutilate, nor kill children or the elderly. Do not dig up date palms nor burn them. Do not chop down fruit-bearing trees. Do not slaughter sheep, cattle and camels unless for purposes of food. If you pass by people who have devoted themselves to monasteries, leave them to their worship. If you come across people who have shaved off the centre of their heads and left the portion surrounding it (resembling a headband/turban), strike their heads off with your sword. When food is offered to you, pronounce the name of Allah ﷻ over it. O Usāmah! Do what the Messenger of Allah ﷺ ordered you to do with the land of Quḍā’ah. Then go to Ābil and do not fall short in what he ordered.” He then bid farewell to him at al-Jurf.<sup>59</sup>

58 The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had prepared this army in order to spread the word of Islām and to repulse the danger that the Romans were posing to the Islamic state. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had selected Usāmah ﷺ out of faithfulness to Usāmah’s ﷺ father, Zayd ibn Ḥārithah ﷺ who had led the army to Mu’tah in the eighth year of the emigration and was consequently martyred while carrying the banner of Islām. Mu’tah was under the Romans who had rallied a huge armed force that Zayd’s small military detachment of only three thousand men with poor weaponry had no power against (Nabih ‘Aqil: *Tārīkh Aṣr ar-Rasul wa ‘l-Khulafā’ ar-Rāshidīn*, pp. 198–200).

59 Jurf was three miles out of Madinah towards the Levant. The wealth of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and the people of Madinah was stored there.

Usāmah ﷺ encouraged ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ to remain behind with Abū Bakr ﷺ in case an important matter arose and Abū Bakr ﷺ permitted ʿUmar ﷺ to remain behind.<sup>60</sup> Usāmah ﷺ continued his journey until he reached the place that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had directed him to and he sent the armies towards the lands of the Quḍāʿah.<sup>61</sup> The Banū Quḍāʿah ruled the land between the Levant (Shām) and Ḥijāz stretching up to Iraq (in the east) including Aylah (Eilat) and the Kurk mountains up to the highlands of the Levant. The Romans appointed them as rulers over these rural Arab lands. Their first king was from amongst them, from their tribal alliance with Tanukh, then Banū Salīḥ overpowered them and leadership fell into the hands of Ḍaʿam ibn Maʿad. Then Banū Ghassān from Yemen overpowered them and Arab dominion in the Levant was passed to the Banū Jafnah, whom Ḥassan ibn Thābit ﷺ had praised.

Usāmah ﷺ attacked Ubnā, capturing its inhabitants and winning spoils, and returned victorious to Madīnah after forty days. Dispatching this army proved to be most advantageous to the Muslims because the Arabs said to themselves: “If the Muslims were not dominant, they would not have sent this army forth” and they abandoned many of their plans.<sup>62</sup>

## MATTERS OF APOSTASY

After the demise of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, a major crisis afflicted Islām. Without the wisdom of Abū Bakr ﷺ, Islām would have been weakened and the power of the Muslims would have been crippled. As soon as the Arabs learnt of the demise of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, they forsook Islām. None from among them remained steadfast on the religion except the Quraysh in Makkah, Thaḳīf in Ṭaʿif, and a few other tribes. The renegades were divided into two:

(1) Those who abandoned Islām wholesale. They were Banū Ṭay, Banū Asad and those who followed them from the Banū Ghaṭafān. All of them were under the influence of Ṭulayḥah ibn Khuwaylid al-Asadī. Then there was Banū Ḥanīfah who followed Musaylimah and the people of Yemen who followed Aswad al-ʿAnsi amongst many others.

60 Yaʿqūbī (vol. 2, p. 127) states that it was Abū Bakr ﷺ who requested Usāmah ﷺ to leave ʿUmar ﷺ behind so that the latter may assist him in his tasks.

61 The Quḍāʿah was a tribe from the Himyār, from Qaḥṭāniyyah. The name of their forefather took precedence and they were therefore referred to as the Quḍāʿah. Some genealogists hold that the Quḍāʿah are from the ʿAdnāniyyah (*Nihāyat al-Arab*, p. 400; *al-Jamharah*, pp. 411–412).

62 *Maghāzī* of Wāqidī, vol. 3, pp. 1117–1127; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 334–336; *ʿUyūn al-Athar*, vol. 2, pp. 355–356; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 489–490.

(2) Those who refused to pay the *zakāt*. Among them were some from Banū Tamīm under the leadership of Mālik ibn Nuwayrah, then Banū Hawāzin and others. Abū Bakr's ﷺ position was to wage war against those who refused to pay *zakāt*, just as with the apostates, because the rejection of *zakāt* not only threatened the prayer, but all other aspects of Islām. But 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ said to him: "O Abū Bakr! How can you fight the people when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'I have been ordered to fight the people until they testify that there is none worthy of worship except Allah. Whoever testifies that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, his wealth and life is safe from me except what is due thereof, and his final account is with Allah.'?"<sup>63</sup> Abū Bakr ﷺ replied: "By Allah, I will fight against those who differentiate between the prayer and *zakāt*. *Zakāt* is due on wealth. By Allah, if they refuse to give me a kid [young of a goat] which they used to give to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, I will fight them." 'Umar ﷺ said: "By Allah, when I realised that Allah ﷻ had inspired Abū Bakr ﷺ to wage war [on those who refused to pay the *zakāt*], I accepted that it was the right thing."

Abū Bakr ﷺ rallied all his forces together. He was calm in the face of grave circumstances, the smallness of his army and the might of the enemy. He placed his trust entirely in the words of Allah ﷻ: "If you help Allah, He will help you and make your steps firm" (Sūrah Muḥammad, 47: 7).

We will now mention the wars against the apostates to apprise you of the triumph of a man who placed his trust in his Lord and considered all difficulties insignificant. Moreover we narrate this so that all Muslims may learn of the actions of their first caliph, when the Muslims were like sheep scattered on a rainy night, few in number, while their enemies were many and the atmosphere dark after the Muslims had just lost their Messenger ﷺ.

#### ‘ABS AND DHIBYĀN

While Abū Bakr ﷺ waited for the army of Usāmah ﷺ, ‘Abs and Dhibyān descended upon him. They were from the Najd, the area adjacent to Wādī al-Qurā and the Ṭayy mountain. Some of them descended upon Abraq while others at Dhu'l-Qaṣṣah (two places to the north of eastern Madīnah in the direction of Najd).<sup>64</sup> A group from Banū Asad and those related to them from Kinānah joined them. They sent a delegation to Abū Bakr ﷺ with a request that they limit themselves to the prayer and abstain from *zakāt*, but he refused and sent them

63 Bukhārī (25), Muslim (20), Abū Dāwūd (2640), Tirmidhī (2609), Ibn Mājah (3927), Nasā'ī, vol. 6, pp. 4, 5; Dārimī, vol. 2, p. 218; Aḥmad, vol. 1, p. 11, vol. 2, p. 314, vol. 3, p. 199, vol. 4, p. 9, vol. 5, p. 246.

64 *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, vol. 4, p. 336; *Aṭlās al-Waṭan al-'Arabī wa 'l-'Ālam*, p. 93.

back frustrated. Abū Bakr ﷺ feared for the safety of the houses in Madīnah so he appointed ʿAlī ﷺ, Ṭalḥah ﷺ, az-Zubayr ﷺ and ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd ﷺ to guard over the entrances to Madīnah and also ordered the residents to remain confined to the mosque.

Meanwhile the delegation that refused to pay *zakāt* returned to their people, encouraging them to attack Madīnah with reports of the small number of people there, so they attacked. Those who were keeping guard over the entrances sent a message to Abū Bakr ﷺ who came with the Muslims mounted on camels and the enemy fled. The Muslims chased them to Dhu Khushub (a valley near Madīnah) where a group supporting the enemy advanced towards the Muslims with inflated water-skins tied with ropes, rolling them on the ground towards the camels of the Muslims which bolted and ran back to Madīnah. None of the Muslims fell off by the grace of Allah ﷻ.

Abū Bakr ﷺ then came out at night with a pursuing party and advanced towards the enemy who only saw the Muslims when they were right over their heads. They turned on their heels and fled, with Abū Bakr ﷺ pursuing them until he reached Dhu'l-Qaṣṣah where he left Nu'mān ibn Muqarrin in charge.

Abū Bakr ﷺ returned to Madīnah where Usāmah ibn Zayd ﷺ had just returned from his expedition. Abū Bakr ﷺ left him in charge of Madīnah and left his army with him so that they might rest. He then left for Dhu Khushub and Dhu'l-Qaṣṣah and continued travelling till he reached Rabadhah,<sup>65</sup> fighting the apostates there and defeating them. He then took over the lands of Dhibyān and made these lands a protected sanctuary for the animals of the Muslims.

Abū Bakr ﷺ then returned to Madīnah, remaining until the army of Usāmah ﷺ had rested, he then headed for Dhu'l-Qaṣṣah, had his army make camp there and handed out eleven flags to eleven commanders.<sup>66</sup> He ﷺ sent out the following armies to the apostates;

1. The sword of Allah, Khālīd ibn al-Walīd ﷺ, to Ṭulayḥah ibn Khuwaylid al-Asadī. After dealing with him Khālīd headed for Mālīk ibn Nuwayrah at al-Biṭāḥ.
2. ʿIkrimah ibn Abī Jahl ﷺ to Musaylimah in Yamāmah.
3. Shuraḥbīl ibn Ḥasanah ﷺ was sent to reinforce ʿIkrimah.
4. Muhājir ibn Abī Umayyah to the armies of ʿAnsī and to assist the Abnā' (descendants of Persians living in Yemen), from whence he was to proceed towards Kindah.

<sup>65</sup> A village at a distance of three days journey from Madīnah (*Mu'jam al-Buldān*, vol. 3, p. 24).

<sup>66</sup> Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 490–91.

5. Ḥudhayfah ibn Miḥṣan al-Ghalfānī was sent to the people of Dabā [in Oman].
6. ʿArfajah ibn Harthamah to the people of Maharah. Abū Bakr ordered him and Ḥudhayfah ibn Miḥṣan to unite and act as leaders to one other in fulfilling their responsibilities.
7. Suwayd ibn Muqarrin was sent to Tihāmah in Yemen.
8. ʿAlā' ibn al-Ḥaḍramī ﷺ was sent to Bahrain.
9. Ṭurayfah ibn Ḥājjiz to Banū Sulaym and those of Hawāzin who were with them.
10. ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀs ﷺ to Quḍā'ah.
11. Khālīd ibn Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀs ﷺ to the highlands of the Levant.

#### ABŪ BAKR'S ﷺ LETTER TO THE COMMANDERS

Abū Bakr ﷺ wrote a list of instructions to the commanders, the contents of which went as follows:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. These are the directives which Abū Bakr, the caliph of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, has set for "so and so" whom he sent among others to fight against those who have forsaken Islām. Abū Bakr enjoins him to fear Allah as much as he is able, in all his affairs, both in private and in public. He orders him to take Allah's matter with seriousness and to fight against those who have turned away from Him and forsaken Islām for the desires of Satan. He should first absolve himself of blame by inviting them to Islām. Should they accept, he must abstain from fighting them; should they refuse, he should attack them from all sides until they submit to him. He is then to inform them of their dues and their rights, taking their dues from them and giving them what is due to them. He should not give them any respite nor turn the Muslims away from the enemy. Whoever responds favourably to the religion of Allah and submits to Allah ﷻ, he should accept it from him and help him in fulfilling it in a good way. He should fight only those who reject and refuse to accept what has come from Allah ﷻ. If he accepts the invitation he is not to be fought. Allah ﷻ will take him to account for whatever is in his heart. Whoever does not accept the call of Allah will be fought and killed wherever he may be and no matter how far he has run away. Allah ﷻ accepts nothing from what He has given except Islām. Therefore whoever accepts and submits, it will be accepted from him and the commander will help him in this but whoever fights the commander, and Allah ﷻ gives power to the commander against them, he should

fight them in every way possible with weapons and fire. The commander should then divide the booty which Allah ﷻ gives him except for one fifth, for that has to be conveyed to us and the commander should stop those under him from hastiness and causing destruction. He should not allow outsiders to join the Muslim ranks until he identifies them and knows who they are, lest they be spies and the Muslims be attacked. The commander should treat the Muslims equitably, and be kind to them whilst travelling and whilst resting. He should constantly inspect them and see to their needs, he should not allow a part of the army to go ahead in haste leaving the rest lagging behind. He should make a point of being a good companion to the Muslims and speaking kind words to them.<sup>67</sup>

#### ABŪ BAKR'S ﷺ LETTER TO THE APOSTATES

Abū Bakr ﷺ wrote similar letters to all the apostates. The following is an example of one:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. From Abū Bakr, the caliph of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, to whoever this letter of mine reaches, be he of the masses or the leaders, of those who remain steadfast on Islām or renege from it. Peace be on the one who follows guidance and does not revert to deviancy and desires after having found guidance. I express to you the praise of Allah ﷻ, apart from whom there is none worthy of worship. I testify that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, He is one and He has no partner. I testify that Muḥammad ﷺ is His servant and His Messenger and I believe in all that he came with.

Allah ﷻ sent Muḥammad ﷺ with the truth to His creation, bearing glad tidings, issuing a warning and inviting to Allah ﷻ by His leave, he was sent as a radiant light. This He did so that he may warn those who are alive and pass verdict on the unbelievers. Allah ﷻ guides anyone who accepts his call to the truth. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ fought, by His order, the one who turned away from Him and he continued fighting until they came to Islām either willingly or by force. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then passed away having fulfilled the order of Allah ﷻ, delivered counsel to the Muslim community and fulfilled his responsibilities.

Allah ﷻ explained this to the Muslims: "Without doubt you have to die and they will also die." (Sūrat az-Zumar, 39: 30) Allah says: "We did not give any human before you eternal life. If you die will they live forever?" (Sūrat al-Anbiyā', 21: 34) Allah ﷻ says to the believers: "Muḥammad is but a Messenger. Many Messengers have gone before him. So if he dies or is killed, will you turn on your heels? Who-

67 Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 251–252; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 495; *al-Wathā'iq*, pp. 344–345.

ever turns on his heels will never harm Allah in any way, and Allah shall reward the grateful.” (Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān, 3: 144)

So the person who was worshipping Muḥammad should know that Muḥammad has died and the person who was worshipping Allah, the One without partner, should know that Allah ﷻ is waiting, living, sustaining all, dying not, not overcome by either slumber or sleep. He is safeguarding His religion, and He exacts revenge from His enemy with His army.

I exhort you to fear Allah ﷻ and you shall receive your share and reward from Allah ﷻ. I advise you to follow that which your Prophet came with, that you follow his way of guidance, and that you hold on firmly to the religion of Allah ﷻ. He whom Allah ﷻ does not guide is most certainly astray; he whom Allah ﷻ does not recognise (as a true believer) is afflicted with tribulation; and he whom Allah ﷻ does not help is in loss. He whom Allah ﷻ guides is indeed guided and he whom He leaves to stray is truly astray: “He whom Allah guides, he alone is guided. As for him He leaves to stray, you will never find him a friend to bring him to the right path” (Sūrat al-Kahf, 18: 17). Allah ﷻ will not accept any deed from him in this world until he believes in Him and He will not accept any of his obligatory or supererogatory deeds on the day of Resurrection.

I have received news that some of you have forsaken their religion after having submitted to Islām and practised it, holding false beliefs about Allah and being ignorant of Him. In response to Satan. Allah ﷻ says: “When We said to the angels: ‘Prostrate to Ādam.’ They all fell into prostration except Satan, he was from the jinn and disobeyed the command of his Lord. Will you then take him and his offspring as friends apart from Me, although they are your enemies? What a bad bargain for the evil-doers!” (Sūrat al-Kahf, 18:50) Allah ﷻ says: “Surely Satan is your enemy-so take him as an enemy-and He calls his followers to enter Hellfire” (Sūrah Fāṭir, 35: 6).

I have sent Khālīd ibn al-Walīd to you at the head of an army of Emigrants, Helpers and those who follow them in good. I ordered him not to fight anyone and not to kill anyone until he invites him to Islām. Whoever accepts and submits, abstaining from insurrection and does good, he will accept it from him and assist him. As for the one who refuses, I have ordered him to fight him on account of his refusal, not to leave him alone once he gains power and to burn them and kill them in every way possible and to take the women and children prisoner. I have ordered him to accept nothing but Islām from anyone. Whoever believes, it will be to his own advantage and whoever rejects belief will never foil Allah.

I have instructed my messenger to read this letter in every assembly of yours. The call shall be the *adhān* (the call to prayer). If the Muslims call out the *adhān* and the people to whom they were sent call out the *adhān*, the Muslims will

abstain from fighting them. If the people do not call out the *adhān*, the Muslims will ask them that about which they must answer. If they refuse, the Muslims will attack them. If they testify to Islām, it will be accepted from them and they will ask them to fulfil that which is due of them.<sup>68</sup>

These letters were dispatched before the commanders. The commanders then departed to their respective destinations with the instructions which they were given and Allah ﷻ as their aid.

#### ṬULAYḤAH

Ṭulayḥah ibn Khuwaylid al-Asadī<sup>69</sup> was an astrologer who had claimed prophet-hood during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and small groups of Israelites followed him. He settled down in Samīrā' which was part of the lands of Banū Asad to the east of Najd and adjacent to Iraq. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent ʿDirār ibn al-Azwar al-Asadī ﷺ to fight him. He advanced towards him but when he intended to go into battle against him, he received the news of the demise of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Ṭulayḥah then became more popular and the Ghaṭafān, Hawāzin and Ṭayy rallied around him. In the meantime, ʿDirār ﷺ returned to Madīnah. It was then that Abū Bakr ﷺ sent Khālīd ibn al-Walīd ﷺ to fight Ṭulayḥah and his supporters. ʿAdī ibn Ḥātim aṭ-Ṭāʾī ﷺ was also in the army of Khālīd and ʿAdī ﷺ sought permission from Khālīd ﷺ to go ahead and invite his people, Banū Ṭayy, to return to the religion of Allah ﷻ. ʿAdī ﷺ went to them and invited them, they accepted his call, left Ṭulayḥah, and joined the army of the Muslims. ʿAdī ﷺ also invited those of Banū Jadīlah who were with Ṭulayḥah and they also accepted his call. Khālīd ﷺ then advanced until he met the apostates at Buzākhah where a fierce battle ensued.

When Ṭulayḥah saw that he had no power to fight, he and his wife fled on two horses which he had prepared for this very purpose, and headed for the Levant. His army was thus vanquished. However Ṭulayḥah later embraced Islām after learning that Banū Asad and Ghaṭafān had embraced Islām and he played a key role in the conquest of Iraq.

The Ghaṭafān tribes rallied around Salmā bint Mālīk ibn Ḥudhayfah at a place called Ḥawʿab. This Salmā had been captured during the life of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the mother of the believers, ʿĀʾishah, ﷺ, freed her. Once, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ went to his wives ﷺ who were in the house of ʿĀʾishah ﷺ with Salmā. He addressed them saying: "One of you will ask the dogs of Ḥawʿab

68 Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 250–251; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 495–496; *al-Wathāʾiq*, pp. 339–341.

69 Ṭulayḥah was martyred in the battle of Nahāwand as stated in *Tārīkh al-Khamīs*, vol. 2, p. 208.

to bark.” This was a true prediction of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.<sup>70</sup> When Khālīd ﷺ learnt of this (i.e. of the Ghaṭafān tribes rallying around Salmā at Ḥaw’ab), he advanced towards her and fought her army. She was riding a camel and one hundred men were killed in defending her but she was eventually killed and her army vanquished.

As for Banū ‘Āmir, they came to Khālīd ﷺ when they heard of what happened to Asad and Ghaṭafān, saying: “We want to return to what we left (i.e. Islām) and we believe in Allah and in His Messenger.” He accepted their reversion and made them pledge to establish the prayer, pay *zakāt* and he took the same pledge from their children and women. He then asked for those who introduced innovations in Islām. They were brought to him and he punished them in accordance with what they had done.

As for Banū Sulaym, Fujā’ah ibn ‘Abd Yālīl had gone to Abū Bakr ﷺ to ask for help to fight the apostates, which Abū Bakr ﷺ provided and appointed him as leader. But he reneged when he returned to his people, and sent Najbah ibn Abī ‘l-Maythā’ to attack the Muslims. Turayfah ibn Ḥājiz, one of the commanders who led the armies against the apostates, advanced towards Najbah and fought him. Najbah was killed and Fujā’ah fled. He was eventually apprehended and sent to Abū Bakr ﷺ who killed him and Banū Sulaym returned to Islām.<sup>71</sup>

#### MĀLIK IBN NUWAYRAH

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had appointed six leaders over Banū Tamīm. They were: Zibriqān ibn Badr, Qays ibn ‘Āṣim, Ṣafwān ibn Ṣafwān, Sabrah ibn Amr, Wakīf ibn Mālik, and Mālik ibn Nuwayrah. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed away, Ṣafwān ibn Ṣafwān and Zibriqān ibn Badr sent the *zakāt* to Abū Bakr ﷺ while Qays ibn ‘Āṣim and Mālik ibn Nuwayrah refused. Those who remained firm in their Islām stood up against those who had reneged and had refused to pay *zakāt*. While they were engrossed in their differences, a woman by the name of Sajāḥ from Banū Taghlib came to them from Jazīrah. She was a Christian and when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed away, she claimed prophethood with hordes of low-class Arabs following her. She advanced with them to do battle with Abū Bakr ﷺ and upon reaching the lands of Banū Tamīm (whose residence was in the Najd but whose territory extended towards Baṣrah and Yamāmah), she sent a message to Mālik ibn Nuwayrah seeking his support. He offered her this and then attempted to dissuade her from attacking Madinah and instead urged her to attack the Muslims of Banū Tamīm, who then fled from her path.

<sup>70</sup> Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 497–498.

<sup>71</sup> Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 253–267; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 343–352.

She continued towards Madīnah until she reached a place called Nibāj. Some members of Tamīm stopped her, fighting and capturing some of her men. Both parties then agreed to lay down their arms on the basis that they would both free their captives and Sajāh would return without passing over Tamīm's territory. She thus lost hope in getting to Madīnah and turned back towards Yamāmah.

Banū Tamīm returned to Islām and expressed remorse over their actions, except Mālik ibn Nuwayrah who wavered. His people rallied around him at Bitāḥ and Khālid ؓ advanced towards him after dealing with Ṭulayḥah. When Mālik learnt of Khālid's ؓ approach, he ordered his people to scatter in the oases but Khālid ؓ sent detachments in pursuit. Many of them were brought as captives and Mālik ibn Nuwayrah was amongst them. Khālid ؓ ordered all captives be killed then married Mālik's wife. 'Umar ؓ became extremely angry at Khālid ؓ for killing Mālik and marrying his wife because a group testified before him that Mālik had returned to Islām. 'Umar ؓ asked Abū Bakr ؓ to exact revenge from Khālid ؓ but Abū Bakr ؓ replied: "He misunderstood and erred. You should therefore hold your tongue against Khālid. I will most certainly not sheath a sword which Allah ؓ unsheathed against the unbelievers."<sup>72</sup>

#### MUSAYLIMAH

Musaylimah ibn Thumāmah, from Banū 'Adī ibn Ḥanīfah, was part of a delegation Banū Ḥanīfah had sent to the Messenger of Allah ؐ. When he came to Madīnah, he said: "If he appoints me as leader after him, I will follow him." The Messenger of Allah ؐ went to him with Thābit ibn Qays ibn Shammās with a strip of palm leaf in his hand. Reaching Musaylimah and his companions, he said: "Even if you ask me for this strip of palm leaf I will not give it to you. I will never transgress the order of Allah with regard to you. If you turn away, Allah ؐ will most certainly strike you dead. Truly I believe you to be the one about whom I was shown something. Here is Thābit who will reply to you on my behalf." The Messenger of Allah ؐ then turned away. Ibn 'Abbās ؓ asked Abū Hurayrah ؓ as to what the Messenger of Allah ؐ was shown about Musaylimah. Abū Hurayrah ؓ said that the Messenger of Allah ؐ said: "While I was sleeping, I saw two bangles of gold which I became concerned about. An order was revealed to me in my dream, it said: 'Blow at them.' I blew at them and they flew. I interpreted them to be two impostors who will come after me".<sup>73</sup> One of them was 'Ansi from Ṣan'ā', and the other was Musaylimah from Yamāmah.

<sup>72</sup> Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 267–280; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 353–360; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 6, pp. 319–323; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 498–500.

<sup>73</sup> Muslim (2274).

When Musaylimah returned with his companions to their home (i.e. Yamāmah which lies between Najd and Bahrain, like the Ḥijāz lies between Najd and Tihāmah), he claimed that he was a prophet and that he was made a partner with Muḥammad in prophethood. His people followed him. He wrote a letter to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ thus: "From Musaylimah the messenger of Allah to Muḥammad the Messenger of Allah. Peace be upon you. I have been made a partner in prophethood with you. Half the land shall be for us and the other half for the Quraysh, though the Quraysh are not equitable people."

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ wrote to him saying: "From Muḥammad the Messenger of Allah to Musaylimah the impostor. Peace be upon those who follow guidance... The land belongs to Allah and He bequeaths it to whomever He wills. The righteous shall have a good reward." Ṭabarī<sup>74</sup> said that this occurred after the Messenger's ﷺ return from the Farewell Pilgrimage. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed away, Abū Bakr ﷺ appointed 'Ikrimah ibn Abī Jahl ﷺ as commander and dispatched him to fight Musaylimah. Abū Bakr ﷺ also sent Shuraḥbīl ibn Ḥasanah ﷺ behind 'Ikrimah ﷺ to help him. However 'Ikrimah ﷺ did not wait for the help of Shuraḥbīl to join forces and form a more difficult opposition to the enemy. Instead, he hastened ahead for glory of defeating Musaylimah alone and confronted his army, meeting with disaster. When Abū Bakr ﷺ learnt of this, he became angry at him and forbade him to return to Madīnah. Instead he ordered him to go to Yemen and join Ḥudhayfah and 'Arfajah in fighting the people of Maharah. Upon completing that mission, they advanced towards Muhājir ibn Abī Umayyah to fight the forces of Aswad al-'Ansī.

In the meantime, Abū Bakr ﷺ sent a message to Khālīd ibn al-Walīd ﷺ ordering him to advance against Musaylimah and sending a huge force of Emigrants and Helpers to support him. He ordered Shuraḥbīl ﷺ to wait for Khālīd ﷺ to join forces against the armies of Musaylimah which numbered 40,000. When Musaylimah and Banū Ḥanīfah learnt of the approach of Khālīd ﷺ, they left and set up camp on the outskirts of Yamāmah. They sent messages to the people asking them to come out and join them and a large number of people did. Khālīd ﷺ advanced with Shuraḥbīl ﷺ in front and, a day's journey from the encampment of Banū Ḥanīfah, he met one of their military detachments returning from a revenge mission to the lands of Banū Tamīm and 'Āmir. Khālīd issued an order and they were killed except for Mujja'ah ibn Marārah, one of the leaders of the Banū Ḥanīfah, who was at the head of this detachment and was left alone because of his high rank.

74 Ṭabarī, vol. 3, p. 146; *al-Wathā'iq*, p. 305.

Khālid ﷺ then continued until he met the army of apostates and the two groups engaged in a fierce battle. When the battle really became furious, the Muslims' rank's suddenly broke, allowing the apostates to reach the tent of Khālid ﷺ. They wanted to capture his wife but Mujjā'ah stopped them saying: "She is an excellent free woman." The Muslims then rallied and Allah ﷻ sent His tranquillity upon them. Khālid ﷺ charged into the midst of the people and repulsed the polytheists to the furthest point. Though Banū Ḥanīfah goaded and roused one another to fight a fierce battle, Khālid ﷺ realised that the fate of Musaylimah would determine the final outcome so he challenged him to one on one combat. He came forward but when the fight got difficult he turned away and so did his companions.

Khālid ﷺ called on the Muslims to renew their attack which they did, allowing them to completely vanquish the apostates, who then sought refuge in an orchard belonging to Musaylimah, named "garden of the merciful". Barā' ibn Mālik, a brave warrior of the Helpers, said: "Throw me onto them in the orchard" so the Muslims threw him upon them and he fought them back and opened the entrance of the orchard. The Muslims rushed inside and slew many of the Banū Ḥanīfah including Musaylimah. Waḥshī, who felled Ḥamzah ibn 'Abdal-Muṭṭalib, and a man from the Helpers jointly put an end to him.

The Banū Ḥanīfah were defeated and the Muslims continued putting them to the sword and imprisoning them. Mujjā'ah said to Khālid ﷺ: "By Allah, it is only the first group of people who have come to you, the greater majority are in the forts. Come now, I will make peace with you on behalf of my people." Khālid ﷺ had taken women, children and wealth from outside the forts and Mujjā'ah said to him: "I offer to make peace with you, allowing you to keep everything but the captives," then proceeded as though he was consulting his people but distributed weapons to the women and made them stand against the walls. He then returned to Khālid ﷺ and told him that they were refusing to agree.

Khālid ﷺ looked at the forts and saw they seemed to be loaded with warriors, whilst the Muslims were exhausted from doing battle. More than 360 Helpers had been killed along with the same number of Emigrants and a similar if not greater number of followers. As for those who remained, they were all suffering from wounds and injuries. He was therefore inclined to sue for peace and sought a truce in return for gold, silver, half the captives, weapons and an orchard and farm from each village. They refused, so he asked for a quarter instead and they agreed.

When the forts were opened, Khālid ﷺ saw that there was none in it but women and weak people. So he said to Mujjā'ah: "You deceived me!" He replied: "These are my people; this is what I had to do for them!" After this peace agree-

ment however, a letter from Abū Bakr came to him ordering him to kill every adult but Khālid had given his word in a peace agreement with them. He then sent a delegation of them to Abū Bakr, announcing their Islām. Abū Bakr met them and asked them about the rhymed prose of Musaylimah which they then recited to him. Upon hearing it he exclaimed: "Glory be to Allah! This language comes not from revelation or truth. How could it make you lose your minds?", then sent them back to their people.<sup>75</sup>

## BAHRAIN

The land of Bahrain was inhabited by many tribes of Rabīʿah, including that of ʿAbd al-Qays ibn Afṣā ibn Duʿmī ibn Jadīlah ibn Asad ibn Rabīʿah and Banū Bakr ibn Wāʿil ibn Qāsiṭ ibn Hīnb ibn Afṣā. The people of Bahrain had come as a delegation to the Messenger of Allah when he was alive and embraced Islām and he appointed Mundhir ibn Sāwā as their leader. Mundhir ibn Sāwā passed away shortly after the Prophet passed away and the people of Bahrain forsook Islām.

Though Banū Bakr remained apostates, Banū ʿAbd al-Qays returned to Islām after the efforts of Jārūd ibn al-Muʿallā al-ʿAbdī. They had claimed that had Muḥammad been a Prophet, he would not have died, so he assembled them and said: "Don't you know that Allah had Prophets in the past?" They said: "Yes." He said: "What happened to them?" They said: "They passed away". He said: "So Muḥammad passed away just as they passed away. I testify that there is none worthy of worship except Allah and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah." They thus embraced Islām and remained steadfast.

The rest of Rabīʿah rallied together in Bahrain and remained apostates, unlike Jārūd and those who followed him. Ḥuṭam ibn Ḍubayʿah emerged from Bakr ibn Wāʿil and many polytheists and apostates rallied around him, he then descended upon Qaṭīf and Hajar, and surrounded the followers of Jārūd.

Abū Bakr sent ʿAlāʾ ibn al-Ḥaḍramī to the people of Bahrain and when he reached Yamāmah, Thumāmah ibn Uthāl al-Ḥanafī with the Muslims of Banī Ḥanīfah joined him, as did Qays ibn ʿĀṣim al-Minqarī with his people. A large group of Yemenis also came. ʿAlāʾ went with them all right to the middle of Dahnā,<sup>76</sup> getting off his camel and ordering them to do likewise. At this point many of the camels bolted, together with their loads, causing great worry amongst them. ʿAlāʾ asked them: "What is the matter with you?" They replied:

<sup>75</sup> Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 281–301; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 6, pp. 323–327; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 501–502.

<sup>76</sup> A place near Yamāma.

“How can you rebuke us when, if we reach tomorrow, we will all be destroyed before the sun’s heat begins to burn?” He said: “Fear not for you are Muslims, in the cause of Allah and the helpers of Allah. So be of good cheer, by Allah you will never be abandoned.”

When they performed the morning prayer, ‘Alā’ ﷺ supplicated to Allah and they joined him. Water then appeared glittering before them and they went to it and drank and bathed themselves. Sure enough, even before the sun had risen to a considerable height, the camels began approaching from all directions and they made them kneel down and gave them water to drink. ‘Alā’ ﷺ sent a message to Jārūd to encamp near the army of Ḥuṭam then, together with his party, he advanced and encamped near Ḥuṭam on the side of the area near Hajar. The polytheists rallied around Ḥaṭm while the Muslims rallied around ‘Alā’ ﷺ. Each dug trenches then they fought in turns, and in the evening both returned to their trenches. One night, the Muslims heard noise coming from the polytheists’ camp and so ‘Alā’ ﷺ sent spies out who returned with the news that they were drunk. The Muslims attacked them by night and they fled. Many were killed including Ḥuṭam and others were captured. The scattered remnants of the polytheist army headed towards Dārayn (an island on the Arabian gulf near the coast of Bahrain) and the Muslims crossed over in pursuit and confronted them, gaining the upper hand and putting an end to many of them. They then sent ‘Alā’ ﷺ to Abū Bakr ﷺ with news of this overwhelming victory.<sup>77</sup>

#### OMAN

The people of Oman embraced Islām during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and he appointed two brothers, Jayfar and ‘Abd, the two sons of Julandā, as their leaders. In pre-Islamic times a person by the name of Dhu’t-Tāj Laqīṭ ibn Mālik al-‘Azdī, one of the leaders of Oman, used to vie with Julandā for supremacy so when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed away, Laqīṭ claimed prophethood and many people of Oman followed him. The two sons of Julandā took fright and sought refuge in the mountains. Jayfar, one of the sons, sent to Abū Bakr ﷺ for help. Abū Bakr ﷺ sent Ḥudhayfah ibn Miḥṣan and ‘Arfajah ibn Harthamah. The first was to go to Oman and the second was sent to Oman and from there to Maharah. Each one was appointed as leader of the other. Abū Bakr had also sent ‘Ikrimah ibn Abī Jahl ﷺ to them after his defeat in Yamāmah and he caught up with them before they reached Oman. When they got close to

<sup>77</sup> Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 301–313; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 6, pp. 327–329; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 368–372; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 504–506.

their destination, they wrote to Jayfar who came to them and they made camp at Ṣuḥār (Sohar), the capital.

Meanwhile Laqīṭ rallied his forces and camped at Dubā. There the two armies met and a severe battle ensued in which the Muslims would certainly have been defeated had Allah ﷻ not favoured them with great help from Banū Nājiyah. The Muslims thus gained the upper hand and defeated the polytheists after having killed a large number of them.<sup>78</sup> They then took the women and children captive, divided the booty and sent one fifth back to Abū Bakr ﷺ with ‘Arfajah.

Hudhayfah remained in Oman in order to settle the people. As for ‘Ikrimah ﷺ, he proceeded with a group from the Banū Nājiyah towards Maharah. Arriving there he found the people divided into two groups, each with its own leader. He wrote to one of the leaders who responded positively and returned to Islām. The other refused so ‘Ikrimah ﷺ engaged him in battle until he defeated him.<sup>79</sup>

#### ASWAD

Yemen was conquered during the era of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and Bādhān al-Fārisī, who was working on behalf of the Khusros (*akāsira*, sing. *kisrā*), was governor. He then embraced Islām, keeping his base at Ṣan‘ā’. When he passed away, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ divided up the provinces as follows: he appointed Bādhān’s son Shahr ibn Bādhān over Ṣan‘ā’; Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī ﷺ over Ma‘rib; ‘Amir ibn Shahr al-Hamdānī over Hamdān who inhabited the eastern region of Yemen; Ṭāhir ibn Abī Hālah over ‘Akk and Ash‘ariyyūn;<sup>80</sup> Khālīd ibn Sa‘īd ibn al-‘Āṣ over the areas between Najrān and Rima‘ and over Zabīd; ‘Amr ibn Ḥazm over Najrān; Ziyād ibn Labīd al-Bayāḍī over Ḥaḍramawt; ‘Ukāshah ibn Thawr over Sakāsik and Sukūn (two tribes belonging to the Kindah who lived to the north of Ḥaḍramawt); and Muhājir ibn ‘Umayyah—the brother of the mother of the believers Umm Salamah ﷺ—over Banū Mu‘āwiyah who were from Kindah, though he did not go out to his province until after the demise of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ because of an illness which he was suffering from. In the meantime Ziyād ibn Labīd saw to Muhājir’s province while Ya‘la ibn Umayyah attended to his army. Mū‘adh ibn Jabal ﷺ was sent as an educator who moved between the various provinces.

<sup>78</sup> Ten thousand of their men were killed.

<sup>79</sup> Tabarī, vol. 3, pp. 314–316; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 372–374; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 6, pp. 329–332; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 506–507.

<sup>80</sup> ‘Akk was the son of ‘Adnān and Banū ‘Akk inhabited the area between Zabīd and Rima‘. The Ash‘ariyyūn lived to the north of Zabīd and their lineage is traced back to Ash‘ar ibn Udad ibn Zayd ibn Yashjub ibn ‘Arīb ibn Zayd ibn Kahlān.

Before the demise of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, a man from 'Ans by the name of 'Abhalah, patronym as Dhu 'l-Khimār, but popularly known as Aswad, revolted in Yemen. He claimed prophethood, Madhḥij rallied around him and they rushed upon Najrān, expelling the governor 'Amr ibn Hazm and Khālīd ibn Sa'īd ibn al-'Aṣ, who both headed to Madīnah. Aswad then went for Ṣan'ā' with 700 of his people, killed Shahr ibn Bādhān, took hold of the city and married Shahr's wife. He then took possession of the entire region between Ṣan'ā' and Ḥaḍramawt, extending to the outskirts of Ṭā'if in the north and to Bahrain in the east. He simply could not be controlled. Mu'ādh ibn Jabal ﷺ fled and met Abū Mūsā ﷺ at Ma'rib from where they both proceeded to Ḥaḍramawt where Mu'ādh ﷺ settled down among the Sakāsik tribe and Abū Mūsā ﷺ among the Sukun tribe. Ṭāhir ibn Abī Ḥalah settled down among 'Ak.

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ heard about all this, he sent messages to the Abnā' (Persian descendants)<sup>81</sup> in Yemen and to Abū Mūsā ﷺ, Mu'ādh ﷺ and Ṭāhir ﷺ that they should give battle to al-Aswad and get rid of him, either by assassination or open combat. Fayrūz and Dādhawayh were amongst the Abnā' who responded positively to this message and took steps to kill him. The wife of Aswad, previously the wife of Shahr ibn Bādhān, helped them in this; they attacked at night and Fayrūz killed him.

The next morning they called out the *adhān*, a clear rallying call to the Muslims. On hearing it the people crowded together. Some followers of Aswad captured children of the Muslims and left the city, leaving many of their own children behind. The two sides then began to correspond in order that each side return the captives it had and the followers of Aswad were left wandering between Ṣan'ā' and Aden unable to seek refuge.

The governors of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ returned to their respective provinces. They all agreed that Mu'ādh ﷺ should lead the people of Ṣan'ā' in prayer as the governor of Ṣan'ā', Shahr, had been killed. He was to do so until an order from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ came. They sent all this news to Madīnah, but by the time it reached there the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had passed away so it was the first good news that came to Abū Bakr ﷺ. When the news of the Messenger's ﷺ demise spread, Qays ibn 'Abd Yaghūth renounced Islām and contacted the defeated armies of Aswad who rallied around him. Qays plotted to kill the senior Abnā'—Fayrūz, Dādhawayh and Jushaysh—and prepared a feast-gathering for them in order to get rid of them. He succeeded in killing Dādhawayh; the

81 These Persian descendants in Yemen were descendants of the representatives of Khusros who had sent them to Yemen with Ibn Dhi Yazīn. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ retained them after they embraced Islām. Some of these descendants were Fayrūz ad-Daylamī, Shahr ibn Bādhān, Wabr ibn Yuḥannas and Dādhawayh (*aṭ-Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 5, pp. 533–535; *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 114).

other two survived so he went in pursuit of them but they sought refuge with the Khawlān tribe. Qays returned to Ṣanʿāʾ where he claimed exclusive power over the city, plotting against the families of the Abnāʾ and expelling them, driving them out of Yemen by land and sea, leaving them vulnerable to robbers. When Fayrūz heard of this, he resolved to wage war against him and sought the help of ʿAk and the sons of ʿAqīl ibn Rabīʿah, who all came to his aid. They rescued the families of the Abnāʾ whom Qays had driven out and killed the men around them.

They then went to Fayrūz and joined him in the battle against Qays and his men, attacking and defeating them. It was at that time that Muhājir ibn Abī Umayyah, the commander sent by Abū Bakr ﷺ to fight the armies of Aswad and help the Abnāʾ, came to them. ʿIkrimah ibn Abī Jahl ﷺ, who had completed his task in Oman and Maharah, also arrived shortly after him. They both helped the Abnāʾ against the armies of Qays ibn ʿAbd Yaghūth until they were defeated. They captured Qays and ʿAmr ibn Maʿdīkarib az-Zabīdī who had followed Aswad in renouncing Islām and sent both as captives to Abū Bakr ﷺ. Abū Bakr ﷺ said: “O Qays! You slaughtered servants of Allah ﷻ and took refuge not with believers but with apostates.” Qays denied having perpetrated any crime against Dādhawayh and indeed there was no proof because he was assassinated surreptitiously. Abū Bakr ﷺ therefore withdrew his accusation, then addressed ʿAmr ibn Maʿdīkarib saying: “Are you not ashamed that you are defeated and captured every day? If you were to help this religion, Allah ﷻ would elevate you.” He replied: “I most certainly embrace this religion and I will not renege.” They both then returned to their families as believers.

Muhājir ibn Abī Umayyah then pursued the remnants of the armies of Aswad, slaying them wherever he found them until they were left absolutely powerless. The reign of Aswad from its beginning until his destruction lasted about four months.<sup>82</sup>

#### THE KINDAH

The Kindah reneged in the time of Aswad because of a dispute that occurred between them and Ziyād ibn Labīd al-Bayāḍī al-Anṣārī about a sum of money from Kindah which Banū ʿAmr ibn Muʿāwiyah released after it was wrongly considered charity. Ziyād waged war against them and defeated them.

Banū Muʿāwiyah and Kindah accepted the refusal to pay *zakāt* but Shuraḥbīl ibn as-Simṭ and his son did not. They apprised Banū Muʿāwiyah of the repugnance of free people defecting. Anyone with self-respect holds on to their posi-

82 Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 318–330; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 336–341, and pp. 374–378.

tion even on a doubtful matter and refuses to change it for something clear out of fear of scorn; how then should one shift from what is good, seemingly and true to something false and repugnant? "By Allah, we will not take our people in that direction", they said. Father and son went to Ziyād and said: "You must attack them at night. If you do not do that, we fear they will run away."

They attacked them at night whilst they were in their places of safety, seizing their kings and putting them to death. Those who were able to flee did so. The Muslims went back with booty and captives, passing by Banū 'l-Ḥārith ibn Mu'āwiyah who were also in their places of safety. Ash'ath ibn Qays was among them and he mounted an attack on the Muslims and rescued the captives from them.

At this point Ziyād wrote to Muhājir asking for his assistance, so he appointed 'Ikrimah ؓ as deputy and hastened with a group of men to Ziyād. Banū 'l-Ḥārith anticipated defeat and sought refuge in Najir, a fort that belonged to them where the Muslims besieged them. When things became unbearable they came out and attempted to fight but it proved hopeless and they returned to the fort.

Ash'ath then sent a message, suing for peace in return for the fort with whoever was inside, providing nine leaders be given an amnesty. He forgot to include his own name however. The Muslims entered the fort, took on the warriors, captured them and took spoils. Those who were to be given an amnesty were lined-up but Ash'ath was not among them. Muhājir wanted to kill him, but his companions suggested that he be sent to Abū Bakr ؓ who would decide his fate, so he did and Abū Bakr ؓ pardoned him. Later on Ash'ath proved his worth in the conquest of Iraq.<sup>83</sup>

It is here that the stories of the apostasies come to an end. Muslims desiring to emulate their pious predecessors will understand from this that the believer does not show weakness no matter how great the enemy is in number. The Muslims will not be overpowered on account of small number and cannot be defeated unless they follow their desires and deviate from the straight path.

Consider Abū Bakr ؓ, the first caliph of the Muslims who faced the enmity of all the Arabs while he and his companions were like a strand of white hair on a black ox in their small number; yet this did not stop him and his supporters helping the religion of Allah ؓ and waging war on those who rejected Him. Instead he had full confidence in the promise of Allah ؓ when He said: "If you help Allah, He will help you and keep your steps firm." (Sūrah Muḥammad, 47: 7)

Allah ؓ therefore rewarded him with great help and manifest victory, and the Arab tribes yielded to him. This is essence of Islām and imān.

83 *Al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 378–383; *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 109–110.

تلك المكارم، لا قعبان من لبن  
شيبا بماء فعادا بعدأ أبوالا

Those are true noble qualities, not two vessels of milk  
which with water mixed, turned to urine.<sup>84</sup>

## IRAQ

Thus Abū Bakr ﷺ dealt with the apostates, bringing all the Arabs to Islām, and Allah ﷻ united the Muslim community. He now directed his attention to spreading the justice and equality of Islām to other nations; nations whose leaders thought themselves superior to their subjects. They considered them slaves who were powerless over their own lives and would abase and tyrannise them.

The greatest empires neighbouring Islām at that time were the Persian Empire to the east and the Roman Empire to the north, and Abū Bakr ﷺ commenced with the Persian Empire. The first contact between the Muslims and this huge empire was the letter which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ wrote to Khusro Parwez, inviting him to Islām. On receiving the letter, Khusro tore it up out of arrogance.<sup>85</sup> In this is a measure of the level of totalitarianism and arrogance which marked the kings of that time. The pure religion of Islām came to destroy this very pride and arrogance.

Parwez actually took this letter of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ quite seriously and conveyed a message to Bādhān, his governor in Yemen, to send two strong

84 This poem was written by Abū 's-Ṣalt, the father of Umayyah, in a panegyric in which he praises Sayf ibn Dhi Yazan. See Ṭabarī, vol. 2, p. 147; *ash-Sh'ir wa 'sh-Shu'arā'*, p. 282; *al-Aghānī*, vol. 16, p. 64; *al-Iqd al-Farid*, vol. 2, p. 24; *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, vol. 4, p. 210; *Sīrah of Ibn Hishām*, vol. 1, p. 266.

85 On his return from Ḥudaybiyyah, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ sent 'Abdullāh ibn Ḥudhāfah as-Sahmī ﷺ to Khusro with a sealed letter which read: "In the name of Allāh, the beneficent, the merciful. From Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allāh, to Khusro, the leader of the Persians. Peace be on the one who follows guidance and believes in Allāh and His Messenger, and testifies that there is none worthy of worship except Allāh, who is one and has no partner, and that Muḥammad is His servant and Messenger. I call you to Allāh, for I am the Messenger of Allāh sent to all people: to warn those who are alive and to establish the proof against the unbelievers. Embrace Islām and you will be safe. Refuse and the sins of all the Mageans shall be on your shoulders."

When he read the letter, he tore it apart. When this news reached the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, he said: "Allāh shall tear apart his kingdom" and this was the greatest cause for its downfall. This, despite the fact that he enjoyed a position that no other king enjoyed. His rule extended over a period of twenty-eight years and he then died on the very day that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ had said he would, killed by his son Shiruwayh (*al-Bidāyah*, vol. 4, p. 269; *Tārikh al-Khamīs*, vol. 2, pp. 34–35; *Ḥayāt aṣ-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 1, p. 138; *al-Wathā'iq*, p. 140).

men to bring the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. When the two reached Madīnah, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ spoke to them saying: "Parwez was slain by his son this very day," and it was as he said (may Allah's peace and blessing be upon him). Parwez's son, Shīruwayh, rebelled against his father with the help of some senior subjects, assassinating him and taking control of the Persian Empire.

When the two men learnt of the truthfulness of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, they embraced Islām. In the meantime, Shīruwayh had sent a message to Bādhān not to interfere with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Yemen was later conquered in the time of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, Bādhān embraced Islām and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ appointed him governor. Thus, Yemen was the first Persian protectorate to align itself with Islām. This was followed by Bahrain and Oman which were also Persian protectorates.<sup>86</sup>

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed away and Abū Bakr ؓ completed his battles against the apostates, he entrusted the sword of Allah, Khālīd ibn al-Walīd ؓ, as the first person to lay the foundations for Islām in Persian lands.<sup>87</sup> This was in the beginning of Muḥarram 12 AH. Abū Bakr ؓ ordered him to start with Ubullah, a border post belonging to the Persians on the Arabian Gulf near the mouth of the Tigris (Dajlah) river, and sent Qa'qā' ibn 'Amr ؓ to help him.

Abū Bakr ؓ also appointed 'Iyād ibn Ghanm to attack the Persians from the north, asking him to start with Muṣayyakh (a village on the Euphrates River to the north of Iraq) and sent 'Abd Yaghūth al-Himyārī to help him. Abū Bakr ؓ ordered both Khālīd ؓ and 'Iyād to enlist those warriors who had fought the apostates and that no apostate should join them. Abū Bakr ؓ was of the opinion that no-one who had ever reneged on Islām should be asked for help in battle.<sup>88</sup>

#### THE BATTLE OF UBULLAH

Khālīd ibn al-Walīd ؓ proceeded until he came close to Ubullah then divided his army into three sections. He appointed Muthannā ibn Ḥārithah ash-Shaybānī ؓ over the first division, 'Adī ibn Ḥātim aṭ-Ṭā'ī ؓ over the second and kept the third under his own command. He sent the first two divisions before him and

<sup>86</sup> *Al-Bidāyah wa 'n-Nihāyah*, vol. 4, pp. 269–272.

<sup>87</sup> Many historians and geographers state that the lands to which Abū Bakr ؓ sent Khālīd ؓ were known as 'Irāq and that they were Arab lands, not Persian lands. See Ṭabarī, vol. 3, p. 343; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, p. 384; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 507; *Uyūn at-Tārikh*, p. 502; *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 242; *Aḥsan at-Taqāsim*, p. 116; *Qāmūs al-Amkinah wa 'l-Biqā'*, p. 151.

<sup>88</sup> Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 343–348; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, p. 385; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 6, pp. 342–343; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 507.

arranged to meet them at Ḥufayr, a place close to Ubullah on the main road between Makkah and Baṣrah.<sup>89</sup>

The commander at this border post was a senior Persian leader by the name of Hurmuz. The Arabs abhorred him because of his constant incursions against them, thus they were all hostile towards him. When Hurmuz heard of Khālid and his plan to meet his two advance parties at Ḥufayr, he moved off to arrive there first. Khālid diverted with his armies towards Kāẓimah, an oasis between present day Kuwait and Baṣrah but Hurmuz reached it first, so the Muslims stopped over at a place without water. Khālid said: "Fight them for the water, surely Allah will give it to the more resolute of the two armies." Khālid went forward in the middle of the row and challenged him to individual combat on foot. Hurmuz accepted the challenge and dismounted and Khālid grasped him. When the Persians saw this they went to attack Khālid treacherously but this did not stop him putting Hurmuz to the sword. Qa'qā' saw this and attacked with the Muslim army, keeping the Persians back from Khālid. From there the encounter escalated and the polytheists were defeated.<sup>90</sup>

This was the first battle between the Muslims and Persians. Khālid sent the good news and one fifth of the booty to Abū Bakr, after having distributed four fifths to the soldiers: three allotted to the cavalry and one to the infantry.

Khālid dispatched Muthannā ibn Ḥārithah in pursuit of those who had retreated in defeat. As Abū Bakr advised, the Muslims did not harm farmers in any way. The news of defeat reached the Persian king, Azdshīr, who was at his palace in Madā'in (Seleucia-Ctesiphonon), a place which belonged to the Khusros on the Tigris River to the south of Baghdād, between the east and the west and the eastern side being where the famous Īwān (Vaulted Arch) of Khusro was situated. The Persian king dispatched another army against the Muslims under the command of a mighty general by the name of Qārin ibn Qaryānis, who rounded-up all the defeated soldiers and returned with them to Thiny, situated at the bend in the river near Baṣrah.<sup>91</sup>

89 *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, vol. 2, p. 277; *aṭ-Ṭariq ilā 'l-Madā'in*, p. 215.

90 Khālid collected all the possessions they left behind, including the chains which were used to bind the soldiers to each other so that they did not flee the battlefield. These were estimated to be one thousand pounds in weight. The battle was named *Dhāt as-Salāsil* (The Battle of Chains) for this reason (Nabīh 'Aqīl, p. 234; Ṭabarī, vol. 3, p. 350).

91 *Uyūn at-Tawārikh*, pp. 504–505. Ṭabarī (vol. 3, p. 350) states that according to authentic sources, Ubullah was actually conquered during the caliphate of 'Umar at the hands of 'Utbah ibn Ghazwān in 14 AH though we did not find anything to support this except what is mentioned in *Tārikh Baghdād* (vol. 1, p. 156) wherein Khaṭīb says: "Utbah ibn Ghazwān passed away on the road to Baṣra in 17 AH, and in 20 AH according to others. He was the one who settled Baṣra, mapped out its houses and built its mosque in Qaṣb. Moreover he was the one who conquered Ubullah. He was the governor of Baṣra for six months, appointed

## THE BATTLE OF THINY

Qārin ibn Qaryānis encamped here and Khālīd ﷺ marched there as well. When the two armies met, Qārin came forward and declared an open challenge to one-on-one combat, hoping to avenge the death of Hurmuz. A Muslim cavalryman<sup>92</sup> accepted the challenge and successfully put him to the sword then the Muslim army attacked the polytheist army and killed a large number of their warriors, apart from those who drowned in the river. Khālīd ﷺ collected the *jizyah*<sup>93</sup> from the farmers, making them *dhimmis*<sup>94</sup>. Again he sent a message of victory and one fifth of the booty to Abū Bakr ﷺ.

As for the Persian king, he dispatched another army to the Muslims under the command of Andar Zaghar, and another after him under the command of Jādhawayh. Both the armies camped at Walajah.<sup>95</sup>

## THE BATTLE OF WALAJAH

Khālīd ﷺ advanced towards these two commanders and the Muslims engaged them in fierce combat until the polytheist army was defeated and the commander Andar Zaghar was killed. Khālīd ﷺ also captured some people of the tribe of Bakr ibn Wā'il and put them to death. Some Christians from their tribe became angry at this and rallied at Ullays,<sup>96</sup> then wrote to the Persian king for help with an army to fight the Muslims. Azdshīr wrote to Bahman Jādhawayh, the other commander who was defeated at Walajah, ordering him to go to the Christians from Bakr and to join them in the fight against the Muslims. When the letter came to him, he sent Jābān ahead as a deputy, while he himself went to Azdshīr in order to consult him and gather information but he found him ill and remained there.<sup>97</sup>

## THE BATTLE OF ULLAYS

As for Jābān, he reached the army of the Bakr and camped with them at Ullays on

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to this post by 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ." This would be acceptable if Baṣra refers to Ubullah itself, as stated by Ibn Sa'd, vol. 3, p. 99; *al-Awā'il* of al-'Askarī, vol. 2, p. 11, and *al-Bayān wa 't-Tabyīn*, vol. 2, p. 57.

92 By the name of Ma'qil ibn al-A'shā ibn an-Nabbāsh. See *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 386–387.

93 Poll tax levied on non-Muslims under the Islamic state.

94 Non-Muslim subjects of the Islamic state.

95 The name of a place in Kaskar. Khālīd ibn al-Walīd ﷺ fought against a Persian army here and defeated it (*Mu'jam al-Buldān*, vol. 5, p. 383).

96 The name of a place on the edge of 'Irāqī lands towards the steppes (*bādiyah*), or one of the villages of Anbār. A battle took place here between the Muslims and Persians (*Mu'jam al-Buldān*, vol. 1, p. 248).

97 *Al-Bidāyah wa 'n-Nihāyah*, vol. 6, p. 345.

the Euphrates River. Khālīd ﷺ advanced towards them with a squadron, walked into the very centre of the battlefield and issued a challenge for a duel. One of the leaders of Bakr stepped forward, Khālīd ﷺ felled him and the Muslims attacked the Persians. However they remained quite resolute because they were anticipating the arrival of Bahman Jādhawayh. The Muslims, on the other hand, also held ranks and remained resolute so that the word of Allah ﷻ might reign supreme. By mid-morning, the Persians fled having suffered great losses. Once again, Khālīd ﷺ distributed the spoils and sent word of victory along with one fifth of the booty to Abū Bakr ﷺ. This battle took place in Šafar 12 AH.<sup>98</sup>

#### THE CONQUEST OF ḤĪRAH

Khālīd ﷺ then proceeded towards Ḥīrah, the capital of Arab kings representing the Persians which was located to the west of the Euphrates near Kūfah. He was sailing along the river when the vicegerent of Ḥīrah, Azādhībāh, came out towards him and encamped outside the city and ordered his son to cut off the water from the Muslim ships by diverting the river water to various canals. The ships were thus grounded, unable to sail. Khālīd ﷺ rode out to Azādhībāh's son and slew him at Furāt Bādaqlā. He then advanced towards Ḥīrah where the vicegerent, Azādhībāh, fled the city. Khālīd ﷺ surrounded all the different castles of the city: the White castle; the castle of Ghariyyayn; the castle of Ibn Māzin; and the castle of Ibn Buqaylah. He invited the leaders of these castles to embrace Islām and gave them a respite of one day and night, but they refused. The Muslims began to open the doors to the monasteries and the monks and pastors started shouting to the people in the castles to make peace with the Muslims. The leaders of the castles announced: "We shall indeed accept one of the three options: Islām, *jizyah* or war", so the Muslims desisted from fighting.

The leaders then approached Khālīd ﷺ with 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-Masīḥ as spokesman. Khālīd ﷺ asked him: "Are you here to make peace or to declare war?" "To make peace", he replied. Khālīd ﷺ asked: "What is the purpose of these castles?" He replied: "We built them for imbeciles. We keep them restrained there until a responsible person is able to look after them." Khālīd ﷺ made peace with them in return for the *jizyah* which was set at 190,000 dirhams. As was their habit with the Persian kings, they presented him with many gifts which he sent on to Abū Bakr ﷺ along with news of victory. Abū Bakr ﷺ accepted them, including them as part of the *jizyah* and ordering Khālīd ﷺ to do likewise.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 343–345; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 6, p. 346.

<sup>99</sup> Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 359–365; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, p. 390–392; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 10.

This is the nature of the religion of Islām. Our first caliph did not agree to take something which the subjects of Persians used to give to their kings seeking favour. In fact, nothing was taken from them except that which the Shari'ah stipulated.

#### BEYOND ḤĪRAH

When the men of political importance beyond Ḥīrah saw the actions of Khālid , they made peace with him on the basis that the region of Ḥīrah between Falālij and Hurmuzjard would be guaranteed protection in exchange for a payment of one million dirhams, excluding the taxes that were to be paid to Khusro. Khālid  then sent off his commanders<sup>100</sup> who traversed the region beyond this one, all the way up to the banks of the Tigris (Dajlah). He then wrote a letter addressed to the Persian kings:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful, All praise is due to Allah who put an end to your rule, thwarted your plan and divided your ranks. Had we not done so, things would have been worse for you. Embrace our religion and we will leave you and your land for another people. If not, you and your land will be conquered by force at the hands of a people who love death as much as you love life.<sup>101</sup>

He also addressed a letter to the provincial governors:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. All praise is due to Allah who has broken your power, scattered your ranks, frightened away your families and nullified your strength. Embrace Islām and you will experience peace. If not, entrust me to grant you protection in exchange for *jizyah*. If you refuse to pay the *jizyah* then I come with a people who love death as much as you love to drink alcohol.<sup>102</sup>

It was at that time that a serious setback befell the Persians which only weakened them further and increased the strength of the Muslims. This was in relation to their internal differences after the death of their king, Azdshīr, and the absence of someone from the family of Khusro to take over the reign of power. When the letters of Khālid  reached them, the wives of Khusro agreed to appoint one of the Persian governors, Farakhzād ibn al-Bandhawān, until such time that they found someone worthy of being king from the family of Khusro.

<sup>100</sup> They were Ḍirār ibn al-Azwar, Ḍirār ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, Qa'qā' ibn 'Amr, Muthannā ibn Ḥārithah, and 'Utaybah ibn an-Nahhās. And according to Ibn Khaldūn: 'Uyaynah ibn ash-Shammās.

<sup>101</sup> Tabarī, vol. 3, p. 370; Ibn Khaldūn vol. 2, p. 511; *al-Wathā'iq*, p. 383.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid. There are several narrations of this letter. See *Wathā'iq*, pp. 384–386.

## THE CONQUEST OF ANBĀR

Meanwhile Khālīd ﷺ proceeded from Ḥīrah towards Anbār,<sup>103</sup> a city on the banks of the Euphrates to the north of Kūfah. Shīrẓād, the ruler of Sābāt, was the commander of the army there and the Muslims engaged them in combat. When Shīrẓād realised he did not have the strength to fight the Muslims, he expressed a desire for peace, but on terms unacceptable to Khālīd ﷺ. So he sent back the envoy then slaughtered the weak camels of the army and threw them in the trench the polytheists had dug, then charged over the dead camels across the trench towards them. When Shīrẓād saw this he sought peace with Khālīd ﷺ on Khālīd's ﷺ terms, and he accepted, then sent Shīrẓād to a place of safety until he later joined Bahman.

## THE CONQUEST OF ʿAYN AT-TAMR

Khālīd ﷺ then advanced towards ʿAyn at-Tamr (three days journey from Anbār), after appointing Zibriqān ibn Badr over Anbār. Reaching ʿAyn at-Tamr he found a huge army of Persians under the leadership of Mihrān<sup>104</sup> ibn Bahrām Jawbayn and a huge number of Arabs from the Namar and Taghlib tribes who were living in those areas under the rule of the Khusros. The Persians placed the Arabs on the front lines because they knew better how to fight the Arabs but Khālīd ﷺ charged their leader while he was straightening the battle lines and captured him. His people surrendered immediately without a fight.

When Mihrān saw this, he and his army also fled and abandoned the fort. The defeated soldiers sought refuge in the fort and asked for an armistice but Khālīd ﷺ refused. He then sent news of victory and one fifth of the booty to Abū Bakr ﷺ.

## THE CONQUEST OF DŪMAT AL-JANDAL

Khālīd ﷺ moved on from ʿAyn at-Tamr towards Dūmat al-Jandal<sup>105</sup> in order

<sup>103</sup> This was a city in the central section of the Tigris River to the west of Madā'in. The Persians used to call it Firūz Sābūr (Perisapora). The caliph Abū 'l-Abbās restructured this city and lived there until his death (*Mu'jam al-Buldān*, vol. 1, p. 258 and *Aṭlās at-Tārikh al-ʿArabī*, pp. 35–37).

<sup>104</sup> The printed editions of this book state that his name was Bahrām, just as Ibn Khaldūn records it (vol. 2, p. 512). However, the name that we write here is correct as stated in Ṭabarī, vol. 3, p. 376 and *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, p. 394.

<sup>105</sup> A place about seven days journey from Damascus and about 650 kilometres from Madinah. It was a walled city and contained a fort made of stone. Khālīd ﷺ conquered it by force in 8 AH. It is said that there are two places with the name of Dūmah. One is Dūmat al-Jandal and the other is Dūmat al-Ḥīrah. There is confusion with regard to these two places as it is said that ʿUmar ﷺ expelled those who opposed

to assist ʿIyād ibn Ghanm to conquer it. While the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was alive, he had sent Khālīd ibn al-Walīd ﷺ to Dūmat al-Jandal in order to capture Ukaydar ibn ʿAbd al-Malik.<sup>106</sup> Khālīd ﷺ had captured him on a moonlit night and presented him before the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ spared him his life and entered into an agreement with him in return for *jizyah*, then sent him back to his town.

When Abū Bakr ﷺ ascended to the caliphate, he sent ʿIyād ibn Ghanm to conquer Iraq, starting with the upper northern regions. On the outskirts of Dūmat al-Jandal, a horde of Christian Arabs rallied against him so he wrote a letter to Khālīd ﷺ asking him for assistance. The letter reached him when he was in ʿAyn at-Tamr and he manoeuvred such that Dūmat al-Jandal would be sandwiched between him and ʿIyād. Jūdī, who jointly ruled over Dūmat al-Jandal with Ukaydar, went out to attack Khālīd ﷺ and also sent another squadron to fight ʿIyād. Both commanders were overwhelmed and the fort of Dūmat al-Jandal was opened by force with Khālīd ﷺ remaining there. As for Ukaydar, he parted ways with Jūdī because he refused to listen to him when he advised him not to fight against Khālīd ﷺ. Khālīd ﷺ sent someone in his tracks to capture and slay him because he had broken the promise he had made to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to pay the *jizyah*.

#### ḤUṢAYD AND KHANĀFIS

The Arabs of Jazīrah were greatly agitated after the Arabs of ʿAyn at-Tamr were killed and they wrote to the Persians asking them to send help. Two Persian generals left for Anbār and reached Ḥuṣayd and Khanāfis, which were near Anbār. Qaʿqāʿ, Khālīd's deputy ﷺ in Ḥīrah, heard about this and dispatched two detachments to act as a barrier between Ḥuṣayd and Khanāfis, and the countryside. Khālīd ﷺ received the news himself and returned towards Ḥīrah, then sent Qaʿqāʿ and Abū Laylā ibn Fadakī to meet the Persian army face to face. A large number of Persians were killed, including both their commanders and the Muslims obtained all that was in Ḥuṣayd as booty. The remainder fled to Khanāfis where Mahbūdhan (a Persian chief) was stationed. Abū Laylā went in pursuit of them until Mahbudhān fled to Muṣayyakh where there were some Arabs of Jazīrah, then Khālīd ﷺ wrote to Qaʿqāʿ and Abū Laylā asking them to meet him at Muṣayyakh at a certain time to fight the Arabs of Jazīrah. He ﷺ reached Muṣayyakh with his army and met the other two, together inflicting a terrible

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Islām from the city to Ḥīrah. Likewise, it is said that Khālīd ﷺ attacked Dūmah during the caliphate of Abū Bakr ﷺ in 12 AH. See *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, vol. 2, pp. 487–488.

106 *Al-Bidāyah*, vol. 5, p. 17.

defeat on them. Khālīd ﷺ then headed for Rabīʿah ibn Bujayr at-Taghlibī who was gathering his troops at Thiny, attacking them at night and delivering a defeat so crushing that not a single one of them could escape.

#### FIRĀḌ

Khālīd ﷺ continued towards Firāḍ which was on the borders of the Levant, Iraq and Jazīrah (north-west Mesopotamia). The heat was intense and it was the month of Ramadan 12 AH. Khālīd ﷺ and the Muslims broke their fast there. A huge assembly of Persians, Romans and Arabs had gathered to take on the Muslims and they crossed the Euphrates to face Khālīd. They put up a severe fight but were soon defeated: "They are Satan's party and the party of Satan are surely bound to lose" (Sūrat al-Mujādalah, 58: 12).

Khālīd ﷺ then issued the command to return to Ḥīrah while he remained behind, pretending to be at the back of the army. It is said that he went to Makkah, performed the pilgrimage then rejoined the rear of the army before it could reach Ḥīrah but this seems far-fetched because of the distance.<sup>107</sup>

#### KHĀLID ﷺ IS SENT TO THE LEVANT

It was at this time that Abū Bakr ﷺ directed Khālīd ﷺ away from the war in Iraq and to the Levant in order to assist the Muslim armies over there. Instead he appointed Muthannā ibn Ḥārithah ash-Shaybānī over the army in Iraq. Muthannā remained in Ḥīrah, laid down arms and sent out spies. After Khālīd's ﷺ departure Shahrbarāz ibn Azdshīr had ascended the Persian throne and he dispatched a huge army towards Muthannā under the command of Hurmuz.

#### BĀBIL (BABYLON)

Muthannā left Ḥīrah and headed towards the army of Hurmuz until he reached Bābil (an old city to the west of the Euphrates River)<sup>108</sup> and stationed himself there. It was here that Hurmuz and the Persian army faced him. The Muslim army fought an intense battle against Hurmuz until he was defeated. Shahrbarāz, the king of Persia, died after this defeat and many internal conflicts broke out in

<sup>107</sup> Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 383–386; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 399–401; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 6, p. 352; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 513–514.

<sup>108</sup> The area near the cities of Kūfah and Ḥillah. Magic and alcohol are associated with this place. It is said that the first person to inhabit it was Nūḥ ﷺ after the flood. It is also said that the seven wonders of the world were found here (*Muʿjam al-Buldān*, vol. 1, pp. 309–311; *al-Aṭlās at-Tārikhī*, pp. 15–21).

the Persian Empire which pre-occupied them and stopped them thinking about the Muslims.

Meanwhile, news from Abū Bakr ﷺ was slow to reach Muthannā, so he appointed Bashīr ibn al-Khaṣāṣiyyah over his army and headed for Madīnah in order to obtain the permission of Abū Bakr ﷺ to enlist the help of those apostates who had repented sincerely. On reaching Madīnah, he found Abū Bakr ﷺ ill. He summoned ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ and said to him: "I have a feeling that I am going to die today. If I pass away, do not take a single step without first sending men with Muthannā. Let no difficulty prevent you from fulfilling the demands of Islām and the order of your Lord. I remember what I did at the time of the demise of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ despite the people never having been afflicted by such a great calamity. If Allah ﷻ gives victory over the people of the Levant, return the people of Iraq to their country because they are its inhabitants and its rulers, and they have power over the people."

This was as far as things went in Persia during the reign of Abū Bakr ﷺ. The reach of Persian power had diminished in all the fertile lands to the west of the Euphrates river, known as *Rīf al-Iraq* (the cultivated lands of Iraq), and the boundary of the Empire was now that river.<sup>109</sup>

## THE ROMANS

The Roman Empire was the second major empire which bordered the Arab lands to the north. The first contact between it and the Muslims was the letter from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to Heraclius, emperor of Rome, inviting him to Islām.<sup>110</sup> The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then wrote to Hārith ibn Abī Shamr al-Ghassānī, king of Ghassān<sup>111</sup> in Balqā'<sup>112</sup> which was in the Levant. He also wrote a letter inviting

109 Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 413–414; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 415–416; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 519–520.

110 Ibn Kathīr ﷺ quotes the text of the letter then relates from Bukhārī the conversation between Abū Sufyān and Heraclius. The letter reads as follows: "In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful. From Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allāh, to Heraclius, high leader of the Romans: peace be on he who follows guidance. Embrace Islām and you will be safe and Allāh will give you your reward twice over. But if you refuse, the sin of the ignorant farmers shall be on your shoulders" (*al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah*, vol. 4, p. 264).

111 The letter reads as follows: "In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful. From Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allāh, to Hārith ibn Abī Shamr: peace be on he who follows guidance, believes in Allāh and testifies. I invite you to believe in Allāh, who is one and has no partner. Do so and your kingdom will continue to exist" (Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 450; *al-Wathā'iq*, p. 126).

112 A place with many plantations from among the districts of Damascus, between the Levant and Wādī l-Qurā, to the east of the Dead Sea, half way between ʿAmmān and Maʿān. (*Muʿjam al-Buldān*, vol. 1, p. 489; *al-Aṭlās at-Tārikhī*, p. 34)

Caesar's governor over the Arabs to Islām. The governor's authority prompted him to evil and he decided to make war on the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, but he was prevented by an order from Caesar that came to him before he could.

In the eighth year of the emigration, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ prepared an army which he sent to the Levant under the command of Zayd ibn Ḥārithah ﷺ (the Mu'tah expedition). The Romans assembled a huge army of over one hundred thousand to meet them. Zayd ﷺ, Ja'far ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ and 'Abdullāh ibn Rawāḥah ﷺ were all martyred in this battle before Khālid ﷺ, the sword of Allah, took over command and rescued the army from destruction.<sup>113</sup> I have discussed this battle in detail in *Nūr al-Yaqīn*.

It was in the ninth year after emigration that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ prepared for battle against the Romans and made for Tabūk. The governor of Aylah,<sup>114</sup> Yuḥannā ibn Ru'bah as well as the governor of Jarbā'<sup>115</sup> and Adhruḥ<sup>116</sup> came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and agreed to pay him the *jizyah*. When Heraclius (Hiraql) heard of what Yuḥannā did he issued an order that he be killed and crucified in his own village.<sup>117</sup>

In the year in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was to pass away, he prepared an army under the command of Usāmah ibn Zayd ibn Ḥārithah ﷺ so that Usāmah might go to Ubnā and Quḍā'ah to avenge the death of his father, but the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed on before Usāmah ﷺ could depart. When Abū Bakr ﷺ was appointed caliph, he dispatched Usāmah's ﷺ army to Ubnā, where he attacked the tribes of Quḍā'ah and returned victorious.

When Abū Bakr ﷺ appointed the different commanders at Dhu'l-Qaṣṣah, he appointed Khālid ibn Sa'īd ibn al-Āṣ to head for the highlands of the Levant. Then however he ordered him to remain in Taymā'<sup>118</sup> to support the Muslims and to remain there unless ordered otherwise, and to fight only if attacked. News of this duly reached Heraclius, the Roman emperor.

113 See the *Maghāzī* of Wāqidi, vol. 2, pp. 755–769; *ad-Durar*, pp. 246–248; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 234–238; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 4, pp. 241–250; *Uyūn al-Athar*, vol. 2, pp. 198–204.

114 Or Elat, a town on the coast of the Red Sea, on the Levant side. It is said that it marks the end of Ḥijāz and the beginning of the Levant (Shām) (*Mu'jam al-Buldān*, vol. 1, p. 292).

115 A district of 'Ammān at Balqā'. At present it lies to the north of Ma'ān.

116 One the districts of Balqā'. Jarbā' lies close to it. Both these places were conquered in the time of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. It was between these two places that the arbitration between 'Alī ﷺ and Mu'āwiya ﷺ took place (*Mu'jam al-Buldān*, vol. 1, pp. 129–130; *al-Aṭlās at-Tārikhī*, p. 32).

117 *Al-Maghāzī* of Wāqidi, vol. 3, pp. 989–1021; Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 100–111; *ad-Durar*, pp. 286–291; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 276–282; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 5, pp. 2–20; *Uyūn al-Athar*, vol. 2, pp. 275–281; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 467–469.

118 A small town on the edge of the Levant, on the *hajj* route from Damascus, lying about 50 km to the north of Madīnah. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ entered into a peace agreement with its people in exchange for *jizyah* (*Mu'jam al-Buldān*, vol. 2, p. 67; *al-Aṭlās at-Tārikhī*, pp. 34–35).

Heraclius (Hiraql) ordered that an army from the Arab tribes under Roman rule be prepared, made up of men from the tribes of Bahrā', Sulayḥ, Kalb, Lakhm, Judhām and Ghassān. Khālīd ibn Sa'īd ibn al-Ās advanced towards their territory but they absconded, so Khālīd informed Abū Bakr and he replied with an order to proceed further. He did so and was met by a Roman by the name of Māhān on the way and defeated him.

Khālīd [ibn Sa'īd] then wrote a letter to Abū Bakr ﷺ asking for assistance and it was then that he really turned his attention to the Levant. The first of the fighters sent to Yemen had begun to return; and 'Ikrimah ibn Abī Jahl ﷺ and those who were with him from Tihāmah and Bahrain too. Abū Bakr ﷺ sent a message to 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ ﷺ who he had sent out when he sent out the other commanders at Dhu'l-Qaṣṣah. 'Amr ﷺ was dispatched to collect charity from the tribes of Sa'd and Hudhaym, who were of the tribe of Quḍā'ah. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had promised him governorship over the region so Abū Bakr ﷺ wrote to him saying: "I reappointed you to the position that the Messenger of Allah posted you to once and guaranteed to you a second time. I fulfilled his promise and you were made governor but I would now like to relieve you of that position for something that is better for you in this world and the Hereafter, unless you prefer your present post."<sup>119</sup>

'Amr ﷺ replied saying: "I am an arrow of Allah ﷻ and, after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, you are the archer who gathers and shoots the arrows. So you should look for the strongest arrow, the one with most fear of Allah, the best of arrows, and shoot it."<sup>120</sup>

Abū Bakr ﷺ thus summoned him and he responded. Abū Bakr ﷺ then prepared four armies and appointed 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ ﷺ over one of them and sent him towards Palestine (which was a rural region in the southern part of the Levant). He appointed Shuraḥbil ibn Ḥasanah, who came to him from Iraq, over the second army and sent him towards Jordan (an area of the Levant named after the Jordan river which runs from the Sea of Galilee down to the Dead Sea). He appointed Yazīd ibn Abī Sufyān over the third army and sent him towards Balqā' (a city in the Levant) and sent his brother Mu'āwiyah after him. He appointed the "trustworthy man of this Ummah" (a title given to him by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ) Abū 'Ubaydah ﷺ commander of the fourth army and sent him towards Ḥimṣ (Homs).

These commanders travelled with Allah's blessing. Abū Bakr ﷺ used to accompany them on foot to bid them farewell and advise them with that which

<sup>119</sup> Ṭabarī, vol. 3, p. 389; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, p. 403; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, p. 2.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

would benefit them in this world and the Hereafter. The great advice which he gave to Yazid was recorded and it contains valuable words of counsel which every military commander should heed, I am therefore quoting it in its entirety:

I have appointed you in order to test you, assess you and to make you go out and gain experience. If you do well, I will give you more work to do and promote you. If you do not do well, I will remove you from your post. You should fear Allah ﷻ for surely your inner self is apparent to Him just as your outer self is. He who is most eminent in Allah's sight is he who entrusts his affairs to Him most, and the closest to Allah ﷻ is he who most desires to gain proximity to Him through his deeds. I have appointed you to the task of Khālīd [ibn Sa'īd ibn al-ʿĀs, whom Abū Bakr ﷺ had first dispatched to the Levant]. Beware of conceitedly vilifying others in the way of the days of ignorance, for surely Allah ﷻ abhors this and those that engage in it. When you go to your men be a good companion to them, be good to them from the outset, and promise them that you will benefit them.

Be concise in your lectures because much of a long speech will be forgotten. Set yourself right and people will set themselves right for you. Pray at the prescribed times with perfection in bowing and prostrating, being humble therein. Honour the envoys of your enemy who come to you but minimise their stay so they leave with little intelligence about you. Do not allow them a lengthy stay for they will see your shortcomings and gauge how much you know. Host them in the best part of your camp and prohibit your people from engaging in conversation with them. You alone are responsible for conversing with them. Do not conflate your secrets with what is apparent or you yourself will get confused. When you seek counsel, speak the truth so that you are given an honest response. Do not conceal anything from your advisor, rather say all that you have to say.

Engage in conversation with your companions at night to gather information and so that information may come to light. Have many guards and disperse them about your camp, then surprise them often at the places where they keep guard without their having knowledge of you. If you find anyone neglectful in his guard-duty admonish him in a goodly manner, reprimand him but without being excessive. Let them take shifts by night and by day. Make the first shift longer than the second shift because it will be easier on them as more of it will be in the day.

Feel no inhibition on punishing one who deserves to be punished. Do not be lax in this, nor hasty. Do not abandon it due to being overpowered. Do not be unmindful of your camp for you will destroy it. Do not spy on your people for you will humiliate them. Do not examine people's secrets but rather suffice with what is outwardly observable in them. Do not sit in the company of those who are idle but in the company of those who are truthful and loyal. Stand firm when you meet the

enemy, show no cowardice or your people will become cowardly. Avoid any deception when dealing with spoils, for it will bring on poverty and drive away victory. You will find some people who are bent on deceit when dealing with booty.<sup>121</sup>

The armies continued to advance until they reached the Levant. 'Amr ibn al-ʿĀṣ stopped at 'Arabah<sup>122</sup> in Palestine, Shurahbīl descended at Jordan, Yazīd at Balqā', and Abū 'Ubaydah at Jābiyah.<sup>123</sup> When news of this reached Heraclius, the Roman Emperor, he said to his people: "I think you should make peace with the Muslims. By Allah, if you make peace with them in exchange for half the produce of the Levant while retaining the other half and the Roman lands, it will be better for you than if they take over the lands of the Levant and half the Roman lands." The people rejected his suggestion however and went to Ḥimṣ (Homs—a city in the Levant to the east of the Orontes (ʿĀṣī) River, at some distance from it). He ordered the troops to rally together. A massive army gathered and to each commander he sent a division of soldiers exceeding what he already had in number.

'Amr ibn al-ʿĀṣ also asked the commanders of the Muslim forces to assemble but they sent messages to Abū Bakr asking his counsel. He replied agreeing with 'Amr, saying: "The likes of you are not defeated on account of your small numbers, but most certainly you can be defeated on account of your sins, so be wary of them!"<sup>124</sup>

#### THE BATTLE OF YARMŪK

The Muslims gathered at Yarmūk, a valley in the south western part of the Levant. Each commander remained in charge of his own army and the Romans stood before them, with a trench separating the two armies. The Romans had the advantage and could remain protected behind their trenches if they wished. The two forces remained like that for the three months of Ṣafar, Rabīʿ al-Awwal and Rabīʿ al-Ākhir, in 13 AH.

At this point the commanders sent a message to Abū Bakr asking for assist-

121 *Al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 404–405.

122 The southern section of the Jordan valley between the Dead Sea and Elat, a valley which rises gradually from 400m beneath sea level up to a mountainous height at the Gulf of 'Aqabah (*al-Azminah wa 'l-Tārīkh*, vol. 2, p. 1065).

123 A village which is one of the districts of Damascus, on the edge of Jawlān near Marj aṣ-Ṣuffar. It was at this place that 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb delivered his famous speech. The Bāb al-Jābiyah (Gate of Jupiter) in Damascus is connected with this place and is also referred to as Jābiyat al-Jawlān (*Mu'jam al-Buldān*, vol. 2, p. 92).

124 Ṭabarī, vol. 3, p. 393; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, p. 406.

ance. He wrote to Khālīd ibn al-Walīd ﷺ, commander of the forces in Iraq, ordering him to appoint someone to deputise over half of his army, and to take the other half to the Levant in order to help the commanders there. Khālīd ﷺ marched with great speed and reached the Muslims in Rabīʿ al-Ākhir. His arrival coincided with the arrival of Māhān with an army to help the Romans. Khālīd ﷺ engaged these new arrivals while the other commanders fought the armies before them.

Khālīd ﷺ realised that the battle would not be won as long as each section of the army had its own commander. He therefore assembled the commanders and addressed them, after praising and glorifying Allah ﷻ, he said: "This is a day in which Allah ﷻ has blessed us. Neither rebelliousness nor pride can be tolerated, make your *jihād* solely for Allah ﷻ and please Him with your deeds. This is a day after which such opportunity as this will not come again. You cannot fight an orderly and organised enemy with all your armies under different flags. This is neither acceptable nor appropriate. If the enemy in front knows how you operate they will be able to thwart you. You are not obliged, but if you can see that this is out of love for you and in your best interests, then act on it."

The commanders asked: "What is your suggestion?" Khālīd ﷺ put forward that there be a single commander over the entire army, with each taking turns in command but that he would be the commander for the first day. The generals duly accepted his suggestion and made him commander. Khālīd ﷺ then arranged the army in a manner hitherto unknown to the Arabs, in a formation which divided the army into different parts causing it to seem very large. Khālīd ﷺ divided the centre of the army into sections and appointed Abū ʿUbaydah ﷺ in charge of it; he divided the right flank into sections and appointed ʿAmr ﷺ and Shurahbīl over it; then he divided the left flank into sections and appointed Yazīd over it. Over each division he appointed a courageous warrior. The divisions in each of these sections numbered thirty-three with one thousand men in each division. He then ordered Qaʿqāʿ ibn ʿAmr and ʿIkrimah ibn Abī Jahal ﷺ to launch an attack and the infantrymen engaged the enemy in close combat, the horsemen scattered the enemy and Khālīd ﷺ displayed great feats of bravery and zeal for Islām.

The Romans then counterattacked which removed the Muslims from their positions. Khālīd ﷺ rushed forward with the central division to isolate the cavalry of the polytheists from the infantry. Now defeated, the cavalry deserted the infantry. The Muslims split up, rushed upon the infantry and routed them. They slayed a large number of them, especially those who had been chained together so that they could not flee the field. The Muslim women also fought hard and bravely, proving their courage that day, as did Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥarb ﷺ who proved his gallantry with exertion and encouragement.

The battle ended with a terrible defeat for the Romans but in the midst of it a letter arrived from Madīnah telling of the demise of Abū Bakr ﷺ, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb’s ascension to the caliphate and the appointment of Abū ‘Ubaydah ﷺ as field commander.<sup>125</sup> The news reached the army after the battle finished.

### THE DEATH OF ABŪ BAKR ﷺ

Abū Bakr ﷺ was struck by fever on 7<sup>th</sup> Jumādā al-Ākhirah 13 AH. When the illness became advanced, he assembled the senior Companions ﷺ and consulted them with regard to handing over the caliphate to ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ. They all responded positively. Abū Bakr ﷺ then called ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān ﷺ and dictated the following to him:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. This is what Abū Bakr, the caliph of Muḥammad ﷺ, commends at the time of his final contact with this world and first contact with the Hereafter, a time in which even an unbeliever will find

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<sup>125</sup> ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ removed Khālīd ﷺ from his post on two occasions; first in 13 AH after taking over upon the death of Abū Bakr ﷺ he removed him as field commander and his general leadership over the commanders in the Levant. Instead he appointed him to the position of squadron commander and Khālīd ﷺ worked under the command of Abū ‘Ubaydah ﷺ for about four years. Secondly in 17 AH at a place called Qinnasarin when ‘Umar ﷺ removed him totally from the army when he had been a squadron commander.

Khālīd ﷺ continued like an ordinary Muslim soldier in his conduct and obedience. He uttered no more than a simple rebuke at the Leader of the Believers, ‘Umar ﷺ. ‘Umar ﷺ said to him: “By Allāh, you are most honourable to me, O Khālīd, and most beloved to me. After today, you will not rebuke me for anything.” Behind the dismissal was the political instinct that guides every ruler and ‘Umar’s ﷺ understanding of matters and individuals. Moreover it was his right to run affairs of state as he deemed fit. One also has to bear in mind the temperaments of the two individuals, which might have prevented one of them from responding positively to the other. There was no suspicion, no accusation of treachery, no misjudging, no grudge borne of ignorance, and no accusation of transgressing the limits of the Sharī‘ah. It was simply a case of a clash of power. The comprehensive authority of the Caliphate over the Islamic community, here invested in ‘Umar ﷺ, clashed with the authority of the victories of Khālīd ﷺ and his personality.

It was therefore natural to stop one of these two powers. And it is one of the responsibilities of the caliphate to bring about a balance between forces in building the Islamic state. ‘Umar ﷺ addressed the people on the second time that Khālīd ﷺ was removed from his post saying: “I did not remove Khālīd ﷺ out of resentment nor because of any treachery. But the people are enamoured by him, I feared that they will place all their trust in him and be put through a tribulation by him. I wanted the people to know that Allāh ﷻ alone is the doer and that they should not be put into tribulation [by forgetting Allāh and assuming that Khālīd ﷺ is responsible for all these victories].”

When the news of Khālīd’s ﷺ death reached ‘Umar ﷺ, he said: “May Allāh shower His mercy on Abū Sulaymān. What Allāh has in store for him is far better than what he was in. He passed away in a remote area and he lived a laudable life. But none can object to the demands of time” (Ṣādiq Arjūn: *Khālīd ibn al-Walīd*, pp. 301–328).

faith and a sinner will know certainty. I have appointed ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb over you and I spare no effort in seeking good for you. If he remains steadfast and establishes justice, this will be in accordance with my knowledge and opinion of him. But if he changes and acts oppressively, then I have no knowledge of the unseen. I desired nothing but good, and each person shall be answerable for the actions he performed. “Soon will the unjust know where they must return to” (Sūrat ash-Shu‘arā’, 26: 227).<sup>126</sup>

Abū Bakr ﷺ then ordered that this testament be read to the Muslims and appearing before them he asked: “Are you happy with the person whom I chose as caliph over you? I did not appoint a relative, instead I appointed ‘Umar. You should therefore listen to him and obey him. By Allah, I spared no effort in coming to a correct decision.” The Muslims replied: “We hear and we obey.”

Abū Bakr ﷺ then summoned ‘Umar ﷺ and said to him:

I have appointed you as caliph over the Companions of the Messenger of Allah. O ‘Umar! Allah ﷻ has certain rights at night which He does not accept fulfilled by day. And He has certain rights by day which He does not accept fulfilled by night. He does not accept an optional act until the obligatory is fulfilled. O ‘Umar! Do you not see that those whose scales are heavy on the day of Resurrection shall be those who followed the truth and considered it a weighty matter? It is most befitting that a scale which only bears the truth be heavy tomorrow. O ‘Umar! Do you not see those whose scales are light on the day of Resurrection shall be those who followed falsehood and to whom this was a light matter? It is most befitting that a scale which only bears falsehood be light tomorrow. O ‘Umar! Do you not see that a verse of ease was revealed with a verse of difficulty and vice versa? This is so that a believer will be both hopeful and fearful, not wishing and holding vain hopes for what he does not deserve from Allah ﷻ, nor fearing Him to the extent that he despairs. O ‘Umar! Do you not see that Allah ﷻ mentioned the inmates of the Hell by their worst deeds? When I think of the Hell, I say to myself: “I hope that I am not of those people.” Do you not see that Allah ﷻ mentioned the inhabitants of Paradise by their best deeds because He pardoned them for their evils? When I think of Paradise, I say to myself: “How can my deeds ever attain to theirs?” If you remember my advice death, the unseen, will be more beloved to you than your present life, and death is inescapable.

Abū Bakr ﷺ then passed away on 22 Jumādā al-Ākhirah. His caliphate lasted two years, three months and ten days. His achievements were extraordinary and

<sup>126</sup> Tabarī, vol. 3, pp. 394–414; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 410–416; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, pp. 4–16; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 517–518; *at-Tarīq ilā Dimashq*, 403–506.

his time in this office was exemplary. It was he who helped the Muslims regain a foothold by returning many of the Arabs to Islām. It was he who began dispatching troops against the two mighty empires that bordered the Muslim lands in order to invite them to the upright religion of Islām or to come under its rule. He did this so that the justice and equality of Islām might spread through nations that were deprived at the hands of kings who considered themselves gods, treated their subjects like slaves, and followed their desires and lusts irrespective of how much harm it caused their subjects. Abū Bakr's ﷺ armies thus enjoyed victory in all their battles.

ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ used to judge on his behalf during his time as caliph and Abū ʿUbaydah ﷺ acted as a close confidant. His scribes and secretaries were ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān ﷺ, ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ and Zayd ibn Thābit ﷺ. The following were the provinces of Islām during his caliphate:

- Makkah, governed by ʿAttāb ibn Usayd ﷺ who the Messenger of Allah ﷺ appointed after the conquest of Makkah.
- Ṭāʾif, governed by ʿUthmān ibn Abī al-ʿĀṣ ath-Thaqafī.
- Ṣanʿāʾ, governed by Muhājir ibn Abī Umayyah.
- Ḥaḍramawt, governed by Ziyād ibn Labīd.
- Khawlān, a large tribe living in the eastern mountains of Yemen, governed by Yaʿlā ibn Umayyah.
- Zabīd, governed by Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī.
- Najrān, a place to the north of Yemen inhabited by tribes from the tribe of Banū ʿl-Hārith ibn Kaʿb ibn [ʿAmr ibn] ʿIllah from the Madhḥij, and Banū Dhuhl ibn Muzayqiyā from Azd. Banū ʿl-Hārith ibn Kaʿb under Yazīd ibn ʿAbd al-Madān ibn ad-Dayyān enjoyed leadership over Najrān during the Prophet's ﷺ time. Yazīd ibn ʿAbd al-Madān's brother, Ḥijr ibn ʿAbd al-Madān came as an envoy to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ through Khālīd ibn al-Walīd ﷺ. The governor of Najrān in the time of Abū Bakr ﷺ was Jarīr ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Bajalī.
- Bahrain, the coastal Arab lands overlooking the gulf, governed by ʿAlāʾ ibn al-Ḥaḍramī.
- Jurash, a district of Yemen, governed by ʿAbdullāh ibn Thawr.
- Dūmat al-Jandal, governed by ʿIyād ibn Ghanm.

The commander over the Muslim forces in Iraq was Muthannā ibn Hārithah ash-Shaybānī, who had his headquarters in Hīrah. The commander over the Muslim forces in the Levant was Khālīd ibn al-Walīd al-Qurashī al-Makhzūmī ﷺ.

The last words uttered by Abū Bakr ﷺ were: "Make me die a Muslim and

admit me with the righteous.” His wife, Asmā’ bint ‘Umayy <sup>ؓ</sup>, and his son, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān <sup>ؓ</sup>, bathed him and he was enshrouded in his two garments, in accordance with his wishes. The caliph succeeding him, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb <sup>ؓ</sup>, performed the funeral prayer over him. He was buried at night in ‘Ā’ishah’s room <sup>ؓ</sup>, behind the Messenger of Allah <sup>ؐ</sup> with his head placed in line with his shoulder <sup>ؓ</sup>. His son ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān <sup>ؓ</sup>, ‘Umar <sup>ؓ</sup>, ‘Uthmān <sup>ؓ</sup>, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf <sup>ؓ</sup> and Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubaydillāh <sup>ؓ</sup> went down into his grave to bury him.<sup>127</sup>

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127 Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 419–423; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 418–424.



## *The Caliphate of ‘Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb* ﷺ



### THE PROFILE OF ‘UMAR IBN AL-KHAṬṬĀB ﷺ

HE IS ‘UMAR IBN al-Khaṭṭāb ibn Nufayl ibn ‘Abd al-‘Uzzā ibn Riyāḥ ibn ‘Abdillāh ibn Qurṭ ibn Razāḥ ibn ‘Adī ibn Ka‘b ibn Luayy ibn Ghālīb ibn Fihr al-‘Adawī al-Qurashī. His lineage meets with that of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at Ka‘b ibn Lu‘ayy. His agnomen is Abū Ḥaḥṣ and his title is Fārūq. His mother is Ḥantamah bint Hishām ibn al-Mughīrah al-Makhzūmiyyah. She was the cousin of Khālīd ibn al-Walīd ﷺ.

‘Umar ﷺ was born thirteen years after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He grew up high-spirited and courageous, raised on the chauvinism of *jāhiliyyah*. When Islām arrived he was one of its foremost antagonists.<sup>128</sup>

When the Muslims emigrated to Abyssinia fearing tribulations, Allah ﷻ blessed ‘Umar ﷺ with Islām through the blessing of the supplication of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when he said: “O Allah! Strengthen Islām through ‘Umar.”<sup>129</sup> ‘Umar ﷺ came to Dar al-Arqam ibn Abī ‘l-Arqam. That is to say the house of Arqam ibn ‘Abd Manāf ibn Abī Jundub Asad ibn ‘Abdillāh ibn ‘Umar ibn Makhzūm, the house in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to meet with other Muslims in secrecy. He came to this house, embraced Islām, and urged the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to forsake concealing Islām and openly proclaim the religion. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then emerged with the Muslims in two lines,

128 Ibn Sa‘d, vol. 3, pp. 265–267; Ibn Khayyāt, vol. 1, p. 48; Ya‘qubī, vol. 2, p. 139; *al-Iṣābah*, no. 5738.

129 Aḥmad, vol. 2, p. 195; Tirmidhī (3682 and 3684); Ibn Mājah (105).

with ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ at the head of one line and Ḥamzah ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib at the head of the other. One could well imagine the distress of the Quraysh at this point, indeed it was so great that they conspired to kill ‘Umar ﷺ. However, the father of ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ ﷺ, ‘Āṣ ibn Wā’il ibn Hishām ibn Sa‘īd ibn Sahm protected him.<sup>130</sup>

After embracing Islām ‘Umar ﷺ began helping this religion with the power and strength that Allāh ﷻ blessed him with. ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd ﷺ said: “We continued to get stronger from the time ‘Umar ﷺ embraced Islām.”<sup>131</sup>

When Allāh ﷻ permitted the Muslims to emigrate to Madinah, they used to leave stealthily and in secrecy, except for ‘Umar ﷺ. When he decided to depart, he went to the Quraysh in their assembly and informed them of his intention.<sup>132</sup> He said: “If there is anyone who would like his mother to be bereaved of her son then he can meet me beyond this valley.” None had the courage to come for him.

<sup>130</sup> Bukhārī (3864) narrates the ḥadīth with regard to the protection which ‘Āṣ ibn Wā’il extended to ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ. Zayd ibn ‘Abdillāh ibn ‘Umar narrates from his father: “While ‘Umar was sitting in his house terrified, ‘Amr’s father, ‘Āṣ ibn Wā’il as-Sahmī came to him. He was wearing Ḥibari dress and a shirt that was edged with silk. He was from the Banū Sahm tribe who were our confederates in the days of ignorance. [After coming in] he asked: ‘What is it with you?’ He said: ‘Your people are saying that they will kill me if I embrace Islām.’ He said: ‘There is no way for them to do that.’ After he said that, I felt safe. ‘Āṣ then went out and met the people who had filled the valley. He asked them: ‘Where are you heading to?’ They replied: ‘We want to get this son of Khaṭṭāb who abandoned his religion.’ He said: ‘There is no way you can get to him.’ The people then went away.” See ḥadīth no. 3865 and *ar-Rawḍ al-Unuf*, vol. 2, p. 98.

<sup>131</sup> Narrated by Bukhārī, 3863, 3864. The Muslims were unable to pray near the Ka‘bah. When ‘Umar ﷺ embraced Islām, he fought the Quraysh till he and the Muslims could pray there. The Muslims gained a lot of strength by his Islām and that of Ḥamzah ﷺ. They could also recite the Qur’ān loudly whereas they were not able to do that previously. Islām thus spread and the Muslims increased in number. ‘Umar ﷺ played a major role in strengthening Islām, to the extent that ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd ﷺ said: “The Islām of ‘Umar was a victory, his emigration a source of help and his caliphate a source of mercy” (Ibn Sa‘d, vol. 3, p. 270; *al-Rawḍ al-Unuf*, vol. 2, p. 95; *Imtā‘ al-Asmā’* of Maqrizī, vol. 1, pp. 24–25).

<sup>132</sup> In comparing the emigration of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ with that of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ one might ask oneself the question: “Why did ‘Umar emigrate publicly, challenging the polytheists without any fear or dread; while the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ emigrated stealthily, taking every precaution to preserve his life? Can one attribute more courage to ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ than the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ?” The answer to this is that the action of ‘Umar ﷺ or any other Muslim other than the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ is a personal action which holds no legal proof. He may therefore choose whatever course of action he likes and which is commensurate with his bravery and faith in Allāh ﷻ.

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ on the other hand is a promulgator of laws. In other words, every action of his related to religion is law for us. It is for this reason that his Sunnah is the second source of Islamic law. Had he acted like ‘Umar ﷺ, the assumption would be that this was compulsory, or that being cautious, guarded and concealed at times of fear is unlawful. However Allāh ﷻ has established His Sharī‘ah in this world on the basis of cause and effect and for this reason the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ made use of all worldly means and avenues at his disposal in those circumstances. The precautionary measures which the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ adopted are hence legal steps which he took (Būṭī, *Fiqh as-Sīrah*, pp. 144–145).

‘Umar joined the Messenger of Allah in every battle, from Badr to Tabūk. He had his daughter Ḥafṣah marry the Messenger of Allah after her husband, Khunays ibn Ḥudhāfah ibn Qays ibn ‘Adī ibn Sahn, died from an injury which he suffered in the battle of Uḥud.

Amongst his feats is the statement of the Messenger of Allah about him: “While I was asleep, I drank [milk] until I was so sated that I saw the satiation flowing down my finger [or fingers], I then gave the milk to ‘Umar [to drink].” The Companions asked: “What is the meaning of this dream, O Messenger of Allah?” He replied: “Knowledge.”<sup>133</sup>

The Messenger of Allah also said: “I saw in my sleep that I was drawing a bucket from a well early in the morning. Abū Bakr came and drew one or two buckets [of water] with some fatigue, and Allah will forgive him. Then ‘Umar came and drew a large bucket [of water]. I never saw a man of talent doing such a marvellous job in his task, [he continued drawing water] until the people were fully slaked and sat down around the well.”<sup>134</sup> This Ḥadīth indicates the length of the caliphates of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar (i.e. that the caliphate of Abū Bakr would be short while that of ‘Umar would be long).

The Messenger of Allah addressed ‘Umar saying: “By He in whose hand is my life, when Satan sees you treading a path, he will most definitely tread a different path to yours.”<sup>135</sup>

The Messenger of Allah said: “There were those in the nations before you who were divinely inspired. If there is any such person in my community, it is ‘Umar.”<sup>136</sup>

The Messenger of Allah said: “While I was sleeping, some people with shirts were presented before me. There were some whose shirts reached their breasts, and some whose shirts were longer. ‘Umar was presented before me and his shirt was dragging on the ground.” The Companions asked: “What is your interpretation of this, O Messenger of Allah?” He replied: “Religion.”<sup>137</sup>

‘Umar would often make suggestions to the Messenger of Allah and the Qur’an would descend in agreement with him. Examples include the verses about the prisoners of war at Badr and the matter concerning the veiling of women (*ḥijāb*). When the Messenger of Allah passed away, ‘Umar was profoundly shaken despite his fortitude and strength, until he was saying: “By

<sup>133</sup> Bukhārī (3681), Muslim (2391), Tirmidhī (2285).

<sup>134</sup> Bukhārī (3682), Muslim (2392), Tirmidhī (2290), Aḥmad, vol. 2, p. 28 and vol. 5, p. 455.

<sup>135</sup> Bukhārī (3683), Muslim (2396).

<sup>136</sup> Bukhārī (3689), Muslim (2398), Aḥmad, vol. 6, p. 55; Tirmidhī (3694).

<sup>137</sup> Bukhārī (3691), Muslim (2390), Aḥmad, vol. 3, p. 86, and vol. 5, p. 374; Tirmidhī (2285), an-Nasā’ī, vol. 8, pp. 113–114, and vol. 2, p. 127.

Allah, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not pass away.” The Mother of the Believers, ‘Ā’ishah ؓ, narrates that ‘Umar ؓ said: “Nothing came to my mind except that [he did not pass away], and that Allah ﷻ would certainly raise him up so that he might chop off the hands and feet of certain people [i.e. the people that were saying he was dead].” When Abū Bakr ؓ arrived and admonished the people, ‘Umar ؓ submitted and accepted the truth. It seemed that Allah ﷻ willed that there should be some benefit in whatever the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did. ‘Umar ؓ threatened people when some of them showed traces of hypocrisy and Allah ﷻ brought them back by his threats. Abū Bakr ؓ then showed the people the way to guidance and taught them of their responsibility.<sup>138</sup> This is what the Mother of the Believers, ‘Ā’ishah ؓ, says in the narration of Bukhārī.<sup>139</sup>

‘Umar ؓ played a major role in the bower of Banī Sā‘idah when he hastened to pledge allegiance to Abū Bakr ؓ before any dissension could arise.<sup>140</sup> When Abū Bakr ؓ was caliph ‘Umar ؓ became his most influential advisor, so that Abū Bakr ؓ did not consider anyone else worthy of the caliphate after him. Thus he appointed him caliph and what a tremendous decision that was!

‘Umar ؓ was ambidextrous and tall, so that it seemed he was mounted on an animal. He was bald, very fair and of reddish complexion. He was grey-haired and would dye his beard yellow and comb his hair.

He had the following children: ‘Abdullāh, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Akbar, Ḥaḥṣah (the mother of the Believers), ‘Ubaydullāh who was killed at Şifīn on the side of Mu‘āwiyah, Fāṭimah, ‘Āṣim, Ruqayyah, Zayd, and ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Awsaṭ.

‘Umar ؓ was given the title “al-Fārūq.”<sup>141</sup> He was given the pledge of alle-

138 *Sirah* of Ibn Hishām, vol. 4, p. 655; *ad-Durar*, p. 272; *Ar-Rawḍ al-Unuḥ*, vol. 4, pp. 271–273; *Uyūn at-Tawārikh*, vol. 1, p. 468; *Ḥadā’iq al-Anwār* of Ibn ad-Dayba’, vol. 2, pp. 757–758.

139 Bukhārī (3667–3670).

140 ‘Umar ؓ said to Abū Bakr ؓ: “Extend your hand, O Abū Bakr!” He extended his hand and ‘Umar pledged his allegiance to him. The Emigrants then pledged their allegiance and then the Helpers pledged their allegiance. ‘Umar ؓ had delivered an eloquent speech to the Muslims which had a great effect on their hearts and which reminded them of the excellence of Abū Bakr ؓ. In sum, ‘Umar’s ؓ call to pledge allegiance to Abū Bakr ؓ was the most correct thing and the height of intelligence (see *Sirah* Ibn Hishām, vol. 4, pp. 656–661).

141 “He who separates truth from falsehood, or belief from disbelief” (*al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*, p. 940). ‘Umar ؓ said to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ: “Why should we conceal our religion when we are with the truth and they are with falsehood?” The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ replied: “O ‘Umar! We are few in number and you can see the hardships which we experience.” ‘Umar ؓ said: “I take an oath by He who sent you with the truth, there shall be no assembly in which I sat as an unbeliever without me sitting in there as a believer.” He then came out in two lines with Ḥamzah ؓ at the head of one line and ‘Umar ؓ at the head of another line. As they came along, fine desert-dust was flying up that was as [fine] as grinded [flour] (This is Ibn Athīr’s translation in *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth*, and is quoted in *Lisān al-Arab* as well) till they eventually entered the Mosque [al-Ḥaram]. The Quraysh looked at ‘Umar ؓ and at Ḥamzah ؓ and were afflicted

giance as caliph on the morning that Abū Bakr passed away. When he was given the pledge, he climbed the pulpit and said: “The flock is like a camel pierced in its nose, it follows its driver, so the driver must look where he leads his flock. As for me I swear by the Lord of the Ka‘bah that I will most certainly lead you along the [straight] path.”<sup>142</sup>

## THE IRAQĪ CAMPAIGN DURING THE ERA OF ‘UMAR

When Abū Bakr passed away, Muthannā ibn Hārithah, the commander of the Iraqi forces, was in Madīnah asking for assistance and when ‘Umar became caliph, he assigned people to join him. The first to respond to this call were Abū ‘Ubayd ibn Mas‘ūd ath-Thaqafi, Sa‘d ibn ‘Ubayd al-Anṣārī and Salīḥ ibn Qays. ‘Umar appointed the first to respond, Abū ‘Ubayd ibn Mas‘ūd, as leader over the group. He said to him:

Listen to the Companions of the Messenger of Allah, include them in all affairs. Do not hasten in carrying out tasks but proceed cautiously with deliberation. This is war and the most worthy person for it is he who is deliberate, seizes an opportunity when he sees it and desists when it is prudent to do so. The only reason for my not appointing Salīḥ as leader is his rashness. Making haste in war when there is no real reason for it leads to destruction. By Allah were it not for his haste I would have appointed him as leader.<sup>143</sup>

He then said:

You are going to a land of scheming, deception, treachery and conceit. You are going to a people who are quite audacious in committing evil, indeed they are fully conversant with it. They feign to have forgotten what good is and are ignorant of it. So be wary of your actions. Safeguard your tongue and do not disclose your secrets. When a person keeps a secret and is scrupulous about doing so, he is protected and will never experience anything disagreeable but if he does not safeguard it, he places himself at risk of being destroyed.<sup>144</sup>

by a sense of distress they had never experienced before. The Messenger of Allah gave him the title of Fārūq on that day (Ibn Sa‘d, vol. 3, pp. 270–271; Qurṭubī, vol. 16, p. 325; *Ṣīfat aṣ-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 1, pp. 272–273; *Tārīkh al-Khamīs*, vol. 1, p. 296).

<sup>142</sup> Ṭabarī, vol. 3, p. 433; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, p. 427.

<sup>143</sup> *Al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, p. 433; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 520.

<sup>144</sup> Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 521–522.

ʿUmar ﷺ then ordered Muthannā to proceed until the army caught up with him. He also ordered him to enlist those former apostates who had repented sincerely. Muthannā moved at great speed and reached Ḥīrah within ten days. In the meantime, the Persians were preoccupied with internal conflicts over who should become their king. They eventually agreed to the leadership of Būrān, the daughter of Khusro, and that Rustam should execute her orders until they found a male from Khusro's family fit to be king.

Rustam made preparations to fight the Muslims and equipped several armies for this purpose. He sent an army to Furāt Bādaqlā with Jābān as commander. Another was sent to Kaskar (to the west of the Tigris, between Baghdād and Baṣrah where the city of Wāsiṭ now lies) with Narsī as its commander. Another army was sent to engage Muthannā in combat. He also sent a message to the farmers to rise up against the Muslims, which they duly did.

When all this information reached Muthannā, he left Ḥīrah and moved to Khaffān (a region inhabited by lions near Kūfah), then waited for Abū ʿUbayd who arrived a month after him. Meanwhile a large army of Persians gathered and made camp at Namāriq, to the north of present-day Wāsiṭ.

#### THE BATTLE OF NAMĀRIQ

Abū ʿUbayd advanced towards them and engaged them in a fierce battle until he overcame them. Jābān and Mardān Shāh were on the right flank of the army and were captured. Abū ʿUbayd issued the order and Mardān Shāh was killed but Jābān deceived his captor and managed to get him to guarantee his life. The Muslims took him to Abū ʿUbayd and some suggested that he be killed but Abū ʿUbayd said: "I fear Allah's retribution for killing a person whose life has been guaranteed by a Muslim. The Muslims are like a single body. When something is incumbent on one, it becomes incumbent on all."

In the meantime, those who were defeated went to Kaskar and joined the commander Narsī. The news of this defeat reached Būrān and Rustam so they sent a huge army under the command of Jālīnūs to help the people of Kaskar. So Abū ʿUbayd advanced towards Kaskar and engaged them before Jālīnūs arrived and inflicted a crushing defeat.

Abū ʿUbayd then sent his squadrons towards Bārūsmā, Zawābī and the Jawbar River.<sup>145</sup> These military squadrons defeated all the Pērsians who had rallied in these areas and their leaders made peace agreements and paid their dues in cash.

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<sup>145</sup> Bārūsmā is a place to the north of Wāsiṭ. Zāb is the name of a river between Surā' and Wāsiṭ and another river near it, which both had small towns along the bank. Together they are referred to as Zābān.

The leaders of the squadrons came to Abū ʿUbayd with various foods that were beloved to the Persians and he asked them: "Did you give the [ordinary] soldiers something like this?" They replied: "No we have not had the chance to, but we will do so soon." Abū ʿUbayd said: "I have no need for these foods. What a terrible person Abū ʿUbayd would be if he took something and deprived people who came with him from his own country. By Allah I will not eat anything which you brought, nor anything from the booty which Allah bestowed on us; I will eat only what the average soldier eats."<sup>146</sup>

Muslims should reflect on the ways of their predecessors, may Allah be pleased with them.

Abū ʿUbayd then advanced to face Jālīnūs (Galen) at Bāqusyāthāyn Bārūsma where he fought him until he fled and his army was overcome. Abū ʿUbayd sent the glad tidings and one fifth of the booty to ʿUmar. In the booty were Narsī dates which none ate but the Persian kings or those they gave them to, and which none but they themselves planted. Abū ʿUbayd wrote to ʿUmar saying: "Allah fed us things which the Khusro used to reserve for themselves. It was my desire that you see these foods so that you may thank Allah for His bounty and grace."<sup>147</sup>

When Jālīnūs returned vanquished to Rustam, he prepared another mighty army under the command of Bahman Jādhawayh, popularly known as Dhu ʿl-Ḥājib. He of all the Persians had the biggest flag which was named Dirafsh Kābyān. It was twelve feet long and eight feet wide and was made of tiger skins. When Abū ʿUbayd heard of this he returned to Ḥīrah. Jālīnūs continued until he stopped over at Qis an-Nāṭif on the Euphrates. Abū ʿUbayd advanced and stopped his army directly opposite the Persian army with the Euphrates in between them so the Persians built a bridge across it.

#### THE BATTLE OF THE BRIDGE (JISR)

Bahman gave the Muslims the choice between crossing the bridge or the Persians crossing over to them. Abū ʿUbayd decided to cross. Men of judgement and foresight advised him not to but he refused their advice saying: "The Persians cannot be more daring in the face of death than us," so the Muslims crossed over and a severe battle ensued.<sup>148</sup>

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When other rivers that are around these two are included, they are referred to as Zawābī, the plural of Zāb. The Jawbar River is one of the tributaries to the south of the gulf.

<sup>146</sup> Ṭabarī, vol. 3, p. 452; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, p. 437.

<sup>147</sup> Ṭabarī, vol. 3, p. 451.

<sup>148</sup> Abū ʿUbayd forgot the advice of ʿUmar and his warning of a land of plotting and treachery.

The Persians had many elephants in their army which terrified the Muslim horses and the battle turned against them. Abū 'Ubayd ordered: "Trap the elephants, cut off their girths and throw their riders off them!" Saying this, Abū 'Ubayd went to jump onto a white elephant to go about what he had just commanded but the elephant struck him with its front foot and he fell to the ground and was trampled to death. His second in command went to take the flag from him, fighting to defend himself until he was able to take the flag. He was then killed. Seven people from the tribe of Thaqif took the flag and were killed one after the other. Muthannā then took it. He saw that the battle had turned against the Muslims, that some of them were defeated and that the bridge had been cut off. One of the Muslims had cut it off so that they did not flee but this did not stop them.<sup>149</sup> Instead they jumped into the Euphrates and some drowned while others managed to save themselves. Muthannā called out to those who had crossed over to re-tie the bridge then he ordered the Muslims to cross over saying to them: "Cross over calmly because we are behind you. Do not get agitated and end up drowning yourselves." He remained behind until they all crossed and then crossed at their rear.

The last to be killed on the bridge was Salīṭ ibn Qays. About four thousand Muslims died in the episode, either in battle or by drowning. Many of those who crossed over left Muthannā out of shame that they were put to flight and he was left injured and with a small number of his men.

Allah ﷻ prevented Bahman from crossing the bridge in pursuit of the Muslims because of news he received of differences that had arisen among the Persians separating them into two groups: those that supported Rustam and those that supported Firuzān. Bahman thus gave up his intention of pursuing the Muslims.

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He also forgot his advice to guard secrets, because they discussed the pros and cons of crossing over in the presence of Ḥuṣayy (Mardān Shāh), the Persian envoy of the commander Bahman Jādhawayh. This envoy gauged the great moment and consequence of this situation. Being extremely conniving he wanted to tempt Abū 'Ubayd and so he said: "The Persians are accusing you of cowardice." How could he have knowledge of this when he never had any prior experience with the Muslims? This only served to increase Abū 'Ubayd's determination and his insistence on crossing over so he rejected the suggestions of his companions. He took an oath that he would cross the Euphrates and show the Persians.

It is related that Dūmah (the wife of Abū 'Ubayd who was a righteous woman) saw in a dream that she had a fan with her and that a man from the heavens descended with a utensil containing a drink from Paradise. Abū 'Ubayd drank from it, then his son, Jābir, drank, and then seven of his family members from the tribe of Thaqif. She informed Abū 'Ubayd of her dream. He said to her: "This is martyrdom." All those whom she had named were martyred in this battle (*Aṭ-Ṭariq ila 'l-Madā'in*, pp. 401–402).

149 He was 'Abdullāh ibn Marthad ath-Thaqafī. He was brought to Muthannā who struck him and asked: "Why did you do that?" He replied: "So that they continue fighting" (Ṭabarī, vol. 3, p. 457). It is stated in *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, p. 439, that 'Abdullāh said: "O people! You should either die for the cause for which your leaders die or win victory."

When the news of the defeat and the news that many of the people had scattered out of shame reached ʿUmar he said: “O Allah! Every Muslim is free from obligation to me and I am the support of every Muslim. May Allah show mercy on Abū ʿUbayd. Had he come to me I would have supported him.”<sup>150</sup>

#### THE BATTLE OF BUWAYB

ʿUmar did then help Muthannā by sending many armies out to him. Among them were Jarīr ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Bajalī and his people and ʿIṣmah ibn ʿAbdillāh ad-Ḍabbī and his people. He also asked the former apostates who had repented sincerely to go out to battle and every time someone from among them came to him, he would send him to Muthannā.

As for Rustam and Firuzān who were disputing with each other over leadership of the Persians, when they heard of what ʿUmar was doing, they dispatched an army under Mihrān al-Fārisī<sup>151</sup> to Hīrah. Muthannā then wrote to Jarīr, ʿIṣmah and their soldiers telling them to meet him at Buwayb<sup>152</sup> (next to present day Kūfah). Muthannā proceeded till he met them at Buwayb. They faced the army of Mihrān with the Euphrates River between them. Muthannā decided to let the Persians cross over to the Muslims, for a Muslim does not fall into the same trap twice. He conveyed to the Persians that they should cross over, and this they did.

In the meantime, Muthannā straightened his battle lines and started to encourage and advise the Muslims saying to them: “I hope that you are not defeated today because of your strength. By Allah, truly whatever pleases me for myself today is precisely what I desire for each one of you!” He displayed utmost sincerity and integrity to the people with his words and actions, and remained with them in both ease and hardship. After this he said: “I am going to cry *Allāhu akbar* three times. When I say it the fourth time, you must attack!”

When he shouted *Allāhu akbar* the first time the Persians rushed towards them. Muthannā saw a gap in the battle lines of the Banū ʿIjl and sent a message to them saying: “The commander conveys peace to you and says to you: ‘Do not disgrace the Muslims today.’” They straightened their battle lines and Muthannā laughed in happiness at their obedience. The battle got going, Muthannā attack-

<sup>150</sup> Ṭabarī, vol. 3, p. 458.

<sup>151</sup> It is stated in Ṭabarī, vol. 3, p. 461, and *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, p. 442 that he was Hamadhānī.

<sup>152</sup> Buwayb was the name of a river in ʿIrāq at Kūfah. A battle took place there between the Muslims and Persians during the caliphate of Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq. This river served as a collecting point for water when the water level of the Euphrates River rose and war ships would be repaired here (*al-Azminah wa ʿt-Tārikh*, vol. 2, p. 1030).

ing the heart of the polytheists where Mihrān was. The two flanks did battle against each other. Neither one of the flanks was able to achieve victory for its commander, neither the Muslims nor the Persians but the central division of the Muslim army overpowered the heart of the polytheist army, devastating it and slaying Mihrān.

When the two flanks of the Muslim army saw this, they advanced towards those who were before them, forcing the Persians to turn back on their heels. Completely routed, they struggled with one another to get over the bridge but Muthannā reached it before them and barred them from crossing so they scattered, climbing and falling. Muthannā used to count this a mistake saying: "You shouldn't corner a person unable to defend himself."<sup>153</sup>

Muthannā then dispatched a squadron to pursue the Persians which reached Sābāt, a place in Madā'in, and conquered it. After this, the path for the Muslims between Ḥīrah and the banks of the Tigris became safe and secure.

#### KHANĀFIS AND SŪQ BAGHDĀD

Muthannā then proceeded in the direction of Khanāfis (near Anbār) and Sūq Baghdād, after appointing Bashīr ibn al-Khaṣāṣiyyah over Ḥīrah. He attacked both these places and continued until he stopped at the Sālīḥīn River in Anbār. He then dispatched a squadron to fight a group of Arabs in Šiffin, a place to the north-west of the Euphrates (now part of the district of Aleppo). The squadron duly defeated the Arabs there.

With this victory the countryside of Iraq came under the control of the Muslims, who took the *jizyah* tax from the non-Muslims and received the proceeds from all the lands they conquered. The Persians had no authority whatsoever west of the Euphrates. Moreover, their authority over the gulf lands weakened as the masses were greatly affected by this and saw their kingdom starting to wane. They realised that their fall was imminent if they did not remedy the situation and strive firstly to resolve the internal conflicts which had almost got the better of them.

#### THE CROWNING OF YAZDAJIRD

The senior Persians went to Rustam and Fīrūzān and said to them: "This dissent and division of yours is helping the Arabs gain victory over us. If you do not bring an end to this discord and pay attention to your enemy, we will vent our anger on you even before the kingdom of the Persians is destroyed." The two leaders concurred with these seniors and began searching for a person from

<sup>153</sup> *Al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, p. 444.

the family of Khusro who would be fit to ascend the throne. After much effort, they identified one of his sons named Yazdajird and crowned him king. The commanders and all the subjects were pleased by this and they all obeyed him. He drew up armies to defend the borders and reclaim whatever they had lost; one to Ubullah, one to Ḥīrah and another to Anbār. These places were the most important border posts of the Persians in the western region of Iraq.

When this news reached Muthannā, he conveyed it to ʿUmar who replied: “By Allah, I will strike the kings of the non-Arabs by means of the kings of the Arabs.”<sup>154</sup> He left out no leader, no man of sound opinion, honour or strength, and no orator or poet in sending the Arabs against the non-Arabs. He wrote to Muthannā ordering him to evacuate Persian lands and to spread out in all the oases until all the armies rallied together. He also ordered him not to leave anyone in the Rabīʿ and Muḍar who had the courage to fight, and no horseman without enlisting him either voluntarily or by force.

Muthannā thus took his army to the borders of the Persian lands. The first of his army was at Ḥillah and the last of it at Ghuday, the mountain near Baṣrah, each awaiting the call to the arms of the other. ʿUmar wrote to his governors instructing them to send all those who had the courage to fight, possessed a horse, had weapons or was of sound opinion. ʿUmar left for the pilgrimage in 13 AH, performed it and returned to Madīnah. All the troops that were sent by the governors came to him there while those who were closer to Iraq joined Muthannā.

#### SAʿD IS APPOINTED COMMANDER AND

#### ʿUMAR’S ADVICE TO HIM

Once a huge army rallied around ʿUmar he went out with them after appointing ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib in charge of Madīnah. He stopped over at Ḍirār, a place near Madīnah, and encamped there. The Muslims did not know what his intention was, was he going to travel to Iraq or was he going to remain behind? ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān asked him about his actions. He sought their counsel as to whether he should remain behind and appoint someone else as commander of the army or whether he should command the army himself. The masses said: “Travel, and take us along with you.”

The senior Companions of the Messenger of Allah however, were of the opinion that he should remain behind and appoint a person of sagacity and courage as commander. He accepted and appointed Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ

<sup>154</sup> Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 525.

az-Zuhri al-Qurashi رضي الله عنه, the maternal uncle of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, commander of the army.

Amongst the words of advice which ‘Umar رضي الله عنه gave him were the following:

O Sa’d ibn Umm Sa’d! Do not be overconfident of Allah’s aid by the fact that you are addressed as the maternal uncle of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Companion of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Surely Allah ﷻ does not wipe out evil with evil, rather He wipes out evil with good. Allah has no relationship with anyone except through his obedience. All people are equal in the religion of Allah ﷻ, they are His servants and only differ with respect to the well-being He bestows and the rewards they acquire through obedience to Him. You should therefore look to all those things which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did persistently and persevere with them yourself.<sup>155</sup>

‘Umar رضي الله عنه dispatched him with 4,000 troops, then sent a similar number after them. He also sent the following missive to Sa’d رضي الله عنه:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. I command you and all the troops that are with you to fear Allah ﷻ in all circumstances. Surely the fear of Allah ﷻ is the best of means against the enemy and the surest strategy in war. I command you and those with you to be more wary of your own selves than of your enemy, truly the sins of an army are more frightening to them than the enemy. The Muslims are assisted by their enemy’s disobedience to Allah ﷻ. Were it not for that we would not have the strength to fight them. Our numbers are not equivalent to theirs nor are our resources. If we equal them in disobedience to Allah ﷻ they will be stronger than us. If not, we will be helped through our virtue and not through our strength.

You should know that wherever you are travelling, there are guards [angels] appointed by Allah ﷻ who know what you are doing. You should therefore be prudent on account of them [and do not sin for they record all your doings]. Do not commit any acts of disobedience while you are fighting for the cause of Allah ﷻ. Do not say: “Our enemy is worse than us and he will therefore not have the upper hand over us.” There were times when nations who were worse were given authority over those who were better. Like the unbelieving Magians who were empowered over Banī Isrā’īl when the latter committed acts of disobedience. The Magians swept through their cities, and it was a promise fulfilled. Ask Allah ﷻ to help you against yourselves just as you ask Him to help you against your enemy, and I ask that from Allah ﷻ for both you and me.

Be gentle on the Muslims when it comes to travel and do not work them to

155 Ṭabarī, vol. 3, p. 483; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, p. 35; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 525.

such an extent that you tire them. Do not shorten their stay at a place in which they find ease, so that when they reach their enemy they are energetic after the journey. This is because they are travelling to enemies residing [in their own country], whose lives and lands are protected. Stop every Friday for a day and a night so that your troops may rest and revitalise themselves and put down their weapons and belongings. Make their camps away from the villages of *dhimmīs* and those with whom peace was made. Do not permit your companions to go to these villages except those (companions) whose religion you have full confidence in. At the same time the *dhimmīs* should not be deprived of anything, because they enjoy a sanctity and guarantee [of their wealth, lives and honour] which you are bound to uphold, just as they are bound to exercise patience in their position as *dhimmīs*. Afford them goodness as long as they exercise patience. You cannot triumph against your enemy by oppressing those who made peace with you.

Once you have crossed into enemy territory, send out spies before you and be mindful of them. You should have with you Arabs or local people in whose advice and truthfulness you trust. The report of a liar cannot help you, even if he may be honest in some matters. As for a treacherous person, he is a spy against you and not for you. When you approach the land of the enemy, you should have many scouts and squadrons dispatched in front of you. The squadrons to sever all help and support to the enemy while the scouts monitor the enemy's weak spots. Choose strong and witty ones from your companions as scouts and select swift horses for them. When they meet the enemy the first thing the enemy will see is their strength. As for the squadrons, choose people who can wage war and exercise patience in adversity. Do not choose anyone on the basis of mere whim. If you do this, your loss in power of discernment will have been greater than this partiality you displayed towards close companions. Do not send a scout or a squadron to a place where you fear defeat, loss or damage.

Once you sight the enemy, bring together all the men who are further away, your scouts and your squadrons, and combine your strategies and strengths. Then do not hasten in attacking the enemy, unless you are forced to, until you see their weak point, their fighters, and until you know the land as well as those who live on it. If you do so, you will be able to do to the enemy what they can do to you. Make sure your armies' (night) patrols are vigilant, and be as wary as possible from being attacked off guard by night. When any prisoner who does not enjoy a guarantee of peace is brought to you, strike off his head so that you may instil terror in Allah's enemies, your enemies. Allah is guardian over you and those with you. Allah is the guarantor of your victory over your enemy, and He alone is asked for help.<sup>156</sup>

156 Tabarī, vol. 3, pp. 483–484.

When Sa'd  reached Zarūd he received the news that Muthannā had passed away from an injury that he had and that he had appointed Bashīr ibn al-Khaṣāṣiyyah as commander over his army. Sa'd  then combined the army of Muthannā with his army which numbered eight thousand and encamped at Sharāf, then set the army in order and appointed commanders. He appointed a sergeant over every ten soldiers and appointed long-time Muslims to hold the flags. He arranged the troops into vanguard, rear, two flanks and scouts. He appointed Zuhrah ibn al-Ḥawiyyah as leader of the vanguard, with the troops ending at a place called 'Udhayb.<sup>157</sup> He appointed 'Abdullāh ibn al-Mu'tamm as leader of the right flank, Shuraḥbīl ibn as-Simṭ al-Kindī leader of the left flank, Khālīd ibn 'Urfuṭah his deputy, 'Āsim ibn 'Amr leader of the rear, Sawād ibn Mālik leader of the scouts, Salmān ibn Rabī'ah al-Bāhili leader of those carrying bare swords, Ḥammāl ibn Mālik al-Asadī leader of the infantry, 'Abdullāh ibn Dhī 'l-Sahmayn al-Ḥanafī leader of the cavalry, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Rabī'ah al-Bāhili judge, Ziyād ibn Abī Sufyān scribe and Salmān al-Fārisī  as forerunner and caller. All these appointments were made under the order of 'Umar .

#### THE DESCENT TO QĀDISIYYAH

Sa'd  then descended to Qādisiyyah<sup>158</sup> (a village near Kūfah where the pilgrims of Kūfah stop over during their journey to Makkah) and 'Atīq, one of the tributaries of the Euphrates in line with Qanṭarah (a village which has a bridge over one of the tributaries of the Euphrates and is therefore known by this name which means bridge).

'Umar  wrote to Sa'd  saying: "If any of you insincerely offers peace to any of the non-Arabs by openly proposing it, or by making some kind of sign or verbal statement which is considered as such by them, then you should treat them as though they are given peace and this offer has been fulfilled. A mistaken promise that is kept will ensure survival but a mistaken act of treachery will bring destruction. This will make you weak and your enemy strong."

Sa'd  remained in Qādisiyyah for one month without any news of the Persians so he sent squadrons to the area between Kaskar and Anbār. They attacked those with whom no peace agreement had been agreed and those who had broken the compact of peace. The people of the rural areas sent a message to Yazda-

<sup>157</sup> A place near Qādisiyyah. A place near Baṣra and another near Faramā in Egypt have the same name (*Muḥjam al-Buldān*, vol. 4, p. 92).

<sup>158</sup> A place to the east of the Euphrates and to the south of Kūfah on the edge of the desert where the battle of Qādisiyyah took place.

jird informing him of what the Muslims had done and said to him that if he did not send anyone to defend them, they would surrender. Yazdajird sent a message to Rustam ordering him to prepare to command a huge army to fight the Muslims. He obeyed the orders, departing and encamping at Sābāt. He only did so under compulsion however, for he was actually of the opinion that they should come to terms with the Muslims and not fight them until they become weak.

This news reached Sa’d who conveyed it to ‘Umar. ‘Umar replied saying: “Do not let the news you receive from them worry you. Seek assistance from Allah and place your trust in Him. Send articulate people who possess intelligence and courage to call him to Islām. Allah will make this invitation to Islām a cause of abasement for them.”<sup>159</sup>

#### YAZDAJIRD IS INVITED TO ISLĀM

Sa’d sent a group of notables to call Yazdajird to Islām which included Nu’mān ibn Muqarrin, Qays<sup>160</sup> ibn Zurārah, Ash‘ath ibn Qays, Furāt ibn Ḥayyān, ‘Āsim ibn ‘Amr, ‘Amr ibn Ma’dikarib and Mughīrah ibn Shu‘bah. When they reached Madā’in, they were taken to Yazdajird. He asked them through an interpreter: “What drove you to attack us and to enter our country? Is it because we were occupied with our own affairs that you had the courage to attack?”

Nu’mān ibn Muqarrin spoke on behalf of the group:

Allah showed mercy on us and sent a Messenger to us who enjoined us to do good and prohibited us from evil, promising us that if we responded positively to his call, we would enjoy the best of this world and the Hereafter. From every tribe a group joined him and another group shunned him. He then ordered that we commence with the Arabs that had opposed him and they joined him either under compulsion, and were subsequently delighted by him, or willingly and thus only grew happier with him. Thus we all recognised the superiority of his message over the enmity and constriction which we had been living in. He then ordered us to go to our neighbouring nations in order to invite them to justice, thus we invite you to our religion. It is a religion which extols all good and condemns all evil. If you refuse, you may choose the lesser evil, the *jizyah*. But if you refuse this too, we will wage war against you. If you accept our religion, we will leave the Book of Allah amongst you and we will remain with you till you rule by its injunctions. We will then leave you and you can see to your own affairs in your country. If you

<sup>159</sup> Ṭabari: vol. 3, p. 495; *Al-Kāmil* vol. 2, p. 456; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, p. 38.

<sup>160</sup> The name Qays is given in the original as it is in Ibn Khaldūn as well. However other books give his name as Mughīrah.

pay the *jizyah*, we will accept it from you and we will protect you. If not, we will fight you.<sup>161</sup>

Yazdajird responded: "I do not know of any nation that was as wretched, disunited and as small in number as yours. We used to charge the villages on our borders to deal with you. You could never have hoped to stand up to the Persians. If it is delusion that has brought you here, then don't ever be deluded by us. If it is hardship that has forced you to come here, we will apportion food for you until you come into prosperity again. We will honour you, feed you, and appoint someone over you who will be kind to you."

Qays ibn Zurārah stood up and said: "As for our terrible condition which you mentioned, it was as you said, if not worse." He then spoke about the life of the Arabs and Allah's mercy on them by sending the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to them. He made a similar statement to that made by Nu'mān then said: "Either you accept, in your lowly state, to pay the *jizyah*, or you face the sword. Otherwise save yourself by embracing Islām."

Yazdajird said: "Were it not for the fact that envoys are not killed I would have put you to death. You will get nothing from me." He then called for a load of earth to be brought and said to his people: "Place it on the most honourable of them and drive him out, until he leaves by the gate of Madā'in." 'Āṣim ibn 'Amr stood up and said: "I am the most honourable", took the earth, went to his horse and mounted it. When he reached Sa'd ؓ, he said to him: "Glad tidings! By Allah, Allah has given us the keys to their kingdom."

Rustam then departed from Sābāṭ with his awesome army which numbered over one hundred thousand. When he passed by Kūthā, a village between Madā'in and Bābil, an Arab met him. Rustam said to him: "Why have you come here? What do you want from us?" He replied: "We have come to realise Allah's promise to us of taking over your country and your children if you refuse to embrace Islām." Rustam asked: "What if you are killed before you can realise this?" He replied: "Whoever of us is killed shall enter Paradise. And Allah will fulfil His promise for those who survive, we have full conviction in this." Rustam said: "Have we been lowered and placed in your hands?" The Arab said: "Your [evil] deeds lowered you and Allah made you subdued because of them. You should not be deceived by what you see around you [i.e. the large numbers of your army]. You are not fighting men; you are fighting your fate." Rustam was angered and murdered him. When he passed with his army through Burs (a

161 Ṭabarī: vol. 3, pp. 498–499, *al-Kāmil*: vol. 2, p. 456–457, *al-Bidāyah*: vol. 7, p. 41, Ibn Khaldūn: vol. 2, p. 527.

village between Kūfah and Ḥillah), his soldiers captured the children, stole their possessions, drank wine and raped the women. The people of Burs complained to Rustam who said to his people: "By Allah, that Arab was right. By Allah, it is our deeds that have subjected us. By Allah, the Arabs and these people (who sided with the Arabs) are displaying better character than you."

He then proceeded till he came to Ḥirah and he reprimanded the seniors for submitting to the Muslims. Ibn Buqaylah said to him: "You cannot show weakness in helping us and at the same time reprimand us for saving ourselves."

When Sa'd, the commander of the Muslim army, heard about Rustam, he sent 'Amr ibn Ma'dikarib az-Zabīdī and Ṭulayḥah ibn Khuwaylid al-Asadī with ten other men in order to gather information about the Persian army. They only travelled a short distance when they spotted the camels of the enemy pasturing on elevated lands, then they all returned except Ṭulayḥah who continued until he actually penetrated the enemy army and learnt what he had to learn before returning to Sa'd and informing him of all that he saw.<sup>162</sup>

## THE BATTLE OF QĀDISIYYAH

### DISCUSSIONS WITH RUSTAM

Rustam advanced with his army from Ḥirah until he descended into Qādisiyyah via the 'Atīq bridge. He positioned the army directly before the Muslim camp, coming between them and the river. The Persians had thirty three elephants. Upon arriving he sent a message to Sa'd to send a person whom he could speak to. Sa'd sent Rib'ī ibn 'Āmir to him. Rib'ī came to him while Rustam was seated on a bed made of gold, having laid out carpets and cushions woven with gold. Rib'ī approached on his horse, his sword wrapped in a rag and his spear attached by a cloth. When he reached the carpet, he walked onto it with his horse then dismounted and tied it to two cushions by splitting them in two and placing the rope into them. He then took the woollen wrap of his camel and wrapped himself in it. The guards asked him to remove his weapons but he said: "Had I come to you of my own accord, I would have done so on your order. However, you called me [so I will not remove them]." He moved forward, leaning on his spear and taking small steps, tearing the carpet as he walked along. He went right up close to Rustam and sat on the ground, staking his spear in the carpet and saying: "We do not sit on your fancy seats." Rustam asked: "Why have you

<sup>162</sup> Ṭabarī: vol. 3, pp. 480–514; *al-Kāmil*: vol. 2, pp. 450–461; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, pp. 37–42; Ibn Khaldūn: vol. 2, pp. 524–529; *al-Futūḥāt al-Islāmiyyah*, vol. 1, pp. 80–88.

come here?" He replied: "Allah brought us here. He sent us in order to remove those who wish to be removed from the worship of slaves to the worship of Allah, from restriction in this world to wide expanse, from the injustice of other ways of life to the justice of Islām. Allah sent His Messenger with His religion to His creation. Whoever embraces it, we shall accept it from him, return, and leave him to his land. Whoever refuses, we shall fight him till we achieve Paradise or victory."

Rustam said: "I have heard what you said. Are you prepared to wait a while for us to come to a decision?" He replied: "Yes. From among the directives of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is that we should not give the enemy a respite of more than three days, and so we will hold off for three days. You decide on what you want to do from the following three options at the end of the period: embrace Islām and we will leave you and your land; pay the *jizyah*, which we will accept from you, and protect and help you when you are in need; the third option is war on the fourth day, unless you attack us before that. I guarantee this on behalf of my companions." Rustam said: "Are you their leader?" He replied: "No. However, the Muslims are as a single body. The lowest of them can grant safety on behalf of the highest of them." He then turned and departed.

Rustam conferred in privacy with his aides. He said to them: "Did you ever hear a speech like this?" They responded by expressing disdain for the Muslim representative but Rustam exclaimed: "Woe on you! I am looking at his intelligence, speech and character. The Arabs do not bother about clothing but they are very particular about noble descent."

On the second day after making camp at Qādisiyyah Rustam sent a message to Sa'd ﷺ saying: "Send this man to us", so Sa'd ﷺ sent Ḥudhayfah ibn Miḥṣan al-Ghaṭafānī. Ḥudhayfah's actions and conversation with Rustam were no different from those of Rib'ī, and this is nothing to be surprised about since they were both given drink from one source: the religion of Islām. Rustam said to Ḥudhayfah: "Why did the first one [Rib'ī] not come to us?" He replied: "Our commander deals equally with us in all matters and it is now my turn." Rustam inquired: "When does the agreed period end?" and Ḥudhayfah responded "After three days, starting yesterday."

On the third day Rustam sent a message to Sa'd ﷺ asking him to send a man to him. So he sent Mughīrah ibn Shu'bah who went to him and when he was before him sat with him on his couch. Rustam's aids advanced towards Mughīrah, pulling him away and he said to them: "We thought you to be intelligent people, but now I see you as the most foolish. We Arabs do not enslave one another unless we are fighting one another. I had thought that you cared for your own people like we care for our own people. The best thing you have done

for me is show me that some of you are lords over others, and that this state of affairs cannot continue among your people. I did not come to you on my own but you invited me here and today I have realised that you are to be vanquished and that a kingdom cannot exist with such ways and such thinking.”

The subjects said: “By Allah the Arab is correct” and those representing the farmers said: “He said something which our slaves have always expressed. May Allah destroy our leaders who belittled this nation [the Arabs].”

Rustam then delivered a speech aggrandizing the Persians and deriding the Arabs, mentioning the terrible condition and worthless livelihood the Arabs had to suffer with. Mughīrah ﷺ said: “As for the terrible condition, poverty and disagreement which you describe, we acknowledge all that and do not deny it. But the world is a place of ups and downs and adversity is followed by prosperity. If you were to be grateful for what Allah ﷻ has given you, your gratitude would not suffice for all that you received. Your lack of gratitude has now brought you to a change of fortune. Allah ﷻ sent a Messenger to us...”, then recounted something similar to Ribʿī’s speech. He ended by giving them the option of embracing Islām, paying the *jizyah*, or going to war, then returned to the Muslim camp.

#### RUSTAM’S ADDRESS TO HIS SOLDIERS

Rustam went into a private meeting with the Persians and said: “What opinion do these have of you? Did the first two not come to you, display their courage before you and expose you? Then this one came. They did not differ from each other in any way, they all followed the same course and they all stuck to one story. By Allah these people are real men, whether they are speaking the truth or lying. By Allah, if they are so well-mannered and protective of their secrets, and differ not among themselves, then there cannot be any nation better equipped to achieve whatever they like. If they are true in what they said there is nothing that can stand up to these people.”

They remained stubborn however. The Persians did not benefit from this speech and persisted in their transgression so that Allah ﷻ might bring about something already ordained.

Both the commanders decided to go to battle and they agreed that the Persians would cross the ʿAtīq River, so they crossed over. Rustam mobilised his huge army and set up a line of communication with Yazdajird so that he could inform him of events as they occurred. The Muslim commander mobilised his army, with their battle lines in line with the orchard of Qudays and Khandaq. The two armies were between ʿAtīq and Khandaq.

## THE FIRST DAY: THE DAY OF ARMĀTH

Sa'd ﷺ sent men endowed with eloquent speech to go out and urge the people to *jihād*. He ordered those proficient in reciting the Qur'ān to recite Sūrat al-Anfāl, the hearts and eyes lit up at this and the people found tranquillity in it. Sa'd ﷺ then gave some orders: "Remain in your lines. When I pray zuhr, I will call the *takbīr*. When I call it the first time, you repeat it and make ready. When I call it the second time, repeat it and pick up your weapons. When I call it the third time, repeat it and give courage. When I call it the fourth time, advance to meet your enemy and say: "There is no strength nor power but in Allah, the Most High, the Mighty."

It was the month of Muḥarram 14 AH. When Sa'd ﷺ called out his final *takbīr*, the brave warriors moved forward, the battle commenced, and the two armies attacked each other. The elephants caused the most difficulty to the Muslims and the men of Bujaylah were almost destroyed because their horses fled. Sa'd ﷺ sent a message to the Banū Asad to come to their defence with Tulayḥah ibn Khuwaylid, leader of the Banū Asad, fulfilling this responsibility magnificently. When Ash'ath ibn Qays saw what Banū Asad were doing he addressed his people saying: "O Banū Kindah! What an excellent thing the Banū Asad are doing! What an unprecedented thing! What feats they are achieving! All the people around them are spared whilst you are waiting for someone to come and protect you. I testify that you have not shown a good example of the Arab tribes." He then advanced and they went with him eliminating the enemy around them.

The Persians directed their strength against the Banū Asad when they saw the latter's intensity against their elephants. The tables turned on Banū Asad and the elephants struck at them incessantly. Sa'd ﷺ sent to 'Āṣim ibn 'Amr, leader of the Banū Tamīm, asking him to think of a ploy to defeat the elephants. He called upon the archers of his tribe and said to them: "Take down the riders with your arrows" then said to others: "Go up behind the elephants and cut off their saddle-belts [the thick bands that hold the saddles in place]". The elephants shrieked, their riders were killed and Banū Asad were given respite after about 500 of their people were martyred.

The battle continued to rage till sunset when the two armies separated. This was the first of several days of battle in Qādisiyyah. It is known as the day of Armāth. The night is known as the night of Had'ah (tranquillity) because no fighting took place.

## THE SECOND DAY: THE DAY OF AGHWĀTH

The next morning Sa'd ﷺ appointed some people to tend to the injured, others

to bury the dead and arranged the army as it had been the previous day. While they were in their battle lines, reinforcements came from the Levant which Abū 'Ubaydah 'Āmir ibn al-Jarrāḥ had sent acting under the instruction of 'Umar. They were led by Hāshim ibn 'Utbah ibn Abī Waqqās al-Mirqāl.<sup>163</sup> Qa'qā' ibn 'Amr led the vanguard, reaching there first having hastened ahead. He arrived on the morning of the second day of the battle. His arrival raised the spirits of the Muslims. As soon as he arrived he challenged the Persians to one-on-one combat. Dhu 'l-Hājib, the man responsible for killing many Muslims at the battle of the Bridge (*jisr*), accepted. Qa'qā' recognised him and called out: "Revenge for the lives of Abū 'Ubayd, Salīṭ and the others killed at the bridge" then they engaged in single combat and Qa'qā' despatched Dhu 'l-Hājib. His death delighted the Muslims as much as it grieved the polytheists and the battle intensified.

On this day the Muslims sensed victory because the caskets of the elephants were broken and the Persians were busy repairing them. The cousins of Qa'qā' carried ten people at a time on camels which they had covered and draped with cloths, their horses walking around them and protecting them. It looked as though they were elephants and Qa'qā' ordered them to attack the Persian cavalry, the Persians suffering a greater defeat than that suffered by the Muslim cavalry the previous day. Qa'qā' displayed great courage and gallantry on this day.

The fighting continued until halfway through the night then the two armies separated. This day is known as the day of Aghwāth. It was the second of the several days of battle at Qādisiyyah. The night was named the night of Sawād.

#### THE THIRD DAY: THE DAY OF 'AMMĀS

They remained in their battle lines the next day, the day of 'Ammās. The dead and injured of the Muslims numbered two thousand; their brothers carried the injured ones to the women for treatment and the dead ones for burial. The number of polytheists killed exceeded ten thousand and their people did not even bother moving them off the battlefield.

It was on this day that Hāshim al-Mirqāl arrived with the remainder of his army. The Persians carefully guarded their elephants by appointing people to protect them from the rear so that their saddle-belts could not be cut off. The Muslim horses did not panic however because elephants are more frightening when they are alone, when there are people around them they are less intimidating. Moreover the horses were used to seeing them by now.

<sup>163</sup> This title of Mirqāl "the one who moves freely" was given to him by 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib in the battle of Ṣiffīn because he gave him the flag with which he advanced unchecked.

The fighting commenced fiercely again. Sa'd ﷺ summoned Qa'qā' and another in order to kill the white elephant, the largest of them and summoned others to kill the mangy elephant.

Qa'qā' and his companion went ahead, each of them aiming his spear into the white elephant's eye. It fell down immediately and they killed its riders. Another two went forward, one stabbing the other elephant in the eye. It leaned back on its hind legs then levelled itself out again. The second stabbed it and cut off its trunk, causing it to immediately turn on its heels and run into the river. The other elephants followed, pushing through the lines of the Persians and crossing the river.

The fighting continued until the evening when the two armies disengaged for a while. Sa'd ﷺ then ordered the troops to continue fighting when he cried the *takbīr* but the Persians attacked them forcing them to fight before he could cry out the *takbīr*. Qa'qā' counterattacked without waiting. Sa'd ﷺ said: "O Allah! Forgive and assist him, I give him permission to fight though he did not await it," for the Muslims had experienced the consequences of disobeying the leader during the battle of Uḥud in the time of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Sa'd ﷺ feared that they would too be punished, so he gave the permission even though they did not first obtain it. The Banū Asad then attacked as well and Sa'd ﷺ said again: "O Allah! Forgive and assist them for I give them permission to fight." Sa'd ﷺ continued saying this each time a tribe attacked before his *takbīr*.

#### THE NIGHT OF HARĪR AND THE DAY OF QĀDISIYYAH

When Sa'd ﷺ prayed 'isha', he said the *takbīr* and the Muslims all attacked. It was a dark night in which the sound of steel striking against steel could be heard and the battlefield sounded like a blacksmith's place. The Muslims were growling and not speaking, so the night was named the night of growling (*harīr*). Neither the Arabs nor the Persians had seen such a sight before, the Arabs defending their religion and the Persians defending their empire. But how could those fighting for the world ever compare with those fighting to make the word of Allah ﷻ supreme?

The fighting continued until the following morning when Qa'qā' said: "Victory shall go to those who remain steadfast for an hour. Remain steadfast for an hour, surely victory comes with steadfastness." A group of more senior warriors joined him and continued fighting until midday when the Persians began withdrawing, Fīrūzān and Hurmuzān being the first to retreat from their positions. Hilāl ibn 'Ullafah, one of the Muslim horsemen, attacked and killed Rustam and when the Persians saw this they began to flee. Jālinūs stood on the dam

and ordered the army to cross over and the survivors succeeded in doing so, but Zuhrah ibn al-Ḥawiyyah was in pursuit. He caught up with Jālinūs while he was rallying together those who had fled and put an end to Jālinūs. ʿUmar al-Khaṭṭāb al-Fihri then took the biggest of the Persian flags, Dirafsh Kābyān. That was the day of Qādisiyyah.

After the defeat of the Persians Sa’d ؓ ordered that all spoils and booty should be collected. There was a lot of it and he ordered it be distributed according to Allah’s ؓ injunctions in the Qur’ān. He congratulated his soldiers on this resounding triumph. He sent one fifth of the booty and the good news to the Leader of the Believers, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ؓ. It was his habit to come out of Madīnah daily in order to receive news of the battle and return when it became intensely hot. When the person bearing the good news approached, ‘Umar ؓ came to him at great speed and asked: “Where have you come from?” The man replied that he had been sent by Sa’d ؓ and ‘Umar ؓ said: “O servant of Allah! Tell me, what news do you have?” He replied: “Allah ؓ defeated the polytheists.” ‘Umar ؓ walked into Madīnah behind him, and the messenger did not even recognise ‘Umar ؓ until he entered the city and he saw that people addressed him as “Leader of the Believers”, so he asked ‘Umar ؓ: “May Allah have mercy on you. Why did you not tell me?” and ‘Umar ؓ replied: “Worry not, my brother.”

This was the greatest battle between the Muslims and the Persians, in which their prominent commanders were killed and many of their soldiers were either killed or drowned. Most of the senior Arab leaders fought in this battle because ‘Umar ؓ did not allow any brave fighter to remain behind. The Muslims did not speak much of battles after this one as it ranked amongst the greatest.

Sa’d ؓ remained in Qādisiyyah for two months, until the order of ‘Umar ؓ came directing him to conquer Madā’in. ‘Umar ؓ ordered him to leave the women and children in ‘Atīq with a sizeable army to protect them, instructing Sa’d to include them in division of the booty as long as they tended to the families of the Muslims. Sa’d ؓ obeyed these orders and moved off with his army a few days before the end of Shawwāl. The scattered remnants of the Persian army went to Bābil (Babylon) with some leaders who were bent on further struggle.<sup>164</sup>

#### THE CONQUEST OF BURS AND BĀBIL

When the vanguard of the Muslim army reached Burs some Persian soldiers confronted them and the Muslims fought and defeated them. When Sa’d ؓ

<sup>164</sup> Tabarī, vol. 3, pp. 515–579; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 450–489; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, pp. 43–51; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 524–539; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, pp. 80–103; Fakhri, pp. 80–81.

caught up with them they informed him of their victory. He was greatly pleased at this and continued on to Bābil.<sup>165</sup>

Sa'd ﷺ crossed the river Tigris and fought the Persians who had rallied at Bābil. The Persians were vanquished in a very short time and banished in the blink of an eye. This is what happens to those whose hearts are filled with terror and awe. How true the words of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ are: "I have been assisted by awe."<sup>166</sup>

Firuzān fled to Nahāwand<sup>167</sup> while Hurmuzān fled to Ahwāz, an area in the south west of Persia made up of nine districts, whose centre is Sūs (Suse). Tustar (Shustar) was one of its cities. The remainder of those who were defeated headed towards Madā'in (Seleucia-Ctesiphonon), the city of Khusros, which was to the west of Baghdād, on the banks of the Tigris River. It was given the name of Madā'in ("the cities") because of its considerable size. It lay on both the eastern and western banks of the Tigris and it was here that the Īwān (Vaulted Arch) of Khusros was. It was the capital of the country. Zuhrah pursued the defeated soldiers and caught up with them at Dayr and Kūthā, repulsing them and finishing a large number of them.<sup>168</sup>

#### THE CONQUEST OF KŪTHĀ AND SĀBĀṬ

Zuhrah then advanced until he reached Kūthā where its leader came out and tried unsuccessfully to fight him and was killed and his army defeated. There Zuhrah waited for the arrival of Sa'd ﷺ.<sup>169</sup>

After Sa'd ﷺ arrived Zuhrah proceeded to Sābāṭ where the people made peace with him and agreed to pay the *jizyah*.

#### THE CONQUEST OF MADĀ'IN

Zuhrah again awaited the arrival of Sa'd ﷺ. When he came the entire army proceeded towards Bahurasīr, a city in the west of the country. The Muslims saw the Īwān of Khusro before them and remembered the promise of the Messenger of

165 Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 619–620; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 505–506; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 536; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, p. 103.

166 Bukhārī (335), Muslim (521).

167 Nahāwand (Nahavand) was a big city in western Iran to the south of Hamadhān (Hamadan).

168 Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 620–622; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, p. 506; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, p. 60; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 536; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, pp. 103–104.

169 Ṭabarī, vol. 3, p. 622; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, p. 507; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, p. 61; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 536; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, p. 105.

Allah ﷻ. It is narrated by Imām Muslim ﷺ from Jābir ibn Samurah ﷺ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “A small group of Muslims shall conquer the White House, the house of Khusro (or of the family of Khusro).”<sup>170</sup>

The hearts of the Muslims were further strengthened and their courage increased, indeed these people deserved Allah’s help because they had full conviction in their religion. Every time they were given an opportunity which would draw them closer to Allah ﷻ, they hastened to it. “Surely in this there are signs for people who possess intelligence.” (Sūrat an-Naḥl, verse 12)

Ḍirār ibn al-Khaṭṭāb shouted out: “Allah is the greatest. This is the White House of Khusro. This is what Allah promised and His Messenger ﷺ spoke the truth,” then cried *Allāhu akbar*, which was echoed by the Muslims.

Ṣa’d ﷺ laid siege to the city on 2 Dhu’l-Ḥijjah 14 AH and sent out horsemen to conquer the surrounding villages. He sought counsel from ‘Umar ﷺ with regard to those of the farmers who had been taken captive. ‘Umar ﷺ held a meeting with his consultative assembly, saying to them:

He who follows his desires and commits sins loses his share and harms none but his own self. He who follows the Sunnah, commits to the Sharī‘ah, and holds to the straight path seeking the rewards Allah has for the people of obedience achieves his objective and receives his share. This is because Allah ﷻ says: “They will find whatever they did placed before them, Your Lord will not wrong anyone” (Sūrat al-Kahf, verse 49). Those warriors who have been engaged in the lands of Qādisiyyah have conquered their surrounding areas. The people of these (rural) areas fled. Some who proved true to their word came to our men. So tell me what do you think of those who claim they were forced by the Persians to be part of the army? What about those who neither claimed this nor were true to their word, but fled? What do you think should be done with those who were true to their word, did not make any claim and did not flee? Finally what about those who submitted completely?

They (the consultative assembly) were unanimous about being faithful to those who had kept their promises and did not fight. Islam’s dominance had only been to their advantage. As for those who made a claim (i.e. that he was forced to fight) and was speaking the truth, or still stood by his word, they were also to be left alone. Those that lied were either to be given their pledges back (i.e. that they had violated their agreement with the Muslims, therefore the Muslims should inform them that they are also free of any obligations towards them) or a new peace agreement could be made with them. The matter of those who fled was left

170 Muslim (1822).

to the discretion of the warriors, if they wished they would make an agreement with them by which they became *dhimmīs*, or they could expel them from their land and treat them as enemies. Those who surrendered were to be given the choice between leaving and paying the *jizyah*.

ʿUmar ؓ wrote to Saʿd ؓ informing him of the verdict of the scholars and consultative assembly, so Saʿd ؓ left the farmers alone. He sent a message to the political leaders inviting them to embrace Islām or pay the *jizyah* in return for protection. They discussed the matter among themselves and there remained nobody in the rural areas to the west of the river Tigris who did not come under Muslim protection and find satisfaction in their rule. Why should they not be pleased with Islamic rule when they saw a nation with a religion based on equality? Their leader was equal to the most insignificant of citizens before the truth. It tolerated no conceit, no oppression and no corruption in the land. The contempt and enslavement which they had experienced was lifted from them and they became servants of Allah ؓ alone.

#### CROSSING OVER TO EAST MADĀʾIN AND THE ĪWĀN

When the siege of west Madāʾin intensified Yazdajird left the city, crossing over to east Madāʾin. Saʿd ؓ resolved to go over in pursuit but the Persians had barricaded all crossing points. However, a Persian showed Saʿd ؓ a ford which could be crossed and Saʿd ؓ said to his army leaders: "I have resolved to cross the river," and they all said: "Allah ؓ has decreed that we all be rightly-guided so proceed." He called upon some to cross over first to guard the ford while the other Muslims crossed. ʿĀṣim ibn ʿAmr, the leader of Banū Tamīm, a person of great valour, responded to this request and crossed over with sixty horsemen from his tribe. When the Persians saw them, they headed for them. The Muslims began hurling spears at them, checking the Persians' advance. When Saʿd ؓ saw that the fords were protected, he ordered the Muslims to cross over. They complied, saying: "We seek the assistance of Allah and place our trust in Him. Allah is sufficient for us and what an excellent disposer of affairs is He! There is no might nor power except with Allah, the most high, the almighty."

Salmān al-Fārisī ؓ and Saʿd ؓ crossed mounted on their horses and Saʿd ؓ was saying: "Allah is sufficient for us and what an excellent guardian He is! By Allah, Allah will definitely assist His helpers, He will most certainly make His religion reign supreme, and He will indeed cause the defeat of His enemies provided there are no wrongs or sins of the Muslim army which wipe out good deeds." Salmān ؓ said: "Islām is something new and the rivers subdued themselves before the Muslims just as the lands did. I take an oath by He who controls

my life, they will surely make it out of the river in droves just as they entered it.” Allah ﷻ fulfilled this oath of Salmān ﷻ and they escaped the river without losing a single thing and without anybody drowning. Only one man slipped from his horse and so Qa‘qā‘ doubled the reins of his horse, lowered it to him which he grasped by his hand, and he brought him to safety. Consider, may Allah guide you, how even in the most difficult of situations his soul did not divert Qa‘qā‘, and rather he gave preference to his brother over his own self. In this manner, Islām and its spirit of brotherhood make themselves manifest in the highest way. This day was named the day of Jarāthīm (mounds of earth) because whenever anyone was exhausted, a mound would appear for him to rest.

#### YAZDAJIRD FLEES AND THE MUSLIMS ENTER THE WHITE HOUSE

When the Persians saw the Muslims crossing the river they lost all hope and realised there was no way to defend themselves. Yazdajird fled the city for Ḥulwān (Helwan), four days journey from Baghdād and at the edge of Eastern Iraq facing Ṭabaristān. It was a mountainous district built on the bank of an offshoot of the river Tigris. His family and children had already gone there.

The Muslims entered the city without any opposition. Sa‘d ﷻ stopped at the White Place, prayed there and read these verses of the Qur’an: “They left behind many gardens, fountains, plantations, palatial homes and items of luxury in which they took delight. So it was and We gave all that as an inheritance to another people” (Sūrat ad-Dukhān, 44: 25–28). Sa‘d ﷻ began gathering the sizeable booty, also sending his men in pursuit of those who were fleeing with their wealth and treasure. They were all brought back and none escaped. The first to enter Madā’in was the squadron of Qa‘qā‘ ibn ‘Amr, known as Kharsā’. This was followed by that of ‘Āsim ibn ‘Amr known as Ahwāl. Sa‘d ﷻ then distributed the booty. The horsemen received twelve thousand dirhams. He distributed the houses among the people, brought the families from Atiq and made them settle down in them. Madā’in thus became the centre for the Iraqi operations under the Muslim field commander. The first Jumu‘ah to be performed in Madā’in was in Ṣafar 17 AH. As before, Sa‘d ﷻ sent one fifth of the booty to ‘Umar ﷻ and everything else from the Persians which he wished the Arabs to find delight in.

The conquest of Madā’in took place towards the end of the year 15 AH. When the bearer of good news came to ‘Umar ﷻ with all the treasures of Khusro, he said: “The people who have conveyed all this treasure to me are truly faithful people.” On hearing this, ‘Alī ﷻ said to him: “You remained restrained, thus your subjects remained restrained too.” Amongst the items which Sa‘d ﷻ sent

was a carpet<sup>171</sup> of Khusro which was referred to as Qitf and measured sixty square feet. ‘Umar ﷺ consulted his companions as to what he should do with it. All of them told him to take it except ‘Alī ﷺ who said to him: “O leader of the believers! What they all said is correct. However there is another point of view; if you accept it today, others who are not worthy of it will claim it tomorrow.” ‘Umar ﷺ responded: “You are correct and have given me good advice”, then distributed it among them.

‘Umar ﷺ appointed Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ to establish the prayer in the areas which he had conquered and also appointed him commander. He appointed Nu‘mān ibn Muqarrin to collect the *kharāj* (land tax) for the lands irrigated by the river Tigris. He appointed Nu‘mān’s brother Suwayd to collect it for the lands irrigated by the Euphrates but the two then resigned from their posts so ‘Umar ﷺ appointed Ḥudhayfah ibn Asid and Jābir ibn ‘Amr al-Muzanī. After them he appointed Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamān and ‘Uthmān ibn Ḥunayf.<sup>172</sup>

### THE CONQUEST OF JALŪLĀ’

When the Persians were defeated and departed from Madā’in they proceeded north until they reached Jalūlā’<sup>173</sup> to the east of the Tigris River. They then split up and took different routes. Those from Azerbaijan wanted to travel north while those from Persian provinces wanted to travel south. They said to themselves: “If we are going to take different routes, we will never be united. Let us prepare for war against the Arabs here. If we are victorious, we will have achieved our objective. If we are defeated, we will at least have satisfied ourselves.” They appointed Mihrān ar-Rāzī their leader and dug a trench around themselves, surrounding it with steel spikes except a few parts they left open as passageways.

When Sa‘d ﷺ heard of this he sent his nephew Hāshim ibn ‘Utbah to them at the head of twelve thousand soldiers and appointing Qa‘qā’ in charge of the vanguard in accordance with the order of ‘Umar ﷺ. They went forth to Jalūlā’ in the

171 The author omitted the bangles of Khusro. A mention of them requires a reference to the ḥadīth of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ in which he said to Surāqah ﷺ: “I can picture you wearing the bangles of Khusro.” The fur of Khusro was brought to ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ and placed before him and Surāqah ibn Mālik ﷺ was present in the assembly around ‘Umar. ‘Umar ﷺ threw the bangles of Khusro to him. When he wore them on his hand they were so large that they reached his shoulders. When ‘Umar ﷺ saw them on Surāqah’s ﷺ hand he said: “All praise is due to Allāh. The bangles of Khusro are in the hands of Surāqah ﷺ, a bedouin from the Banū Mudlij tribe.”

172 Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 622–623, vol. 4, pp. 1–24; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 508–519; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, pp. 61–69; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 536–539; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, pp. 104–109.

173 A place which is to the east of Baghdad in the mountainous regions. A river by the same name (Jalūlā’) flows through it and joins the Tigris River at a place called ‘Aqūbah. The famous battle of Jalūlā’ took place here in 16 AH.

month of Ṣafar 16 AH. The Persians remained in their trenches for eighty days and the Muslims were unable to get at them. After these eighty days the Muslims discovered a path leaving the trench which the Persians had prepared for their horses. The Muslims attacked by means of this path and engaged them in fierce combat, like that of the battle that took place on the night of Harīr though this one was much quicker and a large number of polytheists were killed. The fight ended with the Persians fleeing to Khāniqīn<sup>174</sup> and the Muslims giving chase and vanquishing them.

When Yazdajird heard of the fall of Jalūlā’, he left Ḥulwān and proceeded to Rayy (Rey, Raghes). Qa’qā’ marched to Ḥulwān and took hold of it. Sa’d sent a message to ‘Umar informing him of the Persian defeat and asking permission to pursue them into the very centre of their country. ‘Umar was not happy with this and said: “I would like a fortified barrier between rural area of Iraq (*sawād*) and the mountains behind it. I prefer the safety of the Muslims to the booty and spoils of war.”

When one fifth of the booty came to ‘Umar, he said: “By Allah I will distribute this booty before any roof can give it shelter.” ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf and ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Arqam spent the night guarding it in the mosque and ‘Umar came the next morning. Looking at the booty of jewels and pearls he began to cry. ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān enquired: “Why are you crying, O Leader of the Believers? By Allah, this is an occasion to express gratitude.” ‘Umar replied: “By Allah, it is not that causing me to cry. I swear by Allah that whenever Allah gave such wealth to a nation, they began to bear hatred and malice towards each other and when they bore malice towards one another, Allah caused them to fight amongst themselves.”

‘Umar ultimately forbade the division of the land of Sawad (i.e. the land between Ḥalwān in the east and Qādisiyyah in the west). The conquest of Jalūlā’ took place in Dhu’l-Qa’dah 17 AH.

#### THE CONQUEST OF TIKRĪT

In Jumādā’l-Ūla 16 AH Sa’d received the news that Intāq, the ruler of Mawṣil (Mosul), had moved to Tīkrīt (a city on the eastern bank of the Tigris River, to the north of Baghdād). A large group of Romans and Arabs had gone with him. Sa’d dispatched ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Mu’tamm to him, acting under the orders of ‘Umar. ‘Abdullāh went to Tīkrīt and laid siege to it for forty days. Towards the end of this period, he sent a message to the Arabs who were with Intāq, try-

174 A city in Northern Iraq in the Diyāle province, close to the Iranian border.

ing to win them over to his side. He asked them to help him and to abandon the Persians and Romans who were not from their race. They sent a reply saying that they were with him. He sent another message saying: "If you are honest in your claim, embrace Islām." Allah ﷻ guided them to His upright religion and so they embraced Islām. 'Abdullāh sent them a message saying: "When you hear our *takbīr*, know that we have taken over the entranceways to the trench. You should then take possession of the entranceways on the side of the Tigris, call the *takbīr*, and kill whoever you can." 'Abdullāh then attacked and called out the *takbīr*. The Arabs inside also called it and the polytheists assumed that the Muslims had come at them from behind, from the side of the river. They thus ran to the entrances of the trench only to meet the Muslims and their swords. They were unable to defend themselves. Those who were able to flee, fled the city and the Muslims entered.<sup>175</sup>

#### THE CONQUEST OF NĪNAWĀ (NINEVEH) AND MAWṢIL (MOSUL)

'Abdullāh then sent a squadron to conquer Nīnawā and Mawṣil.<sup>176</sup> With this squadron 'Abdullāh sent a group of those Arabs who had been with the Persians. These Arabs went ahead to the two cities and informed the people that the Persians had won so the gates of the cities were opened up. The Muslims met no opposition whatsoever and the residents sought peace in exchange for paying the *jizyah*. Thus their lives were guaranteed and they came under Muslim protection, then 'Abdullāh distributed the booty and sent a fifth to 'Umar ﷺ.<sup>177</sup>

#### THE CONQUEST OF MĀSABADHĀN, HĪT AND QARQĪSIYĀ<sup>3</sup>

Sa'd ﷺ received reports that a large group of Persians had rallied in the lowlands of Māsabadhān (Massabatice) so he dispatched Ḍirār ibn al-Khaṭṭāb al-Fihri to them who sent their forces running then remained on guard at Māsabadhān because this place was a post on the route to Madā'in.<sup>178</sup>

Sa'd ﷺ then sent 'Umar ibn Mālīk with an army to Hīt on the outskirts

175 Tabarī, vol. 4, pp. 24–35; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 519–523; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, pp. 69–71; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 538–539; *al-Futūḥ*, vol. 1, pp. 271–278; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, pp. 109–111.

176 Two cities on the Tigris River which lie at 36° latitude. Nīnawā lies on the eastern bank of the Tigris and Mawṣil on the western bank.

177 Tabarī, vol. 4, pp. 35–37; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 523–524; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, p. 72; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 539; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, pp. 112–113.

178 Tabarī, vol. 4, p. 37; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, p. 525; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, p. 72; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 539; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, p. 113.

of Baghdād in order to conquer it. By the time he arrived the polytheists had already dug a trench around it so he laid siege to it. In the course of this siege, he conquered Qarqīsiyā<sup>179</sup> on the banks of the Euphrates to the north of Anbār. When the residents of Hīt realised that they had no strength to go to war against the Muslims, they agreed to pay the *jizyah* and thus came under their protection instead.<sup>180</sup>

#### MAPPING OUT KŪFAH

Madā'in remained the centre of the Iraqi operations from the time it was conquered until 17 AH when ʿUmar saw that the Arabs who settled down here had changed. They had changed in complexion and grown weak in their bodies. Thus he wrote to Sa'd instructing him to send Salmān al-Fārisī and Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamān as scouts to search for an uninhabited place, which was not separated from him (Madinah) by any water or bridge.

Sa'd sent them both, each in a different direction but they both ended up at Kūfah, which means "red round grains of sand" or "sand mixed with pebbles", and they both liked it. They prayed there and supplicated to Allah to make it a place of settlement then returned to Sa'd and reported to him. Sa'd sent a message to Qa'qā' and ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Mu'tamm to leave deputies over their respective armies and come to him.

Sa'd then proceeded from Madā'in to the land of Kūfah and encamped there in Muḥarram 17 AH. They consulted ʿUmar about starting to build the city with canes and reeds and he granted them permission. After they had laid out a basic structure fire engulfed it and they asked him permission to build it with bricks. He said: "You may do so but no one is permitted to build more than three rooms. Do not compete with each other in building lofty buildings. Hold on firmly to the Sunnah and the country will remain loyal to you."

Abū Hayyāj ibn Mālīk was the person to map out the city. He made the main street forty cubits, the one next to it thirtycubits and the streets in between them twenty cubits. The alleys were made seven cubits wide and there was nothing made smaller than this. The feudal estates were made sixty cubits. The first thing for which he laid foundations was a mosque. He also built a house for Sa'd opposite which became the palace of Kūfah.

This city was constructed on the western bank of the Euphrates River at a dis-

179 Between here and Raqqah lies the abodes of the tribe of Rabī'ah whose centre was Naṣībīn.

180 Ṭabarī, vol. 4, pp. 37–38; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 525–526; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, p. 73; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, p. 113.

tance of about half a *parasang*<sup>181</sup> inland. The area was made up of interconnected date orchards that extended as far as the eye could see. The distance between Kūfah and Baghdād is 30 *parasangs*.

After the city was mapped out, the Arabs who were in Madā'in were given the choice between remaining where they were or moving to Kūfah which became the centre of operations in Iraq.<sup>182</sup> According to most historians, the city of Baṣrah was also founded in this year. It is close to the Persian Gulf at the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Founded by 'Utbah ibn Ghazwān under the instruction of 'Umar  it became the second centre in Iraq. 'Umar  divided the operations in two: operations in upper Iraq were based in Kūfah with Sa'd  as the governor and operations in lower Iraq in Baṣrah where 'Utbah was the governor. After the founding of Kūfah the following Persian provinces fell under the domain of Kūfah: Bāb, Azerbaijān, Hamadhān, Rayy, Aṣbahān, Māh, Mawṣil and Qarqisiyā'. All these were in the northern region. The following provinces fell under the domain of Baṣrah: Khurāsān, Sijistān (Sistan), Mukrān, Karmān, Fāris, and Ahwāz.<sup>183</sup>

#### ATTACKING THE PERSIANS FROM BAHRAIN

In the earlier period of Islām the Muslims would compete with each other in matters that would draw them closer to Allah . When the leader of Bahrain, 'Alā' ibn al-Ḥaḍramī, saw the damage Sa'd  had done to the Persians, he decided to inflict similar wounds on them. He summoned his people to this cause and they rallied together. He then divided them into three groups, appointing Jārūd ibn al-Mu'allā al-'Abdī over the first, Sawwār ibn Hammām over the second, and Khulayd ibn al-Mundhir ibn Sāwā over the third. The latter was also the general commander of all three. 'Alā' ibn al-Ḥaḍramī allowed them to cross the Arabian Gulf to conquer the areas on the other side. However, he had not sought permission from the Leader of the Believers, 'Umar . It was especially regrettable because 'Umar  did not approve of naval battles and would often prohibit Muslims from undertaking sea journeys for fear of their drowning.

The army of 'Alā' crossed the ocean until it reached Iṣṭakhr.<sup>184</sup> A large number of Persians came out against them and blocked access to their vessels. When

181 A Persian unit of distance equal to about 5.5 km or 3.4 miles.

182 Ṭabarī, vol. 4, pp. 40–48; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 527–530; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, pp. 74–75; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 549–550; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, pp. 111–112. Also see these books: *al-Kūfah: Nash'at al-Madīnah al-'Arabiyyah al-Islāmiyyah*, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 274–278, and *Ya'qūbī*, vol. 2, p. 155.

183 See the book, *Khuṭaṭ al-Baṣrah wa Baghdād*, of Māsiniyun, and the book, *Tārīkh al-Baṣrah al-Qadīmah wa Ḍawāḥihā*, of Muḥammad ash-Shaykhālī.

184 Estakhr or Persepolis, at the centre of the province and the largest city.

Khulayd saw this he addressed his companions saying: The people did not invite you to make war with them. You came for them. The ships and land shall be for those who are victorious. “Seek help with steadfastness and prayer. This is surely difficult except for those who are humble” (Sūrat al-Baqarah, 2: 45). He then mobilised his army and attacked. Jārūd and Sawwār from the Muslims were killed as well as many Persians.

The Muslims realised that if they were to remain in the midst of Persian lands whilst they were outnumbered they would be destroyed so they decided to head for Baṣrah over land because there was no way for them to reach their ships. However the Persians blocked their way, setting up camp and preventing them from moving any further.

When ‘Umar ﷺ heard of ‘Alā’s move and the subsequent siege of the Muslims he sent a message to ‘Utbah ibn Ghazwān, governor of Baṣrah, to prepare a huge army to rescue the Muslims under siege before they were destroyed. ‘Utbah prepared an army of twelve thousand soldiers and they advanced to where the Muslims were. In the meantime, the Persians had rallied a huge force. The Muslims fought until they defeated them and rescued their brothers from the consequence of an action initiated without consulting ‘Umar ﷺ. This was the first battle that the first generation of Baṣrah was honoured with. ‘Umar ﷺ punished ‘Alā’ by relieving him of the governorship of Bahrain and sending him to Kūfah where he would be under Sa’d’s leadership ﷺ.<sup>185</sup>

#### THE CONQUEST OF AHWĀZ

We mentioned previously that when Hurmuzān was defeated at Qādisiyyah he headed towards Ahwāz (Ahvaz) and assumed rule over Khūzistān.<sup>186</sup> Hurmuzān was extending assaults on the people of Maysān (a district between Baṣrah and Wāsiṭ) approaching it from the side of Manādhir and Nahr Tira (which were on the borders of Ahwāz). ‘Utbah ibn Ghazwān sent a message to ‘Umar ﷺ informing him about Hurmuzān.

‘Umar ﷺ sent a message to Sa’d ﷺ, the governor of Kūfah, to help ‘Utbah. Sa’d ﷺ sent Nu‘aym ibn Muqarrin and Nu‘aym ibn Mas‘ūd to assist him. He ordered these two to approach from the upper regions of Maysān so that they would come between Baṣrah and the borders of Ahwāz. ‘Utbah sent Sulmā ibn al-Qayn and Ḥarmalah ibn Murayṭah<sup>187</sup> who went to the edges of Baṣrah where it

185 Ṭabarī, vol. 4, pp. 79–83; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 538–539; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, pp. 83–85; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, p. 114.

186 A district of Ahwāz. It is now the name of a province of Iran whose capital is Tustar (Shustar).

187 Both were companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. May Allah be pleased with them.

bordered Maysān. There they called upon the Arab residents to join the Muslims in the fight against the Persians and the Banū 'l-'Amm of Khūzistān responded. The two commanders made a pledge with the two Arab leaders of Banū 'l-'Amm that one of them would start a rebellion in Manādhir and the other in Nahr Tīrā on an agreed day.

On the agreed day the two armies of Baṣrah and Kūfah attacked Hurmuzān and while he was busy with them the news came to him that Manādhir and Nahr Tīrā had been captured by the Muslims. He lost courage and his army was defeated. The Muslims pursued them to the bank of the Dujayl River.<sup>188</sup> Hurmuzān crossed the bridge of Sūq al-Ahwāz and asked for peace. A peace-deal was made over the entire region between Manadhir and Nahr Tīrā which were already dominated by force and a guard was subsequently placed over the province. The conquest of Ahwāz took place in 17 AH.

The remainder of the Muslims returned to Baṣrah together with Banū 'l-'Amm who had all been guided to Islām. 'Utbah sent a delegation of them to 'Umar ؓ. When they reached him he asked each of them to present a need of his before him. Each one presented a need specifically for himself except Aḥnaf ibn Qays who said: "Leader of the Believers, it is our duty to convey to you that which will benefit the masses and which you are unaware of. A leader sees what is distant from him through the eyes of those who have knowledge thereof and hears through their ears." He then related the condition of Baṣrah and Kūfah and the privileges which the residents of Kūfah enjoyed over the residents of Baṣrah. He then said the following at the end of his speech: "Allah ﷻ has blessed us with prosperity and given us a lot of land. Thus be generous to us, Leader of the Believers, and increase us by a regular portion that would reach us all by which we may live."

When 'Umar ؓ heard his speech, he showed his kindness to them by apportioning for them from the land that belonged to the family of Khusro. He then said: "This youngster is the leader of his people." He then wrote to 'Utbah, the governor of Baṣrah, asking him to listen to what Aḥnaf has to say and to adopt his views.<sup>189</sup>

#### HURMUZĀN BREAKS THE PEACE AGREEMENT

Hurmuzān then went back on his word after having made peace. The reason behind this was a border dispute which took place between him and the Muslims guarding Manādhir and Nahr Tīrā. He sought the assistance of the Kurds and

<sup>188</sup> A tributary of the Tigris at Ahwāz.

<sup>189</sup> Ṭabarī, vol. 4, pp. 72–76; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 542–544; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, p. 82; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 550–551; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 2, pp. 114–115; *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 370.

‘Utbah wrote to ‘Umar informing him of this. ‘Umar replied asking him to pursue Hurmuzān and also sent Ḥurqūṣ ibn Zuhayr as-Sa’dī to help the Muslims, putting him in charge of the fighting and the places which he conquered. He marched with the Baṣrah army until he came to the bridge of Sūq al-Ahwāz. He crossed over, engaged Hurmuzān in battle and defeated his troops then sent Jaza’ ibn Mu’āwiyah after him. He conquered Sūq al-Ahwāz but was unable to catch Hurmuzān. From there Ḥurqūṣ went on to the city of Surraq, the capital of one of the districts of Ahwāz and conquered it, calling upon those who fled to return and agree to pay the *jizyah* which they duly agreed to. He remained there as governor and made the area prosper, digging canals and reviving uncultivated lands.

Hurmuzān wrote to Ḥurqūṣ asking him for peace and Ḥurqūṣ accepted after obtaining permission from ‘Umar. Hurmuzān remained and the Muslims protected him from the Kurds. Ḥurqūṣ established himself on the mountain of Ahwāz but this proved difficult for the Muslims and the *dhimmīs*. ‘Umar wrote to him instructing him to move to plain land and not to impose difficulties on any Muslim or anyone enjoying their protection. He also said: “Do not be overcome by weakness or hastiness for you will imperil your life in this world and destroy your Hereafter.”

It was during this time that ‘Umar appointed Mughīrah ibn Shu‘bah as the governor of Baṣrah after the death of its previous governor, ‘Utbah ibn Ghazwān. He then removed him and appointed Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī with twenty nine Companions of the Messenger of Allah as assistants. Anas ibn Mālīk, ‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣāyn and Hishām ibn ‘Āmir were among them.

It was during the era of Abū Mūsā that Yazdajird, the king of Persia, started to travel round and call on the Persians to help him reclaim the kingdom. They mobilised and wrote to the people of Ahwāz, who Hurmuzān had represented when he entered into a peace treaty with the Muslims. This news reached the Muslim governors of Ahwāz who in turn conveyed it to ‘Umar. ‘Umar wrote to Sa’d, governor of Kūfah, commanding him to dispatch a large army under the command of Nu‘mān ibn Muqarrin. He also wrote to Abū Mūsā, governor of Baṣrah, instructing that he send out a large army under the command of Sahl ibn ‘Adī, and that commander of both armies be Abū Sabrah ibn Abī Ruhm. Nu‘mān ibn Muqarrin marched with his army until he reached Rāmahurmuz, a city in Khūzistān where Hurmuzān was rebelling. Nu‘mān engaged him in battle and defeated him. Hurmuzān then fled to Tustar, a city of Ahwāz near Sūs, while Nu‘mān took control of Rāmahurmuz.<sup>190</sup>

<sup>190</sup> Ṭabarī, vol. 4, pp. 76–77; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 544–545; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, pp. 82–83; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 551–552; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, p. 115.

## THE CONQUEST OF TUSTAR AND SŪS

When the army from Baṣrah reached Ahwāz, they halted at the market then sought to go on to Rāmahurmuz. However they then received the news of the battle that had taken place there and that Hurmuzān had gone on to Tustar so the Baṣran army headed there. Nuṣmān and the governors of Ahwāz also made for Tustar and they all descended upon it. In the meantime the Persians had dug a trench around the city so the Muslims laid siege to them. Barā' ibn Mālik, Majzā'ah ibn Thawr, and several people from Baṣrah and Kūfah displayed great feats there.

When the siege began to take its toll on the residents of Tustar a man came out and asked the Muslims to guarantee his life in exchange for showing them a point of entry into the city. This they gave him and he showed them the point at which water entered the city. The commander of the army asked for some people to go with the man and a group from Kūfah and Baṣrah responded and entered through the canal that he showed them. The Muslims awaited the *takbir* in the meantime. When the group of commandos reached the city, they called the *takbir* and the Muslims responded by calling back. The gates were opened and those who fought were killed.

Hurmuzān took refuge in a fort and the Muslims surrounded it. He asked them if he could surrender to the order of ʿUmar رضي الله عنه and they accepted this. Barā' ibn Mālik and Majzā'ah ibn Thawr were killed during the siege.<sup>191</sup>

The army then advanced to Sūs, the capital of a district of Ahwāz, gaining control of it without fighting. The commander then dispatched a squadron towards Jundaysābūr and the residents there also made peace. At the end of this conquest Abū Sabrah sent a delegation to ʿUmar رضي الله عنه which included Aḥnaf ibn Qays, Anas ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه, and Hurmuzān.<sup>192</sup>

HURMUZĀN COMES TO ʿUMAR رضي الله عنه

When the delegation reached Madīnah they made Hurmuzān wear his garment, made of silk brocade with bits of gold, and his crown of sapphires and jewels so that ʿUmar رضي الله عنه and the Muslims might see him. They made for ʿUmar رضي الله عنه who was in the mosque and found him sleeping with his whip in his hand. Hurmuzān asked where ʿUmar was and the people in the mosque showed him, then he

191 Ṭabarī, vol. 4, pp. 77–79 and 83–89; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 546–550; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7; pp. 83, 85–87; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 551–552; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, pp. 115–118; *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 373–374.

192 Ṭabarī, vol. 4, pp. 89–93; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 550–552; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7; pp. 87–89; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 552–553; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, p. 118.

asked: "Where are his guards and sentinels?" and they responded: "He has no guards or sentinels." He exclaimed: "Then he must be a Prophet!" They said: "No, rather he does as the Prophets did." ʿUmar ؓ then woke up and was informed that Hurmuzān was before him. ʿUmar ؓ looked at him and said: "All praise is due to Allah who subjected him and people like him by means of Islām" then ordered that his clothes be removed and he be made to wear a coarse garment. ʿUmar ؓ asked him: "What do you think is the punishment for treachery and defying the order of Allah?" He appealed: "O ʿUmar during the days of ignorance neither we nor you were conscious of Allah and we enjoyed superiority over you. Now that Allah is with you, you have vanquished us." ʿUmar ؓ said: "During the days of ignorance, you enjoyed superiority over us because of your unity and our disunity. What plea or excuse do you have for breaking peace agreements time and again?" He replied: "I fear that you will kill me before I can inform you." ʿUmar ؓ said: "There is no need to fear that." He asked for water and a coarse bowl was brought to him to drink from. He said: "Even if I were dying of thirst, I could not drink from a bowl like this." A utensil which he approved of was then brought to him and he said: "I fear that I will be killed before I can drink." ʿUmar ؓ said: "No harm will be done to you until you drink the water." He then turned the bowl over and spilt the water without drinking it.

ʿUmar ؓ said: "Bring more water to him and do not let him die of thirst." He implored: "I have no need for water. All I wanted was to guarantee my life by it." ʿUmar ؓ said: "I am going to kill you" and he petitioned; "But you already guaranteed my life." ʿUmar ؓ said: "You are lying." Anas ibn Malik ؓ then joined in: "O Leader of the Believers! You did guarantee his life."

ʿUmar ؓ protested: "O Anas! How could I ever guarantee the life of the person who killed Barāʾ ibn Mālīk and Majzāʾah ibn Thawr. By Allah, you will have to find a solution or I will punish you." Anas ؓ said: "You said to him: 'You do not have to fear that until you inform me' and 'No harm will be done to you until you drink the water.'" Those who were present concurred. ʿUmar ؓ turned to Hurmuzān and said: "You tricked me. By Allah, I will only ever give in to a Muslim."<sup>193</sup>

Hurmuzān embraced Islām and became among those who followed the companions in an admirable way. ʿUmar ؓ stipulated a stipend of two thousand dirhams for him. This conversation between ʿUmar ؓ and Hurmuzān was translated by Mughīrah ibn Shuʿbah ؓ.

ʿUmar ؓ then said to the delegation: "The Muslims must be ill-treating the

<sup>193</sup> The words "except to a Muslim" are narrated by Ṭabarī. Other sources state that ʿUmar ؓ said: "unless you embrace Islām".

*dhimmīs*. That is why they are breaking the peace agreements.” The members of the delegation disagreed: “As far as we know they are fulfilling the peace agreement”. He asked “How is it then?” and Aḥnaf ibn Qays answered: “Leader of the Believers, you prohibited us from spreading out. The king of the Persians is still with them and they will continue fighting us as long as their country is in their hands, two kings in one land will clash until one expels the other. We only took places after they dispatched armies and showed their treachery, it is their king who has been sending them out. These things they are doing will continue unless you allow us to expand our operations. We will spread out in their territory and remove their king to dash their hopes.” ‘Umar ؓ said: “By Allah, you are right” then firmly resolved to act on this advice.<sup>194</sup>

#### THE BATTLE OF NAHĀWAND

When the armies rallied together for the king of Persia at Nahāwand in the mountainous region to the south of Hamadhān, he struck out towards them from Marw (Merv). Rulers from Bāb, Sind, Khurāsān and Ḥulwān (the boundaries of the Persian Empire to the north, south, east and west) stood up to assist him. Sa’d ؓ wrote to ‘Umar ؓ informing him. It was at this time that a group of inhabitants of Kūfah complained about Sa’d ؓ and accused him of injustice. ‘Umar ؓ said: “By Allah, nothing that befalls the Muslims will stop me looking into their complaints” then asked Sa’d ؓ to report to him in Madīnah. Sa’d ؓ appointed ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abdillāh ibn ‘Itbān as deputy and set out for Madīnah. In the meantime ‘Umar ؓ made inquiries about the accusations that were levelled against Sa’d ؓ through Muḥammad ibn Maslamah, who used to enquire into complaints made against the different governors. He found Sa’d ؓ to be innocent but ‘Umar ؓ did not like any malice to exist between the leader and his people as this would bring about disappointment and destruction. Therefore he removed Sa’d ؓ and appointed Nu’mān ibn Muqarrin al-Muzanī as the governor of Kūfah. In the past he had lead a group of Kūfans in an attack on Jundaysābūr and Sūs. ‘Umar ؓ sent his letter of appointment to him which contained the following words:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. From the servant of Allah, ‘Umar, Leader of the Believers, to Nu’mān ibn Muqarrin. Peace be upon you. I praise Allah, other than whom there is none worthy of worship.

I have received information that large numbers of non-Arabs [Persians] have

194 Ṭabarī, vol. 4, pp. 86–89; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 548–550; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, pp. 87–88; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 552; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, pp. 117–118.

gathered to fight at the city of Nahāwand. When this letter of mine reaches you, march with those Muslims who are with you by the order of Allah and with the help of Allah and His assistance. Do not make them walk on rugged terrain for you will injure them. Do not deprive them their rights for this will displease them. Do not send them into dangerous forested areas, for a single Muslim is more beloved to me than one hundred thousand dinars. Peace be upon you.<sup>195</sup>

ʿUmar ordered him to march to Māh so that all the armies could gather there and from thence advance to Nahāwand. He also wrote to ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbdillāh, Saʿd's deputy in Kūfah, bidding him to rally the people to Nuʿmān. He wrote to the army of Ahwāz directing it to remain there so that it could act as a barrier between the people of rural Persia and those gathered at Nahāwand.

When the armies gathered before Nuʿmān he sent ʿAmr ibn Thubayy, ʿAmr ibn Maʿdīkarib, and Ṭulayḥah ibn Khuwaylid to examine the route between Māh and Nahāwand. ʿAmr ibn Thubayy returned that same night. Asked why he had returned he replied: "I have never been to a non-Arab land before. A land will bring an end to a man that has no knowledge of it. On the other hand, a person who knows a land will conquer it." ʿAmr ibn Maʿdīkarib returned on the morning of the second day. When asked about what he saw, he informed that they had travelled for a day and a night and seen nothing. As for Ṭulayḥah he continued until he saw and identified the Persian army then returned and told the Muslims there were no obstacles between them and Nahāwand.

Nuʿmān set out with the army organised as follows: his brother Nuʿaym ibn Muqarrin in charge of the vanguard, his brother Suwayd ibn Muqarrin and Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamān on the two flanks, Qaʿqāʿ at the head of a group not attached to particular sections and Mujāshiʿ ibn Masʿūd at the head of the rear section. Reinforcements under the command of Mughīrah ibn Shuʿbah came to them from Madīnah. When they all reached Nahāwand Nuʿmān called the *takbīr* and the army shouted it in response. They unloaded all their heavy goods and some of the men of rank from Kūfah pitched Nuʿmān's tent. This group included Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamān, ʿUqbah ibn ʿĀmir, Mughīrah ibn Shuʿbah, Bashīr ibn al-Khaṣāṣiyyah, Hanḏalah al-Kātib, Jarīr ibn ʿAbdillāh and Ashʿath ibn Qays amongst others. None had seen men pitch an Arab tent like them before.

The Muslims then commenced the battle, fighting on Wednesday and Thursday. On Friday the Persians took cover in their trenches. The Muslims feared that they might have to wait a long time so they deliberated and decided to appoint Qaʿqāʿ to recommence the battle. When the Persians came out to engage him, he was to act as if he was being defeated. When they pursued him and advanced,

195 *Al-Wathāʿiq*, p. 440.

they would be lured into the midst of the other Muslims who would round on them and what Allah ﷻ had willed would be brought to pass.

Nu'mān thus ordered Qa'qā' to commence the battle. The Persians came out of their trenches and Qa'qā' pretended to be defeated, the Persians pursued him, delighted having never seen the Muslims like this before. They advanced in pursuit until they came close to the Muslim army. Nu'mān had ordered his soldiers not to fight until he gave the word, waiting for the time after midday when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to prefer to engage an enemy in battle. When it came, he called the *takbīr* and led off an attack with the Muslims following him saying: "If I am killed, the commander after me shall be Ḥudhayfah."

The Muslims and Persians engaged in a battle the like of which they had never experienced before, not even at Qādisiyyah. Nu'mān was martyred in the midst of it and his brother, Nu'aym, enshrouded him and did not reveal his death to the army that they might lose courage. Ḥudhayfah took up the flag and the battle continued until nightfall when the Persians were defeated. Whilst retreating, they could not see their way and therefore ended up at the edge of the valley by which they had camped at Isbīdhuhān and many of them fell into it except a few fugitives who escaped. Fīruzān, the Persian leader, survived, though he was injured, and headed north towards Hamadhān. A small section of the army gave chase, catching and killing him at the pass leading to Hamadhān. They subsequently conquered Hamadhān without having to fight, the residents made peace and agreed to pay the *jizyah*. When this news reached the people of the two Māh cities they hastened to make peace and it was granted. This is the text of the agreement:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. The following is what Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamān agreed to with the people of Māh Dinār<sup>196</sup>: He guarantees them peace over their lives, wealth and lands. They will not be forced to change their religion nor be prohibited from acting according to their own law. They will enjoy protection as long as they pay the *jizyah* every year to the Muslim governor appointed over them. This *jizyah* is payable by every adult on his wealth and life and in accordance with his capability. This is on condition that they guide travellers, repair roads, host Muslim soldiers passing through by providing them with shelter for a day and night and act honourably. But if they act treacherously and change their ways, our guarantee no longer extends to them.

196 All the Arabic prints of the book that I have seen have Māh Bahrādhān. There were two areas known as Māh, and both were referred to above by the author. Both areas opted for peace, and exactly the same agreement was written for each of them. The peace agreement for Māh Bahrādhān was written by Nu'mān ibn Muqarrin, and Hudhayfah ibn al-Yamān wrote the peace agreement for Māh Dinār. (editor).

Qa‘qā‘ ibn ‘Amr, Nu‘aym ibn Muqarrin and Suwayd ibn Muqarrin were witnesses to this document which was written in Muharram 19 AH.<sup>197</sup>

The squadron which pursued and killed Firuzān returned. Meanwhile the Muslims collected a lot of booty and spoils. Sā‘ib ibn al-Aqrā‘ had the responsibility of calculating and recording all of it, Ḥudhayfah then sent him with one fifth of the booty and the good news of victory. When he approached Madīnah, he found ‘Umar already waiting outside for news. He had been attempting to gauge the result of the battle and had spent the night in a state of restlessness.<sup>198</sup> When he saw Sā‘ib he demanded news and Sā‘ib replied: “Good news, O Leader of the Believers! Allah blessed you with a very great victory but Nu‘mān ibn Muqarrin was martyred.” ‘Umar said: “To Allah we belong and to Him do we return” then began to cry, sobbing until the nerves in his shoulder blades became visible. When Sā‘ib saw this, he said: “O Leader of the Believers! No person as well known as him was killed after him.” ‘Umar said: “They are the ones considered weak among the Muslims, but any men that Allah has honoured with martyrdom are well-known to Him, why should it matter if I know them?”

The share received by a horseman who took part in the battle of Nahāwand was six thousand dirhams. The Muslims referred to the victory there as the victory of all victories because the Persians had no power afterwards.

It is worth mentioning that in the booty from Nahāwand the Muslims came across two baskets filled with valuable jewels from the treasures of Khusro. Ḥudhayfah, the commander of the army, sent both these baskets with Sā‘ib to ‘Umar. When he conveyed them to ‘Umar he said: “Leave them in the Bayt al-Māl [the treasury] and go and join your army”, so he mounted his animal and returned. ‘Umar sent a messenger after him who caught up with him in Kūfah. The messenger asked him to return to Madīnah. When ‘Umar saw him he said: “What is it with me and Sā‘ib? As soon as I fell asleep on the night you departed angels dragged me to the two baskets, which were now blazing with fire, warning me that I would burn if I did not distribute them. Take these two baskets away from me and sell them so that the proceeds may be distributed among the Muslims.” They were thus sold in the market of Kūfah.

May Allah be pleased with you, O ‘Umar. You followed the path of your Prophet, you were honourable and you elevated Islām and the Muslims. O Allah! Inspire us to emulate him and save us from the evil of innovation. At this point

<sup>197</sup> Tabarī, vol. 4, p. 114.

<sup>198</sup> Ibn Kathīr states in his *Bidāyah* that the Leader of the Believers (‘Umar) passed his days and nights supplicating to Allah for them. His pleas resembled those of a pregnant woman in the last phase of labour, and like people who wail out of immense need.

Ḥudhayfah turned back with his army victorious and triumphant after the battle of Nahāwand.<sup>199</sup>

#### THE CONQUEST OF HAMADHĀN

While Ḥudhayfah was on the way back he received information that the people of Hamdhān had broken the peace agreement. He passed this information on to ʿUmar  who in turn ordered him to dispatch Nuʿaym ibn Muqarrin to Hamdhān and he returned there after having prepared and arranged his army. There he took control of all the lands surrounding Hamadhān and laid siege to the city itself. The residents requested peace. An agreement was reached in return for *jizyah*. He then headed towards Wāj Rūdh where Daylam, the people of Azerbaijan, and Rayy had rallied. Nuʿaym engaged in a fierce battle with them and eventually defeated them.

#### THE CONQUEST OF RAYY AND QŪMIS (HECATOMPYLOS)

He sent this news to ʿUmar  who ordered him to make for Rayy.<sup>200</sup> There the army commander, Abū ʿl-Farrukhān, came out to Nuʿaym and requested peace. In so doing he went against the orders of the king of Rayy, so the king sought the assistance of his neighbours who sent him help. Nuʿaym met them at the top of the mountain of Rayy close to the city and engaged them in fierce combat. When Abū ʿl-Farrukhān saw that it would not be over quickly he asked Nuʿaym to give him a section of his army with which he would enter the city without the Persians knowing. He sent a group with him and entered the city with them just as he said. Nuʿaym attacked the Persians at night and they fought back, but when they heard the *takbir* coming from the city behind them they were sharply defeated.

From this city of Rayy Allah  bestowed a similar amount of booty on the Muslims to that which they acquired at Madāʿin. Nuʿaym appointed Abū ʿl-Farrukhān as the governor of the city and wrote to ʿUmar  informing him of the victory. ʿUmar  wrote to Nuʿaym asking him to dispatch his brother Suwayd to Qūmis, an area between Khurasān and Bilād al-Jabal. Nuʿaym dispatched Suwayd to Qūmis. No one stood in his way and he took control of it without any fighting then made camp there. The residents of the area wrote to him asking to be allowed to return to their land in order to give him the *jizyah* and he replied to them in a letter which read as follows:

199 Ṭabarī, vol. 4, pp. 114–143; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 3, pp. 5–16; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, pp. 105–113; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 556; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, pp. 120–126; *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 300–304.

200 Near to current-day Tehran on the South-Eastern side.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. This is the agreement which Suwayd ibn Muqarrin made with the people of Qūmis and those who belong to them. Their lives, religion and wealth are guaranteed in exchange for *jizyah* which they will pay on behalf of every adult in accordance with his capability. This is on the condition that they act well and not treacherously, that they show the way to travellers, host Muslims who come to their city for a day and a night and provide them with food of average quality. However if they change this agreement and make light of their pact, they shall no longer enjoy any guarantee.

He wrote the letter and had it attested to.

#### THE CONQUEST OF JURJĀN (GORGAN) AND ṬABARISTĀN (TAPURIA)

He advanced to Jurjān in northern Persia and made camp there. The king of Jurjān contacted him about making peace and giving the *jizyah* and Nu‘aym accepted. The king came out and met him outside the city. Nu‘aym entered with him, made camp in the city and collected the *kharāj* (the tax paid on cultivated land).

While he was there the ruler of Ṭabaristān, a Northern province contacted him with regard to making peace on the basis that they leave each other alone, and that Suwayd stipulate something for him in return for him not helping and assisting anyone against the Muslims. He accepted this and wrote him the following letter:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. From Suwayd ibn Muqarrin to Farrukhān the representative of Khurāsān over Ṭabaristān and Jilān (Gilan), part of enemy territory. You are safe under the protection of Allah on condition that you restrain thieves and the people of your rural areas, that you do not provide refuge to anyone who rebels against us and that you protect your land by paying us five hundred thousand dirhams from your wealth. If you agree to all this none of us will attack you, invade your land or come to you without your permission. Once we obtain permission to come, our path to you will be safe and secure and likewise yours to us. You shall not provide refuge to anyone who rebels against us. You shall not steal away to join any enemy and you shall not bear any malice against us. If you perpetrate any of these acts, there shall be no agreement between us and you.

This letter was written in 18 AH and Sawād ibn Quṭbah at-Tamīmī, Hind ibn ‘Amr al-Murādī, Simāk ibn Makhramah al-Asadī, Simāk ibn ‘Ubaydillah al-‘Absī, and ‘Utaybah ibn an-Nahhās al-‘Ījlī all bore witness to it.

## THE CONQUEST OF IŞFAHĀN

ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ then sent a message to ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn ʿĪtbān, governor of Baṣrah before Mughīrah, ordering him to set out for Iṣfahān and directed Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī to assist him. ʿAbdullāh proceeded until he reached Iṣfahān, which was in the Persian region of Iraq. Ustundār was the commander of the army there and the two armies engaged in fierce combat which ended in defeat for the polytheists. They sued for a peace agreement and their request was accepted. ʿAbdullāh then proceeded towards the city of Jayy, the capital of Iṣfahān, and besieged it. Fādhūsān who was the leader of Iṣfahān and in charge of Jayy, made peace with ʿAbdullāh on the condition that *jizyah* be paid by those who lived there and controlled the disposal of their own wealth. He (ʿAbdullāh) was to return land to those from whom it was taken by force. As for those who refused the *jizyah* and left their land, the Muslims could take it.<sup>201</sup>

## SPREADING OUT IN NON-ARAB LANDS

When ʿUmar ﷺ saw that the power of the Persians had waned and no longer feared the loss of Muslim life in expanded operations, he determined to follow the counsel of Aḥnaf ibn Qays. Therefore he sent a message to Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī ﷺ, the appointed governor of Baṣrah after Mughīrah ibn Shuʿbah ﷺ, and ordered him to go a little distance out of the city and to await further orders there. He then sent Sahl ibn ʿAdī to him with flags for the commanders who were to move out into the non-Arab lands:

- Aḥnaf ibn Qays who was to head for Khurāsān.
- Mujāshiʿ ibn Masʿūd as-Sulamī who was to set out for Ardashīr-Khurrah (Gur/Jur/Firuzabad) and Sābūr (Shapur).
- ʿUthmān ibn Abī ʿl-ʿĀṣ ath-Thaqafī who was to march to Iṣṭakhr.
- Sāriyah ibn Zunaym al-Kinānī who was to go to Fasā and Darābjird (Darab).
- Sahl ibn ʿAdī who was to advance to Karmān.
- ʿĀṣim ibn ʿAmr who was to make for Sijistān (Sistan).
- Ḥakam ibn ʿAmr ath-Thaʿlabī who was to head to Mukrān.

This was at the beginning of the year 18 AH.<sup>202</sup>

201 Ṭabarī, vol. 4, pp. 146–150; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 3, pp. 17, 22–23; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, pp. 120–121; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 559–560; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, p. 127; *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 306–308.

202 Ṭabarī, vol. 4, p. 94; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 3, p. 18; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 553.

THE CONQUEST OF AZERBAIJAN

Bukayr ibn ‘Abdillāh proceeded towards Azerbaijan, a province to the west of the Caspian Sea where its present capital is Tabriz. He wrote to Nu‘aym ibn Muqarrin, conqueror of Rayy, to send Simāk ibn Kharashah to assist him. When Bukayr made it to the Jarmīdhān mountains the Persians who were defeated at Wāj Rūdh confronted him under the command of Isfandiyār, brother of Rustam who was killed at Qādisiyyah. They went into battle against Bukayr but were defeated and Isfandiyār was captured. He said to Bukayr: “What do you prefer, peace or war?” “Peace”, he replied.

Isfandiyār said: “Then do not kill me but keep me with you because the people of Azerbaijan will not make peace with you as long as I do not make peace with you.” So Bukayr kept him with him. After a short while the reinforcements which Nu‘aym had sent reached him and they all advanced towards Azerbaijan. The people there made a peace agreement in return for *jizyah* and Bukayr wrote to ‘Umar informing him of this. ‘Umar ordered him to appoint ‘Utbah ibn Farqad as governor of Azerbaijan and to go and help the army of Bāb. ‘Utbah wrote the following peace agreement for the people of Azerbaijan:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. This is what ‘Utbah ibn Farqad, governor on behalf of the Leader of the Believers, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, cedes to the people of Azerbaijan whether they are in low-lying regions, mountainous regions, rural areas or valleys and no matter what their religion is. They shall enjoy peace and security of their lives, wealth, religion and religious injunctions in return for *jizyah* which they will pay according to their capability. This *jizyah* is not binding on children, women and the incapacitated who have no worldly possessions. Nor is it binding on those who are engaged in worship and remain in seclusion, having nothing of this world. They shall enjoy this privilege as will those who live with them. They will have a duty to host a Muslim soldier for a day and night and to show him the way. Whoever suffers poverty in any given year shall be exempt from the *jizyah*. Whoever stays in the place for a time is entitled to the same rights as a resident and whoever leaves enjoys security till he moves on to his destination.

Jundub wrote this letter.<sup>203</sup>

THE CONQUEST OF BĀB

Surāqah ibn ‘Amr proceeded towards Bāb, on the edge of the Caspian Sea and

<sup>203</sup> Tabarī, vol. 4, pp. 153–155; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 3, pp. 27–28; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, p. 122; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 516; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, pp. 130–131.

demarcating the border between the Persians, Armenians and the Russians. ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Rabī‘ah was at the vanguard of this army. Bukayr arrived there before him and awaited his arrival. When ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Rabī‘ah, commander of the vanguard, reached Bāb, Shahrbarāz the king wrote to him to make peace. ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān responded positively so Shahrbarāz came to him and said: “I stand between an insatiable enemy and people of various backgrounds not people of noble descent. It does not befit a man of noble descent and intelligence to help such people so I renounce Qabj (Caucasus) and the Armenians. You have conquered my lands and my people. I am now with you. I hand over myself to you, I will give my *jizyah* to you, I will help you and I will do as you wish. Do not be harsh on us in the *jizyah* or else you will weaken us before your enemy.”

‘Abd ar-Raḥmān sent him to Surāqah. Shahrbarāz spoke to Surāqah in the same way as he had to ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān. Surāqah said to him: “*Jizyah* will have to be paid by those who remain and do not fight the enemy.” He agreed to this and ‘Umar ﷺ attested it. Surāqah then wrote a letter of agreement with them. It read as follows:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. This is what Surāqah ibn ‘Amr, governor for the Leader of the Believers, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, gave to Shahrbarāz, the people of Armenia and the Armenians. He gave them peace and security of their lives, wealth and religion, guaranteeing that they would not be harmed nor their wealth taken. It is the duty of the people of Armenia and Abwāb, whether they are from outside or belong to the country, and those who live around them and are therefore of them, that they go out to fight in every attack, and that they participate in every matter whether imminent or not in which the governor sees benefit. Anyone that agrees to this and to fighting will be absolved from the *jizyah*. Fighting with the Muslims against the enemy is a substitute for it. Whoever does not agree with this and remains at home without going out to fight will have to pay the *jizyah* paid by the people of Azerbaijan, give directions, and host Muslim soldiers for a full day. If they go out to fight, they will be absolved of the *jizyah*, but if they abandon fighting it will be imposed on them.

When Surāqah completed his tasks in Bāb, he dispatched military squadrons towards the mountains around Armenia. He sent Bukayr ibn ‘Abdillāh to Mūqān (the rural area of Armenia), Ḥabīb ibn Maslamah to Taflīs (a place in the Caucasus in present-day Russia), Ḥudhayfah ibn Asīd to the mountains of Lān (a nation and place on the outskirts of Armenia), and Salmān ibn Rabī‘ah in another direction. Bukayr conquered Mūqān entering into a peace agreement with its people and writing the following letter for them:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. This is what Bukayr ibn ‘Abdillāh gave to the people of Mūqān from the mountains of Qabj. They shall enjoy peace and security of their wealth, lives, religion and religious laws in return for the *jizyah* which will be one dinar [per annum] or its equivalent value for every adult. They shall see to the well-being of Muslims, direct them and host them for a day and night. They shall enjoy peace and security as long as they abide to this well. Likewise it is our duty to fulfil our pledge. Help is sought from Allah alone. But if they abandon this and treachery is discovered on their part, they shall enjoy no peace until all traitors are handed over. If they do not hand them over they will be regarded as their supporters.

This letter was written in 21 AH and Surāqah wrote to ‘Umar to inform him of all this. At this stage however Surāqah passed away. ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Rabī‘ took his place and became commander of his army. ‘Umar kept him in this post and ordered him to march on the Turks. He departed and cut across Bāb. Shahrbarāz asked him where he was heading. He replied: “I am marching to Balanjar<sup>204</sup> and the Turks.” Shahrbarāz said: “We would be happy to just leave them beyond Bāb [without attacking them].”

‘Abd ar-Raḥmān said: “We will be satisfied only when we march into their country. By Allah, I have such people with me that if our leader ordered us to devote our utmost we would make it to Rome.”<sup>205</sup> Shahrbarāz asked: “Who are these people?” He replied: “They are people who remained in the company of the Messenger of Allah and entered this religion with full resolve. This trait will remain with them and they will receive divine assistance until they are conquered by people that change them, or they themselves turn away from this condition.”

‘Abd ar-Raḥmān then continued until he reached Balanjar. When the people there saw him they said: “He could not have had the courage to come to attack us if he did not have angels with him” and got out of his way. He continued until he rode his horses to Baydā’ (Beda), about 200 *parasangs* out the other side of Balanjar. He then returned without any casualties among his army and remained there as commander at Bāb.<sup>206</sup>

#### THE CONQUEST OF KHURĀSĀN

Aḥnaf ibn Qays marched to Khurāsān to meet Yazdajird, the Persian king, who

<sup>204</sup> A place on the Caspian Sea behind Bāb al-Abwāb.

<sup>205</sup> The original mentions Radm, but no place to be found by that name. Al-Kāmil says Rome and Tārikh al-Islām says Sindh, while Tabari says Radm (editor).

<sup>206</sup> Ṭabari, vol. 4, pp. 155–160; al-Kāmil, vol. 3, p. 28; al-Bidāyah, vol. 7, p. 122; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 561–562; al-Futūḥāt, vol. 1, pp. 131–132; Futūḥ al-Buldān, pp. 321–326.

had remained in Marw inciting the Persians against the Muslims. When he reached Herāt in Khurāsān (part of present-day Afghanistan), he conquered it. He then advanced to Marw ash-Shāhejān. Yazdajird had left this place and gone to Marw ar-Rūdh<sup>207</sup> and from there he wrote to the Turkish monarch, the king of Ṣughd (Sogdiana), and the king of China asking them for help. In the meantime Aḥnaf took control of Marw ash-Shāhejān and appointed a deputy over it. He then set out for Marw ar-Rūdh. Yazdajird left this place and went to Balkh, a city close to the Jayḥūn river. Aḥnaf took control of Marw ar-Rūdh and reinforcements from Kūfah also came to him. He sent them ahead towards Balkh and they advanced until they met Yazdajird and engaged him in battle there, making him flee across the river. Aḥnaf and those with him did not participate in this battle because they only arrived after the Persians had been defeated. Thus he returned to Marw, remaining there, and sent news of victory and one fifth of the spoils to ʿUmar . He also informed ʿUmar  that Yazdajird had crossed the river. ʿUmar  replied prohibiting Aḥnaf from crossing over in pursuit.

On the other side of the river some Turks under their monarch came to Yazdajird, as well as reinforcements from Farghānah and Ṣughd. He crossed the river with them, returning from where he had fled. He left the Turks facing Aḥnaf and his army at Marw ar-Rūdh while he headed for Marw ash-Shāhejān. Here he constrained the guards and took all his treasures from the city, intending to go to Farghānah or China and settle in one of the two places. However the people of Khurāsān did not permit him to do this, saying: “Come with us to these people [i.e. the Muslims] and make peace with them because they are trustworthy and religious people. We prefer an enemy ruling over us in our own land to an enemy with no religion whom we cannot trust ruling over us from his country.”

Yazdajird refused this proposal so they took all his treasures from him by force. Yazdajird then joined the Turkish monarch who was unable to stand up to the Muslims.

The Khurasānids came to Aḥnaf, made peace with him and gave him all of Yazdajird’s treasures. Then they returned to their lands and properties in a far better state than that which they had to endure under the Persian kings. They were satisfied with the rule of the Muslims because they had to do nothing except give a small amount [as *jizyah*] in return for protection. After giving this, their life, wealth and honour were held in the same sanctity as the life, wealth and honour of a Muslim on a sacred day, in a sacred month and in a sacred place.<sup>208</sup>

207 Both places are between Balkh and Herat.

208 This is in reference to the statement of the Messenger  which he made during the final pilgrim-

If a Muslim considers a person to be under the protection of Allah how could he ever break a peace agreement made with him? After entering into a pact of protection all that is required is to wish the Muslims well and refrain from backing anyone against them. To do so is to act treacherously and he can no longer expect protection and the sanctity of his life and wealth. These are simple conditions for a person to fulfil as long as there is freedom of religion and freedom to act, and this is what the religion of Islām upholds.

The horsemen received a similar share of the booty as that which they received from Qādisiyyah. Aḥnaf then advanced towards Balkh and settled the people of Kūfah there because it was part of their conquered lands. He wrote to ‘Umar informing him of all that had transpired and remained as governor of Khurāsān. The story of Yazdajird will end during the caliphate of ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān.

‘Uthmān ibn Abi ‘l-‘Āṣ‘ath-Thaqafī marched to Iṣṭakhr. He and the people of this place met at Jūr<sup>209</sup> and he defeated them. Those who had fled returned to him and requested permission to remain in their city in exchange for the *jizyah* which he accepted from them. Then he went on to conquer Kāzrūn and Nūbandajān, the centre of the district of Sābur in Persia. He and Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī jointly conquered Shīrāz, Arrajān and Sinīz. ‘Uthmān then headed towards Jannābah.<sup>210</sup> He conquered this place then met an army of Persians on the outskirts of Jahram and overcame them then remained as governor of Iṣṭakhr.<sup>211</sup>

#### THE CONQUEST OF FASĀ AND DĀRĀBJIRD

Sāriyah ibn Zunaym al-Kinānī marched on the city of Fasā and Dārābjird and engaged its residents in combat in the desert. The Persians then sought the help of the Persian Kurds who lived near them. They duly obliged and the Muslims faced a difficult situation. The night before the battle ‘Umar saw in a dream the situation the Muslims were in. When he got up in the morning he called for a group prayer and went out to the Muslims as the time he foresaw in the dream approached. If Sāriyah and those who were with him were to remain in the desert they would be destroyed but if they put the mountain behind them

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age, when he said: “Certainly, your blood, wealth and honour are inviolable between yourselves like the sanctity of this (sacred) day of yours, in this (sacred) month of yours, and in this (sacred) place of yours.” Bukhari (67), Muslim (1679).

209 The city of Firuzabad near Iṣfahān (historically Ardashīr-Khurrah).

210 A Persian town in line with the island of Khārak in the Arabian gulf, now called Kurk.

211 Ṭabarī, vol. 4, pp. 166–173; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 3, pp. 33–37; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, pp. 127–130; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 563–564; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, pp. 133–136; *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 394–420.

they could be attacked from only one direction. ‘Umar ﷺ stood up and said: “O people! I have seen these two armies.” He then informed them of the situation of the Muslims, then while he was addressing them, he began shouting: “O Sāriyah ibn Zunaym! The mountain, the mountain!” He then turned to the Muslims and said: “Allah ﷻ has special armies [referring to angels], perhaps some of them will convey this message [to Sāriyah].”

It was only by the power and might of Allah ﷻ that Sāriyah heard ‘Umar’s voice and so moved back towards the mountains and fought the enemy until he overcame them. He sent a message to ‘Umar ﷺ to notify him of the victory, and one fifth of the booty together with a basket full of jewels but he refused it, sending it back so that it could be sold and distributed among the victorious warriors. Those who were in Madīnah asked Sāriyah’s envoy: “Did you hear a voice on the day of the battle?” He replied: “Yes. We heard the voice saying: ‘O Sāriyah! The mountain, the mountain!’ So we backed up against the mountain [i.e. so the enemy could only come at us from one direction]. Before that we were almost defeated.” Sāriyah remained in Darābjird as governor.<sup>212</sup>

#### THE CONQUEST OF KARMĀN AND SIJISTĀN

Sahl ibn ‘Adī went to Karmān, a province of eastern Persia and ‘Umar ﷺ sent ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abdillāh ibn ‘Itbān to help him. Arriving there they found a large army of Persians and they engaged them in battle until Allah ﷻ put the Persians to flight and the vicegerent of Karmān was killed. The Muslims entered the place victorious and found a large number of camels and sheep there.<sup>213</sup>

‘Aṣim ibn ‘Amr advanced to Sijistān, a province to the east of Karmān<sup>214</sup> where the people met them in battle and were defeated. The Muslims pursued them and surrounded them at Zaranj. They requested peace on the basis that the Muslims take Zaranj and the other lands they had taken possession of, stipulating that the tracts of desert land be protected property [meaning that the Muslims would not interfere with it, leaving it for them]. The Muslims accepted this and subsequently steered clear of these tracts of desert land for fear that they would take some and break the agreement, something they were forbidden from doing.<sup>215</sup>

212 Ṭabarī, vol. 4, pp. 178–179; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 3, pp. 42–43; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, pp. 130–132; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 566; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, pp. 138–140.

213 Ṭabarī, vol. 4, p. 180; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 3, pp. 43–44; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 566; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, p. 140; *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 383–384.

214 A great part of this is in modern-day Afghanistan.

215 Ṭabarī, vol. 4, pp. 180–181; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 3, pp. 44–45; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 566; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, pp. 140–141; *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 385–388.

THE CONQUEST OF MUKRĀN

Ḥakam ibn ʿAmr ath-Thaʿlabī went to Mukrān. Sahl ibn ʿAdī, conqueror of Karmān, and ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn ʿItbān who had gone to help Sahl, joined Ḥakam. They advanced together to the Dawīn River on the border between Persia and Sindh. The polytheists of Mukrān were on the banks there and the king of Sindh had sent a huge army to help them. The Muslims strove until they vanquished them and sent them into the river then returned to Mukrān.

Ḥakam sent one fifth of the booty and the news of victory to ʿUmar with Ṣuḥār al-ʿAbdī and ʿUmar asked him about Mukrān. “O Leader of the Believers”, he replied, “It is a land where even the low lying regions are mountainous, its water scarce, its fruits are low quality dates, its enemies brave, its good very little and its evil profuse, lacking in supplies while the little that is available is wasted, and the land that is beyond it is even worse.” ʿUmar asked him: “Are you a poet or a messenger? By Allah, I would not allow an army of mine to invade such a place.” ʿUmar wrote to Ḥakam ordering him to stop at the places which he conquered and not to go beyond Mukrān.<sup>216</sup>

These were the great feats that were accomplished by the Muslims during the caliphate of ʿUmar in the Persian lands, which had been known for their great power and supremacy. They commenced in 12 AH by conquering the first of the cities, Ubullah, and continued conquering until the death of ʿUmar. They completely annexed a land which extended from the borders of the Arab lands in the west to Transoxiana (Mā warā an-Nahr) and the lands of Sindh in the east, from the Gulf of Arabia in the south to the Caspian Sea, Armenia and Russia in the north.

The Muslims faced the Persians in many battles, the most famous being the battles of Ubullah under Khālīd ibn al-Walīd, Qādisiyyah under Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, Nahāwand under Nuʿmān ibn Muqarrin, the battle against Yazdajird under Aḥnaf ibn Qays, and various others.

No Muslim flag was ever lowered, no Muslim army fled and the Muslims never equalled their Persian opponents in numbers or resources. Indeed the Persians outnumbered them by several times in every battle. The Arabs were not more knowledgeable than the Persians about organising armies and defence strategies, nor wealthier than the Persians in order to influence their enemies to join them. Indeed their ruggedness of life and dire circumstances were well known. The Muslims knew no more than the Persians about the ruses and tac-

<sup>216</sup> Ṭabarī, vol. 4, pp. 181–183; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 3, pp. 45–46; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 567; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, p. 141.

tics of war to use in battle. How then did the Muslims win such a decisive victory and make these grand conquests?

It was solely through the divine help which they earned through the unity and harmony of their hearts; many bodies but a single heart and unity of purpose. It was the universality of the Islamic religion that brought together nations that had veered off the straight path and the upright way. Consider, may Allah protect you, the response of the envoys of Sa'd رضي الله عنه to the Persian kings and commanders who said that Allah had sent them to remove people from the darkness of ignorance and injustice under kings to the light of faith and the justice of Islām. All of them were equal in this faith, even a barefooted Bedouin who, before Islām, cared for nothing other than plundering and ravaging.

Their caliphs were not cowards who feared threats and warnings; their commanders were not charlatans, saying what was not in their hearts. The Muslim community was not plagued with differing desires and diverse opinions, or distracted by trivial matters so that they neglected important issues. Nor did it abandon enjoining good and forbidding evil out of fear or cowardice. Their scholars were not egotistical, vain or concerned with self-aggrandisement and affairs of this world. They did not chase high positions and boast of what they had so that enmity and malice arose amongst them. The zeal of the religion was still alive. Indeed the expressions of it were quite manifest in the speech and actions of the Muslims, who feared not the attacks of critics for the sake of Allah. It is therefore no surprise that in a short space of time they conquered, triumphed and became rulers in a way that no great nation possessing strength, wealth and knowledge could achieve.

O Allah! Inspire the Muslims and their rulers to all that is right. The way is clear and the truth obvious. When the people of insight awaken they will be guided to the good of this world and the Hereafter. Allah is sufficient reliance for us and what an excellent reliance is He! There is no power nor might but with Allah, the Most High, the Almighty.

### THE CONQUEST OF THE LEVANT (SHĀM)

We left this story when the Muslims were victorious and triumphant at Yarmūk after a fierce battle, under the command of the trustworthy Abū 'Ubaydah 'Āmir ibn al-Jarrāḥ al-'Āmirī al-Qurashī رضي الله عنه, who had taken command after the sword of Allah, Khālīd ibn al-Walīd al-Makhzūmī al-Qurashī رضي الله عنه. After this victory, news reached the commander that the scattered remnants of the Roman army had gone to Fīhl (Pella) and that mighty reinforcements from the Roman

emperor had arrived in Damascus. Abū ʿUbaydah wrote to the Leader of the Believers seeking his advice as to which of the two lands he should commence with. He replied saying: "Send a group to Fiḥl to engage those who are there while you go to Damascus because it is the garrison of the Levant and the abode of its king." Abū ʿUbaydah sent part of his army to Fiḥl where it laid siege to the city, while a unit remained between Ḥimṣ and Damascus to block any reinforcements. Another unit remained between Damascus and Palestine, while he marched on Damascus with Khālīd ibn al-Walīd leading the vanguard. He appointed ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ as deputy over Palestine and Jordan.

#### THE CONQUEST OF DAMASCUS

When he reached Damascus the residents took refuge in its forts so the Muslims surrounded them with Abū ʿUbaydah on one side and Khālīd ibn al-Walīd on the other. This siege continued for seventy days.

Khālīd was at his post one night when he heard a clamour. His practice was to spy on enemy movements so as not to miss any opportunity that presented itself and sent someone to investigate. He learnt that a child had been born to the patriarch of the city who had prepared a feast at which the soldiers got very drunk. Khālīd took rope as a lasso and, fronting a small group of brave companions including Qaʿqāʿ and people of his calibre, went to the Muslims saying: "When you hear our *takbīr* on the wall, head for the doors [of the city]." He and his companions reached the wall and flung up the ropes, two of them fastening to the wall. They climbed up with many others behind. Reaching the top of the wall they headed for the door, opened it and called out the *takbīr*. The rest of the army entered calling the *takbīr* so loudly that it roused the people of the city. They sobered from their intoxication, alarmed but helpless.

A delegation went to Abū ʿUbaydah requesting a peace agreement. He agreed to it and entered the city with them to put the rest of the population at ease. He met Khālīd in the centre of the city, one of them having agreed to peace with the other at war. Abū ʿUbaydah informed him of the peace agreement and he held off. Any parts of the city conquered by force were included among the parts that had made peace and so the entire city fell under the peace agreement.

Abū ʿUbaydah sent the message of victory to ʿUmar and appointed Yazīd ibn Abī Sufyān over the city who conquered the coastal regions of Ṣaydāʾ (Sidon), ʿIrqah, Jubayl and Beirut. He also dispatched Yazīd's brother Muʿāwiya to conquer Qaysāriyyah, which presented no difficulty.

As for Abū ʿUbaydah, he proceeded towards Fiḥl with Khālīd ibn al-Walīd

ﷺ at the vanguard, ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ ﷺ and Abū ʿUbaydah ﷺ on the two flanks, Dirār ibn al-Azwar al-Asadī at the head of the cavalry, ʿIyād ibn Ghanm at the head of the infantry and Shuraḥbīl ibn Ḥasanah at the head of the main body of men. It was Shuraḥbīl that descended upon Fiḥl with the main body of men and laid siege to it.

Shuraḥbīl was constantly on guard, being well prepared during the nights and mornings. He used to do this because ʿUmar ﷺ had persistently warned them about being attacked at night, and this was what the Romans did one night. Shuraḥbīl engaged the Romans in a fierce battle that lasted all night and throughout the following day. When evening came the Romans lost courage and were defeated. They were blocked off from the city by waterways they had constructed and used to make the land muddy to serve as a trench around the city. The Muslims seized them from all sides and took control of the city.<sup>217</sup>

The commander sent a fifth of the booty and the news of victory to ʿUmar ﷺ. He then divided his army into two sections with Shuraḥbīl ibn Ḥasanah at the head of one section and dispatched it towards Baysān (Beit She'an). He dispatched the other section to Ṭabariyyah.<sup>218</sup> Both conquered the cities and concluded a peace agreement similar to the one made for Damascus.

As for Abū ʿUbaydah ﷺ, he advanced towards Ḥimṣ with Khālīd ﷺ. When he reached the Roman steppes he met two armies which Heraclius had sent to fight the Muslims. One of them was under the command of a patriarch by the name of Tawdhār and the other was under the command of Shanas ar-Rumī. Khālīd ﷺ went to face the first army and Abū ʿUbaydah ﷺ the second. When Khālīd ﷺ woke up the next morning there was no trace of Tawdhār or his army who had left for Damascus (Dimashq) to retake it, thinking that there was no one there to defend it. Khālīd ﷺ learnt of his intent and pursued him. Likewise Yazīd ibn Abī Sufyān, governor of Damascus learnt of this and made preparations to face him so Tawdhār was sandwiched between two armies. He and his army were seized and only a few managed to escape. Khālīd ﷺ then went back

217 In this battle, the Muslim army numbered between sixteen and thirty thousand while the Romans numbered between fifty and eighty thousand. What were the reasons behind the victory of the Muslim army? (1) The Muslim horsemen were more proficient than the Roman horsemen. Despite the protective steps which the Romans had taken Khālīd ﷺ was able to lure their horsemen out of the protective zone which they had prepared. They thus lost their horsemen and their foot soldiers were left to face the Muslim army. (2) The Romans underestimated the strength of the Muslim army and were thus taken unawares. (3) The Romans did not have alternative strategies. Their army relied solely on the trench and had nothing to fall back on if the tables turned, thus they dug their own graves. See *at-Tariq ilā Dimashq* of Aḥmad ʿĀdil Kamāl, pp. 346–347; Ṭabarī, vol. 3, p. 443; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 427–432; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, pp. 19–26; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 518–519; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, pp. 40–44; *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 123–136.

218 Ṭabariyyah (Lake Tiberias) or the Sea of Galille in modern day occupied Palestine.

having accomplished his task. As for Abū ʿUbaydah, he met Shanas in battle and routed him. Khalid returned after the victory.

#### THE CONQUEST OF ḤIMŞ (HOMS)

Khalid travelled with Abū ʿUbaydah to Ḥimş. When the Roman emperor heard of this, he sent a message to the patriarch of Ḥimş ordering him to go to Rome and he went to Ruhā.<sup>219</sup> The Muslims passed through Baʿlabakk<sup>220</sup> and took control of it then reached Ḥimş, laying siege to the city. The residents took refuge in forts, waiting for reinforcements from Heraclius. They waited a long time however, and sent a message to Abū ʿUbaydah asking for a similar peace agreement to the one made with the people of Damascus. The Muslims accepted and ʿUbādah ibn as-Şāmit was subsequently put in charge of the city while Abū ʿUbaydah continued on to Ḥamā whose residents met him and submitted, so a peace accord was agreed with them in exchange for *jizyah* and *kharāj*.

Abū ʿUbaydah then headed for Shayzar (Larissa) near Ḥamā, taking power by means of another peace agreement, then proceeded to Maʿarrāh between Ḥamā and Ḥalab (Aleppo). He dealt with it in a like manner then proceeded to Lādhīqiyyah (Latakia), one of the districts of Aleppo, which he took by force and the residents fled. They then asked for a guarantee of security so that they could return to their lands and live there. This was agreed upon in return for paying *kharāj* and the Muslims built a *jāmiʿ* mosque [where Friday prayers are held].

#### THE CONQUEST OF QINNASRĪN

Abū ʿUbaydah then sent Khālīd to conquer Qinnasrīn, a rural area in the Levant. When he arrived at Hāḍir (an area close to Ḥalab), a huge army of Romans under the command of Mīnās stood forth to cross swords with them. Khālīd did battle with them and subdued them then went to Qinnasrīn where the people took refuge in its forts. He said to them: “Had you taken refuge in the clouds Allah would have carried us to you or brought you down to us.” They reflected on their situation and what the people of other cities had experienced at the hands of the Muslims and realised that they had no power to go to war or remain under siege. So like the other cities they requested a peace agreement similar to the one made in Damascus. Khālīd would not agree to anything but that the city should be deserted and so its forts were deserted.

219 Present day Urfa or Şanlıurfa in Turkey, historically called Edessa.

220 The ancient city of Heliopolis, in eastern Lebanon.

From there Khālid ﷺ went forth from the Levant in pursuit of Heraclius, as did 'Iyād ibn Ghanm on the Roman side. The Roman emperor bid his final farewell to the Levant and retreated to Constantinople. When 'Umar ﷺ heard of Khālid's ﷺ actions he said: "Khālid has shown himself to be a true leader. May Allah have mercy on Abū Bakr ﷺ, he was a better judge of people than I."

#### THE CONQUEST OF ḤALAB (ALEPPO) AND ANṬĀKIYAH (ANTIOCH)

Abū 'Ubaydah ﷺ now went to Ḥalab and its people took refuge in forts then asked for peace and a guarantee over their lives, children, wealth, churches, and forts. This was accepted but one spot excluded so that a mosque could be built there. He then proceeded to Anṭākiyah and its people made peace in exchange for *jizyah* for those who chose to remain in the city whilst those who wished to leave were expelled. Anṭākiyah was the largest border post of the Roman Empire and 'Umar ﷺ sent word to Abū 'Ubaydah ﷺ to organise a group of Muslims to remain as guards over the city.

Abū 'Ubaydah ﷺ continued then to Ma'arraḥ Maṣrīn, conquered it peacefully, and sent out squadrons to the neighbouring villages and lands which were successfully taken in. Abū 'Ubaydah ﷺ then went to Qūrus,<sup>221</sup> a rural area near Ḥalab, conquering it along with Tal 'Azāz. From Tal 'Azāz he went on to Manbij, part of Roman lands on the Euphrates River. Here he made a peace agreement like that made with Ḥimṣ but stipulated that they convey any information they receive about the Romans to the Muslims. Abū 'Ubaydah ﷺ appointed governors over every area conquered and lined dangerous borders with guards. He then went to Bālis on the banks of the Tigris and sent a squadron with Ḥabīb ibn Maslamah to Qāṣirīn where the people made peace. The Muslims had now completed the conquest of the Levant from this region up to the Euphrates River.

Abū 'Ubaydah ﷺ then returned to Palestine after dispatching an army under Maysarah ibn Masrūq al-'Absī and sending Mālik ibn al-Ḥārith al-Ashtar as back-up. They went to Baghras (Bakras) at the foot of the Lukkām Mountain<sup>222</sup> which was near Roman territory. There they met a Roman army who had been joined by some Arabs from the tribes of Ghassān, Tanūkh and Iyād who wanted to join Heraclius so they attacked them. Abū 'Ubaydah ﷺ sent another army towards Mar'ash near Anṭākiyah under Khālid ibn al-Walīd ﷺ who took power after evacuating its people peacefully, then destroyed the city.

<sup>221</sup> Cyrrhus, an area now completely in ruin.

<sup>222</sup> It faces Ḥamā, Shayzar, Afāmiyah, and extends northwards through Saḥyūn, Shugr and Bakas, ending at Anṭākiyah.

As for ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ in Jordan, he marched to Ajnādayn where a massive army of Romans had gathered under the command of Arṭabūn. ‘Amr besieged the city unrelentingly, making constant inquiries and spying on them until he learned of an access point then engaged them and defeated Arṭabūn who fled to Īliyā’ (Bayt al-Maqdis/Jerusalem).

#### THE CONQUEST OF BAYT AL-MAQDIS

‘Amr pursued him and laid siege to the city (Bayt al-Maqdis) where the people requested a peace agreement, but insisted the person who made it was ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. ‘Amr wrote to ‘Umar and he resolved to undertake the journey to the Levant so that he could personally receive the keys to al-Masjid al-Aqṣā. He left Madīnah, leaving ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib in charge and wrote to his governors telling them to meet him at Jābiyah, a place near Damascus.

The first one to meet him was Yazīd ibn Abī Sufyān, then Abū ‘Ubaydah and then Khālīd ibn al-Walīd on horses. They were covered with brocades and silk.<sup>223</sup> ‘Umar dismounted, took stones and flung them at Khālīd and the others shouting: “How quickly you have changed! You are meeting me in these garments of yours? It is only two years that you have enjoyed this prosperity and by Allah if you were to do this after 200 years of enjoying such spoils I would replace you with other people.” They said: “Leader of the Believers this is merely decoration (to camouflage our weapons), we are still carrying our weapons.” ‘Umar assented.

While he was in Jābiyah the people of Bayt al-Maqdis came to him to request peace and he contracted an accord with them in exchange for *jizyah*. It read as follows:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. This is what the servant of Allah, ‘Umar, the Leader of the Believers, gives to all the people of Īliyā (Bayt al-Maqdis) be they able bodied and in good health or unwell and incapacitated; security of lives, wealth, churches and crosses. Their churches will not be inhabited, nor demolished, nor anything decreased from it or its property, nor any of their crosses or wealth taken away. They will not be compelled to practise their religion and none from among them shall be harmed. No Jews will live with them in Īliyā. It will be the duty of the people of Īliyā to pay the *jizyah* as is paid by the people of Madā’in. It is their duty to expel Romans and thieves from the city. Whoever leaves the city will enjoy security of life and property until he reaches his place of safety. Whoever remains in the city will enjoy security and will have to pay the

<sup>223</sup> Men are not permitted to use silk except in war.

same *jizyah* as that paid by the residents of ʿIlīyā. If any of the residents of ʿIlīyā wishes to betake himself, his life and wealth, to the Romans leaving behind his monasteries and crosses then these shall be guaranteed security until they reach their destination. If anyone from a rural area came to the city before the assassination of “so-and-so”, and they wish to remain behind, they may do so provided they pay the same *jizyah* as that paid by the residents of ʿIlīyā. Those who wish may go to the Romans. Those who wish to return to their families may do so and nothing will be taken from them until they harvest their crops. The conditions laid down in this letter are under the covenant of Allah ﷻ, the guarantee of His Messenger ﷺ, the caliphs and the believers, provided the people pay the *jizyah*.

When ʿUmar ﷺ entered the city he went into the Church of Resurrection and sat in its courtyard. The time of prayer approached and he said to the patriarch: “I would like to pray.” He replied: “You can perform it where you are”, he refused and performed it on the step away from the door of the church. Upon completion he turned to the patriarch and said: “Had I prayed inside the church, the Muslims after me would have taken the church away and said: ‘This is where ʿUmar prayed,’” then wrote an injunction that no prayer should be performed on that step and no *adhān* should be made there. He then said: “Show me a place where I can build a mosque.” He responded: “On the rock on which Yaʿqūb ﷺ spoke to Allah.” ʿUmar ﷺ found the place strewn with rubbish and began removing it, picking it up with his hands and raising it to carry away in his garment. All the Muslims emulated him and the debris was removed right there then ʿUmar ﷺ ordered a mosque be built.<sup>224</sup>

ʿUmar ﷺ then appointed governors for the Levant after dividing the country into different regions. He divided Palestine into two regions, one centred on Ramallah and the other on ʿIlīyā, then returned from his first trip to the Levant to Madīnah, victorious and triumphant.

#### THE PLAGUE OF ʿAMAWĀS

It was in 18 AH that a plague in the Levant afflicted many of the Muslim soldiers. It was known as the plague of ʿAmawās.<sup>225</sup> News of it reached ʿUmar ﷺ when

<sup>224</sup> This is related by Ibn Khaldūn in the second volume of his history.

<sup>225</sup> The plague is an epidemic disease which is spread from rodents such as rats to humans. The plague is referred to as “black death” and is known by inflamed lymph nodes. Alex Michael Francisco describes the Sicilian plague as follows: “No person could escape death by any means. The disease would spread to anyone who touched an afflicted person. When the disease afflicted someone, he would experience pain that would tear through the entire body. Lymph nodes would then appear on the thighs and arms. As soon

he was heading towards the Levant for the second time. The leaders met him at Sargh, a place near the Levant between Mughīthah and Tabūk. Abū ‘Ubaydah was with them and they informed him of the severity of the plague. The Emigrants and Helpers were also with ‘Umar and he brought them together and consulted them as to whether he should continue his journey or return. They differed, with some saying; “You left for the sake of Allah so this plague should not stop you” and some saying: “This is a plague and brings destruction so we feel that you should not go ahead.” He then summoned the Qurayshī Emigrants who were present during the conquest of Makkah and they unanimously opined that he should return to Madīnah. ‘Umar then announced: “I return tomorrow morning” and Abū ‘Ubaydah protested: “Are you fleeing the decree of Allah?” He replied: “Yes. I am fleeing the decree of Allah to go to the decree of Allah. If you had camels and they entered a valley with two sides, one fertile and the other barren, and you grazed them in the fertile place, would you not be grazing them by the decree of Allah? And were you to graze them in the barren place, would you not be grazing them by the decree of Allah?”

‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf heard about the conversation so he came to them and said: “The Messenger of Allah said: ‘When you hear of a plague in any place, do not go to it. And if you are in a place where the plague starts, do not flee from that place.’”<sup>226</sup>

‘Umar then headed towards Madīnah with the people. Abū ‘Ubaydah died in the plague and his place was taken by ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ who went out with his army to an elevated place in the mountains until it died out, and ‘Umar approved this. The governor of Damascus, Yazīd ibn Abī Sufyān passed away, and ‘Umar appointed his brother Mu‘āwiya. He then appointed Shuraḥbīl ibn Ḥasanah as head of the army in Jordan and charged him with collecting the *kharāj*. Death afflicted the people in a way they had never known before but Allah removed it from them after a few months. The leaders wrote to ‘Umar informing him of all the inheritance that was on their hands. ‘Umar gathered the people and consulted them saying: “It seems to me I should go to the Muslims in their different lands to inquire about their legacies. Give me your opinions on this. The inheritances of the people of the Levant must be dealt with so I will start by distributing them. I will give out what I have for them and return, then I will travel around giving money out to the people.”

‘Umar left Madīnah after putting ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib in charge and

as the entire body was affected the person would vomit blood continuously for three days. There was no way of curing the person and he would die soon after that.” See *aṭ-Ṭarīq ilā Dimashq*, pp. 533–534.

<sup>226</sup> Bukhārī (5729), Muslim (2219), Abū Dāwūd (3103).

travelled taking the road via Ayla (Eilat). When he approached the city he was mounted on his camel, with an upturned fur on the saddle. He then gave it to his slave to ride.<sup>227</sup> When the people came out to meet him, they asked: "Where is the Leader of the Believers?" He replied: "He is before you", meaning himself, and continued towards the city. Those who had gone out to meet him (misunderstood and went ahead to receive him. They later) learnt that the Leader of the Believers had already entered the city of Ayla and dismounted so they returned.

ʿUmar ؓ distributed the inheritances in the Levant amongst those still alive. He then arranged the winter and summer squadrons and sealed off all the entry points and exposed frontiers of the Levant so that the enemy could not enter through them. He appointed ʿAbdullāh ibn Qays over the coastal regions and Muʿāwiya over Damascus but removed Shuraḥbīl from Jordan and said to the people: "I did not remove Shuraḥbīl because of any suspicion but because I want to appoint a stronger person." He put ʿAmr ibn ʿUtba in charge of the official food stores. Someone then requested ʿUmar ؓ to ask Bilāl ؓ to call the *adhān* and ʿUmar ؓ bid him do so. All those who had met the Messenger of Allah ؐ began crying when they heard Bilāl ؓ calling out the *adhān* with ʿUmar ؓ crying the most. Those who had never met the Messenger of Allah ؐ also started crying when they saw these Companions crying, all from thinking about the Messenger of Allah ؐ. ʿUmar ؓ returned to Madīnah in Dhu 'l-Qa'dah.<sup>228</sup>

## THE CONQUEST OF EGYPT

While ʿUmar ؓ was in the Levant ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ ؓ sought his permission to conquer Egypt, describing its good to him and informing him that it was a stronghold of the Roman Empire. At that a Roman governor representing the empire was based in Alexandria (Iskandariyyah). ʿUmar ؓ sent him out with a huge army and az-Zubayr ibn al-ʿAwwām ؓ following behind him. They entered through Alyūn and moved through the villages of lower Egypt into Egypt itself. The archbishop, Abū Maryam, and the bishop met them there. The Egyptian leader, Muqawqis, had sent the archbishop to protect Egypt. When ʿAmr ؓ descended upon them, their people came forward to do battle with him so he said: "Do not hasten to fight, let us first give you an option. Let the archbishop and bishop come to me."

<sup>227</sup> Ṭabarī has that he mounted his slave's camel which had an upturned fur on it, and his slave mounted his camel.

<sup>228</sup> Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 599–613; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 491–502; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, pp. 52–61; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 543–544; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, pp. 44–52; *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 136–140 and 150–156.

They both came to him and he invited them to accept Islām or pay the *jizyah*, also informing them of the advice of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ regarding the people of Egypt because of Hājar, the mother of Ismā‘īl. Imām Muslim narrates in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “You shall conquer Egypt, a land in which the *qirāṭ* is mentioned profusely. When you conquer it, be kind to its people for they enjoy protection and ties of kinship” or he said: “protection and ties of marriage.”<sup>229</sup>

They replied: “This is a tie of kinship that extends over a very long period of time. None but prophets maintain such ties of kinship. Give us some time to come back to you.” ‘Amr said: “You cannot deceive someone like me. I will give you a respite of three days to consider your options.” They demanded more time and he gave them one more day. They went back to Muqawqis, the leader of the Copts, and Arṭabūn, the governor acting on behalf of the Romans, and told them about the Muslims. As for Arṭabūn, he refused the options the Muslims offered and resolved to go to war. He attacked the Muslims but they defeated him and his army so they turned and fled to Alexandria. The Muslims then stopped at ‘Ayn Shams<sup>230</sup> and laid siege to it.

‘Amr sent Abrahah ibn aṣ-Ṣabbāḥ to lay siege to Farmā’ and ‘Awf ibn Mālik to lay siege to Alexandria. The residents of the lands made contact with him and waited to see what he did with ‘Ayn Shams. Sometime after the commencement of the siege the residents were prepared to make peace in return for paying the *jizyah*, and the territories taken by force before this were included in the peace agreement. They also stipulated that captives be returned to them and ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ wrote to the Leader of the Believers, informing him of all this. ‘Umar responded with the following missive:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. This is the security which ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ gives to the people of Egypt over their lives, wealth, religion, churches, crosses, land and sea. There will be no interference in any of this nor will it be taken away. The Nubians will not live with them. In return for all this, the people of Egypt will pay the *jizyah* if they all agree to this peace accord. If their river [Nile] reaches its limit [i.e. there is a full harvest], the *jizyah* shall be fifty million dirhams. They shall be responsible for whatever crimes their thieves commit. If any of them refuses to accept this, the *jizyah* will be lifted from them proportionately to their number and our security will no longer be guaranteed for those who refuse to pay the *jizyah*. If the river does not reach its limit, the *jizyah* will be lifted proportionately. If any of the Romans and Nubians join them in the peace

229 Muslim (2543)

230 Maṭariyyah, on the banks of one of the tributaries of the Nile river.

agreement they shall enjoy the same privileges and share the same responsibilities. Whoever refuses and opts to leave shall be guaranteed safety from us until he reaches his secure destination or leaves our sphere of authority. Such people will have to pay one third of what the people of Egypt pay, and they can discharge it in three different payments. The conditions that are laid down in this letter bear the weight of a covenant guaranteed by Allah ﷻ, His Messenger ﷺ, the caliph and the believers. As for Nubians who accept the peace agreement, they will have to provide such and such a number of people and such and such a number of horses. In exchange for this, they will not be attacked or stopped from engaging in business, whether it be by way of import or export.”

Az-Zubayr ؓ and his two sons, ʿAbdullāh and Muḥammad, attested this letter. Wardān wrote the letter and presented it.<sup>231</sup>

All the people of Egypt entered into this peace agreement. As for the *jizyah* which he stipulated, it amounts to the equivalent of 1,250,000 dinars today. A single person would therefore have had to pay just one tenth of a dinar or a little more, because the population of Egypt at that time was ten million according to the lowest version recorded in the history books.

The Muslims then descended upon Fustāt, the garrison town which ʿAmr ؓ had established at the place from which they had besieged Egypt, and pitched their tents. They left the city inhabited by Muqawqis and ʿAmr ؓ then established his famous mosque in his city.

#### THE CONQUEST OF ALEXANDRIA

When the peace agreement was made ʿAmr ؓ continued to Alexandria but the Romans and Copts who lived in the area between Fustāt and Alexandria rallied together to fight him. He routed them then descended upon Alexandria and asked them to accept the peace agreement that had been made with the people of Egypt but they refused to accept it. Thus he took over the city by force, lay hold of the spoils that were to be taken and made the people *dhimmīs*. At the time of the battle, the Romans had taken a lot [of belongings] from Copts in the rural areas so they came to ʿAmr ؓ and said: “Though we were not at war our possessions were seized.” so he returned to them the things they identified as their belongings once they had provided of proof of their claim.

After Egypt and Alexandria had been conquered and the Romans had left for Constantinople, Muqawqis and the Copts upheld the peace agreement which

<sup>231</sup> Ṭabarī, vol. 4, p. 109.

ʿAmr had set out. Muqawqis was left as head of his people, living in Alexandria and sometimes in Manf (Memphis),<sup>232</sup> and the Muslims would consult him on important issues until he passed away.

With the conquest of Egypt the Muslim operations against the Romans under ʿUmar came to an end. They had taken control of two major provinces: the Levant and Egypt, as well as a critical part of Anatolia, the southern lands of Rome. In short, the Muslims diminished Roman strength and displaced their authority.

Now that we have related the conquests which took place in the time of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, it is imperative for a Muslim to know exalted traits of the Muslims of that time by which they accomplished these astonishing feats. We hold that the era of the Messenger of Allah and that of the two caliphs after him was an expression of Islām and its *modus operandi*. It is appropriate to consider this period as the normative model for the Islamic polity in the first era, and to say conclusively that following these ways will bring Muslims honour and straying will bring disgrace.

## THE OFFICE OF THE CALIPHATE

The office of the caliphate is one of vicegerency on behalf of our master, the Messenger of Allah, and this means guarding Islām and administering worldly affairs. The Rightly-Guided Caliphs determined their words and actions by the Book of Allah, which is not touched by untruth, or by the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah. The Muslim community regarded the caliph with same respect with which they would regard the Messenger of Allah. They would remain obedient to him, privately and publicly,<sup>233</sup> observing the words of Allah:

O believers! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those of authority amongst you. (Sūrat an-Nisā', 4: 59)

Do not break oaths after confirming them and making Allah your guarantor. Allah knows whatever you do. Do not be like a woman who unravels the thread she has just firmly spun. (Sūrat an-Nahl, 16: 91–92)

Now whoever breaks his word does so to his own detriment and whoever fulfils what he pledged to Allah, He will give him a great reward." (Sūrat al-Faḥ, 48: 10)

<sup>232</sup> Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 104–114; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, pp. 564–570; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 554–555; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, pp. 56–74; *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, pp. 214–225.

<sup>233</sup> See *ʿAbqariyyat al-Islām fī uṣūl al-ḥukm* by ʿAjlūnī, pp. 176–182, where he defines the caliphate, provides proofs for its necessity and expounds on the rights of the caliph and the duties of the masses.

Disobedience to the caliph is thus considered in the mind of the Muslim to be a serious deviation from the religion and a transgression of its bounds. This is not because of pride and conceit on the part of the caliph, Allah forbid, rather the caliph stands up for the least of people until his needs are fulfilled, emulating the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. 'Umar ﷺ would keep the company of the poor and needy without the slightest sense of disdain.

This was the relationship between the Muslim community and the caliph. As for the caliph himself, he never believed that he was above the rest of the community. In his first address to the community Abū Bakr ﷺ said: "O people! I have been appointed over you though I am not the best of you."<sup>234</sup> He never assumed that he had the slightest right to control their wealth or lives. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said in his farewell sermon: "O people! Your blood, wealth and honour are sacred just as this day is sacred, this month is sacred and this place is sacred."<sup>235</sup>

Khālid ibn al-Walid ﷺ sent Abū Bakr ﷺ the gift which the Persians were in the habit of giving their kings and Abū Bakr ﷺ included it among the *jizyah* and ordered Khālid ﷺ to calculate it as part of that. When the treasures of the Khusro came to 'Umar ﷺ after the conquest of Iraq he sent them back so that they could be sold and the money distributed among the victorious soldiers, in accordance with the order of Allah ﷻ. When Jabalah ibn al-Ayham al-Ghassānī, the last of the Ghassānī kings in the Levant, assaulted a bedouin by slapping him on his face, 'Umar ﷺ insisted that retribution be taken. 'Umar ﷺ used to send messages to the peoples of the cities stating that if any governor or leader harmed anyone of them he should come to him during the *hajj* season so that he might exact retribution on his behalf. The leaders and governors were thus frightened of inflicting any harm on a Muslim or a *dhimmī* for fear of a humiliating public retribution.

The people of the Muslim community were thus equal in the sight of the caliph. No Arab enjoyed superiority over a non-Arab except on the basis of righteousness. Abū Bakr ﷺ said in his first sermon: "The weak of you is strong in my sight until I secure his due and the strong of you is weak in my sight until I take the right from him."<sup>236</sup>

It was not the habit of the caliph to remain aloof from the people and make it difficult for anyone to speak to him. 'Umar ﷺ did not mind whether he sat in the mosque or the marketplace and people had full access to him. Mercy for the

<sup>234</sup> *Al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, p. 332.

<sup>235</sup> Bukhārī (67), Muslim (1679). See note 203 above.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*

Muslim community had filled their hearts in emulation of the Messenger of Allah whom Allah called the Ra’ūf (“kind and affectionate one”). Abū Bakr and ‘Umar would go out at night to inquire about those in difficulty so that none of them would have any case against them on the day of resurrection when neither wealth nor children will be of any avail. ‘Umar used to say: “I take an oath in the name of the One who sent Muḥammad with the truth, if a lost camel dies on the bank of the Euphrates River, I fear Allah will question the family of Kaṭṭāb [i.e. him] about it.” When he appointed a governor he would say: “O Allah I did not send them to take away the wealth of the people or to humiliate them, as leader I am the only one to be held responsible if anyone is wronged”. ‘Umar would carry flour on his back in order to deliver it to the poor and needy.

Ṭabarī narrates from Zayd ibn Aslam who narrates that his father said: “I went out with ‘Umar ibn al-Kaṭṭāb to the Harrah Wāqim.<sup>237</sup> When we reached an elevated place, we spotted a fire blazing and he said to me: ‘O Aslam! I think that the night and the cold have come down on these travellers. Let’s go to them.’ We hastened until we came close to them and saw a woman with her children. A pot was over the fire and her children were crying. ‘Umar said: ‘Peace be upon you, O people of this light’, for he did not want to say ‘O people of this fire.’ The woman replied: ‘Peace be upon you.’ He asked: ‘Can I come closer?’ She replied: ‘You may come closer with good intentions otherwise do not come.’ He went closer and asked: ‘What happened to you?’ She responded: ‘The night and the cold have stopped us travelling.’ He asked: ‘Why are these children crying?’ She replied: ‘Because of hunger.’ He asked: ‘What is in this pot?’ She responded: ‘Water. I am trying to quieten them with it until they fall asleep. Allah shall judge between us and ‘Umar’ [she did not know that she was speaking to ‘Umar]. He said: ‘May Allah have mercy on you, how should ‘Umar know about your condition?’ She replied: ‘He is our leader, and yet he is unmindful of us!’

‘Umar turned to me and said: ‘Come, let us go.’ We left and hastened to the granary and he took out a sack which had some cooking fat in it, and ordered me: ‘Place it on my back.’ I said: ‘I will carry it for you.’ He repeated his order two or three times, and each time I told him I would carry it for him. Eventually he retorted: ‘Are you going to carry my load for me on the day of Resurrection? May you be bereaved of your mother!’ So I loaded it onto him and he proceeded. I went with him, both of us rushing until we reached the woman. He placed the sack next to her, took out some flour and said: ‘Sprinkle while I stir.’

He began blowing under the pot. He had a big beard and I saw the smoke

<sup>237</sup> Madinah Munawwarah has two areas known as Harrah, the Eastern Harrah known as Harrah Wāqim, and the Western Harrah also known as Harrah al-Wabarrah.

spreading through it. When the meal in the pot was cooked he removed the pot from the fire and said: 'Find something [in which to serve the food].' She brought a plate and he dished the food out onto it then said to her: 'Feed them while I spread [the food in the plate] for you.' He continued like this till they were all satiated. He left the extra food with her and stood up and I followed. The woman said: 'May Allah reward you well. You are more worthy of the caliphate than the Leader of the Believers.' He said to her: 'Speak good words. When you come to the Leader of the Believers you will find me there, if Allah wills.' He then moved away at a distance from her and crouched close to the ground waiting and looking. I said to him: 'You shouldn't do this.' He remained silent and did not say anything to me. I then saw the children wrestling with one another and laughing, and then they fell asleep and stayed quiet. He stood up praising Allah ﷺ then said to me: 'O Aslam! Hunger had kept them awake and caused them to cry. I therefore did not want to leave until I saw what I saw now [i.e. they were happy and fell asleep].'"<sup>238</sup>

While the caliphs readily displayed compassion and gentleness, they were equally firm when it came to the injunctions and limits of Allah ﷻ. They did not show favouritism when it came to the laws of Allah ﷻ, emulating the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who said when a Makhzūm<sup>239</sup> woman had stolen something and people came to request her pardon and not to chop off her hand: "One of the things that caused the destruction of the nations before you is that when a noble person committed theft, they left him and when a weak person committed theft, they chopped off his hand. I swear by Allah that if Fāṭimah, the daughter of Muḥammad were to commit theft, I would chop off her hand."<sup>240</sup>

ʿUmar ؓ enforced the punishment for consuming alcohol on his own son who consequently passed away.<sup>241</sup> The affection of a father did not prevent him from carrying out the order of Allah ﷻ. Their character was the Qur'an and the Sunnah and they never veered from it. They endeavoured to emulate the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in every matter.

#### THE ASSASSINATION OF ʿUMAR ؓ

After the demise of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the early Muslims endured nothing more calamitous than the assassination of the Leader of the Believers, ʿUmar

<sup>238</sup> Ṭabarī, vol. 3, pp. 205–206; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, p. 136.

<sup>239</sup> Banū Makhzūm were one of the most noble Arab tribes.

<sup>240</sup> Bukhārī (3733), Muslim (1688).

<sup>241</sup> The established view is that his son passed away due to sickness a month after the lashing, not directly because of the lashing (*al-Laʾālī ʿl-Maṣnūʿah* vol.2, p.167).

ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ؓ, an outrage perpetrated by a Magian slave called Abū Lu’lu’ah who belonged to Mughīrah ibn Shu‘bah ؓ.

We relate this tragedy according to the narration in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Imām Bukhārī ؓ, as related by ‘Amr ibn Maymūn.

‘Amr said: “On the morning he was attacked I was standing with nobody but ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās ؓ between me and him [‘Umar ؓ]. It was his habit to walk through the [prayer] lines and say to them: ‘Straighten the rows.’ When he saw that there were no gaps between them he would step forward and say *Allāhu akbar* and recite either Sūrah Yūsuf, an-Naḥl or another sūrah of similar length in the first *rak‘ah* so that the people would be able to join in. No sooner had he said *Allāhu akbar* than I heard him saying: ‘The dog killed me’ (or ‘ate me’), when he [Abū Lu’lu’ah] stabbed him. This infidel made his way through the crowd with a double-edged knife stabbing those whom he passed by to his right and left. He stabbed thirteen people of whom seven passed away. One Muslim saw this and he threw a cloak on Abū Lu’lu’ah who realised he was trapped and killed himself. ‘Umar ؓ held the hand of ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf ؓ and sent him forward [to lead the prayer]. Those standing near ‘Umar ؓ saw all that I saw and those standing on the fringes of the mosque knew nothing, only they could not hear ‘Umar’s ؓ voice so they were saying: *Subḥān Allāh*.<sup>242</sup>

“‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf ؓ led the people in prayer and made it short. Once they turned away from the prayer ‘Umar ؓ said: ‘O Ibn ‘Abbās! Go and see who tried to kill me.’ He went out and returned after some time, saying: ‘The slave of Mughīrah.’ ‘Umar ؓ asked: ‘The artisan?’ He replied: ‘Yes.’ ‘Umar ؓ said: ‘May Allah ؓ declare war on him. I had ordered things that favoured him. All praise is due to Allah ؓ that He did not make someone who claims to be a Muslim the cause of my death. You and your father used to like bringing many non-Arab unbelieving slaves into Madīnah.’ ‘Abbās ؓ had the most non-Arab unbelieving slaves. ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās ؓ said: ‘If you say so, I will do it.’ In other words, ‘if you wish, we will kill them.’ ‘Umar ؓ said: ‘How could you do that now that they are speaking your language, praying towards your *qiblah*, and making the same pilgrimage as you?’

“‘Umar ؓ was carried to his house and we went with him, it was as though the people had never been afflicted with such a calamity before. Some were saying: ‘It is nothing serious, he will recover’, others: ‘We fear he will pass away.’ Someone brought him some *nabīdh* and he drank it<sup>243</sup> but it came out of his stomach. Milk

<sup>242</sup> When those who are following the imām in prayer believe that the imām has erred they have to say: *Subḥān Allāh* in order to remind him or attract his attention.

<sup>243</sup> Ibn Hajar ؓ states that the *nabīdh* that is mentioned here refers to a few dates soaked in water. They used to do this in order to sweeten the water. He adds that in the narration of Abū Rāfi‘ it is stated

was then brought to him. When he drank it, it flowed out of his wound. When they saw this they realised that he was going to die. We went to him and others came and began praising him. A young man came and said: 'Glad tidings to you O Leader of the Believers, glad tidings from Allah ﷻ. You remained in the company of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and were part of Islām for a long time as you know. You were appointed as caliph and established justice during your rule, now you are achieving martyrdom.' 'Umar ؓ said: 'I hope that all this will be sufficient for my salvation. I do not wish for anything more or less (than mere salvation).' When this youngster turned around to leave, 'Umar ؓ saw that his lower garment was touching the ground. He said: 'Call the youngster back.' When he came back, he said: 'O my nephew!<sup>244</sup> Raise your lower garment because raising it will keep your garment clean and make you more fearful of your Sustainer.'

"He then addressed his son saying: 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar, Check my debts.' They made their calculations and they came to about eighty-six thousand dirhams. He said: 'If the wealth of 'Umar's family is sufficient, pay off the debts. If it is not, ask the Banū 'Adī ibn Ka'b. If their wealth is not sufficient ask the Quraysh and do not ask anyone else. You should then pay my debts on my behalf. Now go to 'Ā'ishah the Mother of the Believers and tell her: "Umar conveys the greeting of peace to you.' And do not say to her, 'the Leader of the Believers,' because I am no longer the Leader of the Believers. Then tell her: "Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb seeks permission to be buried with his two friends [referring to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and Abū Bakr ؓ].' Abdullāh ibn 'Umar ؓ went, greeted her and sought permission to enter. When he went in, he found her sitting and crying. He said to her: "Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb conveys the greeting of peace to you and seeks permission to be buried with his two friends.' She replied: 'I had wanted that place myself but today I will most certainly give him preference over myself.'

"When he returned someone said to 'Umar: 'Here is Abdullāh ibn 'Umar. He has returned.' He said: 'Lift me up.' Someone raised him up leaning against him and he asked his son: 'What reply have you come with?' He replied: 'It is what you would like to hear, O Leader of the Believers! She has given her permission.' 'Umar ؓ said: 'All praise is due to Allah ﷻ. There was nothing as important as

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that he was given this water to drink in order to gauge the extent of his injury. The narration of Abū Iṣḥāq states: "The doctor came to him the next morning and asked him: 'What drink do you like the most?' He replied: 'Nabīdh,' so the doctor asked for some. When he drank it, it flowed out of his wound. On seeing this he said: 'This is pus. Get me some milk.' Some milk was brought, he drank it and it also flowed out of his wound. On seeing this the doctor said: 'You might make a testament for I think that you will certainly die today or tomorrow'" (*Faṭḥ al-Bārī*, vol. 7, p. 65).

244 He used the word "nephew" out of love and affection.

that to me. When I pass away, you must carry me there, greet ‘Ā’ishah and say: ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb seeks permission [to be buried with his two friends].’ If she gives permission, you may take me into her room. If she refuses, bury me in the graveyard of the Muslims.’

“The Mother of the Believers, Ḥaṣṣah [the daughter of ‘Umar], then came with a group of women. When we saw her, we stood up and moved away. She went inside and continued crying for some time. Some men then sought permission to go inside. So she went inside for them to enter and we could hear her crying from inside. The men said: ‘Make a testament, O Leader of the Believers! Appoint someone caliph.’ (According to the narration of Imām Muslim, he replied saying: ‘Should I carry responsibility over you while I was alive and while I am dead too? I wish that the share I receive from that position is merely sufficient [for my salvation], with nothing for me and nothing against me. If I were to appoint someone as a caliph, then the one who was better than me did the same [Abū Bakr]. Were I to leave you without appointing someone caliph then the one superior to me did the same [the Messenger of Allah].’ ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar said: ‘When he mentioned the name of the Messenger of Allah, I realised that he would not appoint anyone as caliph.’)<sup>245</sup>

“‘Umar then said: ‘I do not see anyone more deserving for the post than the group the Messenger of Allah was pleased with when he passed away.’ He then named them as follows: ‘Alī, ‘Uthmān, az-Zubayr, Sa’d, Ṭalḥah, and ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān [ibn ‘Awf]. He said: ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar will be present as a witness but will have no right to the position.’ ‘Umar said this as a way of consoling him. ‘If the caliphate goes to Sa’d, well and good. If not, whoever is appointed from among you should seek his assistance. I did not remove him from his post because of a weakness or any act of treachery.’

“I advise the caliph after me to recognise the rights of the first Emigrants and to preserve their sanctity. I advise him to treat the Helpers well. It was they who were firmly established in their abodes and assisted Islām before them. I advise him to accept those who do good from among them and to pardon those who do wrong from among them. I advise him to treat the residents of the different cities well. They are the supporters of Islām, the collectors of wealth, and the exasperation of our enemies. I advise him to take only surplus wealth from them, after obtaining their permission and pleasure. I advise him to do good to the bedouins because they are the first Arabs, and the foundation of Islām. He should take from their surplus wealth and distribute it among their poor. I advise him to fulfil his responsibility to Allah and the Messenger of Allah

245 Muslim (1823).

by fulfilling his responsibility to them, fighting others and imposing nothing on them that would be beyond their capacity.'

"When he passed on we carried him and went [to bury him]. 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar extended the greeting of peace [to 'Ā'ishah ﷺ] and said: "Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb seeks permission.' She replied: 'You may take him inside.' He was taken inside and buried there with his two friends.

(According to the narration of Imām Bukhārī ﷺ on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ, it was at this point that 'Alī ﷺ said: "May Allah have mercy on you. I had always hoped that Allah ﷻ would place you next to your two friends because I very often heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying: 'It was I, Abū Bakr and 'Umar. . . 'I, Abū Bakr and 'Umar did this. . . 'I, Abū Bakr and 'Umar went. . . ' So I hoped that Allah ﷻ would place you with them.'")<sup>246</sup>

"When his burial was complete the group he had appointed to elect the caliph among themselves got together and had a meeting. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf ﷺ said: 'Give up your rights to the caliphate and leave three.' Az-Zubayr ﷺ said: 'I forfeit my right in favour of 'Alī.' Ṭalḥah ﷺ said: 'I forfeit my right in favour of 'Uthmān.' Sa'd ﷺ said: 'I forfeit my right in favour of 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf.' 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf ﷺ said to 'Uthmān and 'Alī: "Whichever of you two absolves himself of this matter [caliphate], we will appoint him to it. Allah is watching over him, and he is bound by the laws of Islām.' Both of them remained silent. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān asked: 'Do you give me the right to appoint [someone from you two]? By Allah, it is my responsibility to ensure that I appoint the best from you two.' They replied: 'Yes.' He took the hand of one of them ['Alī ﷺ] and said: 'You enjoy ties of kinship with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and have been in Islām a long time as you well know. Allah bears witness that if I appoint you, you shall establish justice and if I appoint 'Uthmān, you shall listen and obey.' He then turned to the other ['Uthmān ﷺ] and said the same thing. When they both agreed, he said: 'Raise your hand, O 'Uthmān!' He then pledged his allegiance to him. 'Alī ﷺ then pledged his allegiance to 'Uthmān ﷺ. All the others who were present in the house then entered and pledged their allegiance to him."<sup>247</sup>

When the pledge of allegiance was complete, 'Uthmān ﷺ climbed the pulpit and addressed the people. He said: "All praise is due to Allah. O people! Fear Allah. This world is as Allah ﷻ said: 'a play, an amusement, a show, a cause of boasting amongst you and a quest for more riches and children. It is like plants that spring up after the rain and first seem attractive to the sowers then dry up

<sup>246</sup> Bukhārī (3677).

<sup>247</sup> Bukhārī (3700).

and you see them wither and yellow then become stubble. In the Hereafter there is severe punishment as well as forgiveness from Allah and His pleasure. This worldly life is nothing but a delusive enjoyment.’ (Sūrat al-Ḥadīd, 57: 20) The best people in this world are those whom Allah ؓ protects and who hold on steadfastly to Allah ؓ and His Book. I have been given a tremendous responsibility. I do not seek the assistance of anyone but Allah ؓ in fulfilling it. None can inspire to good except Allah, and my inspiration is from none but Allah ؓ. It is in Him that I place my trust and it is to Him alone that I turn.” He then descended from the pulpit.<sup>248</sup>

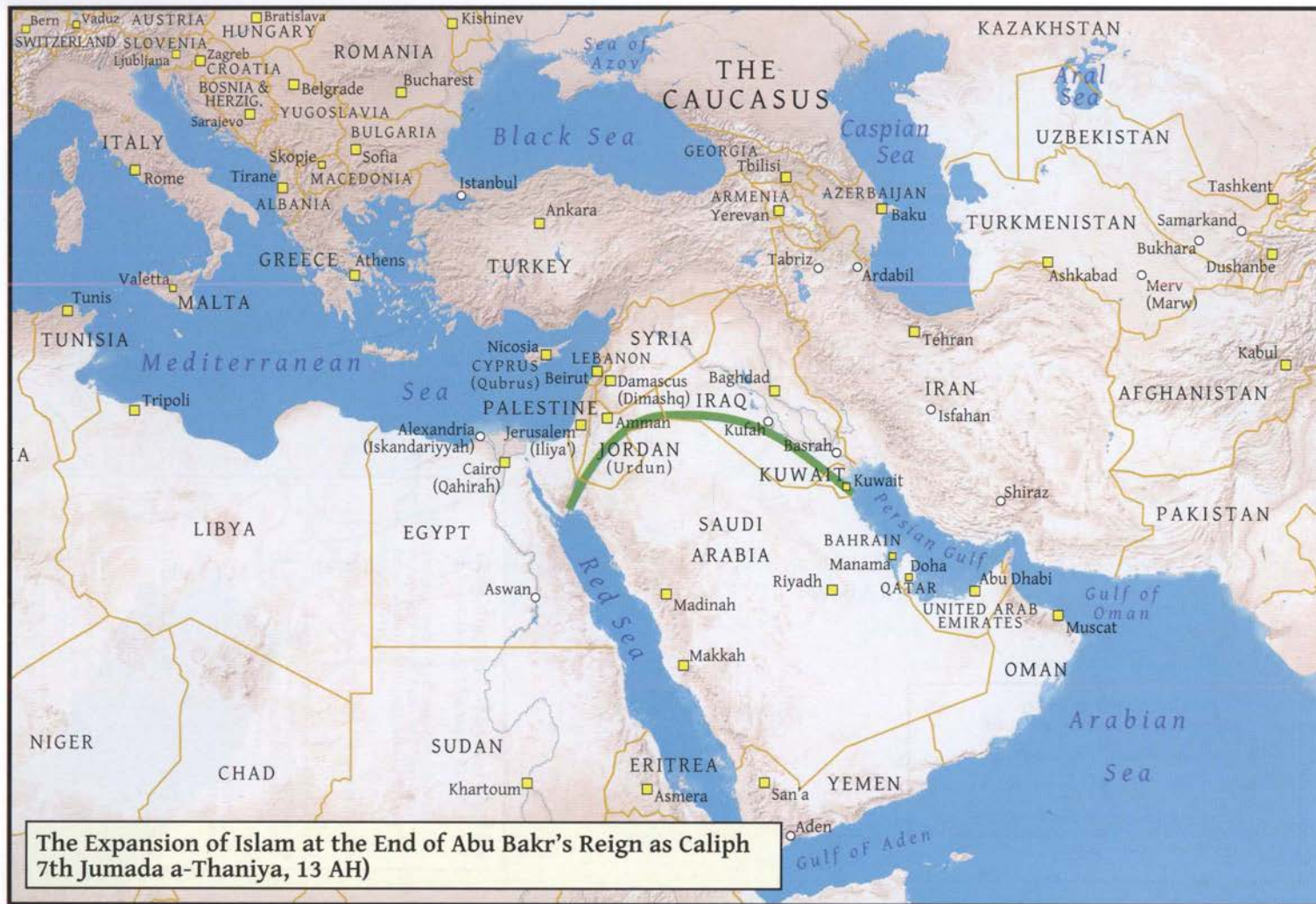
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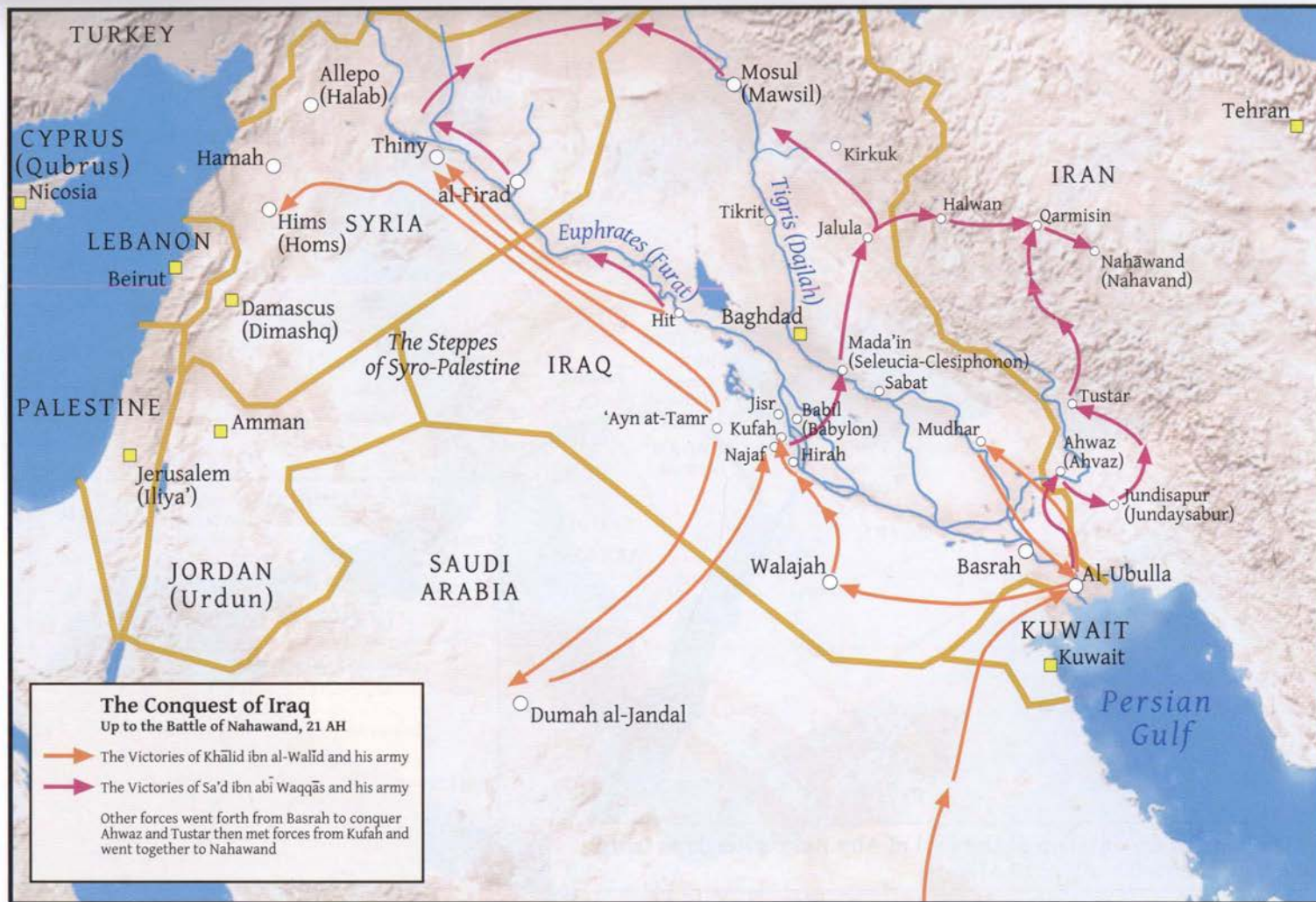
<sup>248</sup> Ṭabari, vol. 4, pp. 190–194; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 3, pp. 49–52; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 568–570; *Mukhtaṣar al-Maḥāsīn al-Mujtama‘ah*, pp. 131–133.













### The Conquest of Syro-Palestine

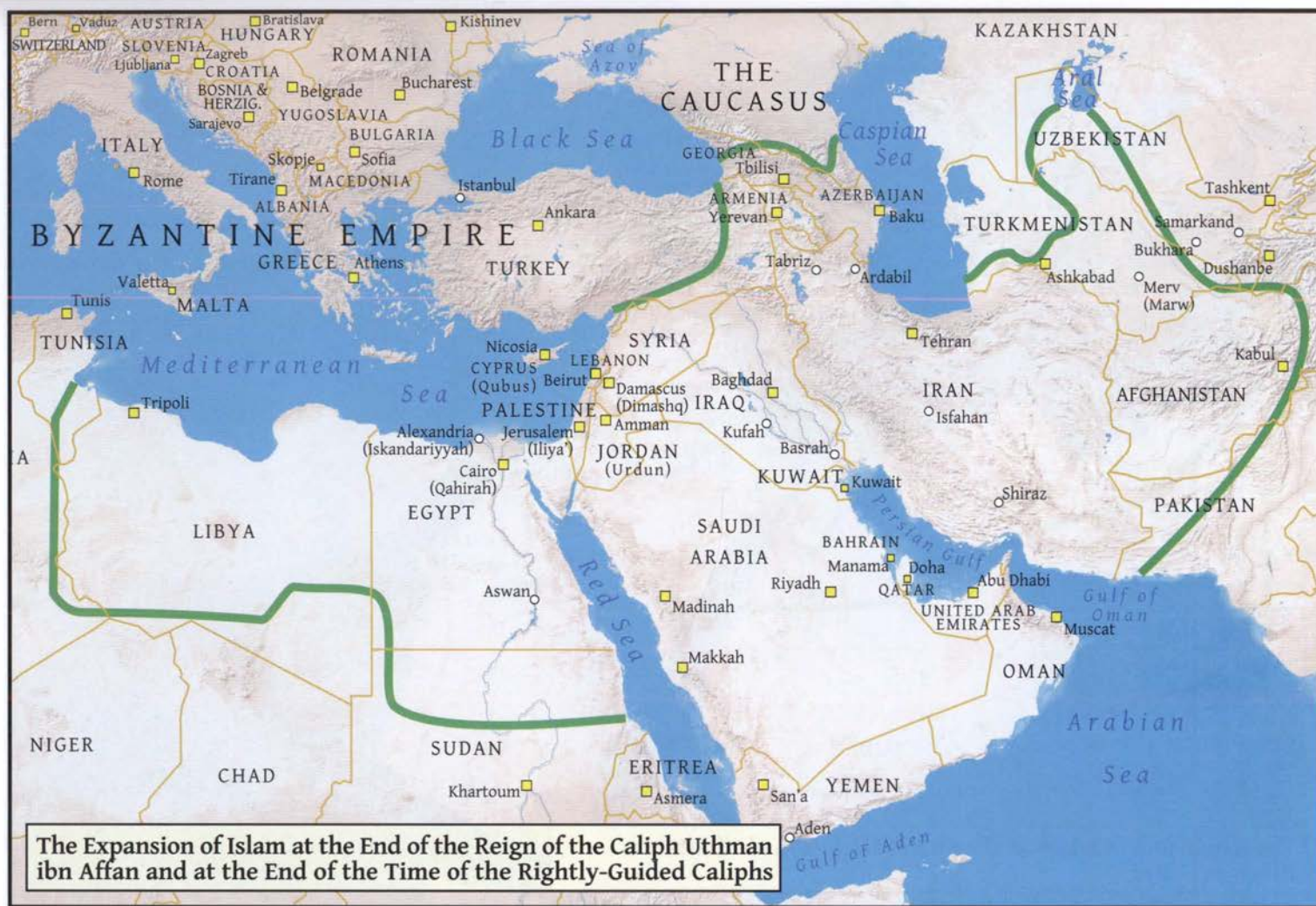
5th Royal, 15 A.H./12th August 636 CE

- ➔ The Muslim armies gathered into two under the leadership of Khalid ibn al-Walid and defeat the Roman armies on 27th Jumaada al-Awwal 30th July, 634 CE
- ➔ The Muslims march to Damascus and surround the city
- ➔ The Romans direct their armies to Baysan where the Muslims face them under the leadership of Abu 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah, triumphing on 28th Dhul Qa'ada 13 A.H./14th January 635 CE
- ➔ The Muslims return to besiege Damascus and conquer the city on 15th Rajab, 13 A.H./14th January 635 CE
- ➔ The Muslims march from Damascus to Hims, conquering it on 28th Rabi at-Thani, 15 A.H./May 636 CE
- ➔ The Romans send a huge army to the south of Damascus, the Muslims move south then meet at Yarmuk. The Muslims inflict a crushing defeat 5th Rajab, 15 A.H./12 August, 636 CE





The Expansion of Islam at the End of Umar ibn al-Khattab's Reign as Caliph



The Expansion of Islam at the End of the Reign of the Caliph Uthman ibn Affan and at the End of the Time of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs

## *The Caliphate of ‘Uthmān Ibn ‘Affān* ﷺ



**H**E IS ‘UTHMĀN IBN ‘AFFĀN ibn Abī al-‘Āṣ ibn Umayyah ibn ‘Abd Shams ibn ‘Abd Manāf al-Umawī al-Qurashī. His mother was Urwah bint Kurayz ibn Rabī‘ah ibn ‘Abd Shams ibn ‘Abd Manāf. He was born five years after the birth of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He grew up noble in virtue, excellent in his ways and was extremely modest and abstinent. When Allah ﷻ sent Muḥammad ﷺ as a Prophet, ‘Uthmān ﷺ was amongst those who hastened to embrace Islām at the hands of Abū Bakr ﷺ. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ married him to his daughter Ruqayyah. When the polytheists imposed hardships on the Muslims he emigrated with his wife to Abyssinia, later returning to Makkah before the emigration to Madīnah. When Allah allowed the Muslims to go to Madīnah ‘Uthmān ﷺ emigrated there with his wife.

He joined the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in all the battles except for Badr because he was busy tending to his sick wife who died shortly after the Muslim victory there. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ allotted him a share from the booty. He then married him to his second daughter, Umm Kulthūm. He was among those whom Allah ﷻ pardoned at Uḥud. On the occasion of Ḥudaybiyyah, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ appointed him as his envoy to the Quraysh. When a rumour spread that the Quraysh had slain him, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ took the pledge of allegiance from his Companions. This pledge of allegiance was known as the Pledge of Pleasure (Bay‘at al-Riḍwān).<sup>249</sup> The Messenger of Allah ﷺ pointed to his right

<sup>249</sup> See Sūrat al-Faṭḥ 48:18

hand and said: "This is the hand of 'Uthmān" then placed it on his other hand and said: "This is on behalf of 'Uthmān."

'Uthmān ﷺ made a major contribution for the expedition to Tabūk, spending more than anyone else from his wealth for this expedition. He also purchased a water-well known as Rūmah which he gave in charity to the Muslims, taking the same share of water from it as the other Muslims. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The person who buys the well of Rūmah shall have Paradise."<sup>250</sup>

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed away, 'Uthmān ﷺ served as a trustworthy governor for both the caliphs (Abū Bakr ﷺ and 'Umar ﷺ). After the Muslims suffered the catastrophic death of 'Umar ﷺ, the majority of the council was in favour of his succession. He then discharged the responsibility of the caliphate in an excellent manner. However towards the end of his caliphate some Muslims had changed from what they were during the days of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his two successors, Abū Bakr and 'Umar ﷺ. They had become influenced by the world and love for it and this is the source of every evil, so some rebels stood up against him and fragmented the unity of the Muslims by their disobedience. The structure of the caliphate eventually collapsed and 'Uthmān ﷺ was unjustly slain. He was over eighty years old at the time.

He was of average height, neither too tall nor too short and had a handsome face with soft skin. His face had the marks of smallpox and he had a large, broad beard which he used to dye with henna. He was brown in complexion and bald-headed. He had large joints and broad shoulders. He had the following children: 'Abdullāh al-Akbar, 'Abdullāh al-Asghar,<sup>251</sup> 'Amr, Khālīd, Abān, 'Umar, Maryam,<sup>252</sup> Walīd, Sa'īd, Umm Sa'īd,<sup>253</sup> 'Abd al-Malik,<sup>254</sup> 'Ā'ishah, Umm Abān, Umm 'Umar,<sup>255</sup> Maryam, 'Anbasah, and Umm al-Banīn.<sup>256</sup>

250 Bakrī said: "The well of Rūmah was in Madīnah. It belonged to a Jew who used to sell its water to the Muslims. So the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: 'Whoever purchases the well of Rūmah and makes it an endowment for the Muslims shall have a well in return for it in Paradise.' 'Uthmān ﷺ purchased it for twenty thousand dirhams" (*Mu'jam ma'sta'jam*, vol. 1, p. 685). Also see *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl*, vol. 8, pp. 638–639; *Tārīkh Dimashq* of Ibn 'Asākir, under the biography of 'Uthmān, p. 67 and p. 339; *Mukhtaṣar al-Maḥāsin al-Muhtamā'ah*, p. 148.

251 Born from his wife, Fakhītah bint Ghazwān.

252 Born from his wife, Umm 'Amr bint Jundub ibn 'Amr ibn Ḥumamah ad-Dawsī.

253 Born from his wife, Faṭimah bint [al-Walīd ibn 'Abd Shams ibn] al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah al-Makhzūmiyyah.

254 Born from his wife, Umm al-Banīn bint 'Uyaynah ibn Ḥiṣn al-Fazāriyyah.

255 Born from his wife, Ramlah bint Shaybah ibn Rabī'ah.

256 Born from his wife, Nā'ilah bint al-Farāfiṣah al-Kalbiyyah.

See Ṭabarī, vol. 4, pp. 418–420; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 3, pp. 184–185; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, p. 192; *al-Jawharah*, vol. 2, pp. 169–175 and pp. 184–185; *Tārīkh al-Khulafā'*, pp. 147–150.

## HIS ACHIEVEMENTS DURING HIS CALIPHATE

### IN KŪFAH AND THE CAMPAIGNS OF ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJĀN

At the beginning of his caliphate, he appointed Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ ؓ as governor of Kūfah, acting on the counsel of ‘Umar ؓ, and ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd ؓ worked under him collecting the *kharāj* tax. ‘Uthmān ؓ then removed Sa‘d ؓ from his post because of a conflict which occurred between him and ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd ؓ. The reason behind this was a loan that Sa‘d ؓ had taken<sup>257</sup> from ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd ؓ. When he asked him to repay the debt, Sa‘d ؓ could not and asked for an extension which ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd ؓ did not agree to, causing a conflict between the two. Some aligned themselves with Sa‘d ؓ and others with ‘Abdullāh ؓ. This was the first dispute among the people of Kūfah.

The Leader of the Believers ‘Uthmān ؓ became angry at this and removed Sa‘d ؓ, appointing Walīd ibn ‘Uqbah ibn Abī Mu‘ayṭ ibn Abī ‘Amr ibn Umayyah ibn ‘Abd Shams in his place. His mother was also ‘Uthmān’s ؓ mother. ‘Uthmān ؓ also removed ‘Utbah ibn Farqad from Azerbaijan which was part of the province of Kūfah. The people of Azerbaijan broke their peace agreement and so Walīd waged war on them. He attacked the people of Mūqān, Babr and Ṭaylasān (Talish), conquering these places and collecting booty. The people of the rural areas requested a peace treaty and he agreed to this on the same lines as the peace treaty of Ḥudhayfah: eight hundred thousand dirhams.

He then sent Salmān ibn Rabī‘ al-Bāhili towards Armenia in command of twelve thousand soldiers. He completely routed them and returned to Walīd with the spoils of war. Walīd went back via Mawṣil. When he was about to reach Madīnah a letter from ‘Uthmān ؓ reached him ordering him to help the people of the Levant with an army commanded by a brave warrior, so he called on people to go forth under Salmān ibn Rabī‘ah al-Bāhili ؓ. Eight thousand responded and he dispatched them with Salmān.

Walīd remained governor of Kūfah for five years. Towards the end of this period, some people of Kūfah accused him of consuming alcohol and testified to this before ‘Uthmān ؓ who removed him from his post and gave him forty lashes (the punishment for a person who consumes alcohol) in accordance with the verdict of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ؓ.

‘Uthmān ؓ then appointed Sa‘īd ibn al-‘Āṣ in his place. When he reached Kūfah he climbed the pulpit, praised and glorified Allah ؓ then said: “By Allah I have been sent to you and I did not want to be. I have no choice but to accept

<sup>257</sup> This loan was taken from the Bayt al-Māl.

this post since I have been appointed to it. Hear me! Sedition has reared its ugly head and by Allah I will attack it head on until I either uproot it or be left powerless. I will start to make inquiries today.” He then descended from the pulpit and began making inquiries about the people of Kūfah. He thus came to know of them and wrote to ‘Uthmān ؓ: “The people of Kūfah are restless. The people of nobility and original city dwellers have been outnumbered by outsiders and rural dwellers. They are all mixed and one cannot differentiate between people of nobility and people of tribulation.”

‘Uthmān ؓ replied to his letter as follows: “Give preference to those who came to this city first and to those through whom we conquered those places. Those who settled there after them should be lower than those that came first, unless the latter are lagging behind in their duties to Islām and have abandoned their responsibilities whilst the former are fulfilling theirs. Uphold the rank of each and every person and give all of them their rights. It is by doing good to people that one can achieve justice.”

Sa‘īd sent a message to those who participated in the battle of Qādisiyyah and other battles saying: “You are the faces of the people [i.e. “eminent ones”], and the face tells the state of the body, so you should convey to us the requirements of the needy.” He brought in the needy from the outsiders and those who came later and included the Qur’ān reciters in his evening conversations. Slandorous statements subsequently spread in Kūfah about the governors appointed and similar statements against ‘Uthmān ؓ for appointing such governors, so Sa‘īd wrote to ‘Uthmān ؓ about this. ‘Uthmān ؓ had a meeting with the people and informed them of the letter. The people said: “You are correct. Do not allow them to aspire to what they do not deserve. When a person aspires to do things for which he is not qualified, he will not be able to bear its responsibilities and will make a mess of the situation instead.”

‘Uthmān ؓ said: “O people of Madīnah! Be prepared and remain steadfast because tribulations are creeping up on you. By Allah, I will secure what is due to you so that it is conveyed to you, if you so desire, so that the share [of property] of one who fought with the people of Iraq comes to a man and remains with him in his country.” They said: “How will you convey us our share from the different lands?” He said: “A man sells it to whoever wants it [in Iraq], in exchange for what the buyers own in the Ḥijāz, in Yemen or the other lands.” They were pleased at hearing this and Allah ؓ opened up a way for them which they had not anticipated. So after their tribe approved it, men from each tribe purchased property belonging to the people of Madīnah.

Ṭabaristān (Tapuria) was conquered during the time of Sa‘īd ibn al-‘Āṣ ؓ. He had marched there with Ḥasan ؓ and Ḥusayn ؓ the two sons of ‘Alī ؓ,

Ibn ʿAbbās ؓ, Ibn ʿUmar ؓ, ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ ؓ, Ibn az-Zubayr ؓ, Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamān ؓ and other senior Companions. There they did battle with the people of Ṭabaristān who eventually sued for peace, and a peace agreement was made in 30 AH.

Saʿīd ؓ and Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamān ؓ then proceeded to help ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān ibn Rabīʿah who was at Bāb. When they reached Azerbaijan, Saʿīd ؓ sent Ḥudhayfah ؓ ahead of him while he remained in the rear. Ḥudhayfah ؓ marched ahead and joined ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān in the battle, then returned to Saʿīd ؓ joining him in Kūfah.

ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān ibn Rabīʿah attacked the Turks for the third time in 32 AH and made quick advances. The Turks and the people inhabiting the areas around the Caspian Sea rallied their forces against him and engaged him in a fierce battle until he was killed. His army divided itself into two: One section went to Bāb and joined Salmān ibn Rabīʿah al-Bāhili ؓ, the brother of ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān whom Saʿīd ؓ had sent as help. They survived as did Salmān ibn Rabīʿah ؓ. The other section went towards Jilān and Jurjān, Salmān al-Fārisī ؓ and Abū Hurayrah ad-Dawsī ؓ were among them.

Saʿīd ؓ appointed ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān's brother, Salmān ؓ, in his place to wage war against Bāb and appointed Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamān ؓ as commander of the Kūfans. The Leader of the Believers, ʿUthmān ؓ, sent men from the Levant under the command of Ḥabīb ibn Maslamah as reinforcements. Salmān ibn Rabīʿah assumed command over them but Ḥabīb refused to be under his command, refusing so vehemently that the men of the Levant threatened to give Salmān ؓ a beating. The Kūfans said: "In that case, we will beat Ḥabīb and imprison him. If you refuse many lives will be lost between us." This was the first conflict that flared up between the Kūfans and the men of the Levant. Desire for leadership had brought about hatred in their hearts, there is no power and might except with Allah, the most High the Almighty.

In 33 AH the conflict in Kūfah intensified, largely because very few of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ؐ had settled down there. Moreover, Saʿīd had sent out the early settlers and people of virtue as governors to the rural areas of Kūfah which formed part of the Iraqi territory.

Many people of Kūfah would engage in conversations with Saʿīd ؓ at night. They would discuss the incidents and episodes affecting them, which eventually led to disputes. When the chief of police warned them against this they beat him up so Saʿīd ؓ stopped them from joining him in his night-time discourse. They avoided him and began to hold their own meetings, intending nothing but harm to Saʿīd ؓ and his representatives. Saʿīd ؓ wrote to ʿUthmān ؓ informing him of these people and he wrote back instructing him to take their leaders

to Mu'āwiyah ؓ in the Levant. He also wrote to Mu'āwiyah ؓ saying: "There is a group that is bent on sedition. Summon them before you and stop them. If you find that they are inclined to reforming their ways, accept it from them. If not, send them to me."

When they came to Mu'āwiyah ؓ he treated them kindly and hosted them well, providing them with the foods that they were used to eating in Iraq. However, these favours only increased their arrogance and they looked down on Mu'āwiyah ؓ and raised objections against his governorship. He said to them: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was divinely protected from error of judgement. He appointed me to positions of responsibility and included me in his important decisions. Abū Bakr ؓ was then appointed as caliph and he also appointed me to positions of responsibility. 'Umar ؓ was then appointed as caliph and he also appointed me to positions of responsibility. 'Uthmān ؓ was then appointed as caliph and he also appointed me to positions of responsibility. All of them were pleased with my conduct. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to seek people who were capable and effective to accomplish tasks of importance. Allah ﷻ is All-powerful and has the full capacity to exact revenge from those who plot against Him. You should therefore not make objections about a matter while you yourselves know for a fact that you express one thing while your hearts contain something different. Allah ﷻ will not leave you alone before testing you and exposing your plots before the people."

When Mu'āwiyah ؓ realised that these people had wittingly gone astray and that no words of advice would be of any avail to them he wrote to 'Uthmān ؓ. 'Uthmān ؓ sent a reply instructing him to send them to 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Khālīd ibn al-Walīd who was in Ḥims. When they reached him, he summoned them and said:

You instruments of Satan. You are neither welcome nor happily received. Satan has gone back despondent, yet you are full of energy. By Allah, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān will be at loss if he does not discipline you. O you who I know not as Arabs or non-Arabs! Don't you dare tell me what I heard you saying to Mu'āwiyah. I am the son of Khālīd ibn al-Walīd ؓ. I am the son of the one whom the Persians tried to test, the son of the one who burst the eyes of apostasy! By Allah! O so and so! If I hear that one of my people has put you to the sword and reviled you I will throw the rest of you out and away to a distant place.<sup>258</sup>

He made them remain there for a month and each time he rode his horse he made them walk behind him till they eventually said: "We turn in repentance to

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258 That is, "I would not care."

Allah. Release us, may Allah release you.”<sup>259</sup> They continued making this request until he said: “May Allah accept your repentance.”

In the meantime Sa‘īd ibn al-‘Āṣ ؓ the governor of Kūfah travelled to meet the Leader of the Believers to discuss matters concerning his governorship and left ‘Amr ibn Hurayth in charge of his affairs. A group of Kūfans who disliked having Sa‘īd ؓ as governor prepared to go to ‘Uthmān ؓ and request his removal from the post. They contacted those who were with ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Khālid and went to them, joining up to meet ‘Uthmān ؓ. While Sa‘īd ؓ was on his way back he came across them and when they informed him of their intention he said: “It would have been sufficient for you to send a single person to ‘Uthmān and another person to me [i.e. in order to inform both of us].” Sa‘īd ؓ then returned to ‘Uthmān ؓ and conveyed what transpired, saying: “They want me to be replaced and they like Abū Mūsā [al-Ash‘arī].” ‘Uthmān ؓ appointed Abū Mūsā as their governor and wrote to them saying:

I have appointed someone over you who you prefer and have relieved you of Sa‘īd. By Allah, I will give up my honour for you, I will expend all my patience for you and I will seek to rectify you with all my endeavours. I will give in to whatever you request provided it does not entail disobedience to Allah ؓ. I will do all this so that you may have no case whatsoever against me in the court of Allah ؓ. We will exercise patience as we have been commanded to do, so that you may realise whatever you are after.

Abū Mūsā entered Kūfah, and addressed its people ordering them to hold firmly to unity. He remained governor until ‘Uthmān ؓ passed away.<sup>260</sup>

#### IN BAṢRAH

Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī ؓ was governor of Baṣrah at the beginning of the caliphate of ‘Uthmān ؓ. He held this position till 29 AH when ‘Uthmān ؓ removed him and replaced him with ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Āmir ibn Kurayz ibn Rabī‘ah ibn ‘Abd Shams, and amalgamated the armies of Abū Mūsā and ‘Uthmān ibn al-‘Āṣ ath-Thaqafī from Oman and Bahrain for him.

It was during his time that the Persians broke the peace with their governor ‘Ubaydullāh bin Ma‘mar so ‘Ubaydullāh marched on them and faced them at the entrance to Iṣṭakhr but he was killed and his companions defeated. When Ibn

<sup>259</sup> That is, “release you from punishment.”

<sup>260</sup> Ṭabarī, vol. 4, pp. 244–326; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 3, pp. 79–144; *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, pp. 154–167; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 571–593; *al-Futūḥāt*, vol. 1, pp. 143–158.

ʿĀmir heard of this, he marched on them with a huge army and engaged them in a fierce battle until he overcame them and conquered Iṣṭakhr by force. He then went to Darābjird and took it because its residents had broken the peace agreement. While he was there he received news that the people of Iṣṭakhr had gone back on their word so he returned and took control of it for the third time and put many of the notables to the sword. He thereafter trampled the Persians so severely that they remained subjugated ever after.

#### THE DEATH OF YAZDAJIRD

It was during his time that Yazdajird, the last of the Persian kings, was killed. There are conflicting reports about how it took place but there is agreement that he was killed alone and rejected, his great kingdom did not avail him in any way. There is also agreement that he was killed by a non-Arab. He had been hoping to fall into the hands of the Arab Muslims so that they would spare his life and he might live happily under Islām but how could he realise such a hope, when such a state of infelicity overcomes a person it cannot be repulsed!

#### THE RECONQUEST OF KHURĀSĀN

ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿĀmir went to Khurāsān in 31 AH because its people had broken their agreement after the death of ʿUmar رضي الله عنه. When he reached Ṭabasayn,<sup>261</sup> the two entrance points to Khurāsān, the people met him and made peace. He went on to Quhistān (Kohistan) and faced its residents in battle until he forced them into their forts. When he made to enter the city itself the people requested peace, so he entered into a peace agreement with them in return for six hundred thousand dirhams. He then moved on to Naysābūr (Nishapur) where the people made peace in return for one million dirhams.

Thereafter, he sent Aḥnaf ibn Qays towards Ṭakhāristān (Bactria) and then to Marw ar-Rūdh. A huge army of polytheists rallied against him but he defeated them. He sent Aqrāʿ ibn Ḥābis at-Tamīmī to an army of Persians in Jūzajān and counselled him and his army: “Banū Tamīm! Have love for each other and sacrifice for the sake of each other. If you do this, your affairs will be set right. Commence by waging *jihād* on your stomachs and private parts, and your religious matters will be set right. Do not be treacherous with the booty and your *jihād* will be successful.” The Banū Tamīm went off into battle against the enemy and subdued them. Aḥnaf then took over Ṭālaqān by making peace with the people

<sup>261</sup> Ṭabasayn is in its dual form. It refers to two areas or districts of Khurāsān, each one known as Ṭabas. Together they were referred to as Ṭabasayn meaning the two Ṭabas districts.

then proceeded to Balkh where the people made peace in exchange for four hundred thousand dirhams. From there he marched to Khawārizm (Chorasmia) but was unable to conquer it and returned.

After conquering these great lands for the second time, Ibn ‘Āmir returned. It was said to him: “Allah enabled you to conquer lands which none else conquered; Persia, Karmān, Sijistān and Khurāsān.” He replied: “In order to show my appreciation to Allah, I will depart for ‘umrah from this very place” and thus donned the *ihrām* (unstitched-garments for *hajj*) at Naysābūr.

#### ABDULLĀH IBN SABA’ SOWING THE SEEDS OF SEDITION

Three years into his governorship at Baṣrah, Ibn ‘Āmir received information that a person holding offensive views had come as a guest of Ḥakīm ibn Jabalah al-‘Abdī. Ibn ‘Āmir summoned him and questioned him: “Who are you?” He replied: “I am from the people of the Book, I am interested in Islām and am under your protection.” He said: “This is not what I have learnt about you. Get away from me.” This man went to Kūfah and was expelled from there as well. He then went to the Ḥijāz and the Levant and was expelled from these places as well. He then went to Egypt where he settled down and began to sow the seeds of corruption. This man was ‘Abdullāh ibn Saba’, the son of Sawdā’. He was a Jew who pretended to be a Muslim, he had a wicked disposition and held corrupt views. Among them his statement: “I am astonished at one who believes in the return of the Messiah but does not believe in the return of Muḥammad.” This was the beginning of the belief in the return (of Muḥammad). He also used to say that ‘Alī was commissioned by Muḥammad as his successor and that the caliphs before him had usurped this right. It was therefore the duty of the Muslims to restore this right to the appropriate people. Many of the fickle-minded followed his way of thinking and this was one of the underlying causes of the breakdown of law and the disunity of the community of Islām. The community of Islām will only benefit from unity and harmony and will only be destroyed by disunity and disharmony.

#### IN THE LEVANT

At the beginning of the caliphate of ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān the entire territory of the Levant was under the authority of Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān ibn Ḥarb ibn Umayyah.

Mu‘āwiyah waged a campaign against the Romans in the second year of ‘Uthmān’s caliphate and reached ‘Ammūriyyah (Amorium). He found the

forts between Ṭartūs and Anṭāqiya (Antioch) deserted so he stationed many groups of men of the Levant and Jazīrah there and returned, later sending Yazīd ibn al-Ḥurr al-ʿAbasī to lead an attack in the summer. The latter did the same as Muʿāwiyah ؓ had done.

It was in this year that the Leader of the Believers ordered Muʿāwiyah ؓ to dispatch Ḥabīb ibn Maslamah to Armenia. He went to Qālīqalā, laid siege to it and narrowed conditions for its inhabitants. They asked for a peace agreement whereby those who wished to leave the land could do so, and those who wished to remain behind would pay the *jizyah*. Ḥabīb accepted and remained there for one month. He then received the news that Qiss, the patriarch of Armenia, had come with an army of eighty thousand to do battle with him and he conveyed this to ʿUthmān ؓ. ʿUthmān ؓ sent a message to Walīd ibn ʿUqbah, governor of Kūfah, to send reinforcements to him. Walīd sent Salmān ibn Rabīʿah at the head of eight thousand men, as mentioned previously.

Ḥabīb and his men decided to attack the Romans at night. His wife, Umm ʿAbdillāh bint Yazīd al-Kalbīyyah, overheard this and asked: “Where are you going tomorrow?” He replied: “The big tents of Mawriyān.” He then attacked the Romans at night and engaged them in fierce combat. He headed towards the big tents and found that his wife had preceded him there. She was the first Arab woman for whom these large tents were pitched. Ḥabīb then returned to Qālīqalā (Erzurum) and from there went on to Marbālā. The patriarch, Khilāt, came to him with a covenant of peace which ʿIyād ibn Ghanm had written for him. Ḥabīb accepted it then advanced until the leader of Muks which was part of Basfurjān met with him and made an agreement of peace for his land with him.

He went to Azdishāt and besieged it then its residents made peace with him. The patriarch of the Basfurjān soon came to him and made peace with him on behalf of all his lands. He advanced to Tiflīs and took control of it and Salmān ibn Rabīʿah went to Arrān then conquered Baylaqān peacefully. He gave them a guarantee over their lives, property and the city’s orchards. He stipulated the *jizyah* be paid by individuals and the *kharāj* be paid on the produce of the land. He continued on to the city of Bardhaʿah and camped at Thurthūr, a river that was one *parasang* out of the city. The residents attacked him for several days then made peace. He took over the rural areas and invited the Kurds of Balāshjān to embrace Islām, when they refused he struck at them and surmounted them. Some agreed to pay the *jizyah* while a minority gave the *zakāt*.<sup>262</sup> He pushed

<sup>262</sup> Although the *zakāt* would amount to more than the *jizyah*, some preferred paying *zakāt* over the *jizyah* because of the stigma attached to the *jizyah*, while *zakāt*, as a form of charity, would be seen as

ahead to Shamkūr and took it.<sup>263</sup> Ḥabīb entered into a peace agreement with the residents of all these areas then returned.

#### THE CONQUEST OF CYPRUS (QUBRUŞ)

In 28 AH Muʿāwiyah conquered the island of Cyprus with many senior Companions accompanying him in the battle. Amongst them were Abū Dharr, ʿUbādah ibn aṣ-Ṣamit and ʿUbādah's wife Umm Ḥarām bint Milḥān. The Messenger of Allah had told her that she would be amongst the first to join a naval battle.

Anas ibn Mālīk narrates that the Messenger of Allah used to go to Umm Ḥarām bint Milḥān and she used to prepare food for him, Umm Ḥarām was married to ʿUbādah ibn aṣ-Ṣamit. The Messenger of Allah went to her house one day and she fed him some food. She then sat down searching for lice in his head.<sup>264</sup> The Messenger of Allah fell asleep and woke up smiling. She related that she asked him: "Why are you smiling, O Messenger of Allah?" and he replied: "I was made to see some people from my community waging *jihād* in the cause of Allah, riding on the high seas. They were kings sitting on thrones or like kings sitting on thrones [the narrator is unsure]." I said: "O Messenger of Allah! Supplicate to Allah to include me among them." So he supplicated for her. He then put his head down and fell asleep again. When he woke up he was smiling again. She said; "I asked: 'Why are you smiling, O Messenger of Allah?'" He replied: "I was made to see some people from my community waging *jihād* in the cause of Allah", as he had said the previous time. She said: "O Messenger of Allah! Supplicate to Allah to include me among them." He replied: "You are already with the first group."<sup>265</sup>

Abū 'd-Dardā' and Shaddad ibn Aws were also with them on this mission. Muʿāwiyah always wished to engage the Romans in a naval battle during the caliphate of ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb but ʿUmar would not permit him because he feared for Muslim lives. When ʿUthmān became caliph he gave him permission saying: "You must not appoint people to accompany you nor should you draw lots among them. Rather, take the person who voluntarily

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something honourable to pay. However, their payment was still technically a mutually agreed amount of *jizyah*.

<sup>263</sup> It later became deserted and was re-inhabited during the caliphate of Mutawakkil, the ʿAbbāsīd caliph. It was renamed Mutawakkiliyyah.

<sup>264</sup> Imām Nawawī and others mentioned that there must have been a (milk) relationship between the Messenger of Allah and Umm Ḥarām.

<sup>265</sup> Bukhārī (2788–2789), an-Nasāʾī, vol. 6, pp. 40–41; *al-Muwattaʾ*, vol. 2, p. 464; Muslim (1912); Aḥmad, vol. 3, p. 240; Tirmidhī (1645)

joins you and then help him.” And this is what he did when he left the Levant for Cyprus. The governor of Egypt, ‘Abdullāh ibn Sa’d, came himself to help him and met him there. The people entered into a peace agreement which stipulated that they would pay seven thousand dirhams to the Muslims annually and an equal amount to the Romans, with the Muslims imposing no restrictions in this. It would not be the duty of the Muslims to defend them if anyone attacks them but it would be their duty to inform the Muslims if the Roman enemies intended to attack them, and it would be their duty to make way for the Muslims if they went for the enemy. Umm Ḥarām bint Milhān al-Anṣāriyyah ؓ, who was previously mentioned, passed away on this expedition in Cyprus when her donkey flung her off.

Mu‘āwiyah ؓ appointed ‘Abdullāh ibn Qays al-Ḥārithī to wage naval battles. He waged fifty battles, in summer and winter, on land and sea. Not a single person from his army drowned nor was any (boat) overturned, until one occasion when he went out on reconnaissance and came to a Roman harbour. The Romans there had been warned about him and they came and killed him.

Mu‘āwiyah ؓ complained about Abū Dharr ؓ to ‘Uthmān ؓ in 30 AH. Abū Dharr ؓ believed that it was not lawful for a Muslim to possess more than one day’s food, something which one intends to spend in the cause of Allah ؓ, or something which one intends to offer to a guest. He used the following verse as his proof: “Those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in the cause of Allah they will have a painful punishment, on the day their wealth shall be heated in the fire of Hell, and used to brand their foreheads, sides and backs. ‘This is what you hoarded up for yourselves. Now taste what you have been hoarding” (Sūrat at-Tawbah, 9: 34–35). (In the present age communists are inclined to this view.) Abū Dharr ؓ used to stand up in the Levant and say: “O you wealthy people! See to the needs of the poor. Give a warning to those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in the cause of Allah of the hot irons of the Hellfire which will be used to brand their foreheads, sides and backs.” Such statements proved attractive to the poor and they would force them on the wealthy. The wealthy people complained about this to Mu‘āwiyah ؓ who in turn wrote to ‘Uthmān ؓ who summoned Abū Dharr ؓ.

When Abū Dharr ؓ came to Madīnah and saw people sitting amongst worldly things, he said: “Inform the people of Madīnah of a large-scale attack and a war of admonishment.” When he went to ‘Uthmān ؓ he asked him: “Why is it that the people of the Levant are complaining about your sharp tongue?” Abū Dharr ؓ informed him and he said: “O Abū Dharr! I have to fulfil my responsibilities and call on the masses to strive yet find balance. I cannot compel them to asceticism.” Abū Dharr ؓ said: “Do not accept the wealthy until they spend of their

wealth, show kindness to their neighbours and brothers, and maintain their ties of kinship.” He then asked ‘Uthmān permission to leave Madīnah, the Messenger of Allah had ordered him to do this when buildings become a commodity (and no longer used as a necessity). ‘Uthmān sent him to Rabadhah where he built a mosque. ‘Uthmān apportioned him some camels and set aside a stipend for him. Abū Dharr subsequently lived there in solitude until the inevitable (death) overtook him.

#### IN EGYPT

‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ, conqueror of Egypt, was governor there at the beginning of ‘Uthmān’s caliphate. In the second year of his caliphate the Romans in Constantinople wrote to their brethren in Alexandria asking them to break their peace treaty with the Muslims and they agreed. Muqawqis however was a righteous person and did not go back on his covenant.

A huge Roman army went to Alexandria. When ‘Amr heard of this he marched upon them and the Romans marched on him. The two armies did battle at a place between Egypt and Alexandria until the Romans were defeated. The Muslims pursued them and killed a large number of them in Alexandria, where ‘Amr also destroyed the city wall.

#### THE CONQUEST OF IFRĪQIYYA (NORTH AFRICA)

In this same year ‘Amr dispatched ‘Abdullāh ibn Sa’d ibn Abī Sarḥ to the northern coastal regions of Africa (the area between Tripoli and Tangiers), to wage war under the order of ‘Uthmān. He conquered these regions and collected much booty. When he returned, he asked ‘Uthmān permission to engage in further attacks in the region. ‘Uthmān granted him permission and said: “If Allah gives you victory, you can have one fifth of one fifth of the booty as a gift.” He appointed ‘Abdullāh ibn Nāfi’ ibn ‘Abd al-Qays and ‘Abdullāh ibn Nāfi’ ibn al-Ḥārith as commanders of the army and ordered them to join ‘Abdullāh ibn Sa’d. They crossed Egypt and traversed the land of Ifrīqiyya. The army was colossal, made up of tens of thousands of brave Muslims. The king of Africa made peace with them in exchange for a sum of wealth which they would pay to the Muslims. They did not settle in the depths of the country because of the large populations and ‘Abdullāh ibn Sa’d returned to Egypt. ‘Uthmān gave him the responsibility of collecting the *kharāj* and appointed ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ to command the army. However, these two disagreed with each other so ‘Uthmān charged ‘Abdullāh ibn Sa’d with both these posts and removed ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ.

‘Abdullāh ibn Sa’d then sought the advice of ‘Uthmān ؓ concerning the *jihād* in Africa and requested additional soldiers for it. ‘Uthmān ؓ mobilised forces for him from Madīnah and he then advanced into Africa. King Jurjir ruled a kingdom that extended from Tripoli to Tangier. He ruled on behalf of the Romans and would pay taxes to the Roman Emperor. When he heard of the Muslim advance, he made preparations for them and faced them at a place at a distance of one day’s journey from his capital, Subayṭilah (Sbeitla). ‘Abdullāh had invited him to embrace Islām or pay the *jizyah* but he refused so they went to war. The ensuing battle continued for several days, the two armies fighting until midday then returning to camp.

The news about the Muslims progress was slow to reach ‘Uthmān ؓ so he sent reinforcements under ‘Abdullāh ibn az-Zubayr ؓ. When he arrived he advised Ibn Sa’d to divide the army into two sections, one to fight till midday and the other to take its place thereafter, so that the polytheists would tire. Ibn Sa’d followed his advice and sent the first section which fought till midday. The polytheists wanted to leave the battlefield but could not. The battle continued with the second group until the polytheists became extremely weak and eventually suffered a crushing defeat. ‘Abdullāh ibn az-Zubayr ؓ put Jurjir, the king of North Africa, to the sword and the city was conquered.

Ibn Sa’d then dispatched military squadrons which reached Qafṣah (Gafsa). This city was taken and much booty collected. He sent off another squadron to the fort of Ajam which besieged the city then made peace with its people. Finally Ibn Sa’d entered into a peace agreement with the people of North Africa in return for 2.5 million dinars and then sent the good news and one fifth of the booty to ‘Uthmān ؓ. He then headed home after spending a year and three months in North Africa. When the booty of Africa reached Madīnah, Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam purchased it and ‘Uthmān ؓ reimbursed him for it. ‘Uthmān ؓ then appointed ‘Abdullāh ibn Nāfi’ ibn ‘Abd al-Qays as governor of Africa and left ‘Abdullāh ibn Sa’d to look after Egypt.

## PART 2: THE ERA OF DIFFERENCES AND TRIBULATIONS

### THE MOVEMENT AGAINST ‘UTHMĀN ؓ

THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ was wary of tribulations afflicting his community and would very often warn them of such trials. When a nation begins to harm itself rather than its enemies its condition deteriorates, its structure is thrown

into disarray and it moves from rectitude towards a state of chaos. There are several ḥadīths from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ warning of such tribulations but they were destined to happen and therefore came to pass.

The conquests of the Muslim community were completed and the government was established. The Arabs settled down in cities with Baṣrah, Kūfah, the Levant and Egypt as borders between themselves and the other nations. The Emigrants and Helpers from the Quraysh, the people of Quraysh and some others enjoyed the special companionship of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and were guided by his ways and virtues. As for all the other Arabs from the Bakr ibn Wā’il, ‘Abd al-Qays, all of the Rabī‘ah, Azd, Kindah, Tamīm, Quḍā‘ah and others, none but a few of them enjoyed the companionship of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. They did play a major role in the conquests but considered themselves solely responsible for the successes. Despite this the virtuous among them held the early Companions in high esteem and recognised their merits, and were reverential at the affair of prophecy, the arrival of divine revelation and the descent of angels.

This chapter was shut; the earlier state of Muslims was forgotten, the enemy was subjugated and the empire grew too big, so the pulse of *jāhiliyyah* began to beat again. Some saw that the Emigrants and Helpers from the Quraysh (and others) held authority over them and they looked upon this with scorn. This was during the caliphate of ‘Uthmān ﷺ so they began to criticise his governors, taking them to task for minor mishaps and errors, and underhandedly demanding their replacement and removal as well as criticising ‘Uthmān ﷺ excessively.

#### IBN SABA’: THE SPEARHEAD OF THE SEDITION

The cause of all this sedition was that Jewish person mentioned above, known as ‘Abdullāh ibn Saba’. He proclaimed his open support for ‘Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib ﷺ, alleging that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had nominated ‘Alī ﷺ as his successor, so who could be more unjust than the one who did not fulfil the wishes of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ? Many of those inclined to deviation and lacking understanding followed his line of thinking. He urged them: “Stand up and fight over this matter because ‘Uthmān usurped it.” They corresponded with people in other cities and found many that shared their view, so a tendency to criticise ‘Uthmān ﷺ and his governors spread.

This news reached the people of Madīnah and they asked ‘Uthmān ﷺ about it. He said to them: “News of peace is all that has come to me from my governors. You are my associates and witnesses over the believers, so tell me what to do.” They advised him to send people to the various cities to verify the different pieces

of information that had come to Madīnah. He sent Muḥammad ibn Maslamah to Kūfah, Usāmah ibn Zayd ﷺ to Baṣrah, ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ﷺ to the Levant and Ammār ibn Yāsir ﷺ to Egypt. They all returned and said: “We learnt of nothing but good from your governors.” As for ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir ﷺ, who went to Egypt, a group of followers of ‘Abdullāh ibn Saba’ took him aside, loaded him with complaints against the governors of ‘Uthmān ﷺ and did not allow him to return to Madīnah. ‘Abdullāh ibn Sa’d wrote to ‘Uthmān ﷺ informing him of this so ‘Uthmān ﷺ sent messages to all the cities saying: “I take my governors to account every year at the time of *ḥajj*. The people of Madīnah have conveyed to me that some people are accusing them and attacking them. If anyone has any such complaints, he should come at the time of *ḥajj* to claim his right, whether it be from me or from my governors. Alternatively, forgive for surely Allah ﷻ rewards those who forgive.”

‘Uthmān ﷺ summoned his governors to meet him during the *ḥajj* season. They were ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Āmir, governor of Baṣrah, ‘Abdullāh ibn Sa’d, governor of Egypt, and Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān, governor of the Levant. ‘Uthmān ﷺ held a meeting with them and also called ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ as-Sahmī and Sa‘īd ibn al-‘Āṣ al-Umawī to attend. He said to them: “We are here to decide what these complaints and rumours are all about. By Allah, I fear that these claims against you may be proven true, and all this comes back to me for I am the one held responsible.” They said: “Did you not send out people to investigate? Did news not come back to you from the masses? Did your envoys not return? Did someone not speak to them directly? By Allah, there is no truth in the matter and we do not know of any basis to this rumour. It is not lawful to take anyone to task on the basis of this.” So he sought their advice on ways to put an end to this sedition. Ibn ‘Āmir said: “I think that we should keep them busy with *jihād*.” Ibn Sa’d suggested: “Seek to make peace with them through wealth.” Mu‘āwiyah said: “Give the governors the responsibility to put an end to this. I will put an end to it in the Levant.” Ibn al-‘Āṣ said: “I think that you have become soft on them, that you have displayed satisfaction with them and that you have given them more courage, unlike the way ‘Umar used to be. I think that you should adopt his way: be firm where it is needed, and soft where it is needed.” Sa‘īd ibn al-‘Āṣ then added: “When their leaders are destroyed, the followers will scatter.”

‘Uthmān ﷺ said: “I have heard all that you said to me. There is a way of approaching every matter. The matter we fear will befall the Muslim community is most certain to take place. The door that has been shut to keep it away will most certainly be opened. We will have to repulse it with tolerance and lenience, unless it concerns the injunctions of Allah ﷻ. If this door is opened, no one can have a case against me. Allah ﷻ most certainly knows that I have not spared

any effort in seeking good for the people. The wheel of sedition is turning, and glad tidings to ‘Uthmān if he passes away without causing it to move. Calm the people and give them their dues. If the rights of Allah are violated do not display any leniency.” He then departed and the governors went to their respective provinces. Mu‘āwiyah ؓ accompanied ‘Uthmān ؓ because his path was through Madīnah.

When they reached Madīnah ‘Uthmān ؓ held a meeting with the senior Companions. Mu‘āwiyah ؓ stood up, praised Allah ﷻ and said: “You are the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the best people from the creation of Allah ﷻ, those responsible in this Muslim community. None but you could ask for such a position. You chose this leader of yours without compulsion or worldly motive. He has grown old and his life is leaving him. If you are waiting for decrepitude to overpower him then that is close, although I hope that he is too honourable in the sight of Allah for Him to allow this to afflict him. A rumour has spread amongst the people [i.e. that you have something against ‘Uthmān or do not want him as caliph] and I fear that it might be true. If you are blaming him for something then here are my hands [i.e. tell me what it is, and I will respond and defend him]. Please do not give anyone any hope (of leadership) in your matter (by having differences among yourselves). By Allah, if the masses begin to get involved in this then you will only see it going further and further away from you.”

‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ؓ brushed him off but ‘Uthmān ؓ said: “My nephew is correct. Let me tell you about myself and the position [of caliphate] which I have been entrusted with. My two companions before me [referring to Abū Bakr ؓ and ‘Umar ؓ] deprived themselves and their relatives while seeking rewards from Allah. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to give to his relatives. I am amongst a group of people who are poor and lack resources and I extended my hand to some extent as I was now in charge. If you think that I have erred, take it back from me. I will do what you say.” They replied: “You are correct and have spoken well. You gave Khālid ibn Usayd fifty thousand and Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam fifteen thousand”. He took that back from them, then all left happily.

Mu‘āwiyah ؓ departed for the Levant after offering ‘Uthmān ؓ the chance to go with him. ‘Uthmān ؓ refused because he preferred being near the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Mu‘āwiyah ؓ moved off and passed by a group of Emigrants which included ‘Alī ؓ, Ṭalhah ؓ and az-Zubayr ؓ amongst others. He said to them: “You know that leadership is something which people fought over until Allah ﷻ sent His Prophet. They would lay claim to it on the grounds that they surpassed others, their seniority and their endeavours. If they assumed leadership on the basis of these, they would wield authority and people would

follow them. When they sought the material world through leadership, it was taken away from them and Allah ﷻ gave it to someone else. And Allah ﷻ has full power to replace people. I have now left an old man behind [‘Uthmān ﷺ] among you, so treat him well, help him, and you will be the most fortunate in this affair,” then moved on.

#### THE START OF THE SEDITION

The people of the cities who had turned away from ‘Uthmān ﷺ persisted in their transgression. Letters from rebels in Madīnah came to them, saying: “Come to us we are going to start the *jihād*” They picked the month of Shawwāl to come out, pretending to be pilgrims. Five hundred Egyptians left under the leadership of Ghāfiqī ibn Ḥarb. A similar number left from Kūfah and from Baṣrah. When they were three days journey from Madīnah the people of Baṣrah stopped at a place called Khushub. The people of Kūfah stopped at A‘waṣ with a group of Egyptians who were with them. They all then stopped over at Dhu ‘l-Marwah. They held different views<sup>266</sup> as to who should become the caliph after ‘Uthmān ﷺ. The Kūfans wanted Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubaydillāh ﷺ, the people of Baṣrah wanted az-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām ﷺ and the Egyptians wanted ‘Alī ﷺ.

A delegation from each place got together and went to the person which each group desired. The Egyptians went to ‘Alī ﷺ, greeted him and made their offer

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266 Those who took part in committing the crime against Islām on *Yawm ad-Dār* (the day when they laid siege to the house of ‘Uthmān ﷺ and killed him) were of different groups holding different views: (1) There were those inclined to excesses in religion and therefore exaggerated the importance of trivial matters, yet in rejecting certain trivial things they committed major sins. (2) There were those from Yemen who were affected by a fanatic rancour towards the senior Companions from the Quraysh. They harboured malice towards the senior Companions from the Quraysh over the share of the booty which they received as a recompense for their *jihād* and victories. They wanted the same amount of booty without enjoying seniority in Islām and without engaging in *jihād*. (3) Those who felt that they were wronged when the Islamic penal code was implemented in instances involving relatives. They therefore harboured hatred and malice in their hearts. (4) Foolish people that followers of ‘Abdullah ibn Saba’ took advantage of and urged to sedition, corruption and heretical beliefs. (5) Those overwhelmed by the goodness and kindness of ‘Uthmān ﷺ yet rejected it, desiring leadership and authority which they did not deserve because they were immature in comparison with their contemporaries. (6) Those who were reprimanded by ‘Uthmān ﷺ when they did things that conflicted with the goodly ways of Islām. This legitimate reproof from ‘Uthmān ﷺ angered them, but had they received a more severe rebuke from ‘Umar ﷺ they would have submitted to it obediently. (7) Those chasing after leadership before they were eligible for it. They were deluded by an intelligence or eloquence which was not accompanied by wisdom. They rebelled and hastened to a matter before the appropriate time to approach it.

In short, the mercy and kind-heartedness which dominated ‘Uthmān’s heart eventually inspired avarice against him on the part of many, and they took advantage of his mercy to fulfil their desires and schemes (*al-‘Awāṣim min al-Qawāṣim*, vol. 1, p. 58).

to him. He got angry at them and drove them out, saying: “The righteous know that you are cursed by Muḥammad ؐ.” Ṭalḥah ؓ and az-Zubayr ؓ gave the same reply to those who came to them. They all then turned back, pretending to return to their respective countries. When the people of Madīnah dispersed and became engrossed in their day-to-day activities, they suddenly heard the *takbīr* (*Allāhu akbar*—Allah is the greatest) all around Madīnah. The house of ‘Uthmān ؓ was surrounded and an announcement was made: “Whoever refrains from fighting shall be safe.”

#### THE ALLEGED LETTER

The people remained indoors, astonished that the rebels had returned after submitting to ‘Uthmān’s request to leave alone the governors that they wanted removed. Muḥammad ibn Maslamah went to the Egyptians and asked them: “Why have you returned after having departed?” They replied: “We confiscated a letter<sup>267</sup> from a servant of ‘Uthmān addressed to the governor of Egypt in which he ordered him to kill us.” He then asked the people of Baṣrah the reason for their return. They replied: “We came to help our brothers” and the Kūfians said the same. Muḥammad ibn Maslamah asked: “How did you come to know of what transpired with the Egyptians? You [three groups] were far away from each other and yet you have all come back together! This is undoubtedly a plot.” They said: “You can think whatever you want. We have no need for this man.” The letter was taken from them and ‘Uthmān ؓ was asked: “Did you write this letter?” He replied: “By Allah, I did not write it, I did not ask anyone to write it, and I have no knowledge of it.” ‘Alī ؓ and other senior Companions who were with him said: “‘Uthmān has spoken the truth.” The Egyptians said: “Then who wrote it?” ‘Uthmān ؓ responded: “I do not know.” They said: “Is it possible that someone overpower you, send your attendant with some of the camels of *zakāt*, a seal like yours is made, and a letter containing these serious statements is written to your governor, and that you do not know about all this?” He replied: “Yes.” They said: “You are either speaking the truth or you are lying. If you are lying, you deserve

267 It is implausible that ‘Uthmān ؓ would write a letter ordering the Egyptians to be killed, crucified or their hands and feet chopped off. Moreover the narrations which state that the attendant belonged to ‘Uthmān ؓ, that the camels were from the treasury and that ‘Uthmān ؓ admitted to all this have narrators who are unknown or are fabricated narrations spread by narrators whose honesty and trustworthiness is doubtful. There are conflicting narrations vis-à-vis the subject of the letter, and this has caused further doubts in its authenticity and made this entire incident a fabrication. It is clear that the main objective—from beginning to end—was to remove the Leader of the Believers, ‘Uthmān ؓ, and to shed his blood which Allāh ؓ considered sacrosanct in the Shari‘ah (*al-‘Awāṣim min al-Qawāṣim*, vol. 4, p. 126, and vol. 1, p. 127).

to be removed [from your post of caliph] because of your order to kill us. And if you are speaking the truth, you still deserve to be removed because of your weakness in this matter. We cannot leave the caliphate in the hands of a person who has no power over such things. You should resign.” ‘Uthmān ؓ said: “I will not remove a shirt which Allah ؓ made me wear.”

Allah ؓ did not inspire anyone to investigate the matter of the letter. Also-how did they end up returning to Madīnah together when they had taken different paths to their different countries? As for the accusation that was levelled against Marwān, that was not proven. In fact, when they asked him, he took an oath that he did not write the letter. Allah ؓ has laid down in His upright religion that when a person is accused and there is no proof against him, then an oath is sufficient to absolve him. However, when sedition bares its teeth all righteousness disappears. There is no power and no might but with Allah, the Most High, the Almighty.

#### ‘UTHMĀN ؓ IS SURROUNDED

The rebels then surrounded the Leader of the Believers, the Companion of the Messenger of Allah ؓ, who was given the glad tidings of Paradise. They laid siege to him fiercely, stopping him from praying in the mosque of the Messenger of Allah ؓ. ‘Uthmān ؓ summoned ‘Alī ؓ, Ṭalhah ؓ and az-Zubayr ؓ and they came. He then appeared before all the people and said: “O people! Sit down.” Those who were at peace with him and those who were rebelling against him all sat down. He then said: “O people of Madīnah! I entrust you to Allah and I ask Him to set right the caliphate for you after me.” He then said: “I take the name of Allah ؓ and ask you, do you remember that when ‘Umar ؓ was departing from this world, you asked Allah ؓ to choose a caliph for you, and to rally you together under the best of you? Are you going to say that Allah did not accept this request of yours, and that He disregarded you despite your being His rightful servants? Or are you going to say that Allah considered His religion to be of no consequence and was unconcerned as to who became your leader, even if it were to cause disunity among the followers of Islām at that time? Or are you going to say that he was appointed without any consultation and that he was overbearing, and that Allah left the Muslim community to act as it pleased because they disobeyed Him in not consulting [the people] when appointing the caliph? Or are you going to say that Allah ؓ did not know what the end of my life would be? I take the name of Allah ؓ and ask you, do you not know that I was one of the first to hasten to good [i.e. in embracing Islām] and that Allah ؓ placed me ahead, that those who came after me should recognise the merit of

this? Do not hasten in killing me because killing someone is only lawful in three instances: a married person who commits adultery, a person who becomes an apostate after embracing Islām and a person who kills another without a just cause. If you kill me, you would place the sword over your own necks and then Allah ؓ would never remove the strife between you.”

The rebels said: “As regards what you said about the people seeking from Allah the best successor after 'Umar and the people then appointing you, there is good in everything that Allah did. However, Allah made you a test by which He put the people through a tribulation. As regards what you said about your early acceptance of Islām and close position with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, you did enjoy that and you were worthy of the caliphate. However you have now done things which you know of, and we will not abandon establishing the truth for fear of sedition in the future. As regards what you said about it not being lawful to kill anyone except in three situations, we find other reasons than those you enumerated in the religion of Allah: the one who strives to cause corruption in the land, the one who rebels and then fights with others to promote his rebellion, killing the person who gets in the way of the truth and prevents it being known and then fights to defend this. You have rebelled, you prevented the truth coming out, you blocked it and you are persistent in all this. Furthermore, you have not given those whom you wronged the right to take reprisal and you are holding on to the caliphate over us. You claim that you are not forcefully holding on to the caliphate, but those who have stood up against you and resisted you are only doing so because you are clinging on to it. If you voluntarily step down, they [i.e. us, the rebels] will turn away and abstain from fighting you.”

Uthmān ؓ did not give them any reply and remained in his house. Many residents of Madīnah came and surround his house to defend him, but he asked them to leave. Most of them left, except a few including Ḥusāyn ibn 'Alī ؓ, Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, Ibn az-Zubayr ؓ, and Muḥammad ibn Ṭalḥah ؓ. Uthmān ؓ strongly detested that any fighting should take place in Madīnah during his caliphate and would take all possible means to avoid it, even forbidding the people of his house to unsheathe weapons. He tried putting off the rebels and spoke to them a great deal, he would send 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭalīb ؓ to them time and again promising them to submit to their demands but they did not desist, every time he shut a door of sedition, they opened another one. They even prevented water from going to the caliph of the Muslims. 'Alī ؓ went to them at night and said: “O people! What you are doing does not behove believers or unbelievers. Do not prevent water and food from going to him. When the Romans and Persians imprison someone, they still provide him with food and drink.” They replied: “No. By Allah, we will not even give him a drop” and so 'Alī ؓ went away.

The Mother of the Believers, Umm Ḥabibah bint Abī Sufyān ؓ, came with a water-skin [to provide water to ‘Uthmān ؓ] so the rebels struck her donkey’s face. She said to them: “The bequests of the Banū Umayyah are with this man [referring to ‘Uthmān ؓ]. I would like to ask him about them so that the wealth of the orphans and widows is not destroyed.” They replied: “You are lying.” And they cut the rope of her donkey with a sword which caused it to bolt, and the Mother of the Believers almost fell off. Some people approached her and took her to her house.

‘Uthmān ؓ appeared before the people after he was refused water. He said to them: “I take the name of Allah ؓ and ask you, don’t you know that I purchased the water-well of Rūmah with my wealth so that its sweet water may be consumed? And that I made my claim to it equal to any other Muslim?” They replied: “Yes.” He asked: “Why, then, are you stopping me from drinking to the extent that I am forced to open my fast with sea water?” He then asked: “I take the name of Allah ؓ and ask you, don’t you know that I purchased a certain land and attached it to the mosque?” They replied: “Yes.” He said: “Do you know of anyone before me who was prevented from praying in the mosque?” He then asked: “I take the name of Allah ؓ and ask you, did the Messenger of Allah ؐ not make such and such statements about me. . .” then enumerated some merits and virtues which the Messenger of Allah ؐ had mentioned about him.

This speech of his affected many of these people, and they said: “Wait, do not harm the Leader of the Believers” but a devil from them shouted: “It seems that this was a plot which he devised against him [i.e. the Messenger of Allah] and you,”<sup>268</sup> so this served to increase their intransigence. The Mother of the Believers, ‘Ā’ishah ؓ left for *hajj*. She was tired of remaining in Madīnah in the midst of all these tribulations. She asked her brother, Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr, to follow her. He refused because he was from among the rebels. Hanḏalah the scribe said to him: “The Mother of the Believers is asking you to follow her and you are not doing that? Yet you are following the wolves of the Arabs in something prohibited! If this was merely a question of power the Banū ‘Abd Manāf would overcome you.”<sup>269</sup>

268 This statement was made by Ashtar, one of the leaders of the rebels. Its meaning is somewhat unclear. Some read the Arabic in the active form *لعله مكر به وبكم* while others read it in the passive form *مكر*. Some regard it to mean that Ashtar also began to regret and was one of those who were affected by his speech, while others say he actually meant to spur them on to the *fitnah* once more. The following are thus possible ways to translate it: “Maybe a scam was devised against him (i.e. ‘Uthmān) and you (to create this *fitnah*)” or “Maybe he was given respite (by Allah when being given all these grand opportunities mentioned by him) and it serves as a tribulation for you.”

269 Muḥammad son of Abū Bakr repented shortly before the assassination of ‘Uthmān ؓ when

‘UTHMĀN’S ؓ LETTER TO THE MUSLIMS

‘Uthmān ؓ ordered ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās ؓ to lead the people for the pilgrimage, but he said: “I would prefer to fight these people than go on the pilgrimage.” ‘Uthmān ؓ stressed this upon him and he obeyed, departing for the pilgrimage. He gave a letter to him, addressed to the Muslims so that they may know his version of this entire matter. This letter is quoted from Ṭabarī:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. From the servant of Allah, ‘Uthmān the Leader of the Believers. Peace be on you. I praise Allah, the One other than whom there is none worthy of worship.

I remind you of Allah ؓ who has conferred His favour on us and you with Islām, guided you out of deviation, rescued you from unbelief, showed you clear signs, given you generous sustenance, helped you against the enemy, and showered His favours on you. Allah ؓ says, and His word is the truth: “Were you to count the favours of Allah you could not enumerate them. Man is truly unjust and ungrateful” (Sūrah Ibrahim, 14: 34).

Allah ؓ says: “O believers! Fear Allah as He ought to be feared and die only as Muslims. Hold fast to the rope of Allah altogether and do not create dissension. Remember the bounty of Allah upon you when you were enemies of one another, then He cast love into your hearts and you became brothers by His grace. You were on the brink of a pit of fire and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah expound His verses to you so that you might be guided. There should be among you a group that continually invites towards good, commands good deeds and forbids evil, and it is they who are the successful ones. Be not like those who split into factions and fell into disputes after clear instructions came to them, for them is a mighty punishment” (Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān, 3: 102–105). Allah ؓ says, and His word is the truth: “Remember the favour of Allah upon you and His covenant which He took from you when you said: ‘We hear and obey’” (Sūrat al-Mā’idah, 5: 7).

He says, and His word is the truth: “O believers! If a sinner comes to you with information, then verify it lest you harm some people out of ignorance, and later become remorseful over what you have done. Know well that the Messenger of Allah is among you. In many matters, if he followed your wishes you would suffer. But Allah made imān beloved to you and beautified it in your hearts, and He made unbelief, sinning and disobedience repugnant to you. It is such who are on the path of virtue, by the grace of Allah and His kindness. Allah is all-knowing and wise” (Sūrat al-Hujurāt, 49: 6–8).

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‘Uthmān ؓ himself reproached him reminding him of his relationship with his father. It was Allah’s mercy that rescued him moments before it would have been too late.

He ﷺ says: "Those who sell the covenant of Allah and their own oaths for a low price shall have no share in the Hereafter. Allah will neither speak to them, nor look at them, nor purify them on the day of Resurrection; for them is a painful punishment" (Sūrah Āl-ʿImrān, 3: 77).

He says, and His word is the truth: "So fear Allah as much as you can. Listen and obey, and spend for your own good. Those who are saved from the greed of their selves, it is they who are the successful" (Sūrat at-Taghābūn, 64: 16).

He says, and His word is the truth: "Fulfil oaths you have made in Allah's name and do not break oaths after you have sworn them, and taken Allah as guarantor. Allah knows everything you do. Do not be like the woman who completely unwinds a thread she has firmly spun. You use your oaths to deceive each other, just because one group is more numerous than another. Allah is testing you by this. Allah shall make clear to you on the day of Resurrection all that you used to differ about. Had Allah willed, He would have made all of you one community but He leaves to stray whomever He wills and guides whomever He wills, and you shall be questioned about what you used to do. Do not use your oaths as a means of mutual deception lest a foot slip after being firmly placed. You will have to taste the evil [punishment] for barring [others] from the path of Allah, and there shall be a mighty punishment for you. Do not purchase a small gain for the price of Allah's covenant. Truly that which is with Allah is best for you, if you only knew. All that you have is bound to come to an end, and all that is with Allah is everlasting. We shall certainly reward the patient for the good deeds that they used to do" (Sūrat an-Nahl, 16: 91–96).

He says, and His word is the truth: "Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those of you in authority. If you dispute in any matter refer it to Allah and the Messenger if you have conviction in Allah and in the day of Resurrection. This is best and brings a much better result" (Sūrat an-Nisā', 4: 59).

He says, and His word is the truth: "Allah has promised those who have imān from among you and did good deeds that He shall make them leaders in the land as He made those who were before them leaders. He shall establish the religion He chose for them and He will give them security to replace their fear. They will worship Me and not ascribe anything to Me. Whoever is defiant thereafter, they are the truly disobedient" (Sūrat an-Nūr, 24: 55).

He says, and His word is the truth: "Truly those who pledge their allegiance to you, pledge allegiance to Allah. The hand of Allah is above their hands. Now whoever breaks his word does so to his own detriment and whoever fulfils what He has pledged to Allah, He will give him a great reward" (Sūrat al-Fath, 48: 10).

To proceed: Allah ﷻ wants you to listen, obey, and remain united. He warns you against disobeying, being disunited and differing. He has informed you of what nations before you did and made you acquainted with it so that He might

have a case against you if you disobey Him. You should therefore accept the admonition of Allah and fear His chastisement. A nation will be destroyed by internecine conflict unless it has a leader to keep it united. If you remain in conflict, you will not establish the prayer together, your enemies will defeat you and you will trample on each other's rights. When this happens, nothing of the religion of Allah will remain and you will be divided into numerous sects. Allah said to the Messenger of Allah: "Those who split up their religion and have become many sects; you have nothing to do with them. Their case rests with Allah alone. He will then inform them of what they used to do" (Sūrat al-An‘ām, 6: 159).

I admonish you with what Allah admonished you and I warn you of His chastisement. Shu‘ayb said to his people: "O people! Let not your opposition to me cause you to bring a fate upon you similar to the one that befell the people of Nūḥ, the people of Hūd or the people of Šāliḥ. And the people of Lūṭ are not very far from you. Seek forgiveness for your sins from your Lord and turn to Him. Surely my Lord is merciful, loving" (Sūrah Hūd, 11: 89–90).

To proceed: People who hold certain views in this matter maintain before the people that they are calling to the Book of Allah, to the truth, and that they do not have worldly motives nor do they desire discord. But when the truth is presented to them they differ. There are those who are fighting for the truth and disputing it until it is given to them. There are those who are disregarding and abandoning the truth, wanting to snatch it [the caliphate] away in falsehood. They feel that I have outlived my time and their hopes to gain leadership have proved slow to be realised so they have tried to hasten destiny. They have written to you saying that they have gone back to the cities with what I have given them, but I do not know of missing anything out in what I gave them. They were claiming that they want the penal laws to be implemented. So I said: "Implement the punishment for those whom you know have transgressed the laws. Implement it for those who have wronged you, be they near or far." They said: "The Book of Allah is [before us and it can be] recited [to find out the ruling]." So I said: "Let that person who commits no excesses in its recitations [i.e. its injunctions] read it and see what Allah says therein." They said: "The one who is needy should be provided with sustenance, so that a good Sunnah may be established; there should be no transgression in the *khumus* [one fifth of the booty which goes to the treasury] and in the sums for charity; People of capability and trustworthiness should be appointed to responsible positions; People's complaints should be settled with those who committed the wrongs." I accepted this and persevered. I went to speak to the wives of the Messenger of Allah and asked them: "What do you think I should do?" They replied: "Appoint ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ and ‘Abdullāh ibn Qays [as governors]. Leave Mu‘āwiyah [as governor of the Levant] because the caliph [‘Umar] appointed him before you. He is doing well in

his province and his army is happy with him. Send ‘Amr [ibn al-‘Āṣ] back because his army is happy with him, and order him to set right his province.” I did all that but hostile actions were still committed against me and the truth has been attacked.

I am writing this letter to you while these people who are disputing this matter and seeking to hasten destiny have prevented me from praying in the mosque and seized whatever they could in Madīnah. At the time of writing this letter to you they are asking me to choose one of the following three options: that they take reprisals from me on behalf of every person whom I punished whether correctly or not; that I resign from the position of caliphate and they appoint someone else; that they instruct those who obey them from the armies and the people of Madīnah to wash their hands of the right of obedience which Allah gave me over them.

So I said to them: “As for taking retribution from me, there were caliphs before me who got some things right and some things wrong, and were not chastened. I know certainly that they are after me personally. As for stepping down from the caliphate, even if they shackled me I would not step down from fulfilling the work of Allah ﷻ and His caliphate. As for their instructing people in the armies and in Madīnah to disavow me, well I am not their guardian and I do not compel them to listen to me and obey me. They came to obedience voluntarily, seeking the pleasure of Allah ﷻ and maintaining a state of unity. Whoever among you desires this world shall acquire nothing of it except what Allah ﷻ has destined for him. Whoever from among you desires the pleasure of Allah, the Hereafter, the well-being of the Muslim community, Allah’s pleasure, the beautiful Sunnah left by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and adopted by the two caliphs after him, then Allah ﷻ shall reward you for all that and it is not in my hand to reward you. If I were to give you the entire world, it would not be equivalent to the price of your religion and it would not avail you in any way.

So fear Allah and seek the reward that is with Him. Whoever wants to break his covenant, then I would not like him to do so, nor does Allah like you to break His covenant. As for all the choices they have offered to me, they intend by them to remove me and appoint someone else. I have governed properly, and observed Allah’s command. Changes of fortune are in the hand of Allah ﷻ. I would hate to establish an evil precedent, split the Muslim community and shed blood. I therefore ask you in the name of Allah and Islām, that you follow nothing but the truth and that you convey the truth from me. Leave rebellion to those bent on it. If you have to decide between us, do so on the basis of justice as Allah ﷻ commanded you. I call you to Allah who has obliged you to uphold justice and to support His religion. Allah ﷻ says, and His words are true: “Fulfil covenants, surely covenants will be asked about” (Sūrah Banī Isrā’īl, 17: 34). In this manner I excuse myself in the court of Allah, and so it may be a lesson for you.

I do not absolve my own soul; “Truly the soul incites to evil except those my Lord shows mercy, indeed my Lord is most forgiving, most merciful” (Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 53). If I have punished anyone, I did it solely out of my desire for good. I repent to Allah for all that I have done and seek His forgiveness. None forgives sins except Him. The mercy of my Lord encompasses everything, and none but the misguided despair of the mercy of Allah. He accepts the repentance of His servants, pardons sins, and knows all that you do. I ask Allah ؓ to forgive me and you, unite this community in goodness, and make misdeeds abhorrent to it. May the peace, mercy and blessings of Allah be on you, O Believers and Muslims.”

Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ read this letter to the people on the 8<sup>th</sup> of Dhu’l-Hijjah (Yawm al-Tarwiya).

#### THE ASSASSINATION OF ‘UTHMĀN ؓ

The rebels barred the people from meeting and speaking with ‘Uthmān ؓ. When they feared that the matter would be prolonged, and that the armies from the other cities would come upon them, they headed for the door of ‘Uthmān’s ؓ house. A group of the children of the Companions ؓ fought them, but were powerless against people wielding such power. ‘Uthmān ؓ indicated to those who were fighting for him to stop, though they were still free to help him. The rebels burnt down the door and rushed upon him while he was reciting the Qur’an. None of this diverted him from his recitation. He said to those with him in the house: “The Messenger of Allah ؓ took a promise from me and I remain firm upon it. Now that they have set the door on fire, they are going to do something worse.” He ordered them to go away then addressed Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ؓ saying: “Your father most certainly does not know of your whereabouts. I adjure you; go to him.” But he and a few others refused to listen to ‘Uthmān ؓ and continued fighting to defend him but were so few in number and the enemies were so many that there was little they could do. Some of them were killed, a few injured, and others saved themselves.

Some of the rebels then climbed into the house of Banū Ḥazm next to ‘Uthmān’s ؓ house and then got into ‘Uthmān’s ؓ house. Someone said to him: “Step down from the caliphate and we will leave you.” ‘Uthmān ؓ replied: “Woe unto you. I swear by Allah that I never exposed a woman before or after Islām, I never involved myself in music and never desired to, and I never placed my right hand on my private part ever since I pledged my allegiance to the Messenger of Allah ؓ. So I will not remove a shirt [referring to the caliphate] which Allah ؓ made me wear until when Allah ؓ honours the fortunate and humiliates the

wretched.” This man then left and did not do anything. Another man came forward and ‘Uthmān ؓ said the same thing so this man also went away.

‘Abdullāh ibn Salām ؓ then came to them and said: “O people! Do not unsheathe the sword of Allah among yourselves. By Allah, if you unsheathe it, you will not be able to re-sheathe it. Today your ruler sets affairs right by the whip, if you kill him the sword will be needed to set right your affairs. Your city is surrounded by angels. If you kill him, they will leave.” But the rebels did not heed him and reviled him instead.

Those destined for wretchedness then entered upon ‘Uthmān ؓ and killed this pure soul in injustice and tyranny in the sanctified month and in the sanctified city of Madīnah on 18 Dhu ’l-Hijjah 35 AH. That was the cursed day which opened the door to evil and disunity among the Muslims. ‘Uthmān ؓ was 82 years old at the time of his martyrdom. This was a matter in which the Sharī‘ah was openly violated in the capital of the Islamic caliphate and the place where divine revelation descended. The rebels broke the staff of obedience to the leader who was legally elected, whose election was ratified by senior Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who had been instructed to do so by ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ؓ. He had done nothing to justify a rebellion against him, and it is only clear unbelief that compels rebellion against the leader. This is clearly stated in the ḥadīth of ‘Ubādah ibn aṣ-Ṣāmit ؓ which was quoted at the beginning of this book. None of them levelled such an accusation against ‘Uthmān ؓ and no judge issued such a ruling on the basis of the Qur’ān or Sunnah. All the malice they bore towards him was on account of things that a leader cannot be blamed for.

#### THE FALSE CLAIMS OF THE REBELS

The rebels objected that ‘Uthmān ؓ appointed his relatives to important positions but there is nothing wrong with a leader doing this since he had a precedent with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ appointing ‘Alī ؓ, his cousin, for various things. Had there been something wrong with appointing relatives, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would have prohibited it, and he did not do so. Islām treats everyone equally, with no one considered nearer to Islām or further from it. The matter is left to the discretion of the leader who is given the reins of the Muslim community. If he appoints someone who turns aside from the religion, we can complain to him. If he does not accept our complaint, we are to exercise patience as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ ordered us to do. This is because breaking community unity is an affliction that brings ruin upon nations. There is nothing in the Sharī‘ah which permits the removal of the leader except a clear act of unbelief.

Another criticism levelled against ‘Uthmān ؓ was that he sent Abū Dharr

out to Rabadhah. We explained the reason behind this, his way of thinking which he was calling others to was unacceptable. It could have caused the poor to rise against the rich and this would have disastrous consequences.

The rebels complained that he introduced the second *adhān* (call to prayer) on Friday. He did this because of the increase in the number of Muslims and the fact that they spread out to different areas of Madīnah, which had not been the case in the time of the Messenger of Allah . They also objected that he offered the full prayer (i.e. the full four *rak‘ats* in the *ḡuhr*, ‘aṣr and ‘ishā’ prayers) in Mīna and ‘Arafāt, whereas the Messenger of Allah and the two caliphs after him would shorten it (to two *rak‘ats* because they were travelling). When ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf asked him about this, he gave a clear answer saying: “I have heard that some of the pilgrims of Yemen and other outsiders consider the prayer of a resident to be two *rak‘ats* because of my prayer. I have a family in Makkah and property in Ṭā’if.” This was a valid reason according to him though ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān did not accept it.<sup>270</sup>

Another objection was that the ring of the Messenger of Allah fell from his hand into the well of Arīs, and it was never found (in spite of tremendous efforts).

Another objection of theirs was that he reimbursed Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam after he bought one-fifth of the booty from Africa. The Sharī‘ah does not prohibit the leader from singling someone out from the Muslims to give an amount to. Imām Muslim narrates that the Messenger of Allah would give something to the squadrons he sent out in addition to what used to be distributed to the general army. At times the Messenger of Allah would also give a share to someone who did not even take part in a particular battle. For example he gave to some who did not take part in the battle of Badr, to some Abyssian emigrants who came to him at Khaybar and to those who belonged to the tribe of Daws.

If you consider all the objections they made against ‘Uthmān —may Allah guide you—you will find nothing that tarnishes him, and you will find that he did not transgress the limits of the Sharī‘ah in any matter. Rather the excessive pride and vanity of these people drove them to demand for themselves what they had no right to demand. Thus they deserved Allah’s punishment. Allah says: “Guard yourselves against a sedition which will not only afflict the wrongdoers amongst you and know well that the punishment of Allah is severe” (Sūrat al-Anfāl, 8: 25).

Allah inflicted them with His full punishment. We ask Allah to remove His wrath and anger from us, and inspire us, through His grace and kindness, to that in which His pleasure lies.

270 Ṭabarī, vol. 4, pp. 427–430; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 3, pp. 190–191; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 602–603.



## *The Caliphate of ‘Alī* ﷺ



**T**HE MUSLIMS were left stunned after the murder of the wronged caliph, they could find no refuge and suffered a state of chaos. After ‘Uthmān none was fit for the caliphate other than ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ. Many of the Muslims went to him requesting him to assume the mantle of caliph. He gauged the future as best he could and realised that he would have to face a coming tribulation that could not be repulsed, so he said to them: “Look for someone else for we are certainly going to face a situation that will be difficult in so many ways, hearts will not be able to face it and minds will not be able to confront it.” The people then asked him to take up the responsibility in the name of Allah and for the sake of His religion. He said to them: “I accept. If you accept, I will do what I feel is best for you. But if you leave me be, I will be just like you all, but most obedient and subservient to the person you choose as caliph.” They refused this and said that he alone should be caliph.

The people felt that the matter could not be complete without az-Zubayr ﷺ and Ṭalḥah ﷺ pledging their obedience. A group went and brought them and they pledged their allegiance to ‘Alī ﷺ, though some say they were forced. Others are of the opinion that az-Zubayr ﷺ never pledged his allegiance. The rest of the people then followed and pledged their allegiance. A group of senior Companions of Madīnah which included the following men withheld the pledge: Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ ﷺ, Sa‘id ibn Zayd ﷺ, ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ﷺ, Usāmah ibn Zayd ﷺ, Mughīrah ibn Shu‘bah ﷺ, ‘Abdullāh ibn Salām ﷺ, Qudāmah ibn Maz‘ūn ﷺ, Abū Sa‘id al-Khudrī ﷺ, Ka‘b ibn ‘Ujrah ﷺ, Ka‘b ibn Malik ﷺ, Nu‘mān ibn

Bashīr ﷺ, Ḥassān ibn Thābit ﷺ, Maslamah ibn Makhlad ﷺ, Fuḍālāh ibn ‘Ubayd ﷺ and other senior Companions in the other cities.<sup>271</sup>

When ‘Alī ﷺ saw the pledge had been made, he stood and addressed the people, after praising and glorifying Allah ﷻ, he said:

O people! Allah ﷻ sent a guiding Book in which He has made good and evil clear, so hold on to what is good and abstain from what is evil. Fulfil the obligations to Allah ﷻ and He will convey you to Paradise. Allah ﷻ made certain things sacred and these are well known, but He has given superiority to the sanctity of Muslims over all other sanctified matters. He bound the rights of Muslims to devotion and belief in His oneness. Thus a Muslim is one from whose verbal and physical abuse other Muslims are safe, except in matters of truth. The blood of a Muslim is not lawful except in relation to certain obligations. Hasten to see to the affairs of the masses and prepare for death. The people (i.e. the companions) have gone ahead of you, and the Final Hour urges you on from behind. Lighten your burdens to catch up because the last part of (the same group of) people are waited for (meaning that if you tread in their footsteps, you will be awaited for in order to join up with them). O servants of Allah! Fear Allah with regard to His land and His servants, for you are even answerable for the land and animals. Obey Allah ﷻ and do not disobey Him. If you see good, hold on to it and follow it. If you see evil, abstain from it.” “Remember the time when you were few and victimised in the land” (Sūrat al-Anfāl, 8: 26). He then climbed down from the pulpit.<sup>272</sup>

#### THE PROFILE OF ‘ALĪ ﷺ

He is ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib ibn Hāshim al-Hāshimī al-Qurashī, the cousin of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. His mother was Fāṭimah bint Asad ibn Hāshim ibn ‘Abd Manāf.<sup>273</sup> He was born 32 years after the birth of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and was still a boy when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was commissioned as a Prophet. He was living with him in his house, and he used to provide him with food and drink because his father suffered poverty. He thus followed in the ways of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and was not defiled by the impurities of *jāhiliyyah* such as the worship of idols and other foul things.

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ emigrated to Madīnah ‘Alī ﷺ risked his life for him by sleeping on his bed to deceive those who had surrounded his

271 *Al-Muqaddimah* of Ibn Khaldūn, p. 214. Also see Ṭabarī, vol. 4, pp. 427–430; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 3, pp. 190–191; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 602–603.

272 Ṭabarī, vol. 4, p. 436; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 3, p. 194.

273 See *al-Iṣābah*, no. 5690; *Ṣifat aṣ-Ṣafwah*, vol. 1, p. 308; *Hilyat al-Awliyā’*, vol. 1, pp. 61–87.

house into thinking that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was still sleeping (when he had actually already gone), and not go after him. ʿAlī then joined him (in Madinah) after a short while.

He participated in every battle with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ except for the expedition to Tabūk when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ left him in charge of his family. He said to him: "Would it not please you to be like Hārūn was to Mūsā, except that there is no prophethood after me?"<sup>274</sup> ʿAlī remained firm and steadfast in every battle. He was among the first to step forward in the battle of Badr and he was among those who remained steadfast in the battles of Uḥud and Ḥunayn. Khaybar was conquered at his hands.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ married him to his daughter Fāṭimah in the second year of the emigration. She gave birth to Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, Zaynab al-Kubrā, and Umm Kulthūm al-Kubrā. He represented the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when he recited the opening verses of Sūrat at-Tawbah during the pilgrimage, announcing that Allah and His Messenger rejected the polytheists.

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed away and the pledge was made to Abū Bakr, ʿAlī pledged his allegiance to him though he felt he had the right to the caliphate because of his kinship with the Messenger. However, he disliked conflict and so pledged his allegiance. Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn, the Follower (*Tābiʿī*) rejected all those statements which were attributed to ʿAlī in which he supposedly denigrated Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, as narrated by Imām Bukhārī.<sup>275</sup>

When ʿUmar became caliph ʿAlī pledged his allegiance and had ʿUmar marry his daughter, Umm Kulthūm. ʿUmar would often place him in charge of Madinah when he left the city. When ʿUthmān became caliph, ʿAlī pledged his allegiance to him as well. He remained with him right till the end of his caliphate when the rebels stood up against him and accused him of nepotism. ʿAlī would extend his sincerest advice to ʿUthmān and guide him towards matters of success and salvation. Thus when the inevitable took place and ʿUthmān was martyred, the Muslims turned to him and appointed him caliph on 25 Dhu'l-Ḥijjah 35 AH. He remained caliph for almost five years in which he did not enjoy a single clear and untroubled day, and the decree of Allah is bound to come to pass.

ʿAlī was brown in complexion, had large eyes, a big stomach, bald, a large beard and a hairy chest. He was slightly short in stature. His upper arms were fleshy and forearms skinny, similarly his thighs were fleshy and his lower legs

<sup>274</sup> Bukhārī, vol. 7, p. 71 (3706); Tirmidhī (3724); Ibn Mājah (115), Aḥmad, vol. 1, p. 170 and vol. 3, p. 32.

<sup>275</sup> Bukhārī, vol. 7, p. 71, ḥadīth no. 3707.

skinny. He was one of the most handsome people and his grey hair did not diminish his looks; he was always smiling.

Apart from the children listed previously, he had the following children as well: 'Abbās, Ja'far, 'Abdullāh, 'Uthmān, 'Ubaydullah, Abū Bakr, Muḥammad al-Aṣghar, Yaḥyā, 'Umar, Ruqayyah, Muḥammad al-Awsaṭ, Muḥammad al-Akbar (popularly known as Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah), Umm al-Ḥasan, Ramlah al-Kubrā, Umm Kulthūm aṣ-Ṣughrā, Umm Hānī', Maymūnah, Zaynab aṣ-Ṣughrā, Ramlah aṣ-Ṣughrā, Fāṭimah, Umamah, Khadijah, Umm al-Kirām, Umm Salamah, Umm Ja'far, Jumānah and Nafīṣah. They were all born from several wives. Of them Ḥasan, Ḥusāyn, Muḥammad al-Akbar, 'Abbās and 'Umar left behind progeny themselves.

#### THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF 'ALĪ ﷺ

At the very beginning of his caliphate, 'Alī ﷺ sent governors to the different provinces, replacing all 'Uthmān's governors. He sent 'Uthmān ibn Ḥunayf al-Anṣārī to Baṣrah, replacing 'Abdullāh ibn 'Āmir. To Kūfah he sent 'Umārah ibn Shihāb, replacing Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī ﷺ. He sent 'Ubaydullāh ibn 'Abbās to Yemen, replacing Ya'lā ibn Munyah.<sup>276</sup> To Egypt he sent Qays ibn Sa'd ibn 'Ubādah, replacing 'Abdullāh ibn Sa'd. He sent Sahl ibn Ḥunayf to the Levant, replacing Mu'āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān. 'Alī ﷺ ordered each of them to proceed to his respective province.

'Uthmān ibn Ḥunayf went to Baṣrah and no one refused him entry, nor did Ibn 'Āmir the previous governor contend with him. As for 'Umārah ibn Shihāb, Ṭalayḥah ibn Khuwaylid al-Asadī confronted him when he drew close to Kūfah. Ṭalayḥah said: "You had better return because the people do not want their present governor to be replaced," so he returned to 'Alī ﷺ. 'Ubaydullāh ibn 'Abbās approached Yemen and Ya'lā ibn Munyah departed, taking a lot of wealth from there and going to Makkah. 'Ubaydullah thus entered without any opposition. As for Qays ibn Sa'd, when he reached Egypt the people took sides over his governorship. One group joined him and accepted him. Another group detached themselves, rallied at Khirbita (Khirbet) and said: "We refuse to be under 'Alī until he kills those who killed 'Uthmān." A third group said: "We will only support 'Alī if he does not exact revenge from our brothers". Qays wrote to 'Alī ﷺ informing him of all this. As for Sahl ibn Ḥunayf, when he reached Tabūk, a group of horsemen from the Levant confronted him and sent him back.

<sup>276</sup> He is actually Ya'lā ibn Umayyah, and Munyah is his mother's name (*al-Iṣābah*, vol. 6, no. 9360).

MUʿĀWIYAH'S OPPOSITION

Muʿāwiyah refused to pledge his allegiance to ʿAlī. He challenged his right to the caliphate because he believed ʿAlī had been lax in helping ʿUthmān against his killers. Muʿāwiyah believed that he himself had a great duty to exact revenge from the killers of ʿUthmān because he was his heir. Allah says: "As for one killed wrongfully, We have given authority to the defender of his rights, but let him not be excessive in killing." (Sūrah Banī Isrāʾīl, 17: 33)

He did not consider his refusal in pledging allegiance to be an act of going against the imām, because he felt that the pledge of allegiance to ʿAlī was invalid as it was not undertaken by consensus of influential people as explained at the beginning of this book. He sent a man to ʿAlī with a letter with nothing written on it. It was merely titled "from Muʿāwiyah to ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib." He ordered him to display it to the people in Madīnah, so that people might learn he was opposed to ʿAlī. This man did what he was told and when the people of Madīnah learnt of this, they wanted to know ʿAlī's opinion in this difficult matter. Was he going to fight Muʿāwiyah or did he fear that? They sent Ziyād ibn Hanḏalah, who was close to ʿAlī. ʿAlī said to him: "O Ziyād! Get ready." He asked: "For what?" He said: "To attack the Levant." Ziyād said: "Patience and gentleness is better" and quoted the couplet: "He who cooperates not in matters will be torn by fangs and trampled under the feet of animals."<sup>277</sup> ʿAlī replied by quoting the following poem: "If an intelligent heart is bent on severity for the sake of protection, wrongs and injustices will stay clear of you."<sup>278</sup>

Ziyād then went out and the people asked him: "What news have you come with?" He said: "The sword." ʿAlī prepared to fight Muʿāwiyah because of his rebellion and rejection of his authority. ʿAlī felt that the pledge of allegiance that was given to him was valid on the basis of those who pledged allegiance, and that this authority extended to those who did not pledge allegiance. He sent messages to the different provinces asking them to make preparations to fight Muʿāwiyah. In the meantime, az-Zubayr ibn al-ʿAwwām and Ṭalḥah ibn ʿUbaydillāh had left with the intention of performing *ʿumrah*. While ʿAlī was making his preparations he heard some news he had never expected; Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr, and the Mother of the Believers, ʿĀʾishah were opposed to him and were heading for Baṣrah.

<sup>277</sup> This is a line written by Zuhayr ibn Abī Salmā in his *Muʿallaqah* (See page 29 of his *Diwān*).

<sup>278</sup> This is a line written by Burāqah al-Hamadhānī (See *al-Kāmil*, vol. 1, p. 27).

## THE OPPOSITION OF ʿĀISHAH, ṬALḤAH AND AZ-ZUBAYR

The reason behind this was that when the Mother of the Believers completed her *ḥajj* and was returning to Madīnah, she received news of ʿUthmān's assassination and the appointment of ʿAlī as caliph. She said: "By Allah, ʿUthmān has been wrongfully killed. By Allah, I will truly seek justice for him." She then went back to Makkah and addressed the people: "O people! Mobs from various provinces and oases and the slaves of Madīnah rallied against this man and killed him without a just cause. They sought vengeance from him only because he utilised certain young people (for governance, etc.), yet their likes were also used (in authority) before. They also disliked that he gave them some special privileges. He thus conceded to their claims, and reversed his preferences. So when they found no evidence and no valid excuse they hastened to transgress. They shed innocent blood in a sanctified place and in a sanctified month, and seized unlawful wealth. By Allah, a single finger of ʿUthmān's is better than a world full of such people. By Allah, even as the basis on which they transgressed against him was a sin, he will come out of it pure, just as gold is purified of scum, or a garment is purified of filth. They have indeed cleansed him just like a cloth is washed with water."<sup>279</sup>

ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Ḥaḍramī, governor of Makkah, agreed with her. She was also supported by those of the Banū Umayyah who had fled Madīnah. ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿĀmir came to them from Baṣrah as did Yaʿlā ibn Munyah from Kūfah. Az-Zubayr and Ṭalḥah also concurred with her.

Many Companions were of the opinion that the first duty of the Muslims at this time was to pursue those who killed ʿUthmān, to take retaliation from them and to promulgate the penal law of Allah on them. They were of the opinion that there should be no delay whatsoever in this, regardless of the consequences. It was as though implementation of the law was the responsibility of every Muslim, and it was necessary for everyone to do all that was needed to fulfil this responsibility.

Neither az-Zubayr nor Ṭalḥah considered their opposition to be true opposition to the imām, because they did not consider the pledge of allegiance valid, since many Companions in Madīnah and other places had not pledged allegiance (to ʿAlī). As for the pledge which these two had given, it was under compulsion with the sword placed on their necks so they felt that obedience to the imām was not incumbent on them. They decided to go to Baṣrah and invited ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar to join them but he refused.

A large group of people went with the Mother of the Believers, with ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān ibn ʿAttāb ibn Usayd leading them in prayer. When they neared

<sup>279</sup> Ṭabarī, vol. 4, p. 449; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 3, p. 207; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 607.

Başrah, ʿĀʾishah ؑ sent ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿĀmir to inform the residents of her arrival. ʿUthmān ibn Ḥunayf, governor of Başrah, sent ʿImrān ibn Ḥuşāyn and Abū ʿl-Aswad ad-Duʿālī to ʿĀʾishah to ask her why she had come to Başrah. They went to her and said: “Our leader has sent us to ask you the reason for coming, will you inform us?” She replied: “I am not one to conceal information from her children. Mobs and people from various tribes invaded the sanctified city of the Messenger of Allah ؐ, committed acts of evil and gave shelter to the perpetrators. They brought the wrath of Allah ؐ and the curse of the Messenger of Allah ؐ upon them and murdered the leader of the Muslims without a valid reason or just cause. They shed sanctified blood that they considered lawful, seized wealth unlawfully, and ignored the sanctity of Madinah and the sanctified month. I have therefore come out to inform the Muslims of what these people have done, what the people behind us are enduring and what they should do in order to set right this matter.” She then recited the verse: “There is no good in most of their deliberations, only in enjoining charity, good deeds, or reconciliation between people” (Sūrat an-Nisāʾ, 4: 114).

The two then left her and went to Ṭalḥah ؑ and az-Zubayr ؑ, asking them: “Why have you come here?” They replied: “To seek retaliation for ʿUthmān’s death.” The two men asked: “Did you two not pledge your allegiance to ʿAlī?” They replied: “The sword was placed on our necks [we were compelled]. We will not ask him to resign from his post if he does not come between us and the killers of ʿUthmān.” ʿImrān and Abū ʿl-Aswad then returned to Ibn Ḥunayf (the governor) and informed him of all that transpired. He resolved to barricade Başrah until ʿAlī ؑ arrived. He then wanted to know if there were people in Başrah who were inclined towards Ṭalḥah ؑ and az-Zubayr ؑ so he sent a man out to the people, who said: “O people! I am so and so. If these people [Ṭalḥah ؑ, az-Zubayr ؑ and others] have come out of fear, they have come from a place [Makkah] where not even a bird has any cause to fear, but if they have come looking for the killers of ʿUthmān, we did not kill him. So you should follow me and send them back to where they came from.” One of the leaders of Başrah stood up and asked: “Have they claimed that we are the killers of ʿUthmān? They have merely come to ask us for assistance against those who killed ʿUthmān, whether they are amongst us or from somewhere else.”

On hearing this, Ibn Ḥunayf realised that Ṭalḥah ؑ and az-Zubayr ؑ had supporters in Başrah so he went out with his companions and stopped on the left of Mirbad. The Mother of the Believers came forward and stopped to its right. She addressed the people with a loud voice. She praised Allah ؐ and said:

The people are accusing ʿUthmān of certain crimes and disparaging his governors.

They are coming to us at Madīnah and asking for advice about matters they tell us of. When we investigated these accusations, we found him innocent, righteous and loyal and we found them to be sinners, treacherous, and liars. They have sinister motives. When they got the chance they overpowered him, laid siege to his house and shed innocent blood in a sanctified month in a sanctified city. They shed his blood without a just cause and without a valid reason. Listen! It is your only duty to seize the killers of ‘Uthmān and impose the injunctions of the Book of Allah on them.

She then recited this verse: “Have you not seen those people who receive a portion of the Book? They are called to the Book of Allah so that the Book may judge between them, but a group among them turn away indifferent” (Sūrah ‘Āl ‘Imrān, 3: 23).

A group of ‘Uthmān ibn Ḥunayf’s companions then joined her. Jāriyah ibn Qudāmah as-Sa’dī turned to her and said: “O Mother of the Believers! By Allah, the assassination of ‘Uthmān is less serious than you coming out of your house on this camel, becoming a target of weapons. You were concealed by Allah and given sanctity, but you tore down this curtain and foreswore your sanctity. Whoever sees you fighting will see it lawful to kill you. If you have come to us of your own accord we ask you to go back to your house. If you have been compelled to come to us, ask the people to help you.”<sup>280</sup>

Ḥakīm ibn Jabalah, a horseman of Baṣrah, advanced towards her with a group of fighters and engaged her companions. She ordered her people to be restrained and only defend themselves but Ḥakīm did not stop fighting so she ordered the army towards the graveyard of Banī Māzin on the right. Night then fell upon the two armies and all fighting stopped.

The next morning Ḥakīm came out at the head of his army and continued fighting almost until evening, but when they were afflicted with the heat of war they announced that they wanted to make peace, so that they could send someone to Madīnah to discover whether Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr’s pledge of allegiance was given voluntarily or under compulsion. If they ascertained that they were compelled, ‘Uthmān ibn Ḥunayf would leave Baṣrah. But if they were not compelled, Ṭalḥah ﷺ and az-Zubayr ﷺ were to go back.

They sent Ka‘b ibn Sūr, judge of Baṣrah, for this purpose. When he came to Madīnah he said: “People of Madīnah, I am the envoy of the people of Baṣrah. I have been sent to you to ask whether Ṭalḥah ﷺ and az-Zubayr ﷺ were forced into pledging allegiance or whether they did it of their own accord?” Usāmah

<sup>280</sup> Ṭabarī, vol. 4, p. 464; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 3, p. 213; Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 609.

ibn Zayd answered that they were compelled. Usāmah was reprimanded and humiliated by the governor of Madīnah, Sahl ibn Ḥunayf, the brother of ‘Uthmān ibn Ḥunayf for saying this. This news reached ‘Alī and he sent a message to ‘Uthmān ibn Ḥunayf saying: “By Allah, they were not forced into causing division but were forced into remaining united and doing good. If they want to remove me from office, they have no excuse. But if they have some other reason we can look into the matter and they can look into the matter as well.”

Ka‘b ibn Sūr reached Baṣrah and his arrival coincided with the arrival of ‘Alī’s letter. Ka‘b conveyed the message that az-Zubayr and Ṭalḥah were compelled into pledging allegiance. Az-Zubayr and Ṭalḥah therefore asked Ibn Ḥunayf to leave Baṣrah as was agreed but he refused, using ‘Alī’s letter in defence. The people then attacked him one night, took control of Baṣrah, appointed ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Abi Bakr in charge of the Bayt al-Māl and imprisoned Ibn Ḥunayf. Ḥakīm ibn Jabalah learnt of this and came with his men to help Ibn Ḥunayf. He spoke to ‘Abdullāh ibn az-Zubayr asking him to release ‘Uthmān ibn Ḥunayf so that he might take over the governorship of Baṣrah until the arrival of ‘Alī but ‘Abdullāh ibn az-Zubayr refused. Ḥakīm advanced with his men and fought them, and many of those with him were killed and the rest fled. Az-Zubayr and Ṭalḥah brought those of them who had attacked the city. They were killed, except Ḥurqūṣ ibn Zuhayr whose kinsmen came to his defence. This incident took place in 25 Rabī’ al-Ākhir 36 AH and after this incident, the Mother of the Believers and those who were with her remained in Baṣrah.

#### THE BATTLE OF THE CAMEL (JAMAL)

‘Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib the leader of the Believers learnt of ‘Ā’ishah’s journey while he was in Madīnah and had already mobilised his army to go to Levant. He called the elders of Madīnah together and said: “The end of this entire affair cannot be well if the beginning is not made well. So help Allah and He will help you and set right your affairs.” Some people joined him while others remained behind. He left Madīnah in the care of Sahl ibn Ḥunayf, hoping to catch up with az-Zubayr and Ṭalḥah before they reached Baṣrah. When he reached ar-Rabadhah, he heard news that they had made it there first so he remained there and sent Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr and Muḥammad ibn Ja‘far to go out and mobilise the people. He also sent a letter with them addressed to the people of Kūfah: “I chose you over the other provinces and take refuge with you at this time of trouble, so prepare to help and assist the religion of Allah and come to us. We want peace and order so that this Muslim community may once go back to being brothers to each other.”

Abū Musa al-Ash‘arī ؓ the governor of Kūfah was of the opinion that the people should not get involved in these tribulations. When the people of Kūfah asked him about going out to ‘Alī ؓ and joining him in the fight, he said: “There are two ways: you either desist from fighting for the sake of the Hereafter or you join the fight for worldly motives,” so no one went with Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr and Muḥammad ibn Ja‘far and they were angry at Abū Mūsā ؓ. He said to them: “By Allah, the pledge of allegiance to ‘Uthmān ؓ is on my neck and on the neck of your leader [‘Alī ؓ]. If there is no alternative to fighting, we should not fight anyone until we finish with the killers of ‘Uthmān ؓ, no matter where they are.”

The two then returned to ‘Alī ؓ with this information and they met him at a place called Dhū Qār. ‘Alī then sent Mālik ibn al-Ḥārith al-Ashtar and ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās ؓ instead. When they arrived in Kūfah, they spoke to Abū Mūsā ؓ and sought the assistance of some Kūfans as well. Abū Musa ؓ stood up and addressed the people, after praising and glorifying Allah he said:

O people! The Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that kept his company have more knowledge of Allah and His Messenger than those who did not. We have a duty to you and so I am giving you some advice. The right thing to do is not consider the authority of Allah [the caliphate] insignificant, nor do you show yourselves audacious before Him. Send whoever comes from Madīnah back there so that they can get together [and find a solution] for they know best who is worthy of the caliphate. This terrible tribulation is such that someone who sleeps through it is better than someone awake, one awake is better than the one who is sitting, one who is sitting is better than the one who is standing, one who is standing is better than one who is riding and the one who is riding is better than the one who is hastening (towards this tribulation). So be out of sight. Sheath your swords, drop your spears and cut your bow-strings. Give refuge to those who are wronged and oppressed until this matter is corrected and the tribulation removed.

Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ and Ashtar returned to ‘Alī ؓ with this information so he sent Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ؓ and ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir ؓ and they went to the mosque. Ḥasan ؓ asked Abū Mūsā ؓ: “Why are you keeping back the people from us? By Allah, we desire nothing but goodness. The Leader of the Believers is not to be feared.” He replied: “I swear by my parents that you are right. However, the person whose counsel is sought is placed in a position of trust. I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying: ‘There shall be tribulations; he who remains seated shall be better than the one who stands up, he who remains standing shall be better than one who walks and one who walks shall be better than one who rides.’ Allah made us brothers and prohibited us from shedding each other’s blood and usurping each other’s wealth.”

Arguments then broke out between the people. Some were urging others to go out and join the Leader of the Believers while others were determined not to get involved. Qaʿqāʿ ibn ʿAmr then stood up and said: “O people of Kūfah! I want to advise you. I am fond of you and desire your well-being. I will say something truthful. As for what our leader [Abū Musa] said, it is the truth, but there is no way for it. There must be a leadership which guides the people, does away with oppressors and raises the oppressed. Here the Leader of the Believers has been put in charge of the caliphate and has made a valid call, he calls only to peace and order, so go out, join him and be part of this affair.”

Sayhān ibn Šūhān, one of the notables in Kūfah, got up and said: “O people! This caliphate and these people must have a ruler who repulses oppressors, raises the oppressed and unites the people. Here is your leader calling you to consider the matter that exists between him and his two adversaries. He is to be trusted in matters of the Muslim community and has full understanding of the religion. So if anyone stands up against him, we will have to go to his support.”

Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ﷺ said: “Answer the call of your caliph and go to your brothers, for people will certainly go to his aid. By Allah it would be best now, in the future, and in the end of affairs if people of intelligence went to him. Answer our call and help us in combating the tribulation which both we and you face. The Leader of the Believers says: ‘I have come out here either as oppressor or oppressed. I ask in Allah’s name every person who is concerned about fulfilling the rights of Allah, to proceed. Whoever finds me to be oppressed should help me, and whoever finds me an oppressor should take me to task. By Allah, Ṭalḥah ﷺ and az-Zubayr ﷺ were the first to pledge their allegiance to me, and the first ones to betray me. Have I misappropriated any wealth or changed any injunction?’ So go out, command good and prohibit evil.”

These words had an effect on them and they agreed to go forth with close to nine thousand leaving with him, a third went via the Euphrates River while the remainder rode with him. When they came to the Leader of the Believers, he welcomed them and said: “O people of Kūfah! It is you who fought the Persian kings and scattered their forces until all their inheritance was made yours. You defended your territories and helped the people against their enemies. I called you to join us and witness what transpires with our brothers of Baṣrah. If they retract, then that is exactly what we want. If they persist, we shall treat them with warmth unless they commence hostilities. We shall definitely give preference to an option in which there is goodness over one in which there is destruction, if Allah so wills.”

He then appointed Qaʿqāʿ ibn ʿAmr to act as a mediator between him and Ṭalḥah ﷺ and az-Zubayr ﷺ. He said to him: “Go to them and invite them to

love and unity, and make them realise the gravity of disunity.” ‘Alī ﷺ then asked him: “What will you do if their reply is something I have not advised you on?” He said: “I will first present them with what you have said to me. If they say something on which I do not know your opinion, I will use my own opinion and speak to them according to what I hear and see.” ‘Alī ﷺ said: “You may do that.”

Qa‘qā‘ continued to Baṣrah and went first to the Mother of the Believers. He said to her: “O Mother! Why have you come to this place?” She replied: “O my son! In order to reconcile the people.” He said: “Call Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr so that you can hear what I have to say and what they have to say.” She called for them and they came. Qa‘qā‘ said: “I asked the Mother of the Believers her reason for coming here. She replied: ‘To reconcile the people.’ Now what do you two have to say. Do you agree with her or disagree?” They replied: “We agree.” He said: “Now tell me, how can this reconciliation be realised? By Allah, if we identify this, we will most certainly reconcile. If not, there will be no reconciliation.” They said: “By bringing the killers of ‘Uthmān to justice, for if we were to abandon that matter, it would mean abandoning the Qur’an.” He said: “You killed [some of] those who killed ‘Uthmān from the people of Baṣrah. Before killing them you were closer to righteousness. You killed six hundred people, so six thousand people got angry over them and left you. You went after Ḥurqūṣ ibn Zuhayr and six thousand people protected him. If you leave them, you’ll be going against what you said [i.e. that you must follow the Qur’an and punish all those who were involved in bringing down ‘Uthmān]. If you fight them and those who left you [a total of twelve thousand people] and things turn against you then the affair that roused you and that you took strength from is greater than the thing you hate [i.e. ‘this *fitna* is more than just fighting’]. Furthermore, if you bar Muḍar and Rabī‘a [two tribes] from these lands they will get together and assist them, just as those whose left you got together with the people who committed the enormous crime [bringing about the demise of ‘Uthmān].”

The Mother of the Believers said: “So what do you have to say?” He said: “The solution to this problem is to wait for the matter to settle down. Once it settles down, those who killed ‘Uthmān will (once again) create disturbance (and become known) [and can then be dealt with]. If you pledge allegiance to us it will be a token of good and glad tidings of mercy, and we will be able to exact revenge [on behalf of ‘Uthmān ﷺ]. But if you refuse and insist on making this matter more difficult, it will be a sign of evil. Choose security and well-being, and you will be given it. Be the means to goodness that you have always been. Do not take us towards calamity, for you will also have to face it and it will destroy both of us. O servants of Allah! I say all this to you and I implore you to accept it, I fear that it will not be done until Allah disregards this community,

this community that has so little in the way of provisions and is suffering what has befallen it. This matter which has taken place is not simply a matter of one man killing another, or a group killing someone, nor even a tribe killing someone [it is far more serious].”

They said: “You are correct and have spoken well. If ‘Alī comes and holds the same opinion as you, peace will be made.”

He returned to ‘Alī ﷺ and informed him of what transpired. He was most pleased with it and the people were about to make peace. Delegations from Baṣrah went to their brothers in Kūfah to see what their opinion was and found they unanimously desired peace and would not countenance doing battle with their brothers. They returned to Baṣrah and informed all the people of this pleasing news. ‘Alī ﷺ stood up and addressed them. He praised and glorified Allah, spoke of the misery of the days of ignorance and the good fortune brought by Islām. He spoke of Allah’s favour on the Muslim community when they remained united around the caliph after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ (Abū Bakr ﷺ), then he that followed him (‘Umar ﷺ) and then the one (‘Uthmān ﷺ) who followed him. Then this incident occurred, forced upon the Muslim community by a group of people who desired this world. He said: “They were jealous of those whom Allah had blessed with the spoils of war and they sought to take Islām backwards, but Allah ﷻ shall achieve His purpose. Listen! I depart tomorrow, join me! Though anyone who helped against ‘Uthmān should not join me; the foolish should help their own selves.”

When the followers of ‘Abdullāh ibn Saba’ heard this speech of ‘Alī’s they were left confounded, and realised that they were the ones who would be harmed by this peace because if it were achieved it would result in their deaths. They consulted one another to decide what to do. Their misguided leader who was bent on harming Islām said: “O people! Your strength lies in confusing the people. When they meet tomorrow, initiate a fierce war and give them no chance to think. Those who you are with will find no way to desist [from fighting] and Allah will distract ‘Alī, az-Zubayr and Ṭalḥah and those who want to make peace from achieving the peace that you do not want to see.” They all concurred with his opinion and the rest of the people knew nothing about it.

The next morning ‘Alī ﷺ went forth, and Ṭalḥah ﷺ and az-Zubayr ﷺ went out to meet him. The two armies met outside Baṣrah. One of his companions asked ‘Alī ﷺ as to what he was going to do. He replied: “We are going to make peace and extinguish the rebellion. It is hoped that Allah ﷻ will unite the forces of this Muslim community and make the Muslims lay down their arms.” He asked: “What if they do not accept?” ‘Alī ﷺ replied: “We will leave them alone as long as they leave us alone.” He asked: “What if they do not leave us alone?” He

replied: "We will defend ourselves." He asked: "Will they adopt the same position as this?" 'Alī ﷺ replied: "Yes." Another person came to 'Alī ﷺ and asked: "If these people are demanding retribution for the sake of Allah do they have any proof?" 'Alī ﷺ replied: "Yes." He asked: "Do you think you have any proof with which to delay it?" 'Alī ﷺ replied: "Yes." He asked: "What will our position and their position be if we are forced to go to battle tomorrow?" 'Alī ﷺ replied: "I hope that anyone who might be killed from us or them be admitted to Paradise if he purified his heart for the sake of Allah." He then said: "O people! Restrain your hands and tongues from these people and do not race with us, for he who goes on the offensive today will be defeated tomorrow (in the Hereafter)."

He then sent a message to Ṭalḥah ﷺ and az-Zubayr ﷺ saying: "If you still adhere to what you said to Qa'qā', then desist so that we can come and look into this matter." They agreed. Az-Zubayr ﷺ then came out between the two armies mounted on his horse. Someone said to 'Alī ﷺ: "This is az-Zubayr!" He said: "Of the two of them he is more likely to pay attention if he is reminded in the name of Allah." Ṭalḥah ﷺ also appeared. 'Alī ﷺ went up close to them and the necks of their animals touched. He said: "By my life, you two have gathered much weaponry and rallied many men. If you have prepared an excuse to offer before Allah you should most certainly fear Him, and do not be like that woman who unravels a thread she has firmly spun. Was I not your brother in your religion, you considered my life sacred and I yours? Now has anything happened that has made taking my life lawful to you?" Ṭalḥah ﷺ said: "You incited the people against 'Uthmān." 'Alī ﷺ cursed those who killed 'Uthmān ﷺ and said: "Did you not pledge your allegiance to me?" Ṭalḥah ﷺ replied: "I did it with my neck under the sword." Then 'Alī ﷺ reminded az-Zubayr ﷺ of several things which softened his heart and asked him: "Do you remember the day when you passed by with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ among the Banū Ghanm? He looked at me and smiled, and I smiled at him. Then you said: 'Ibn Abī Ṭālib will not give up his conceit.' And the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to you: 'He is not conceited. There will come a time when you will fight him and you will be wronging him.'"

On hearing this az-Zubayr ﷺ went back and took an oath that he would not fight 'Alī, and this was reinforced when he learnt that 'Ammār ibn Yāsir ﷺ was with 'Alī ﷺ. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had said to 'Ammār ibn Yāsir ﷺ: "The group that is in the wrong will kill you."<sup>281</sup> It seemed that he perceived that he was wrong in his assessment of the situation. He was doing all this solely for Allah and when someone does something solely for Allah, he is closer to going back to the truth and it is easier for him to return to what is correct. So each one

<sup>281</sup> Muslim (2915).

of them returned to his people and they all had no doubt whatsoever that peace would be made. They slept peacefully, anticipating a peaceful outcome.

It was at this point that the followers of ʿAbdullāh ibn Saba', may Allah destroy them, decided that the time had come to carry out their schemes. They went out in the dark of the night without anyone knowing of their movements. Those of them who were from the Muḍar tribe headed for the Muḍar people of Baṣrah, those of them who were of the Rabīʿah tribe headed to the Rabīʿah people of Baṣrah and those of them who were from Yemen went to the Yemenites of Baṣrah. They went to these different groups and set about massacring them so each tribe stood up against those who came to them. Ṭalḥah ﷺ and az-Zubayr ﷺ made inquiries as to what was happening and were told: "The people of Kūfah attacked us at night." He said: "We knew ʿAlī would not stop before he shed blood and that he would never accede to our wishes." In the meantime ʿAlī ﷺ asked as to what had happened. The followers of ʿAbdullāh ibn Saba' had already placed a man near him to inform him if he were to ask such a question. So the man said: "We were caught unawares. Some people from the other side attacked us at night and we repulsed them. We saw some people mounted and riding and the people rose up." ʿAlī ﷺ said: "I knew that Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr would not stop until they shed blood and that they would never accede to our wishes."<sup>282</sup> He then announced to the people to desist from fighting.

Everyone wanted to avoid being the first to fight so that the proof would be in their favour. They also agreed that no one who fled should be killed and no injured person attacked. The possessions of anyone slain would not be lawful to anyone and no weapons or possessions would be taken from Baṣrah. Kaʿb ibn Sūr, the judge of Baṣrah, came to the Mother of the Believers and said to her: "Restrain the people because they are bent on fighting, perhaps Allah ﷻ will use you to reconcile them." She mounted her camel after they covered her howdah with armour then went ahead and stopped where she could hear the clamour of fighting. As for az-Zubayr ﷺ, he left the people to their fighting and went away. A person by the name of Ibn Jurmūz pursued him and slew him treacherously while he was praying in the Sibā' valley. The army of Baṣrah fought a little and was soon defeated. While retreating they came to the Mother of the Believers

<sup>282</sup> This statement of ʿAlī ﷺ and the above statement of Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr ﷺ fall within the ambit of *jarḥ al-aqrān* in the terminology of the ḥadīth scholars. It means that criticism of one another made by contemporaries who enjoy the same high status is not considered. This is due to the fact that, misunderstanding based on obscurities of situations and other facts is a very common phenomenon. Later on, when incidents turn into history, clouds clear up and it becomes mostly easier to understand what had actually happened. Such light statements made by each of them under such extraordinarily difficult circumstances speak volumes of their nobility and virtue. May Allah keep their love alive in our hearts.

sitting on her howdah and surrounded it. She said to Ka'b ibn Sūr: "Go to these people with the Qur'ān and invite them to the Book of Allah," but one of the followers of 'Abdullāh ibn Saba' shot an arrow at him and killed him, then began shooting spears at the howdah of the Mother of the Believers. She began shouting out: "Seek the reward of Allah, the reward of Allah! O my children! Allah is the Greatest! Fear Allah! Think of the accounting of deeds!" They refused to listen to her and continued advancing so when she saw the Kūfans advancing towards her howdah she urged the Baṣran army to fight.

It was at this point that you see their greatest zeal to protect the wife of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. There was no point averting the fight because when it comes, it comes as an unstoppable flood. Many brave warriors from the Quraysh and other tribes held on to the reins of the camel (in order to defend the Mother of the Believers). About seventy warriors from the Quraysh and many more from the other tribes were killed in defending her, Muḥammad ibn Ṭalḥah and 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn 'Attāb ibn Usayd were among them. The Kūfans decided to rush upon the camel because they saw that the people of Baṣrah were not being defeated as long as the camel was standing. Many of them threw stones at it but every one of them who threw stones at it was killed.

When 'Alī ᷺ saw the severity of the situation and the amount of Muslims killed he said: "Hamstring the camel so the people disperse from around it." What prompted him to issue this order was his concern for the safety of the Mother of the Believers, for many spears had struck her howdah. They cut off the camel's legs then Qa'qā' ibn 'Amr and Zufar ibn al-Ḥārith joined together and cut the girth of the camel then lifted the howdah, now looking like a porcupine with so many spears attached to it.

It was then that the people of Baṣrah were defeated. 'Alī ᷺ announced that they should not pursue anyone who was fleeing, not attack any injured person and not enter any house. He ordered that the howdah be carried away from the dead, asking Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr to place a canopy over it and check whether the mother of the believers ﷺ had suffered any injury. He found her, by the praise of Allah, safe and sound. 'Alī ᷺ then came to her and said: "How are you, O Mother?" She replied: "I am well. May Allah forgive you." He said: "And you as well." The effects of sorrow and grief were clearly seen on 'Alī ᷺ from this grave incident which proved unavoidable, as was the case with the Mother of the Believers because she earnestly wanted peace. None of them was pleased with what happened. 'Alī ᷺ used to quote the following lines of poetry after this incident:

To You I complain of my shortcomings, the apparent and the hidden,  
and of a group who veiled my eyes;

killed my own people with my own people,  
I satisfied my soul yet slew my own family.<sup>283</sup>

ʿAlī then ordered that the Mother of the Believers be made to stay in the house of Khalaf ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Khuẓāʿī with Ṣafīyyah bint al-Ḥārith ibn Abī Ṭalḥah ibn ʿAbd al-ʿUzzā ibn ʿUthmān ibn ʿAbd ad-Dār. He also ordered that the dead be buried then walked around among those who were killed. When he saw Kaʿb ibn Sūr, he said: “You all claimed that the foolish had joined them, yet you see this man [who was no fool] before you.” When he came upon Ṭalḥah, he said: “O how sorry I feel for you O Abū Muḥammad! To Allah we belong and to Him is our return. By Allah, I did not want to see anyone from the Quraysh killed. By Allah, you are as a poet said: “A youth whose wealth made him close to friends while poverty would distance him.”<sup>284</sup>

ʿAlī performed the funeral prayer over all the deceased from Baṣrah and Kūfah. He sent all the personal possessions of the dead to the mosque of Baṣrah and said: “Whoever recognises anything [as belonging to someone] may take it, except for the weapons from the treasuries which have the mark of the ruler.” He then went into Baṣrah and its people pledged allegiance to him. He appointed ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās as governor, and Ziyād ibn Abī Sufyān to collect the *kharāj*. He then heard that a man said: “You should punish our mother (referring to ʿĀʾishah) for disobeying us.” And another man said: “O mother! You must repent.” When ʿAlī heard about this, he ordered that both men be punished with one hundred lashes.

ʿAlī then prepared the Mother of the Believers to go to Madīnah. He sent forty reputable women of Baṣrah to accompany her and her brother Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr, with her. When the day of her departure came, all the people gathered round her and she addressed them saying: “O my children! We should not blame each other. By Allah, in the past there was no misunderstanding between ʿAlī and I other than what normally takes place between a woman and her close friends. Despite this misunderstanding with me, he is among the best of people.” ʿAlī said: “She is correct. By Allah, there was nothing but that between her and I. She is most certainly the wife of your Prophet in this world and in the Hereafter.” She departed on a Saturday at the beginning of Rajab in 36 AH. She went to Makkah, performed the pilgrimage, and then returned to Madīnah. All praise is due to Allah.

ʿAlī then returned to Kūfah, which he made the capital of his caliphate.

283 Ṭabarī, vol. 4, p. 527; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 3, p. 255.

284 Meaning he was very generous and would spend money he had on his friends. *Al-Kāmil*, vol. 3, p. 255.

He sent Jarīr ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Bajālī to Muʿāwiyah in the Levant calling him to join the ranks of the rest of the people (i.e. to pledge allegiance to ʿAlī عليه السلام), and to inform him that the Emigrants and the Helpers had now jointly pledged their allegiance to him. Muʿāwiyah عليه السلام refused saying that ʿAlī عليه السلام should first kill the killers of ʿUthmān عليه السلام wherever they may be, and then let the Muslims choose a caliph for themselves. Muʿāwiyah عليه السلام was of the opinion that the pledge to ʿAlī عليه السلام was invalid because the Companions, the people of influence, were scattered in different regions and the pledge of allegiance could not be complete without their concurrence. It could not be validly established if carried out by people other than them, or by a few of them. Muʿāwiyah عليه السلام thus stipulated that taking retribution from the killers of ʿUthmān عليه السلام was the first duty of the Muslims, and that his legal heirs should demand it. Electing the caliph was a matter that should come after that.

Muʿāwiyah عليه السلام never accused ʿAlī عليه السلام of bias against ʿUthmān عليه السلام, Allah forbid, but he felt that ʿAlī عليه السلام had shown some laxity in helping ʿUthmān عليه السلام against those who had come to kill him by keeping quiet, as stated by ʿAllāmah Ibn Khaldūn in his *Muqaddimah*.<sup>285</sup>

As for ʿAlī عليه السلام, he felt that the pledge to him was complete and extended to those who were not present, on the basis of the pledge of those present in Madīnah, the abode of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Companions. As for taking retribution from the killers of ʿUthmān عليه السلام, this would take place when the people got together and united. Once this was achieved he would be able to do whatever had to be done. On the basis of all this, he considered anyone who did not pledge allegiance to him to be rebelling against him, and thus believed it to be lawful to fight such a person.<sup>286</sup> ʿAlī عليه السلام left and camped at Nukhaylah. Ibn ʿAbbās عليه السلام came to him from Baṣrah, leaving Ziyād in charge. He then sent out his scouts and mobilised his armies with the intention of doing battle against the people of the Levant to compel them to join the rest of the people.

## THE BATTLE OF ŞİFFİN

When Muʿāwiyah عليه السلام heard of this he went forth to meet ʿAlī عليه السلام with his forces from the Levant. The two armies met on the plains of Şıffin which was near the Euphrates River to the east of Ḥalab. They remained there for two days after

<sup>285</sup> *Al-Muqaddimah*, p. 214.

<sup>286</sup> Allah says in Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt: "If two groups of believers fight, then reconcile them. If one however rebels (or wrongs) against the other then fight the one that rebels (or wrongs) until it returns to the command of Allah".

which they began sending envoys to each other. ʿAlī sent Bashīr ibn ʿAmr al-Anṣārī, Saʿīd ibn Qays al-Hamdānī, and Shabath ibn Ribʿī at-Tamīmī. He said to them: “Go to this person and call him to Allah, obedience, and unity.” They went to him and Bashīr ibn ʿAmr started speaking, praising and glorifying Allah he said: “O Muʿāwiyah! The world is going to leave you and you are to return to the Hereafter. Allah shall hold you to account for your deeds and recompense you for them. In the name of Allah I ask you to refrain from breaking the unity of this Muslim community and to refrain from shedding blood.” Muʿāwiyah said: “Why did you not give the same advice to your companion [ʿAlī]?” Bashīr replied: “He is not like you. My companion is the most eligible to this position of caliphate because of his virtue, piety, early acceptance of Islām, and close relationship with the Messenger of Allah.” Muʿāwiyah asked: “What is he saying?” He replied: “He orders you to fear Allah and to accept the truth to which your cousin calls you. If you do this, it will be safer for you in this world, and better for you in the Hereafter.” Muʿāwiyah asked: “And should we abandon retribution for Ibn ʿAffān? By Allah, I will never do that.”<sup>287</sup>

Saʿīd ibn Qays went to speak, but Shabath ibn Ribʿī pre-empted him. He praised and glorified Allah and said: “O Muʿāwiyah! I fully understood the reply which you gave Bashīr. By Allah, your demands are not unknown to us.

287 To Muʿāwiyah and those with him, it seemed as though ʿAlī was unconcerned about taking the killers of ʿUthmān to task. The Companions were restricted by ʿUthmān himself from saving him to an extent that their honourable souls could not bear. Having witnessed his killing, they were unable to restrain themselves any more. Before appointing another caliph who might restrict them again, they first wished to execute retribution. It is for this reason that so many senior companions avoided pledging allegiance right away. For us to fully perceive their sentiments is almost impossible.

On the other hand, ʿAlī who was already made caliph, viewed that it would not be possible to execute retribution without an Islamic court. This is in itself not possible without having a caliph. Furthermore, Islam does not permit the existence of two caliphs, and in trying to find the killers and execute retribution many more lives would have been lost. It would lead to chaos, with each group under command of their own leader, and the Muslim nation being left without a single leader. He therefore felt that, at any cost, the Muslims should first become united. Any attempt to execute retribution before that would lead to turmoil. In spite of how correct ʿAlī's approach was, it created misgivings within Muʿāwiyah and those around him. Later, after the demise of ʿAlī, Muʿāwiyah realised the reality and would weep profusely. At times, his companions feared that he might choke to death for the way he wept at the mention of ʿAlī.

While observing the decree of Allah, we should well understand that this was inevitable, as a divine consequence and chastisement that descended from the skies due to the killing of ʿUthmān; for when the chastisement of Allah descends it encompasses the bad folk as well as the good. This fact was known to them from before. ʿUthmān himself warned about it more than once, when he said that if they unsheathed the sword against him (being a rightly caliph), it will not be sheathed again very soon. ʿAlī also indicated to this knowledge when he warned the people about the difficult conditions they were going to face, before he accepted their pledge of allegiance. May Allah shower His choicest blessings and mercies upon those magnanimous souls.

You could not find anything with which to win over the people, manipulate their will, and gain their obedience except by saying that your leader [ʿUthmān ؓ] has been unjustly killed and you therefore demand retribution. The foolish common people have followed you. We know that you are slow to help ʿAlī and would rather see him dead because you are seeking this position [office of caliph]. Sometimes Allah ﷻ comes in between a person and what he seeks, at other times he is given what he desires and even more. By Allah, there is no good for you in either of the two. By Allah, if you do not achieve what you seek you will be the worst of Arabs and if you do achieve what you desire you will only do so after you become eligible for Hellfire in the eyes of your Lord. So fear Allah, O Muʿāwiyah! Give up this stand which you have adopted and do not dispute those in authority.”

This statement of Shaʿbath had a great effect on Muʿāwiyah ؓ, for he had accused him of things he (i.e. Muʿāwiyah) had not intended. Muʿāwiyah ؓ then praised and glorified Allah ﷻ and said: “The first thing that displays your foolishness and lack of forbearance is that you prevented this noble, honourable, eminent man of his people [referring to Saʿīd ibn Qays] from speaking first. Then you made objections pertaining to matters of which you have no knowledge. You have lied and acted wickedly, you rude and uncivil bedouin, in everything that you mentioned and described. Go back, for only the sword will decide between you and us.”

From this we can ascertain that the potential for either reconciliation or destruction lies with the envoys that act on behalf of leaders. Muʿāwiyah ؓ was actually correct because later on, Shabath ibn Ribʿī was one of the first ones to go against ʿAlī ؓ when the group known as the Khārijites was formed. The delegation returned to ʿAlī ؓ and informed him of what transpired. There was no way of avoiding war because Muʿāwiyah ؓ was demanding the killers of his cousin, ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān ؓ. He had the right to make such a demand because he was his legal heir and the penal laws of Allah ﷻ should not be delayed for any reason. On the other hand, ʿAlī ؓ wanted him to return to obedience (to the caliph) and to unite (with the main body of Muslims) before seeking revenge from those who killed ʿUthmān ؓ. At the same time, they both feared war between the people of the Levant and the people of Iraq [ʿAlī ؓ had moved the headquarters of the caliph to Kūfah, Iraq], because it was bound to bring death and destruction. If this were to happen, Islām would be lost and its enemies would plot against it. ʿAlī ؓ therefore ordered a man of nobility to go out with like people, and asked that Muʿāwiyah ؓ send a similar group. They continued in this way until the new year, 37 AH started.

ʿAlī ؓ and Muʿāwiyah ؓ agreed upon a cessation of hostilities for one

month in the hope of achieving peace and reconciliation. Envoys went to and fro between them. ʿAlī sent ʿAdī ibn Ḥātim, Yazīd ibn Qays al-Arḥabī, Shabath ibn Ribʿī and Ziyād ibn Ḥaḥṣah. ʿAdī commenced speaking by praising and glorifying Allah then said: “We have come to invite you to something by which Allah will unite us and our community, thus we will save our lives and reconcile things between us. Your cousin [ʿAlī] is the best of the community, in outstripping others to embrace Islām and had the best effect on the religion. All the people have rallied around him and none but you and your followers are left. O Muʿāwiyah beware! Do not put yourself and your followers through what happened at the battle of the Camel.”

Muʿāwiyah said: “It seems that you have come to threaten me and not to make peace. Give up such thoughts O ʿAdī. By Allah I am a man of war. I will not be rattled by a mere verbal assault. By Allah, you are from among those who strove against ʿUthmān and you are one of his killers. I hope that you will be one of the ones Allah kills for that.” Those who were with ʿAdī said: “We came to you to discuss matters which would bring about peace between you and us, but you are speaking to us in riddles. Give up what is of no use and talk to us of matters which would benefit all.”

Muʿāwiyah asked them that ʿAlī hand over the killers of ʿUthmān who were with him and had conspired against him. Shabath ibn Ribʿī said: “Would it please you to kill ʿAmmār ibn Yāsir?” Muʿāwiyah said: “And what can stop me from that? If I get the opportunity against Ibn Sumayyah, I will kill him in retaliation for ʿUthmān.” Shabath said: “By Allah other than whom there is none worthy of worship, you will not be able to reach him until heads are separated from necks and earth and sky come together to crush you.” Muʿāwiyah said: “If that were to happen earth and sky would crush you even more.” The people then dispersed without any results.<sup>288</sup>

Those whom Muʿāwiyah had sent to ʿAlī also returned because ʿAlī demanded his pledge of allegiance before everything else, including dealing with ʿUthmān’s killers. When the month long peace ended ʿAlī ordered one of his people to announce: “O people of the Levant! The Leader of the Believers says to you: ‘I have given you respite to return to the truth and repent. You have not desisted from your transgression and have not accepted the truth. I now end the peace with you. Truly Allah does not like the treacherous.’”

ʿAlī then advised his people saying: “Do not fight them until they go on the offensive. All praise is due to Allah that you are in the right. If you do not go on the offensive, you will have another proof against them. When you defeat them,

<sup>288</sup> Note how it was Shabath again that made aggravating, insulting and war-mongering statements.

do not kill anyone who flees, do not finish off a wounded man, do not expose anyone's private parts and do not mutilate anyone. When you get to their camp do not expose anything covered, do not enter any house, do not take any of their possessions, do not rouse the women even if they revile you and abuse your leaders and righteous people, because they are both physically and emotionally weak."

‘Ali  mobilised his army and appointed his commanders and Mu‘āwiyah  did likewise. The fighting commenced on a Tuesday on the first of Ṣafar. A group of Iraqis came forward and a similar number of people of the Levant came forward, and the two parties fought the entire day. The following days were similar. On Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> of Ṣafar ‘Alī  addressed his people in the evening. He praised and glorified Allah and said: "All praise is due to Allah for whatever He undoes cannot be made up again, and whatever He does nobody can undo. Had Allah willed, no two people from His creation would ever have differed, no community would have disagreed and no inferior person would have denied the merit of his superior. Destiny has driven us and these people against one another. Allah  is watching and listening to all that we do and say. Had He willed He could have made this tribulation befall us sooner. He can change the situation and bring about the rejection of the oppressor and the recognition of the truth. But Allah  made this world the place of deeds and the Hereafter the abode of rest so that He may recompense those who did evil and reward those who did good. Listen! You are going to face them tomorrow. Spend long hours of the night in prayer, recite the Qur’ān abundantly and ask Allah  for help and steadfastness. Meet them with strength and determination, and prove yourselves true."

‘Alī  made a decision to confront Mu‘āwiyah's  forces with his full army, and when the morning came the two armies met and fought fiercely, turning away in the evening though neither of the two armies prevailed. As for Thursday the 10<sup>th</sup> of Ṣafar, the fortunes of war turned against both armies. Stirring words of the pure in speech and the rousing locutions of the eloquent were heard that day. Each party considered itself to be obeying Allah  and when one saw men tire of fighting, he would cast thunderbolts of the tongue upon them to reinvigorate them. Ashtar ibn al-Ḥārith played a major role, advancing with those around him until he came close to Mu‘āwiyah . After the encounter Mu‘āwiyah  would say; "I was almost defeated, but I remembered the words of Ibn al-It̤nābah:

My self-restraint refused me,  
 my courage against warriors too,  
 my spending wealth despite poverty,  
 and the price I paid for praise.

Each time my soul heaved from fright,  
I said to it: 'Stand firm!  
You will win either praise or rest.'<sup>289</sup>

Mu'āwiyah said that it was these words that prevented him from fleeing. The army of the Levant surrounded him from all sides, their hearts on fire they were not stopped by the approach of night and continued fighting on a dark night for Islām. The next morning it became apparent that the men of the Levant were fatigued.

#### THE ARBITRATION

Mu'āwiyah and 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ realised their men were fatigued so 'Amr said to him: "Let us ask them to make the Book of Allah the judge between us." Mu'āwiyah ordered copies of the Qur'an be raised on spears, and a man called: "Let the Book of Allah to judge between us. If the men of the Levant are destroyed here, who will inhabit their land after them? And if the people of Iraq die here, who will live there?"

Ali's people saw this when they were about to triumph and differed about it. One group said: "We should accept the call to the Book of Allah" with Ash'ath ibn Qays al-Kindi heading them. Another group headed by Ashtar completely refused to desist believing the raising of Qur'an was a mere ruse. Ali agreed with the second group but he followed the opinion of the first group because they were in the majority. He sent Ash'ath to Mu'āwiyah to ask him what he wanted. He went to him and asked: "Why did you raise the Qur'an?" He replied: "So that we and you may return to what Allah commanded in His Book. You should send a person from your ranks and we will send a person from our ranks, and we will take a pledge from them that they will act in accordance with what is in the Book of Allah, and that they will not go beyond it. We will then follow whatever decision they make." He returned to Ali and conveyed all this to him. The people said: "We are happy and we agree." The people of the Levant chose 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ as their representative while the Iraqis chose Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī. 'Amr came forward to write the covenant between the two groups. They wrote the following: "In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. This is what the Leader of the Believers lays down." 'Amr said: "He is not the Leader in our view." So Ali erased those words, and wrote:

<sup>289</sup> The poet is recalling some praiseworthy actions of his to take courage in war, saying to his own self: "Stand firm, for you will either win praise or acquire rest [in death]." *Al-Kāmil*, vol. 3, p. 303; Ṭabarī, vol. 5, p. 24.

This is what 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and Mu'āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān declare. 'Alī is speaking for the people of Iraq and those who are with them while Mu'āwiyah speaks for the people of the Levant and those who are with them. We agree to abide by the order of Allah and His Book, and that nothing else should reconcile us. The Book of Allah is before us, from beginning to end. We shall give life to what it gives life to and give death to what it gives death to. Whatever the two arbitrators Abū Mūsā 'Abdullāh ibn Qays and 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ find in the Book of Allah, they shall act on it. If they do not find something in the Book of Allah, they shall resort to the just Sunnah which is agreed and not differed upon.

The two arbitrators took pledges and guarantees from 'Alī ﷺ, Mu'āwiyah ﷺ and the two armies guaranteeing their lives and their families' lives, and that the Muslim community should assist them in whatever decision they make. 'Abdullāh ibn Qays and 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ made a pledge and covenant by Allah that they would pass a decision on this Muslim community, they would not convey it towards war, and there would be no division before they passed their decision. They were to have until Ramaḍān to come to a decision. If they wished to delay it, they could do so. The result of the affair was to be one that did justice to both the people of Kūfah and the people of the Levant.

A group from 'Alī's ﷺ army and a group from Mu'āwiyah's ﷺ army endorsed the letter, which was written on Wednesday, 17 Ṣafar 37 AH. They agreed that the two arbitrators should meet in Dūmat al-Jandal or Adhruḥ in Ramaḍān. The people then dispersed from this inauspicious place where two mighty groups of believers met and fought. The fact that both groups desired the pleasure of Allah in their actions however made an otherwise calamitous episode a little less grave. All wanted to carry out His orders, according to their assessment of the situation.

The Leader of the Believers left Ṣiffin and returned to Kūfah but his army was split and divided. One group was pleased with the arbitration, thinking that it would end conflict and unite the Muslims. Another group disliked the arbitration, saying: "How, in the religion of Allah, can men make judgements?" These people withdrew from their brothers, saying: "You have been too lenient in the religion of Allah." The first group replied: "You have separated yourselves from our caliph." When 'Alī ﷺ reached Kūfah, a group of those who felt that the arbitration was an act of misguidance separated themselves from 'Alī ﷺ. They went to a place called Ḥarūrā' and settled down there, they numbered twelve thousand. They appointed Shabath ibn Rib'ī as their military commander and 'Abdullāh ibn al-Kawwā' al-Yashkurī to lead them in prayer. They believed that all orders should be issued on the basis of consultation after the victory (of Islām

over polytheism at Makkah), that the pledge of allegiance was to Allah alone, and that they had to enjoin good and prohibit evil.

ʿAlī ﷺ sent ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās ﷺ to them saying to him: “Do not engage them in any discussion until I come to you,” but he was unable to hold himself back and said to them: “What is your objection to having two arbitrators when Allah ﷻ commanded the appointment of two arbitrators between husband and wife. Allah ﷻ says: ‘If you fear that they harbour mutual enmity, appoint an arbitrator from his family and an arbitrator from her family. Then if the couple resolve to set things right, Allah will bring about reconciliation between them’ (Sūrat an-Nisā’, 4: 35). So why can this rule not be applied to the entire community of Muḥammad ﷺ?” They replied: “This cannot be on the basis of individual opinion and analogy. That is something which Allah ﷻ has promulgated as a ruling for the people and this He has ordered, just as He has given the order for the adulterer and the thief. People have no right to look into such matters.” Ibn ʿAbbās ﷺ said: “Allah ﷻ says: ‘... to be decided by two reliable people from among you’ (Sūrat al-Māʾidah, 5: 95). They replied: “The second verse is the same: the matter of husband and wife and the matter concerning game animals are not like a matter concerning the lives of Muslims.” They also objected to ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ ﷺ saying: “You chose ordinary people to decide in the affair of Allah whereas Allah has already issued His ruling with regard to Muʿāwiyah and his people; that they be killed if they do not return to obedience. You have resorted to writing peace agreements whilst Allah ﷻ cancelled such agreements between Muslims and those who wage war against Muslims when Sūrat at-Tawbah was revealed.”

ʿAlī ﷺ arrived and dismounted at the tent of Yazīd ibn Qays. He thought that they would return to him and retract their opinions. He offered two *raḳʿats* of prayer with Yazīd ibn Qays and appointed him over Aṣbahān (Isfahan) and Rayy. He then went to these people while they were sitting with Ibn ʿAbbās ﷺ. “Who is your leader?” he asked. They replied: “Ibn al-Kawwā’.” He asked: “What is the reason for this secession?” They replied: “You accepting arbitration at Ṣiffīn.” He said: “I made a precondition that both arbitrators give life to what the Qurʾān gives life to and bring an end to what the Qurʾān brings an end to. If they pass their decision in accordance with the Qurʾān, we have no right to oppose it. If they refuse, we reject their decision.” They said: “We ask, is it just to appoint ordinary men to decide in matters over which blood is shed?” He said: “We did not appoint men, we appointed the Qurʾān. The Qurʾān is the criterion for judging between two sides. But it does not speak. Men speak from it.” They asked: “Then why did you fix a time [for the decision]?” He said: “So that the ignorant may learn and the knowledgeable may be further convinced, and that Allah ﷻ might reconcile the Muslim community during this period of peace.”

They accepted his answers and he said to them: "You should all now go to your city, may Allah have mercy on you" and they all went back to their city.

#### THE ARBITRATORS MEET

When the period ended and Ramaḍān of 37 AH commenced, 'Alī   sent Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī   with four hundred men under Shurayḥ ibn Hānī' al-Ḥārithī. 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās   was with them, leading them in prayer and taking care of their affairs. Mu'āwiyah   sent 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ   with four hundred men under Shurahbīl ibn aṣ-Ṣimmaḥ. The two groups met at Dūmat al-Jandal. 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar  , 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr  , 'Abdullāh ibn az-Zubayr  , 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Hishām  , al-Mughīrah ibn Shu'bah   and Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ   were all present.

Abū Mūsā   stood up, praised and glorified Allah  , briefly described what had befallen Islām and the conflict that had broken out amongst its adherents. He then said: "O 'Amr! Come and agree to something through which Allah   will bring about affection, remove ill-feeling, and reconcile everyone." 'Amr   expressed his gratitude to him and said: "There is a beginning and an end to the discussion. When we exchange words in the form of speeches, we will forget the beginning before reaching the end. So let us write down certain things which we agree on here." Abū Mūsā   agreed and 'Amr   called for a scroll and a scribe, and said to him: "You must act as a witness over us and do not write down anything which one of us asks unless you ask the other as well. If the other agrees, only then must you write it down. If the other stops you writing then do not write until both of us concur. Now write:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. This is what Abū Mūsā 'Abdullāh ibn Qays and 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ have ruled upon. They state that they both testify that there is none worthy of worship but Allah, who is One and has no partner, and that Muḥammad is His servant and Messenger. He sent him with guidance and the true religion so that He may make it reign supreme over all other religions, though the polytheists may detest it.

'Amr   then said: "We testify that Abū Bakr was the caliph of the Messenger of Allah  . He practised on the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger until Allah took him to Himself, and he fulfilled the responsibility that he was charged with." Abū Mūsā   said: "You may write that." 'Amr   said the same about 'Umar   and Abū Mūsā   concurred. 'Amr   then said: "'Uthmān then took charge of the caliphate after 'Umar after gaining the consensus of the Muslims, the consultation of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah   and their

approval. He was a believer.” Abū Mūsā ؑ said: “We are not sitting here to discuss this.” ‘Amr ؑ said: “By Allah, he is either a believer or an unbeliever.” Abū Mūsā ؑ said: “You may write that.” ‘Amr ؑ asked: “Was ‘Uthmān killed as a person who committed wrong or as a wronged person?” Abū Mūsā ؑ said: “He was wronged.” ‘Amr ؑ said: “Has Allah not given the guardian of the wronged person’s rights the authority to seek retaliation for his life?” Abū Mūsā ؑ said: “Yes.” ‘Amr ؑ said: “Do you know of any heir to ‘Uthmān more eligible than Mu‘āwiyah?” Abū Mūsā ؑ replied: “No.” ‘Amr ؑ said: “Does Mu‘āwiyah not have the right to seek his killer wherever he may be, or should he just sit back?” Abū Mūsā ؑ said: “Indeed he does.” ‘Amr ؑ ordered the scribe to write and Abū Mūsā ؑ ordered him to do the same, so he wrote.

Abū Mūsā ؑ then said: “This is an incident that occurred in Islām and we have gathered for the sake of Allah. Now let’s agree to a matter with which Allah ؑ will reconcile the followers of Muḥammad ؐ.” ‘Amr ؑ asked: “And what is that?” Abū Mūsā ؑ said: “You know for a fact that the people of Iraq will never like Mu‘āwiyah and that the people of the Levant will never like ‘Alī, so why don’t we remove both of them and appoint ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar?” ‘Amr ؑ asked: “Will ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar agree to that?” He replied: “Yes. If the people ask him to do it, he will agree.” ‘Amr ؑ asked: “What about Sa’d?” He replied: “No.” He then named several others but Abū Mūsā did not agree to anyone except ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar.

‘Amr ؑ took the scroll after they both set their seals on it. They did not agree on who would take charge of the Muslim community because Abū Mūsā ؑ agreed to removing ‘Alī ؑ and Mu‘āwiyah ؑ and would have none but ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar as caliph, but ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ ؑ did not accept this. They departed like this with nothing gained except the words on the scroll.<sup>290</sup>

Abū Mūsā ؑ felt ashamed to meet ‘Alī ؑ after agreeing to his removal from the caliphate so he went away to Makkah. ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ ؑ felt that the matter was now to go to the Muslims to be discussed, based on what was written and what they had agreed on. He and the men of the Levant then went to Mu‘āwiyah ؑ and pledged their allegiance to him, because they felt that he was qualified to bear its responsibilities.

As for the Leader of the Believers, ‘Alī ؑ, he felt that the arbitrators did not fulfil their agreement to decide on the basis of the Qur’ān and followed their own desires instead so he resolved to do battle with Mu‘āwiyah ؑ for a second time. He addressed his people saying:

All praise is due to Allah, though fate has brought us some burdensome issues and

290 Based on the narration of Ma’sūdi.

difficult situations. I testify that there is none worthy of worship except Allah and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah. Disobedience begets regret and brings remorse. I had indeed given you command in respect of these two men and this matter of arbitration, and gave you my opinion. If only “Qaṣīr’s” command had been heeded<sup>291</sup> but you refused to do anything other than what you wanted. So you and I are as the Hawāzinī poet described:

I gave them my decision at Mun‘araj al-Liwā,  
but they could see no good until the next morning.<sup>292</sup>

These two men whom you chose as arbitrators cast aside the governance of the Qur’ān, gave life to what the Qur’ān brought an end to and both followed their desires without guidance from Allah. Thus they passed their decisions without any clear evidence or any precedent. They disagreed in this and both of their decisions are wrong. Allah, His Messenger and the righteous Muslims denounce them. Prepare and mobilise to march for the Levant. You should be in your camp by Monday morning by the will of Allah.

#### THE KHĀRIJITES

The group that claimed that resorting to arbitration was a deficiency in practise of the religion now went against ‘Alī عليه السلام and obstructed him. These were the same people who had seceded previously. ‘Alī عليه السلام sent ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās عليه السلام to them and when he reached them, they welcomed him and honoured him. He saw they had marks on their foreheads from profuse prostration (they prayed a great deal), their hands resembled camel knees (showing their extensive use), wore cleanly washed clothes and went about their affairs keenly. They asked him: “Why have you come, O Ibn ‘Abbās?” He replied: “I have come to you from the son-in-law of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, his cousin and the most knowledgeable of us about Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet.” They said: “We committed a very grave error in appointing ordinary men as arbitrators in Allah’s religion.

<sup>291</sup> “If only Qaṣīr’s command had been heeded”—this is a proverb, which was first said by Qaṣīr ibn Sa’d in an incident where his advice was not heeded by Jadhimah al-Abrash, and the latter lost his life as a result of that. It appears that ‘Alī عليه السلام was referring to the battle between his and Mu‘āwiyah’s army عليه السلام, when his army were on the point of victory, and Mu‘āwiyah’s army raised copies of the Qur’ān on their swords. ‘Alī عليه السلام inclined to going on and earning the victory once and for all, but most of his men inclined to stopping, and allowing negotiations. Had they acquired victory, it would have been all over with. Because most of his men wanted to stop, he acceded and allowed it. Now, they are seeing the consequences of it when it is too late. He could also be referring to the arbitration, where the arbitrators were commanded to come to a decision and bring an end to the dispute, but instead further differed and allowed the conflicts to go on. It resulted in a situation that would only lead to the worse, which can not be reversed.

<sup>292</sup> These are the lines of Durayd ibn aṣ-Ṣimmah. See Ṭabarī, vol. 5, p. 77 and *Nahj al-Balāghah*, p. 80.

If he repents as we repented and is ready to fight our enemy, we will return to him.” They continued arguing with each other. One of their claims was that ʿAlī renounced leadership of the Muslims when the scroll was written. Ibn ʿAbbās said: “That does not remove him from leadership. The Messenger of Allah erased the title “Prophet” from his name.<sup>293</sup> Moreover ʿAlī took a pledge from the arbitrators that they would neither transgress nor fall short and ʿAlī is better qualified to be caliph than Muʿāwiyah or anyone else.” They said: “Muʿāwiyah makes the same claims as ʿAlī.” He said: “Fine, appoint whoever of the two you feel is more qualified.” They said: “You are correct, O Ibn ʿAbbās.” Ibn ʿAbbās said: “As the two arbitrators went beyond their remits, we neither have to obey them nor accept what they said.” Two thousand of them went back with him and the others remained behind. Ibn al-Kawwāʾ used to lead them in prayer, and he said to them: “When war breaks out your leader shall be Shabath ibn Ribʿī ar-Rabāḥī.” They remained in this way for two days.

### *Some strange doings of the Khārijites*

They unanimously decided to pledge their allegiance to ʿAbdullāh ibn Wahb ar-Rāsibī and went to Nahrawān. On the way, they came across a Muslim and a Christian. They killed the Muslim, and advised the Christian saying: “Hold on to the teaching of your Prophet.”

ʿAbdullāh ibn Khabbāb ibn al-Aratt came across them. He had a Qurʾān around his neck and his pregnant wife with him. They said to him: “That which is around your neck commands us to kill you.” He said: “Give life to what the Qurʾān gave life to and death to what the Qurʾān brought an end to.” A man among them leaped to a date and placed it in his mouth, so they shouted at him, he spat it out to avoid sin. A pig then appeared before one of them and he beat it to death. The others said: “This is spreading corruption in the land.” ʿAbdullāh ibn Khabbāb said: “I have nothing to fear from you, I am a Muslim.” They demanded he relate a ḥadīth to them from his father. He said: “I heard my father saying: I heard the Messenger of Allah saying: ‘A tribulation will take place wherein the heart of a man will die just as his body dies. He will be a believer in the evening but become an unbeliever in the morning. O servant of Allah! Be the one who is killed and do not be the killer.’”<sup>294</sup>

They said: “What do you have to say about Abū Bakr and ʿUmar?” He spoke well of them. They asked: “What do you have to say about ʿAlī before the arbitra-

293 This refers to the treaty of Ḥudaybiyah when the disbelieving polytheists of Mecca did not want him to write “Prophet” next to his name on the treaty and he assented.

294 Haythamī said in *Majmaʿ az-Zawāʿid*, vol. 7, p. 303: “Ṭabarānī narrated it.” Haythamī quoted many other ḥadīths with the same meaning using similar words.

tion, and about the six years of ‘Uthmān?” He spoke well of them. They asked: “What do you have to say about governance and arbitration?” He said: “I say that ‘Alī has more knowledge than you about the Book of Allah, he is more righteous in his religion, and has more insight.” They said: “You are not following guidance, you only follow men because of their reputations.” They then took him to the river bank and slaughtered him.

They went to a Christian and asked him the price of a date tree. He said to them: “You can have it for free.” They replied: “We will only take it for a price.” He said: “This is so strange. You kill someone like ‘Abdullāh ibn Khabbāb yet you do not accept the fruit of a date tree from me?”

When the Leader of the Believers heard of all this corruption of theirs he resolved to commence with them. He sent Qays ibn Sa’d to them who said: “O servants of Allah! Hand over to us those whom we seek; the killers of ‘Abdullāh ibn Khabbāb. Join this affair which you have seceded from and come back to us against an enemy to us and to you. You are committing very grave offences. You are claiming that we are polytheists but are shedding the innocent blood of Muslims.” Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī ؓ said to them: “O servants of Allah! We are in the same situation as before. There is no conflict between us and you so why do you fight us?”

The Khārijites refused to retract their resolution and refused to hand over those who had killed ‘Abdullāh ibn Khabbāb. The Leader of the Believers therefore mobilised his army to march on them. Abū Ayyūb ؓ raised the flag of peace and announced to them: “Whoever comes under this flag shall be secure. Whoever abstains from fighting and attacking shall be secure. Whoever among you turns back to Kūfah or Madā’in and leaves this group shall be secure. There is no need for us to shed your blood once we apprehend those who killed our brothers.” Farwah ibn Nawfal turned back with five hundred people and went to Bandanijayn and Daskarah. Another group went back to Kūfah. About one hundred came out to ‘Alī ؓ and made peace with him while approximately two thousand eight hundred Khārijites remained. By mid-morning they had all been killed and only eight survived. Nine men of ‘Alī ؓ were killed. He then took everything from their camp, the weapons, animals and anything else they had brought out for war was distributed. The slaves and other possessions were returned to their rightful owners in Kūfah.

Those who had left the main body of Khārijites, either seeking refuge under the flag of Abū Ayyūb ؓ or going to Kūfah, all gathered together and regretted abandoning their companions. Mustawrid, one of their seniors, stood and addressed them, urging them to fight against ‘Alī ؓ. They went to Nukhaylah where ‘Alī ؓ had sent ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās ؓ to advise them though they

ignored it. The Leader of the Believers advanced on them and crushed them at Nukhaylah, only five of them survived including Mustawrid, Ibn Juwayn at-Ṭā’i, and Ibn Sharīk al-Ashja’i.

Once the Leader of the Believers had finished off the Khārijites, he ordered his people to march on the Levant to fight Mu‘āwiyah ﷺ and his supporters. They said to him: “O Leader of the Believers! Our arrows are spent, our swords blunted, our spear-heads frayed and mostly blunt. Take us back to our city to make preparations, perhaps the Leader of the Believers will increase our preparations and we will be stronger against our enemy.” It was understood from this that the people’s spirits were dampened and they were tired of fighting. If this was the condition of the army, one cannot be surprised at what the condition of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ had become. His authority was diminishing day by day and each time he urged them on with the eloquence and artful speech with which Allah ﷻ had blessed him they only became more weary. There were very few among them who were devoted to him whole-heartedly. Moreover the Khārijites bombarded him with their claim that he had given precedence to human agency over the religion of Allah, and that there is no authority but with Allah.

Khirrīt ibn Rāshid an-Nāji with three hundred people from the Banū Nājiyah had withdrawn from ‘Alī ﷺ and gone against him. He came to him and said: “O ‘Alī! By Allah, I will not obey your command nor pray behind you. I secede from you tomorrow.” ‘Alī ﷺ said: “In such a case, you will be disobeying your Lord and breaking your covenant. You will be harming none but yourself. Tell me, why are you doing this?” He replied: “Because you agreed to the arbitration, you were weak in upholding the truth and you relented to the people who did wrong. I am therefore detaching myself from you, seeking vengeance against them and distancing myself from all of you.” ‘Alī ﷺ said: “Come, let me teach you the Qur’ān, discuss the Sunnah with you, and present some matters which I have more knowledge of than you. Perhaps you will acknowledge what you are now rejecting.” He replied: “I will come back to you soon.” ‘Alī ﷺ said: “Do not let Satan delude you and do not allow fools to drag you down. By Allah, if you seek guidance from me and accept it from me I will most certainly show you the path of guidance.” But he did not heed anything which ‘Alī ﷺ said and went off with his supporters towards Niffar.

‘Alī ﷺ sent Ziyād ibn Khaṣafah al-Bakrī in pursuit of them and said to him: “March to Dayr Abī Mūsā and wait for my orders.” Ziyād did as he was told, sending Qarazah ibn Ka‘b al-Anṣārī to ‘Alī ﷺ informing him that the supporters of Khirrīt had killed a Persian grandee who had embraced Islām. ‘Alī ﷺ replied by ordering him to follow them, demanding they hand over those who killed this grandee to him. If they refused he should do battle with them.

Ziyād advanced until he caught up with them at Madhār. Ziyād said to Khirrīt: "What is it that is making you so resentful against the Leader of the Believers and us that you break with us?" He replied: "I am not happy with your leader as the caliph and I do not like your ways. I therefore decided to part ways with you and join those who call for consultation." Ziyād said: "Are the people rallying around anyone that may resemble the man you have seceded yourselves from in his knowledge of Allah, His way and His Book, not to mention his close kinship to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and early acceptance of Islām?" Khirrīt said: "I cannot affirm that." Ziyād said: "Now why did you kill that Muslim?" He said: "I did not kill him. A group of my supporters killed him." Ziyād said: "Then hand them over to me." Khirrīt said: "I cannot do that." Ziyād fought them till nightfall. Khirrīt escaped (with his men) by night.

When Ziyād saw this he returned to Baṣrah in order to treat those who were injured and sent all the news to ʿAlī ﷺ. ʿAlī ﷺ sent Maʿqil ibn Qays ar-Riyāḥī at the head of two thousand soldiers to the Khārijites and wrote to Ibn ʿAbbās ﷺ in Baṣrah to send two thousand soldiers from Baṣrah as reinforcements for Maʿqil, and to appoint a brave warrior as their commander. Maʿqil moved on and the reinforcements from Baṣrah caught up with him. They took on the Khārijites near one of the mountains of Rāmahurmuz and some seventy of Maʿqil's men were killed. Khirrīt fled with some of his supporters and ʿAlī ﷺ ordered Maʿqil to pursue him. He pursued him, attacked those who were with him and killed Khirrīt. Many Khārijites showed open opposition to ʿAlī ﷺ after that, each time he extinguished one rebellion another popped up somewhere else.

Meanwhile Muʿāwiyah ﷺ had firmly established himself in the Levant since he was given the pledge of allegiance. His soldiers were the most obedient to their commanders. He sought to unite the Muslims under his pledge, just like ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ, so he sent ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ ﷺ to Egypt.

When ʿAlī ﷺ was given the pledge of allegiance, he had sent Qays ibn Saʿd ibn ʿUbādah as the governor of Egypt, as stated before and the Egyptians pledged their allegiance to him except one group who announced their disaffiliation at a place called Kharbatā and were lead by Yazīd ibn al-Ḥārith al-Mudlijī, later joined by Maslamah ibn Makhlad. They considered the assassination of ʿUthmān ﷺ to be a very grave matter. Qays did nothing to them because he thought they were nothing to worry about but when ʿAlī ﷺ learnt about these people he ordered Qays to go after them, as a huge fire can be caused when a small spark is considered insignificant. Qays wrote to ʿAlī ﷺ saying: "I am surprised by your order to kill a group that is not interfering with you and is allowing you to deal with your enemies. If we were to threaten them, they will help your enemies against you. Listen to me, O Leader of the Believers, leave them alone truly it is best. Peace be upon you."

The Leader of the Believers thus removed him from his post and appointed Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddiq in his place. When he reached Egypt, he headed for the mosque and addressed its people saying: “All praise is due to Allah who guided us and you when there were differences over the truth. All praise is due to Him for having guided us to the truth in matters wherein people have differed, and enabled us to see much of what the ignorant are blind to. Listen! The Leader of the Believers appointed me as governor over you and you should listen to me. My inspiration to do good is from none but Allah. It is in Him that I place my trust and to Him I turn. If you see me obedient to Allah in my governorship and other responsibilities, praise Allah for it because He alone is the guide. If you see an employee of mine failing to fulfil his responsibilities, present the problem and reprimand me about him. I would be happy with that and you deserve this. May Allah inspire us and you towards righteous deeds through His mercy.” He then descended from the pulpit.

A month after his arrival Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr sent a message to those who had disaffiliated themselves at Kharbatā, giving them the option to obey or leave Egypt. They replied: “We will not do that, but let us look into the matter and do not hasten in fighting us.” He refused however and they cautiously desisted. This was during the time that the battle of Siffin was taking place. When the battle came to an end, they were wary of Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr but when the arbitration took place, they used it as an opportunity to resist him. He sent a military squadron against them, but they managed to kill its leader. He then sent another squadron and they killed its leader as well. Mu‘āwiyah ibn Ḥudayj as-Sakūnī then came out demanding retaliation for the life of ‘Uthmān. When the Leader of the Believers learnt of all this, he felt that Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr did not have the ability to combat the group so he appointed Ash-tar ibn al-Ḥārith an-Nakha‘ī as governor of Egypt. He wrote a charter for him, stating that he was to look after political administration and affairs of the Hereafter (i.e. both material and spiritual leadership), but he passed away on the way to Egypt. Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr was greatly disturbed by his removal so ‘Alī wrote to him saying:

I have heard about your anger at me sending Ashtar to take your place. I only did it so that your stature may increase for I may have removed you from a post, but I will appoint you to one that will be easier for you to fulfil and appeal to you more. The person who I appointed as governor of Egypt wanted good for us and was severe on our enemy, but his days have come to an end and he has met his destiny. We are pleased with him, may Allah be pleased with him and multiply his rewards. Remain steadfast against your enemy and make full preparations for

war. Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful admonition. Engage in abundant remembrance of Allah, seek help from Him and fear Him. If you do that He will remove your worries and help you fulfil your responsibilities.<sup>295</sup>

Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr wrote to him saying:

Your letter reached me and I understood it. There is no one more accepting of the opinion of the Leader of the Believers, more severe against his enemies and more affectionate to his relatives than me. I have departed and made camp. I have given the people security, except those bent on waging war against us and who openly displayed their opposition to us. I am following and safeguarding the orders of the Leader of the Believers. Peace be upon you.

#### THE DEATH OF MUḤAMMAD IBN ABĪ BAKR

In 38 AH Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه sent ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ رضي الله عنه at the head of six thousand men and he marched as far as lower Egypt. Those opposed to Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr who demanded retaliation on behalf of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه came and joined them. ‘Amr رضي الله عنه wrote to Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr saying: “Move away and save yourself from me, O son of Abū Bakr! I do not want you to be afflicted by my victory, the people in these lands have rallied against you and they are Muslims. You better leave these lands. I am giving you good advice.”

Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr wrote to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه asking him for help and ‘Alī رضي الله عنه replied by advising him to draw his supporters close and persevere, also promising to dispatch armies to him. Muḥammad stood up before the people, invited them to join him and two thousand came forward. He appointed Kinānah ibn Bishr over them as commander and dispatched them ahead of him, then made off himself with two thousand men to fight ‘Amr رضي الله عنه. When Kinānah clashed with the army from the Levant together with Mu‘āwiyah ibn Ḥudayj and the other Egyptians who had joined them, the Egyptians were defeated and Kinānah was killed. When those who were with Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr heard about this they deserted him so Muḥammad went into hiding. ‘Amr رضي الله عنه marched on to Fustāt while Mu‘āwiyah ibn Ḥudayj left in search of Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr, eventually catching and killing him.

When the Mother of the Believers, ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها heard about his death she took fright. She also brought his children under her wing. With the killing of Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr Egypt fell under the authority of Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān رضي الله عنه and the Egyptians pledged their allegiance to him. As for the rein-

<sup>295</sup> *Nahj al-Balāghah*, pp. 407–408.

forcements which ʿAlī ﷺ had sent to Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr, they heard of his death while on the way to Egypt and turned back.

After establishing his authority in Egypt Muʿāwiyah ﷺ dispatched ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Ḥaḍramī to Baṣrah where Ziyād ibn Abī Sufyān had been left in charge by ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās ﷺ. Many people from the Banū Tamīm rallied around ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Ḥaḍramī because they were also seeking retaliation on behalf of ʿUthmān ﷺ, so he asked them for assistance. Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Qays who was at the head of the police force of ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās ﷺ stood up before him and said: “May Allah curse the end which brought you here and to which you call us. At present we are all united on allegiance to ʿAlī. He relented to those who stumbled and pardoned those who wronged. Do you now order us to unsheathe our swords and strike each other so that Muʿāwiyah may become ruler?” ʿAbdullāh ibn Khāzim as-Sulamī stood up and said to Ḍaḥḥāk: “Remain silent you have no right to speak.” He then addressed ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Ḥaḍramī saying: “We shall help and assist you. We are at your command.”

When Ziyād saw this, he sought refuge with the Azd tribe. They gave refuge to him together with the state funds that he had and he conveyed all this news to ʿAlī ﷺ. ʿAlī ﷺ sent Aʿyun ibn Ḍubayʿah al-Mujāshīʿī at-Tamīmi to make Tamīm leave ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Ḥaḍramī but Aʿyun was assassinated. When ʿAlī ﷺ heard of this, he sent Jāriyah ibn Qudāmah as-Saʿdī to Baṣrah. He addressed the Azd tribe and thanked them on behalf of the Leader of the Believers. He then read the letter of ʿAlī ﷺ to the people of Baṣrah threatening them with a more fierce battle than the battle of Jamal. The majority of the people of Baṣrah responded positively. He then went on to meet ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Ḥaḍramī and did battle with him and his supporters. ʿAbdullāh was defeated and fled but was pursued and killed.

Muʿāwiyah ﷺ then began dispatching military squadrons to the lands of the Leader of the Believers to bring them under his control. He sent Yazīd ibn Shajarah to Makkah to lead the people for the *ḥajj* and take the pledge of allegiance from the residents of Makkah. The governor of Makkah acting on behalf of ʿAlī ﷺ was Qutham ibn al-ʿAbbās but he had no forces with which he could fight and therefore did not attempt to. As for Yazīd ibn Shajarah, he guaranteed people their lives except those who fought back. He sent a message to Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī ﷺ asking him to order Qutham not to lead the people in prayer, and that he (Yazīd ibn Shajarah) also not lead them in prayer. The people should then choose whoever they wanted. They chose Shaybah ibn ʿUthmān who led them in prayer and the *ḥajj* was completed peacefully. No heresy took place in the Sanctified area because they all feared the warning of Allah ﷻ: “Those who try to violate it with wrongdoing, We shall make them taste a painful punishment” (Sūrat al-Ḥajj, 22: 25).

Squadrons moved out continuously from the two sides (the Levant and Kūfah), each wanting to bring the people under one command but neither of them could achieve this. The people of Yemen and the Ḥijāz did however accept the authority of Mu‘āwiyah ؓ when he sent Busr ibn Arṭāt al-‘Āmirī to them. Thus it was only Iraq and the surrounding Persian lands that remained loyal to the pledge to the Leader of the Believers, ‘Alī ؓ. But even these lands were full of conflict and disunity, one group was that of ‘Alī ؓ, one was the Khārijites who wanted neither ‘Alī ؓ nor Mu‘āwiyah ؓ and another group were hypocrites who displayed their obedience to ‘Alī ؓ while harbouring enmity towards him. The Leader of the Believers was tired of them and grew weary of leading them, addressing them about this in many of his sermons.

#### THE ASSASSINATION OF ‘ALĪ ؓ

It was in 40 AH that Allah ؓ gave ‘Alī ؓ a rest from this continuous conflict and incurable disunity, joining him with his brothers from the martyrs and righteous, and what excellent company they are! The cause of this was three Khārijites who got together and began discussing what their fellow Khārijites were enduring. They hated being left behind after the other Khārijites. They all agreed that one of them, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Muljam al-Murādī, would go to Kūfah and kill ‘Alī ؓ. The second, Burak ibn ‘Abdillāh at-Tamīmī, would go to the Levant and kill Mu‘āwiyah ؓ. The third, ‘Amr ibn Bakr at-Tamīmī, would go to Egypt and kill ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ ؓ. They set a date to carry out what they had resolved to do.

Burak went to Mu‘āwiyah ؓ and lay in wait for him at morning prayer. He struck him with his sword but only hit his buttock and did not kill him. Mu‘āwiyah ؓ ordered Burak be killed.

‘Amr ibn Bakr went to ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ ؓ. Fortunately for him he did not go out for the prayer that morning because he was ill. Khārijah ibn Ḥudhāfah as-Sahmī was leading the people in prayer instead. The Khārijite struck and killed him, thinking him to be ‘Amr ؓ. He was captured and killed.

‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Muljim went to Kūfah and lay in waiting for the Leader of the Believers on the morning the Khārijites had agreed upon; Friday 7<sup>th</sup> of Ramaḍān. While the Leader of the Believers was calling people to prayer this wretched man struck him with his sword saying: “Authority belongs to Allah alone. It is not for you or your supporters.” ‘Alī ؓ said: “Do not let this man escape.” The people rushed him and apprehended him. ‘Alī ؓ sent Ja‘dah ibn Hubayrah forward to lead the people in prayer. ‘Alī ؓ then said: “A life for a life. If I die, kill him as he killed me. If I survive, I will decide what to do with him. O Banī ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib! I do not want to find you shedding the blood of Muslims,

claiming that the Leader of the Believers was killed. Listen! None but the one who killed me should be killed. O Ḥasan! If I die from this injury of mine, strike him; a blow for a blow, and do not mutilate him for truly I heard the Messenger of Allah ؐ saying: 'Be sure not to mutilate anything, even if it be a wounded dog.'<sup>296</sup> Jundub ibn 'Abdillāh came in and said: "O Leader of the Believers! We do not want to lose you, but if we were to lose you, should we pledge allegiance to Ḥasan?" He replied: "I am neither ordering you to do that nor prohibiting you. You know best."

He then called Ḥasan ؑ and Ḥusayn ؑ and said to them: "I advise you to fear Allah and not to pursue this world even if it comes towards you. Do not cry over something that is kept away from you. Speak the truth, show mercy to orphans, help those who are lost, do deeds that will benefit you in the Hereafter. Oppose the oppressor, help the oppressed and practise what is in the Book of Allah. Do not fear the attacks of critics in matters concerning Allah."

He then looked at Muḥammad al-Akbar ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah and said to him: "Have you heard what I advised your brothers with?" He replied: "Yes." 'Alī ؑ said: "I give the same advice to you and further advise you to respect your brothers because of the great right which they enjoy over you. Support them and do not do anything without consulting them."

He then said to Ḥasan ؑ and Ḥusayn ؑ: "I advise you to look after him because he is your brother and the son of your father. You know very well that your father loved him." He said to Ḥasan ؑ: "O my son! I advise you to fear Allah, to establish the prayer at its appointed time, to give the *zakāt* in the appropriate place and to perform excellent ablution because no prayer is accepted without purity. I advise you to forgive sins [committed against you], subdue your anger, maintain ties of kinship, be forbearing towards the ignorant, gain a deep understanding of religion, do not be hasty in taking decisions without giving them due deliberation, remain attached to the Qur'ān, maintain good neighbourly ties, enjoin good and forbid evil and abstain from immoral acts." He then remained in the remembrance of Allah ؐ until he passed on. His two sons, Ḥasan ؑ and Ḥusayn ؑ, and his nephew, 'Abdullāh ibn Ja'far ؑ bathed him. He was enshrouded in three cloths with no shirt. Ḥasan ؑ said the *takbīr* seven times.

'Alī ؑ remained at the helm of the caliphate for four years, seven months and some days. During this period Allah ؐ willed that the Muslim community taste the pain of disunity, so that it would have experienced both calamity and

<sup>296</sup> Haythami said in *Majma' az-Zawā'id*, vol. 6, p. 249: "Ṭabarānī narrated it and its chain of narrators is broken." See vol. 9, p. 142 as well.

prosperity, as well as disunity and brotherhood and might itself choose which state to be in, as long as Allah granted it this.

During the era of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, Allah informed the community of a chastisement that would soon befall it as recompense for certain deeds, and Allah ﷻ did this to warn the Muslim community against committing such deeds again. For example Allah ﷻ punished them with defeat in the battle of Uḥud when the Muslims lost courage, differed in a matter, and disobeyed the Messenger ﷺ. Consequently the Muslims did not commit these three mistakes again because they knew that doing so would distance them from Allah ﷻ. As long as they made such errors, His help would be a long way from them. Similarly Allah ﷻ wished to chastise them for what some of them did to their caliph to whom they had pledged allegiance and obedience, before breaking the pledge and killing him unjustly. Allah ﷻ thus afflicted them with this severe chastisement, making them draw swords against each other. This He did so that they would not revert to disunity and disobeying their leaders. We ask Allah ﷻ for success.

When ʿAlī ؑ was martyred the people of Kūfah pledged their allegiance to his son Ḥasan ؑ. Qays ibn Saʿd ibn ʿUbādah was the first to do so and he said to him: “Extend your hand so that I may pledge my allegiance to you in the name of upholding the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger, and fighting those who violate what is sacred.” Ḥasan ؑ said: “In the name of upholding the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (only), because these two include all other conditions.” The people thus pledged their allegiance to him on this.

## Hasan ibn 'Alī ﷺ



**H**E IS ḤASAN ibn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ. His mother was Fāṭimah ﷺ, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He was born in Madīnah in the third year of the emigration and he resembled the Messenger of Allah ﷺ the most. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ loved him and his brother Ḥusayn ﷺ intensely. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said with regard to Ḥasan ﷺ: "O Allah! I love him, so love him and those who love him."<sup>297</sup> The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also said about him: "This son of mine shall be a leader. Perhaps Allah will reconcile two large groups of believers through him."<sup>298</sup>

He did not participate in any battles with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ because of his tender age, being just over seven years old when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed away. When 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ allotted the stipends for different groups of Companions he included Ḥasan ﷺ among those who participated in the battle of Badr because of the position which he enjoyed with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Ḥasan ﷺ was among those who came to the defence of 'Uthmān ﷺ and displayed heroic feats in this until 'Uthmān ﷺ stopped him.

When the pledge of allegiance was given to the Leader of the Believers, 'Alī ﷺ, Ḥasan ﷺ joined him in all his battles. When 'Alī ﷺ was killed, his father's supporters jointly resolved to appoint him as the next caliph. He had many children from several wives but the progeny of only two of his sons, Ḥasan al-Muthannā and Zayd lived on after them.

<sup>297</sup> Bukhārī, vol. 7, p. 94, (3749); Muslim (2421), Tirmidhī (3784), Ibn Hibban (6923).

<sup>298</sup> Bukhārī, vol. 7, p. 94, (3746); Tirmidhī (3773), Aḥmad, vol. 5, p. 47.

## HIS ACHIEVEMENTS DURING HIS CALIPHATE

His father, 'Alī ؑ, had already prepared an army to do battle with the people of the Levant. When Ḥasan ؑ became the caliph he ordered that this army depart in order to execute what his father had wanted and dispatched Qays ibn Sa'd as his scout.

Allah ؑ inspired him to rectitude in order to realise what the Messenger of Allah ؑ had said of him. Ḥasan ؑ considered the manner in which he was appointed caliph and saw that it was not like the way his father was appointed. The pledge of allegiance to him did not command universal authority, but was confined to their supporters in Iraq. He could also see that a proper government could not be established in Iraq because the people were constantly bickering, disputing among themselves and hankering after what was not theirs. This last habit of theirs was such that they even tried to wrest the carpet he sat on away from him.

He contacted Mu'āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān ؑ offering him peace and laying down certain conditions. Mu'āwiyah ؑ sent a stamped and sealed document to him which was completely blank and asked him to write down whatever conditions he wished to make. Ḥasan ؑ wrote down several conditions, the most important being that he should guarantee peace and security to his army and all the supporters of 'Alī ؑ. Mu'āwiyah ؑ accepted this condition and came to Iraq. Ḥasan ؑ met him with his army, and he and his army pledged their allegiance to Mu'āwiyah ؑ, making him caliph. Thus the statement of the Messenger of Allah ؑ was confirmed: "This son of mine shall be a leader. Perhaps Allah will reconcile two large groups of believers through him."<sup>299</sup>

By handing over the reins of caliphate, the second period of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, the period of seditions and disunity, came to an end. This second period began with rebels standing up against 'Uthmān ؑ and ended with Ḥasan ؑ handing over the caliphate to Mu'āwiyah ؑ.

These seditions and tribulations went on for about ten years. Had any other nation experienced such tribulations its pillars would have fallen and its structure would have collapsed but Allah ؑ looked at His upright religion with affection, uniting its followers and safeguarding it as He had promised.



I wanted to conclude this book with the caliphate of the Leader of the Believers, Mu'āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān ؑ. However the factors that prevented 'Allāmah 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Khaldūn from doing so prevented me as well. He said at the end of volume two of his book:

<sup>299</sup> Bukhārī, vol. 7, p. 94 (3746); Tirmidhī (3773), Aḥmad, vol. 5, p. 47.

It would have been appropriate to append the caliphate of Muʿāwiyah ﷺ and his biography to that of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs because he follows them in merits, justice, and Companionship with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Here there is no need to consider the ḥadīth “The caliphate after me shall extend for a period of thirty years”<sup>300</sup> because it is not authentic. The fact of the matter is that Muʿāwiyah ﷺ is from among the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, but the historians excluded him for two reasons:

The caliphate during his era was the subject of a contest because of the partisanship that existed in his era, whilst before him the caliphate was decided by election and consensus. Historians differentiated between these two conditions. Muʿāwiyah ﷺ was the first to be made caliph by contest and partisanship. Such rulers are called kings by the deviated groups, and they normally measure them all with the same yardstick. Allah forbid! It is inconceivable that Muʿāwiyah ﷺ be likened to those who came later, for he was one of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. The Marwānid caliphs who followed him in religiosity and virtue occupied the same position, as did the ʿAbbāsīd caliphs who came after them. It should not be said that kingship is of a lower rank than caliphate so how can a caliph be a king?

You should know that that kingship which contradicts, even negates caliphate is absolutism, also referred to as Khusrawī kingship, that very autocracy which ʿUmar ﷺ reprimanded Muʿāwiyah ﷺ about when he saw manifestations of it on him. Sovereignty that is established through majority will, collective force and power does not negate the concept of caliphate nor that of prophethood. Sulaymān ﷺ and his father, Dāwūd ﷺ, were Prophets and kings. They were both most upright in their worldly affairs and most obedient to their Lord. Muʿāwiyah ﷺ did not seek kingship and its attractions to accumulate more of this world, rather he was driven by the influence he enjoyed with the Muslims, and a concern for them after their domination of lands of the east and west.

He was a caliph who called them to what kings called their people when partisanship becomes excessive and demands the caliph adopt the nature of a king. Similar were the religious caliphs after him when kingship and its difficult demands were required. The rule in such a case is to weigh their actions against authentic ḥadīths and not spurious narrations. The person whose actions are in accordance with authentic ḥadīths is truly a caliph of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ for the Muslims. As for he whose actions are outside of this ambit, then he is one of the kings of this world even if he is given the title of caliph.

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<sup>300</sup> Tirmidhī (2226) with the words: “The caliphate in my community shall go on for a period of thirty years.” Tirmidhī said: “This is a good ḥadīth.” Abū Dāwūd (4646) with the words: “The caliphate of prophethood shall extend for a period of thirty years.” Ibn Ḥibbān (6904), and Aḥmad, vol. 5, p. 220 and vol. 4, p. 273.

The second reason for including Mu'āwiyah ؓ with the Umayyad caliphs and not the first four caliphs was that they were of one lineage, with Mu'āwiyah ؓ being their progenitor; he was thus placed with those of his lineage. The first four caliphs on the other hand, were of different lineages and so they came under another category. 'Uthmān ؓ was included among them [the first four caliphs], though he was from the lineage of the Umayyads, because of his merits and virtues. May Allah ؓ resurrect us among all of them and show His mercy to us by enabling us to emulate them.<sup>301</sup>

We have written an independent book on the Umayyads, their caliphs and their empire in the Levant and Andalus. It is a book of immense value. The book has been named: *Islamic Conquests during the Umayyad rule in the East and al-Andalus*.

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301 Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, pp. 650–651.

## Conclusion



SINCE WE MADE a point of following each era with the results achieved therein, we feel we should stick to this here. Thus we say that there is a single reason for the split which took place and the disunity which caused so much suffering, because of this single factor the rope of unity snapped and harmony was lost. The single reason was the assassination of ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān ؓ, the Leader of the Believers. Some people of that time were angry at him for certain things he had done. So they stood up against him, laid siege to his house, and would accept nothing but resignation. They based their case solely on a fabricated letter, which claimed to be from ‘Uthmān to his governor in Egypt ordering him to kill some of them and lash others. When ‘Uthmān ؓ refused to resign, they killed him in his very own house, in the capital of Islām and the city of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the city in which a criminal is secure and a sinner seeks refuge. They upheld neither the sanctity of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ nor the covenant with his caliph.

The people were divided into three categories with regard to ‘Uthmān ؓ. Firstly there were those who broke their pledge of allegiance to him. They were the riff-raff who had not been illuminated by the companionship of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Secondly there were those who remained faithful to him and defended him. They were the majority of the Muslim community and most of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who were in the different Muslim cities. Thirdly were those who remained neutral, who neither helped him nor abandoned him.

As for the first group of people, they acted against the Sunnah of the Mes-

senger of Allah ﷺ. At the beginning of this book we quoted what the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said about renouncing obedience to the imām, for which he gave only one valid reason; an obvious act of unbelief which is absolutely clear and cannot be explained otherwise. None but the extremists among them said this about ʿUthmān ﷺ. Their statement to this effect has been rejected by the entire Muslim community, even the Shīʿa. Whatever objections they made against him were on matters that did not constitute disobeying the Sharīʿah, as we explained previously.

As for those who remained faithful to him, some were the residents of Madīnah. They were overpowered and were unable to fight back. Some of those who tried to fight back were killed while most of them were injured. Some of them were residents of the other cities and when news reached them they left their cities to go and help ʿUthmān ﷺ but it was over before they could get there.

Those who remained neutral did not think that the matter would get to the stage where ʿUthmān ﷺ would be killed. They felt that ʿUthmān ﷺ had become a prisoner at the hands of the rebels and it was against the norm to kill a prisoner even if he was an unbeliever. Allah forbid, we could never think that ʿAlī ﷺ, az-Zubayr ﷺ and Ṭalḥah ﷺ were thinking that the rebels intended killing ʿUthmān ﷺ and yet not go to defend him and either die fighting or rescue him.

Allah ﷻ did what He wished and there is none to reverse His decision. ʿUthmān ﷺ was killed and the community became divided, it was no trivial matter that could be disregarded. One group was outraged by his assassination. It wanted the penal law of Allah executed and retaliation from the killers before anything else. Only then should people of authority and influence from the Muslim community get together and elect someone to replace him. This group consisted of the family of ʿUthmān ﷺ, headed by Muʿāwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān ﷺ governor of the Levant, and numerous other Companions like Ṭalḥah ﷺ, az-Zubayr ﷺ, ʿĀʾishah ﷺ, ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ ﷺ and others. May Allah be pleased with all of them.

The other group felt that the first responsibility of the Muslims was to choose themselves a caliph who would then execute the command of Allah upon the killers after the situation calmed down. Then it would not be difficult to exact retribution and the Muslim forces would rally together to apprehend the rebels. ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭalīb ﷺ belonged to this group and was supported by many Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Then there was the third group: the killers of ʿUthmān ﷺ who naturally felt that they were right in what they did and that they did not deserve any retaliation.

The Muslims of Madīnah, amongst whom many Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ were to be found, stood up and pledged their allegiance to ʿAlī ﷺ as caliph. All those who did not agree with ʿAlī ﷺ abstained from pledging.

They started calling the Muslims to support them so that they could enforce the law of Allah for those who killed 'Uthmān ؓ. So az-Zubayr ؓ, Ṭalḥah ؓ and 'Ā'ishah ؓ headed for Baṣrah to gain the support of its residents for retaliation. Some agreed with this stand of theirs and others disagreed. They considered those who opposed them to be sinners preventing the implementation of Allah's law. They found some of 'Uthmān's ؓ killers and killed them.

As for the Leader of the Believers, he thought they were opposing him because he felt that his pledge was valid on the basis of those who were present and pledged their allegiance, and that his authority extended to those not present. So he marched upon them and did battle with them until they came to obey him after some of their leaders were killed, then he escorted the Mother of the Believers to her house. He then resolved to face Mu'āwiyah ؓ and his supporters if they refused to submit to him. But how would they obey while they were still suffering from the loss of their sheikh, the Leader of the Believers? Exacting revenge was the most important thing in their eyes. How could they have abandoned this or delayed it? They considered this an act of disobedience against Allah ؓ and a suspension of His penal laws. They accused 'Alī ؓ of leniency in helping the caliph and giving refuge to his killers in his army. When 'Alī ؓ waged war against them they fought back and swords ended Muslim lives.

Mu'āwiyah ؓ and his supporters saw this and called the Leader of the Believers to use the Book of Allah as arbiter between them. 'Alī ؓ accepted this when he saw that most of his army were happy with this offer. Each group appointed an arbitrator but they were unable to reconcile the two groups. Instead they elected in the document they wrote to remove 'Alī ؓ and Mu'āwiyah and for the Muslims to elect whomever they liked. Each group named a person but neither of the groups accepted the person named by the other group and on that note they separated.

This arbitration resulted in the realisation of a great hope for Mu'āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān ؓ; he assumed the caliphate after many Companions of the Messenger of Allah ؓ pledged allegiance to him. They believed that he was suitably qualified and a good administrator. On the other side, this arbitration resulted in further disunity and conflict in 'Alī's ؓ army. One group considered the arbitration to be an act of unbelief and deviance, claiming that there was no authority except with Allah, and that arbitration meant giving men authority in the affair of Allah. Another group considered the arbitration to be good and the two groups antagonised one another. Those who disagreed with the arbitration disaffiliated themselves from 'Alī ؓ. He thus became preoccupied with them and did battle with them on several occasions, killing many while others escaped. This concept of opposing the caliphs then became firmly established in their opinion, for they

claimed that none was eligible to hold the post of caliphate unless he adopted their beliefs. Thus they preoccupied the caliphs for lengthy periods of time and distracted them from *jihād* against the enemies of Islām on many occasions.

As for the partisans of ‘Alī (عليه السلام), they considered the action of Mu‘āwiyah (عليه السلام) and his quest for the caliphate to be foolish. They compared him to ‘Alī (عليه السلام) and felt that he was inferior so they decided to attack the Levant once again, but the inevitable (death) overtook the Leader of the Believers, he passed away and joined his Lord. The noble leader (Ḥasan (عليه السلام)), the son of the noble leader (‘Alī (عليه السلام)) came, reconciled the believers, united the ranks and removed divisions. Hearts still hid something within however. The partisans of ‘Alī (عليه السلام) still considered the caliphate to be the right of his progeny and would demand it whenever they found the opportunity. They developed into various schools of thought and sects which we cannot write about here. The Khārijites still consider arbitration an act of deviation, the pledge of allegiance only valid through consultation, and that only a person holding their beliefs may be appointed caliph. They split into various groups, each one following its own school of thought.

It is no hidden fact that ‘Alī (عليه السلام) and Mu‘āwiyah (عليه السلام) each considered the other to be wrong and in opposition to the Sunnah. If this was not the case it would not have been permissible for either one to fight against the other. This belief of theirs was so intense that ‘Alī (عليه السلام) used to supplicate against Mu‘āwiyah (عليه السلام) in his prayer and Mu‘āwiyah (عليه السلام) did the same.<sup>302</sup>

As for the narrations that they used to curse each other, these are historical fabrications. None of the two considered the other to be an unbeliever which would have made it lawful for them to curse each other. Rather they believed that the other was a believer but that he was committing a sin. The statement of ‘Alī (عليه السلام) with regard to those killed on both sides during the battles of the Camel and Ṣiffīn is sufficient proof for this. Allāmah Ibn Kathīr said in *Bidāyah*: “The narrations stating that they cursed each other are not authentic.”<sup>303</sup>

After all this the most astonishing thing is that those who have come after them and know very little about what transpired insist on supporting one of the two sides and bearing malice towards the other side. This has nothing to do with Islām. Those were people who held different opinions. They did not follow their whims and desires but desired the pleasure of Allah in all their actions. They were the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) who received Islām directly from him and conveyed it to us. The Muslims unanimously agree about their reliabil-

302 This is in reference to *qunūt nāzilāh* which is a practice performed during times of war in order to draw the help of Allah.

303 4:395.

ity and righteousness. Thus to consider some of them to be astray is something which neither Allah ﷻ nor His Messenger is pleased with. It is best for Muslims to accept that they cannot act on the disunity and division which occurred in their time. They should avoid this and take it as a lesson in their own situations and worldly politics, instead of occupying themselves with saying one brother was better than the other and deeming the latter astray which is of no benefit.

Fear Allah, fear Allah with regard to the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. O people! If any of you were to spend the equivalent of Mount Uhud in gold, it would not equal a *mudd*<sup>304</sup> or even half a *mudd* of what one of the Companions spent. This is attested to by your Prophet ﷺ.<sup>305</sup> Beware of the arch deceivers (*dajjāls*) and fabricators from the historians. The circumstances of their times overpowered them to such an extent that they were ready to alter facts and fabricate lies against Allah ﷻ and the Islamic community. Thus they attribute reprehensible things to the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. You should rather occupy yourselves with improving your own condition and obeying your Lord.

Thus, have I related to you this small history from the most reliable sources you believe in. After the Book of Allah, there is no book that is more authentic than the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Imām Bukhārī and the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Imām Muslim. The fundamental issues and some of the secondary matters which befell the Muslim community were quoted from these two sources. In no way is it difficult for Allah ﷻ through His grace and kindness to unite the Muslim community, to help it get back on its feet and inspire it to that in which lies His pleasure. I ask Allah ﷻ to inspire us and all Muslims to this. Truly He has power to do whatever He wills.



The author said: The compilation of this book was completed on the 5<sup>th</sup> of Ramaḍān 1316 AH, in the city of Maṣṣūrah.

304 Equivalent to 0.825 kg.

305 The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: "Do not abuse my Companions. I swear by the name of the One who controls my life, if any of you were to spend the equivalent of Mount Uhud in gold, it would not reach a *mudd* or even half a *mudd* of what one of them spent" Narrated by Bukhārī (3673) and Muslim (2540).



**T**HIS BOOK is a concise and immensely satisfying historical account of the first four caliphs of Islam, Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī ؓ, who because of their rectitude, became known as the “Rightly-Guided Caliphs”. The author provides a clear and fast-paced account of the battles and internal struggles of the four caliphs, as well as that of the fifth, Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ؓ. He avoids long excursions into the technical intricacies and obscure historical detail found in longer books. However, he refreshingly puts forward a balanced and convincing analysis of the contentious issues involving the four caliphs, such as ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib’s ؓ delay in giving the pledge, the insurgency against ‘Uthmān ؓ, the battles of the Camel and Ṣiffin, and the disputes between ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiya ؓ.

The author’s analysis leaves the reader with a clear understanding and helps to increase the love and respect for the Prophet of Allah ﷺ and his Companions.

This book will surely satisfy your curiosity about the immediate period after the Prophet’s ﷺ departure from this world. It will relieve your heart of any confusion you feel about the events of that time. This is a book written for readers of any age, hence an inspiring read for the young and old alike.

### *About the Author*

HE IS MUḤAMMAD ibn ‘Afīf al-Bājūrī, popularly known as Shaykh Khudārī Bak. He was a scholar of Sharī‘ah, literature and Islamic history. He was born in Egypt in 1289/1872 and lived in Zaytūn, a suburb of Cairo. He graduated from Madrasah Dār al-‘Ulūm and surpassed his contemporaries as a scholar, researcher, orator, educator and reformer. During the course of his life he was an Islamic judge in Khartoum, an educator in the Islamic Judicial School in Cairo for a period of twelve years, a Professor in Islamic history at the University of Egypt (now named The University of Cairo), the Deputy-Head of the Islamic judicial school and an inspector for the Ministry of Education.



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