The Shiʿi Islamic Martyrdom Narratives of Imam al-Ḥusayn
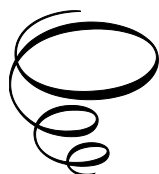
The Shiʿi Islamic Martyrdom Narratives of Imam al-Ḥusayn:

An Introduction

By

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Publishing

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PREFACE

It was in the autumn of 2018 that I received an email from Dr. Adam Rummens of Cambridge Scholars Publishing in the UK in that whether I would be ready to develop a book on any certain aspect of Shii Islam. After a series of email exchanges, I agreed with alacrity to develop an introductory book on the martyrdom narratives of Imam al-Ḥusayn (including some of his martyred companions).

The project proved a formidable task. Although I have been interested in the same subject for various reasons, the task laid ahead was certainly a demanding job, particularly when the new readership was not expected to know much about religion, Islam, Shii Islam, and the Ashura episode. As expected, such topics must go smoothly, without expecting too much prior information and background knowledge on the part of the global, English-reading audience.

Having agreed to develop the present book, I prepared an initial, working outline. Soon after collecting the first notes, I realized that it was indeed a project greater by far than what I had anticipated at the outset. Soon after starting this project, almost the whole world was inflicted with the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, like the rest of academics, I had to remain at home and teach online. This experience gave me the free time I needed to develop this book. It also had other unfavorable consequences: other libraries were closed; there was little opportunity to travel abroad for research purposes, either. I had to make the most of the books I have collected in my own library over two decades.

Along with developing the present book, I kept scanning many English sources relevant to this topic. The more I searched around, the less I found anything markworthy to have been written on this topic. At times, it was necessary to revise and rewrite several pages. Sometimes it proved frustrating to find several claimants not to know more than their everyday experiences in the field. This reality urged me to dive deeper and deeper, particularly for the uninitiated readership who would turn the pages of a book on a topic not that familiar to them.

All in all, the present book provides major outlines of typical martyrdom narratives (*maqtal*s) of Imam al-Ḥusayn and his martyred companions. Although some of its paragraphs and sub-topics might sound already well-known to typical Muslim, particularly Shii, readers, it presupposes almost no background knowledge on the subject on the part of those readers who may be new to the topic. Yet, as an academic and an author raised in the Iranian Shii heartland, Qum, the dominant perspective sketched in this book reflects what is shared by typical Shiis. To keep the book as reader-friendly as possible, I deliberately refused to delve into some unnecessary and boring issues and controversies; in the Qum or Najaf Shii religious seminaries (*ḥawzah*s) some younger and more energetic clerics might wish to focus on certain hot issues. Unnecessary and of little benefit, I have circumvented such time-consuming topics.

This is to inform the esteemed readers that this book has been developed in the present-day Iran. Yet, it does not claim any authority on post-revolutionary, Iranian, Shii political thoughts, currents of change, or intellectual frameworks. This is because certain esteemed Iranian authorities are inclined to make some quick connections between the currents of change that led to the 1979 Iranian Revolution, on the one hand, and the Ashura episode, on the other hand. They oftentimes make comparisons between Imam al-Ḥusayn and a few top-ranking figures on the contemporary Iranian politico-clerical scene. For various (and obviously guessable) reasons, I have deliberately and prudentially skipped dealing with various trends of Shii, particularly Iranian, political thoughts, for they have other requirements and corollaries. As they fall far beyond the scope of the present enterprise, let other people dive deep down in such hot and alluring topics.

As this work may need some revisions for its subsequent editions, I appreciate any constructive or complementary remark and suggestion(s).

Qum, Iran
Urdibehesht 1402 Sh
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

REMARKS ON THE TRANSLITERATION AND SPELLING USED

In the present work, the system of translation used is exactly what is announced on the website of the *Journal of Islamic Studies*, published by the Oxford University Press. However, Arabic names appear in transliterated forms. As for the words and titles already known, hence widely used in typical academic English texts on Islamic subjects, no effort has been made to transliterate them. Hence, Perso-Arabic and Urdu loanwords appear as they are registered in reliable Oxford English dictionaries.[1] Quoted words appear as indicated in their originals. With the exception of direct quotations, in this book the words Shī'ite, Shi'ite, Shī'i, and Shi'i have been simplified as "Shii". Likewise, "Quran" is used instead of Qur'ān, Qurān, Qur'an, and other variant forms.

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[1] These dictionaries include, but are never limited to, the following references: *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. Angus Stevenson, and Maurice Waite, 12th ed. (Oxford, 2011); *Oxford Dictionary of English*, ed. Angus Stevenson, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 2010); *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. Angus Stevenson, 6th ed., 2 vols. (Oxford, 2007); and, on top of them, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. J. Simpson, and E. S. C. Weiner, 2nd ed., 20 vols. (Oxford, 1989).

PART ONE:

BACKGROUND

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the dark ages of the pre-Islamic era in ancient Arabia, the last Divine prophet, Muḥammad, was born. That pre-Islamic era was called *al-Jāhilīyyah* (lit., the time or era of ignorance, or "pre-Islamic folly"[1] [henceforth spelled without diacritics as 'Jahiliyyah') because there was almost little trace of learning, education, and culture there. It is held that it refers to "the century immediately preceding the rise of Islam"[2] and "the condition of society in Arabia before the advent of Islam".[3] The Classical Arabic word *al-jāhilīyyah* is used in the Holy Quran in several suras 'chapters', e.g., Āl ʿImrān [3]: 154; al-Māʾidah [5]: 50; al-Aḥzāb [33]: 33; and al-Fatḥ [48]: 26, with several other allusions to it. Long before this significant and tremendous event (i.e., the birth of the Prophet Muḥammad), God had given the good tidings of the coming of the last prophet in the sacred books of other pre-Islamic Abrahamic religions, i.e., Judaism and Christianity. This is well asserted in the words of Jesus Christ in that he maintained thus: "And when Jesus son of Mary said, 'O Descendants of Israel! I am indeed the messenger of Allah to you, confirming the Torah that is before me, and giving the good news of a messenger who shall come after me, whose name shall be Aḥmad." (The Holy Quran, Sura al-Ṣaff [61]: 6).[4]

The Jahiliyyah period refers to the pre-Islamic dark, pagan and polytheistic era. As such, it had several characteristics: There was almost little trace of learning and erudition therein, many Arab clans and tribes were deeply engrossed in enjoying themselves (both legally and illegally), and the monotheistic religion that had been introduced by Abraham (Arabic, Ibrāhīm) and promulgated by his first son Ishmael (Arabic, Ismāʿīl) was gradually changed into polytheism and idol-worshipping. Despite such a

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[1] Mahmoud M. Ayoub, *The Crisis of Muslim History: Religion and Politics in Early Islam* (Oxford, 2003), p. 119.
[2] Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 10th ed. (London, 1970), p. 87.
[3] Eleanor Abdella Doumato, "Jāhilīyah," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, ed. John L. Esposito, 4 vols. (New York, 1995), vol. 2, p. 352.
[4] Aḥmad is another name of the Prophet Muḥammad as asserted in the Holy Quran, Sura al-Ṣaff [61]: 6.

prevailing situation, there were still some people, mostly settled in Mecca, Arabia, who devoutly and seriously kept away from the abominable practices of a great majority of those polytheist Arabs. Praised in the Holy Quran, they have been called *ḥunafāʾ* (plural of *ḥanīf*, 'orthodox, original, authentic').[5]

The ancestors of the Prophet Muḥammad were totally different from the rest of the ancient Arabs in terms of their thoughts, creeds, manner, and life-style. Descended from Ishmael, son of Abraham, they were all monotheists, hence called *ḥunafāʾ* 'the orthodox believers' (sing. *ḥanīf*) in the ancient Meccan Arab community. They had been the trustworthy custodians of the Kaaba (Arabic *al-Kaʿbah*), the House of God, in Mecca.

Despite the monotheistic nature of the Abrahamic faith introduced and brought in Mecca by Abraham and maintained by his son Ishmael, the Meccan community gradually turned into polytheists and idol-worshippers. It is indicated that the first person who introduced the earliest idol to the Meccan community was ʿAmr b. Luḥayy who was given the idol Hubal in one of his trips to the Levant and took it back to Arabia, ca. 250.[6] In this way, he institutionalized idol-worshipping. Gradually, the Bedouin Arabs of Mecca and Arabia fabricated their own idols, placed them within and around the Kaaba and institutionalized polytheism and paganism. The leaders of the Meccan polytheists benefitted from the vows common people paid to them so as to fulfill their vows for the sake of their idols. There were too many idols for them. The names of some of the idols are mentioned in the Holy Quran, e.g., Wadd, Suwāʿ, Yaghūth, Yaʿūq, and Nasr (The Holy Quran, Sura Nūḥ [71]: 23); Baal (Arabic Baʿl) (The Holy Quran, Sura al-Ṣāffāt [37]: 125); and Lāt, ʿUzzā, and Manāt (The Holy Quran, Sura al-Najm [53]: 19-20). There were so many other idols whose names can be found in other sources.[7]

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[5] The Quranic word *ḥanīf* is used several times in the Holy Quran, inter alia, Sura Āl ʿImrān [3]: 67; Sura al-Naḥl [16]: 120; and its plural form *ḥunafāʾ* is used in the Sura al-Ḥajj [22]: 31; Sura al-Bayyinah [98]: 5.

[6] Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Āyatī, *Tārīkh-i payāmbar-i Islām*, 4th ed., ed. and rev. Abū al-Qāsim Gurjī (Tehran, 1366 Sh/ 1987), p. 7, based on Hishām b. Sāʾib al-Kalbī, *Kitāb al-aṣnām*, ed. Aḥmad Zakkī Bāshā (Cairo ed.), p. 33.

[7] Some of the sources are as follows: Hishām b. Sāʾib al-Kalbī, *Kitāb al-aṣnām*, ed. Aḥmad Zakkī Bāshā (Cairo, 1332 AH/ 1914); Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Āyatī, *Tārīkh pīyāmbar-i Islām*, 4th ed., ed. and rev. Abū al-Qāsim Gurjī (Tehran, 1366 Sh/ 1987), p. 7; Insīyih Khazʿalī, *Taṣvīr-i ʿaṣr-i jāhilī dar Qurʾān-i karīm* (Tehran, 1388 Sh/ 2009), pp. 166-168; Yaḥīyā Nūrī, *Islām va ʿaqāʾid va ārāʾ-i basharī yā jāhilīyyat va*

Deprived of a Divine prophet, and heavily influenced by being largely unschooled, a great majority of the Bedouin Arabs developed their own lifestyle. This pre-Islamic culture and lifestyle which have come to be collectively referred to as traits of Jahiliyyah had their largely negative effects and unfavorable implications. Among the negative traits of the Jahiliyyah era, the following can be listed: killing their daughters shortly after birth, launching skirmishes on other tribes, drinking wine, gambling, marrying too many women, adultery, and so on. It must be mentioned that some small Jahiliyyah-period Arab clans also had certain good characteristics, namely, helping the oppressed people, hospitality, supporting anybody who had sought refuge to them, and defending their family, tribe, fidelity to their promises, and honor to the last drop of their blood.

Several centuries passed by in this way until Allah (God) selected the Prophet Muḥammad who introduced Islam as the last Divine religion in ancient Arabia. [8]The Prophet Muḥammad was born in Mecca in the Year of the Elephant (*'Ām al-Fīl*), in the year of Abrahah's unsuccessful attempt to conquer Mecca for ruining the Kaaba in ca. 570.

The Prophet Muḥammad's life and times had several phases: birth, childhood, youth and adolescence, his prophetic career, the Mecca phase,

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Islām, 2nd ed. (Tehran, 1346 Sh/ 1967), pp. 251-275; Ghulāmḥusayn Muṣāḥab, ed., *Dāyirat al-ma'ārif-i Fārsī*, 3 vols. (Tehran, 1345 Sh/ 1966; 1391 Sh/ 2012), vol. 1, pp. 387-388, "bot"; John Bowker, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* (Oxford, 1997), "Idolatry"; Cyril Glassé, *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. rev. (London, 2001), "Idols"; and Thomas Patrick Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam* (London, 1885; New Delhi, 1999), "Idols"; and E. H. Palmer, trans., *The Qur'an*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1880), Pt. 1, p. xii. Cf. also W. P. Paterson, "Idolatry," in *Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. James Hastings, 5 vols. (Edinburgh, 1898-1904), vol. 2 (Edinburgh, 1899), pp. 445-449.

[8] Since 'Allah' is first and foremost the 'Quranic' name of the Supreme Being and the Deity in Islam, it is used throughout the present work. As a proper name, it can hardly be translated, although the word 'God' is regarded as its equivalent in English. The significance of being a 'Quranic' word or phrase is simply that it is used in the very original Arabic text of the Holy Quran. According to Islamic doctrines, the Arabic text of the Holy Quran has since been and remained the intact Divine word and scripture (hence inimitable), as asserted thus in the Holy Quran: "Indeed We [Allah] have sent down the Reminder [the Holy Quran] and indeed We will preserve it." (Sura al-Ḥijr [15]: 9). For further information, see Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim al-Mūsawī al-Khū'ī, *The Prolegomena to the Qur'an*, trans. Abdulaziz A. Sachedina (New York, 1998), pp. 142-144; Muhammad Hādi Ma'rifat, *Introduction to the Sciences of the Qur'an*, 2 vols., trans. Salim Rossier, and Mansoor Limba, abr. and introd. Mohammad Saeed Bahmanpour (Tehran, 2014), vol. 1, pp. 34-39.

emigration (*hijrah*) to Medina, the Medina phase, his Farewell Pilgrimage to Mecca, and his demise. The pre-prophetic phase of the life of the Prophet Muḥammad was entirely full of honor: he never committed any oppression against anybody and was kind and fair to his peers. He never worshipped any of the Bedouin idols; he was a true believer in the very monotheistic religion of his ancestor, the prophet Abraham.

The Meccan phase of the life of the Prophet Muḥammad (hence that of the Islamic religion) may be divided into three sub-phases: covert promulgation of Islam, overt promulgation of Islam, and the Year of the Grief. For roughly the first three years, the Prophet Muḥammad distributed the message of Islam not in public but in his family contacts and personal gatherings. Right from the very beginning, two notable persons joined him: his wife Khadījah,[9] and his paternal cousin, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. Both of them contributed greatly to his prophetic mission for which the Prophet Muḥammad always showed his deep appreciation to them.

In the second sub-phase of the Meccan phase, the Prophet Muḥammad started promulgating his prophetic mission overtly. Many slaves and poor people joined him, for they sensed that Islam, as the new religion and doctrinal system, values mankind both in theory and in practice. This event made many wealthy pagans of Mecca very worried, hence their fierce opposition against him and his call of invitation. One of the overtones of the Islamic religion was rejection of idols and worshipping only the only Deity, i.e., Allah. It also taught people that nobody had any right to exploit other people, slavery was to be rejected and abolished outright, in consequence, everybody has the right to live honorably. In the pre-Islamic polytheistic community of ancient Arabia, and particularly at Mecca, there were many wealthy people who committed all sorts of oppression and tortured their colored slaves and servants. The Islamic instructions at the private, family, and social levels had many implications for the poor, hence they easily and willingly joined him. The Islamic instructions proved revolutionary on various tiers: doctrinal-cum-theological, economic, and moral-cum-ethical. These tiers will briefly be dealt with later.

The emigration of the Prophet Muḥammad from Mecca to Medina was due to several reasons. Āminih, the mother of the Prophet Muḥammad, was originally of a Medinan Arab tribe, hence his maternal uncles and relatives

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[9] On the life and times and financial contributions of Khadījah, see Sayyid Nabīl al-Ḥasanī, *Khadījah bt. Khuwaylid: Ummahtun jumiʿat fī imraʾah*, 4 vols. (Karbala, 1432 AH/ 2011).

had come to Mecca and inquired of the truth of his prophetic mission in secret. They had also promised him to shelter and help him. Moreover, in the Meccan period of the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, some Medinan pilgrims who had got informed of his prophetic mission accepted Islam and converted to Islam. In the eleventh year after the advent of Islam, that is in ca. 620, six Medinans met the Prophet in the hajj ceremony in Mina in the vicinity of Mecca, talked with him, and were influenced by him. Upon their return to Medina, they started promulgating the Islamic religion in Medina. Next year, in 621, another Medinan delegation consisting of twelve persons met the Prophet in the same place and converted to Islam. Later on, the Prophet dispatched one of his companions named Muṣʿab b. ʿUmayr (who was later on martyred in the Battle of Uḥud in 3 AH/ 624) to Medina to teach them the Holy Quran and the fundamental principles of the Islamic religion. The next meeting took place in the thirteenth year after the advent of Islam, in ca. 622, in the hajj season. This time, around seventy-five persons (two of whom were ladies) entered Mecca and met the Prophet secretly on the plain of Mina near Mecca. They preferred to meet the Prophet at night time for security reasons. They promised the Prophet to support him at all costs, even at the outbreak of a war. After this meeting, the Prophet permitted his Meccan followers to emigrate from there to Medina.

In the much later sub-phase of the Mecca period, the Prophet Muḥammad lost his two main and influential supporters. They were his paternal uncle, Abū Ṭālib, and his beloved wife, Khadījah who died in the tenth year after the advent of Islam, that is in 619. Politically and from a security perspective, Abū Ṭālib was certainly a Muslim although he never announced it tacitly, for he always supported the Prophet Muḥammad and composed many poems in support of the Islamic religion.[10] Abū Ṭalib's sons, Jaʿfar

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[10] According to the Shiis, it is certain that Abū Ṭālib was a Muslim for sure. His staunch and wholehearted support in favor of Islam and the Prophet Muḥammd is well echoed in his poems. See, for example, Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī, ed., *al-Dharīʿah ilā taṣānīf al-shīʿh*, 25 vols. (Najaf and Tehran, 1341-1398 AH/ 1922-1978; Beirut, 1403 AH/ 1983), vol. 2, pp. 510-514; and ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn al-Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, 2nd rev. ed., 11 vols., (Tehran, 1372 AH/ 1952), vol. 7, pp. 331-409; besides there are many leading Sunni authors have also authored books in support of Abū Ṭālib's faith in the Islamic religion, e.g., ʿAbd Allāh al-Khunayzī, *Abū Ṭālib muʾmin Quraysh*; Aḥmad b. Zaynī Daḥlān, *Asnā al-maṭālib fī īmān Abī Ṭālib*. See also Sabir Thariani, *Study on the Life of Abu Talib* (Karachi, 1970); and Syed Nasr Abbas Naqvi, *Refulgence of Abu Talib*, trans. Syed Hasan Hamid Naqvi (Islamabad, 2013). Muḥammad Mahdī Ṣabāḥī al-Kāshānī, *Abū Ṭālib: Shāʿir al-Rasūl al-aʿẓam* (Qum, 1437 AH/ 1395 Sh/ 2016) proves that Abū Ṭālib was not only a Muslim for

and ʿAlī, were among the staunch supporters of Islam, too. While Jaʿfar was martyred in the Battle of Muʾtah, in present-day southern Jordan, in 8 AH/ 629, ʿAlī attained the highest position in Islam next to the Prophet Muḥammad: Allah selected him as the immediate successor to the Prophet Muḥammad, as his nomination was publicly announced several years later, near and before the demise of the prophet, on the day of Ghadīr Khumm, hence his designation as (the first Infallible) Imam ʿAlī.[11]

Another influential figure was Khadījah whose economic and financial support to the religion of her husband proved very significant. Khadījah was so beloved to the Prophet Muḥammad that so long as she was alive, the prophet never married anybody else, although polygamy is permitted in Islam. In addition to being one of the most influential ladies at Mecca, Khadījah had several other merits and virtues; moreover, one of her most outstanding attributes is that she is the mother of her Infallible daughter Fāṭimah al-Zahrā, who was later on married to Imam ʿAlī.[12] Owing to the loss of such key and influential supporters, the same year of their demise came to be regarded as the Year of Grief (*ʾĀm al-ḥuzn*).

With the demise of Abū Ṭālib and Khadījah, the Meccan polytheists and pagans began to feel courageous enough to conspire against the Prophet

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sure, he was also a great poet who used his poetic talent in support of the Prophet Muḥammad.

[11] Imam, hence imamate, has several meanings. The scope of doctrinal imamate is wider by far than simply leading congregational mandatory prayer, i.e., salat, for it entails all walks of life, both private and social. For a purely Shiʿi Islamic conception and interpretation of both imam and imamate, see Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Shi'ite Islam*, trans. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (New York, 1975); and Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr, "A Study on the Question of al-Wilaya," trans. P. Haseltine, in *Ghadir*, ed. Ghulam Abbas Sajan (Toronto, 1990; Qum, 2000), pp. 7-45; and Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Redhewi (Rizvi), *Imamate*, annot. Sayyid Muhammad Redhewi (Rizvi) (Dar es Salam, 1971; Qum, 1996).

[12] Islamic infallibility or immaculateness (*ʿiṣmah*) has various aspects. The most fundamental feature of infallibility that the personalities whom Allah has provided with this faculty and exceptionally grace are so insightful, hence being sharply foresighted, that they never commit any sin or make any mistake. It is this trait of infallibility that makes such personalities deserving the high-ranking office of being selected and announced as 'infallible' imams. Shiʿi Muslims strongly believe in fourteen Infallibles, from whom twelve men of them are the imams. Although Fāṭimah al-Zahrāʾ is not regarded as an infallible imam, for the office of imamate belongs to men, she is the only infallible lady in the list and hierarchy of the infallible personalities, hence particularly venerated, for her being the infallible daughter of the Prophet.

Muḥammad. They were determined to kill him so as to put an end to the growth of the Islamic religion all at once. There was a local city council of Mecca, called Dār al-Nadwah, wherein tens of people gathered to find a way for carrying out their conspiracy. Although some of the attendants suggested the Prophet should be detained, or expelled out of Mecca, some others, e.g., Abū Jahl suggested him to be killed. For this purpose, it was decided that a swordsman from every Arab clan would attack the Prophet at home. Since Allah had decided the Islamic religion to continue, the Archangel Gabriel descended to the Prophet and informed him of such a dangerous, fatal plot against him. This is explicitly mentioned in the Holy Quran: "When the faithless plotted against you to take you captive, or to kill or expel you – they plotted and Allah devised, and Allah is the best of devisers." (Sura al-Anfāl [8]: 30).

To nullify the plot of the Meccan infidels and polytheists, according to a piece of the Divine revelation, the Prophet Muḥammad suggested Imam ʿAlī to sleep in his bed that night. Although the danger of being slain was very high, Imam ʿAlī knowingly accepted the offer with alacrity, without any hesitation, and risked his life, helped the Prophet Muḥammad escape and circumvent the assassination plot. In effect of this praiseworthy courageous deed, Imam ʿAlī received the Divine appreciation as indicated in the Holy Quran: "And among the people there is one who sells his soul seeking the pleasure of Allah, and Allah is most kind to [His] servants." (Sura al-Baqarah [2]: 207). In this context, the phrase "one who sells his soul seeking the pleasure of Allah" refers only to Imam ʿAlī, hence such an explicit Divine appreciation as asserted in the Holy Quran. That historic night has since been referred to as the Night of Sleeping (*Laylat al-Mabīt*).

The next phase of the life of the Prophet Muḥammad and the Muslim community took shape in Medina. Earlier called Yathrib, it came to be referred to as Madīnah al-Nabīyy 'the City of the Prophet', shortened to al-Madīnah 'the City', and later on simply 'Medina'. The presence of the Prophet in Medina has since brought much fame to the city such that not only in Arabia but in the whole Muslim world, it stands next to Mecca in importance, all due to being the city of residence of the Prophet and his sacred shrine and sanctuary therein. The presence of the Prophet there brought about peaceful coalition and confederation among certain major tribes who had been fighting for ages. The Prophet issued some verdicts, in the present sense certain constitutions, due to which he was able to control and situation. In addition to the proclamation of brotherhood among the emigrants from Mecca (*huhājirūn*) and the Medinan helpers (*anṣār*) in the first year of his emigration to Medina, the Prophet declared his

brotherhood(-in-faith) with his cousin Imam ʿAlī. He also maintained peaceful relations in the form of treaties concluded with the major local tribes of Medina. He signed peace treaties with the Jews and Christians of Arabia, too. The Medinan period resembled the Muslim community whose foundation stone was nothing but the Divine revelation that the Prophet used to receive, hence a great majority of the law-giving verses of the Holy Quran that were mainly revealed unto the Prophet in the Medina phase.

The Meccan polytheists and pagans could not sit still and witness the earliest Muslim community develop in another city in Arabia. They soon started creating problems for the Prophet Muḥammad. They waged tens of wars against the then developing and nascent Muslim community in Medina. On the other hand, there were some hypocrites (*munāfiqūn*) who maintained secret relations with the opponents and enemies of the Islamic religion and the Prophet Muḥammad. There are several indications in the Holy Quran that depict their characteristics, e.g., the Suras al-Baqarah [2]: 8-20, and 204-206; Āl ʿImrān [3]: 72, 118-120, and 167; and the whole Sura al-Munāfiqūn [63] that consists of eleven verses.

There were important events in the Medinan phase of the life of the Prophet Muḥammad. Some of them were as follows: The Treaty of al-Ḥudaybīyyah in the 6 AH/ 628 that led to the armistice on the side of the Quraysh tribe of Mecca, the peaceful Conquest of Mecca in 8 AH/ 629, and the Farewell Hajj in the 10 AH/ 632.

With the approach of the hajj (pilgrimage) season, the Prophet Muḥammad announced that he intended to perform the hajj in Mecca. It was a golden and unique opportunity for all Muslims to accompany him and observe the proper rites and rituals of the hajj, as performed by the Prophet. Since it was the last hajj of the Prophet, it came to be known as the Farewell Hajj (*Ḥajjat al-Widāʿ*). In the Farewell Hajj, the Prophet Muḥammad delivered a very important speech on the plain of ʿArafāt in the vicinity of Mecca. In his speech, he summarized the gist of the Islamic instructions.

As a large of group of Muslims had joined Imam ʿAlī from Yemen in southern Arabia just some time before the hajj season, they came to Mecca together with him to have the honor of joining the Farewell Pilgrimage, too. After the hajj ceremonies, the Prophet ordered all the pilgrims to move northward in the direction of Medina. Everybody had to accompany the Prophet, even those hajjis (pilgrims) who had come from Yemen. It was indeed a Divine command to follow the Prophet and to observe it right away.

On the way back to Medina, it was at Ghadīr Khumm, near al-Juḥfah, that the Prophet Muḥammad received an urgent revelation to convey a very significant message to people. The order is in fact a Quranic verse: "O Messenger! Proclaim what descended to you from your Lord; and if you do not do so, you have not proclaimed His message, and Allah protects you from the people." (Sura al-Mā'idah [5]: 67) The order was to publicly declare and announce Imam ʿAlī as his immediate successor and the first Infallible Imam.

The Prophet Muḥammad ordered the hajjis (pilgrims) to stop and to wait for the rest to reach them. He then ordered his companions to make a high pulpit (minbar) for him to deliver his lecture on top of it. In his historic address and lecture, the Prophet announced that he was approaching his demise, gave a good and informative overview of the gist of his instructions, introduced all the twelve Infallible imams by name who would follow him, and explicitly announced Imam ʿAlī as his immediate successor, hence as the first Infallible Imam.

The large audience who gathered there amounted around 120,000 people. To institutionalize it, the Prophet ordered all those who were present there to congratulate Imam ʿAlī and to recognize him as 'The Amir of the Faithful' (amīr al-mu'minīn). To fix it as a noble historic day, the Prophet Muḥammad ordered the Arab poet Ḥassān b. Thābit (d. ca. 54 AH/ 673) to compose the first Ghadir-themed poem in honor of Imam ʿAlī's Divinely-granted sublime and unique office. The poem is anthologized in most Arabic anthologies that deal with the event of Ghadīr Khumm, it is also available in al-Ghadīr.[13] (It is still an Arab practice to compose poems on markworthy occasions.) The event of Ghadīr Khumm has since been identified as the Divine yardstick in favor of Imam ʿAlī's right of immediate successorship to the Prophet Muḥammad.

Soon after this ground-breaking and epoch-making religio-public inauguration, the Prophet Muḥammad received another Divine revelation in appreciation. It is read thus in the Holy Quran: "Today I [Allah] perfected your religion [Islam] and completed My favor upon you, and I have been satisfied that Islam be your religion" (Sura al-Mā'idah [5]: 3) It is because of this great event in the Islamic history that it has come to be designated as 'the Greatest Divine Feast' (ʿĪd Allāh al-Akbar).

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[13] See ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad al-Amīnī al-Najafī, al-Ghadīr, 2nd rev. ed., 11 vols. (Tehran, 1372 AH/ 1952; Beirut, 1403 AH/ 1983), vol. 2, p. 39.

It deserves mention that the Prophet Muḥammad had long announced Imam ʿAlī's praiseworthy qualifications on a number of occasions before the event of Ghadīr Khumm. For example, when Imam ʿAlī was almost at the age of ten and when the Prophet Muḥammad had just received the first Divine revelation in the Mount Ḥirā in the vicinity of Mecca, hence became His prophet, Imam ʿAlī was the first man who joined him and announced his staunch, lifelong loyalty to him. In the fiercest battles in the Medinan phase of the life of the Prophet, he was the first and the last helper and escort of the Prophet Muḥammad. In addition to this, there are at least a hundred Quranic verses that refer to Imam ʿAlī and express the Divine appreciation for his personality, character, career, and deeds.[14] The significance of the event of Ghadīr Khumm lies in the fact that the Divine line of guidance would continue in the hands of Imam ʿAlī, the rightful and most trustworthy successor to the Prophet Muḥammad, who was raised and carefully educated since childhood by the Prophet himself.

Shiism has a direct bearing to the event of the day of Ghadīr Khumm. It has since been such a day that the true followers of the Islamic religion, the Prophet Muḥammad, and the Quranic revelations came to recognize Imam ʿAlī as the immediate successor to the Prophet. Therefore, Arabic word shīʿah 'follower' came to be derived from the root sh-y-ʿ which means 'to follow'.

Around sixty-four days after the Day of Ghadīr Khumm, the Prophet Muḥammad breathed his last at his home in Medina on 28 Ṣafar 10 AH/ 8 June 632. When he was severely ill, he requested a pen and a piece of parchment to write down an important instructive announcement for the public so that the religio-political course of the Muslim people would not go astray. It is said that it was ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb who prevented people from fulfilling the Prophet's urgent request; moreover, he also insulted the Prophet and accused him to have just murmured something deliriously and in derangement owing to high fever. Soon after the Prophet's demise and, whilst his body was still on the ground, a small council consisting of not

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[14] A host of great books have been written by leading and iconic Sunni scholars in praise of Imam ʿAlī. For quotations of their views on the Quranic verses revealed focusing on Imam ʿAlī, see al-Amīnī al-Najafī, *al-Ghadīr*, 2nd rev. ed., 11 vols. (Tehran, 1372 AH/ 1952; Beirut, 1403 AH/ 1983), vol. 1, pp. 214-246. See also Muḥammad-Riḍā Ramzī Awḥadī, *Hizār-o-yik faḍīlat az Amīr al-Muʾminīn dar kutub-i ahl-i sunnat* (Qum, 1392 Sh/ 2013); ʿAlī Āl Kāẓimī, *Imām ʿAlī dar Qurʾān* (Tehran, 1385 Sh/ 2006); and Toyib Olawuyi, *Ali: The Best of the Sahaabah: Explicit Testimonies of Saheeh Sunni Ahaadees* (Mumbai, 2014).

more than a couple of those who had witnessed the event of Ghadīr Khumm, gathered at a place called Saqīfah Banī Sāʿidah and selected an old man by the name of ʿAbd Allāh b. Abī Quḥāfah, commonly referred to as Abū Bakr, all under the fierce threat of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and a donkey-seller named Abū ʿUbaydah al-Jarrāḥ. They deliberately did this to threaten and frighten the public, leading to preventing Imam ʿAlī from getting hold of the administration of the Muslim community. Such a strife and calamity took place because those who committed this unforgettable big crime never intended the intellectual and religious line of the Prophet Muḥammad continue. The event of Saqīfah resembles the first major division and sinister schism among the early Muslim community.[15]

Although Imam ʿAlī was both a sage intellectual and a courageous warrior, he seldom resorted to a military act to restore his right of rulership. This was because he never intended to cause a fraction in the Muslim community just after the demise of the Prophet Muḥammad. It does not mean that he never expressed his indignation. Soon after burying the body of the Prophet Muḥammad, Imam ʿAlī started collecting and organizing the Holy Quran in the present shape and sequence of the suras.

The succession and imamate right of Imam ʿAlī had one major supporter: his first wife, Fāṭimah al-Zahrā, who was the only surviving daughter of the Prophet Muḥammad. In the reign of Abū Bakr (11-13 AH/ 632-634), and shortly, around ten days, after the demise of the Prophet, Fadak, being a fertile region of the date-groves in Arabia, was officially confiscated from Fāṭimah al-Zahrā by both Abū Bakr and ʿUmar. Earlier the Prophet Muḥammad had donated Fadak to her beloved daughter, Fāṭimah al-Zahrā. This unjust confiscation took place together with selecting Abū Bakr as the imposed successor to the Prophet, an act that stood in stark opposition against the Divine nomination of Imam ʿAlī on the day of Ghadīr Khumm.[16]

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[15] There are several works on the event of Saqīfah, see, for example, Sayyid Murtaḍā ʿAskarī, *Saqīfah*, ed. Mahdī Dashtī (Qum, 1387 Sh/ 2008); Mohammad Reza al-Mudhafar, *The Saqifah*, trans. Hasan Najafi (Qum, n.d.); Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Muẓaffar, *Asrār-i Saqīfah*, trans. Muḥammad Jawād Ḥujjatī Kirmānī (Qum, 1373 Sh/ 1994); and Syed Husain Mohammad Jafri, *The Origins and Early Development of Shiʿa Islam* (London/ Beirut, 1979; Oxford/ Karachi, 2000), pp. 27-48.

[16] On the sorrowful event of Fadak and its confiscation and usurpation in the early Islamic history, Muslim authors have written several fine books, see, for example, Ḥasan ʿĪsā al-Ḥakīm, *Fāṭimah al-Zahrāʾ: Shihāb al-nubuwwah al-thāqib* (Qum, 1430 AH/ 1388 Sh/ 2009), pp. 203-230 (esp. pp. 228-230 are devoted to a short booklist of 43 books written on the confiscation of Fadak); Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr, *Fadak fī al-Taʾrīkh* (Najaf, 1374 AH/ 1955), English version *Fadak in*

Almost all those who paved the way for this usurpation and coup d'état were present on the day of Ghadīr Khumm, recognized Imam ʿAlī, and congratulated him. In consequence, she delivered a hot sermon at the Prophet's mosque in Medina, expressed the basic tenets of the Islamic religion as introduced by her father, the Prophet Muḥammad, announced the oppression that was just taken place against her and the true followers of the Prophet, reminded people of the day of Ghadīr Khumm and rebuked them for their deathly reticence vis-à-vis the confiscation of the right of Imam ʿAlī. (Apart from being a fertile region, hence a strong economic support (that the Prophet Muḥammad had donated it to her, Fadak simply symbolized her right; otherwise, she herself was not financially in dire need of its revenues for her own personal benefits.)[17] Shortly after this pressure on the daughter of the Prophet that meant to silence her and to get Imam ʿAlī's recognition of the reign of Abū Bakr, who just usurped Imam ʿAlī's right, a group of hooligans and notorious people, e.g., Qunfudh, attacked the house of Imam ʿAlī, all under ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, in effect of which Fāṭimah al-Zahrā' was severely injured at waist and arms and was martyred reportedly 75 or 90 days after the demise of the Prophet Muḥammad.[18] In

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History, trans. Abdullah al-Shahin (Qum, 1423 AH/ 1381 Sh/ 2002); Muḥammad Jawād Ṭabasī, *Durdānih-yi dildādih: Barrasī-yi taḥlīlī-yi zindagānī-yi Fāṭimah-yi Zahrā*, ed. ʿAlī Riḍā Kākāvand Burūjirdī (Qum, 1388 Sh/ 2009), pp. 350-396; Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdī al-Mūsawī al-Khirsān, *Nihāyat al-taḥqīq fīmā jarā fī amr fadak li-al-Ṣiddīqah wa al-Ṣiddīq bi-al-naṣṣ wa al-tawthīq* (Qum/ Najaf, 1432 AH/ 1390 Sh/ 2011); a brief version in English is available in Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, *Fadak* (Dar es Salam, 1999).

[17] This historic harangue of Fāṭimah al-Zahrā' is quoted in many sources, hence received several and various expositions. See Maḥmūd Riḍā Nizhād Ṣidāqat, *Khuṭbah al-Lummah-yi Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah al-Zahrā' dar masjid-i Payāmbar* (Mashhad, 1398 Sh/ 2019); for the English version of the same text, see *Partoei az Meshkat Vahy/ A Beam from the Lantern of Revelation*, English trans. Javad Qasemi, rev. and ed. Muhammad-Reza Fakhr-Rohani (Tehran/ Qum, 1399 Sh/ 2020), pp. 48-61.

[18] The case of the tragic martyrdom of Fāṭimah al-Zahrā is mentioned in many sources written on her life and times. See, for example, Sayyid Muḥammad Kāẓim Qazwīnī, *Fāṭimah al-Zahrā az wilādat tā shahādat*, rev. and enl. ed., trans. ʿAlī Riḍā Karamī (Qum, 1417 AH/ 1996; 3rd imp., 1380 Sh/ 2001); ʿAbd al-Zahrā Mahdī, *al-Hujūm ʿalā bayt Fāṭimah* (Tehran, 1383 Sh/ 2004); Bāqir Sharīf al-Qarashī, *Fatima az-Zahra*, English trans. Abdullah al-Shahin (Qum, 1427 AH/ 1385 Sh/ 2006), pp. 217-226; ʿAbd al-Bāqī Qarnah al-Jazāʾirī, *al-Wahmī wa al-ḥaqīqī fī sīrah ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb* (Qum, 1428 AH/ 1386 Sh/ 1997), pp. 390-393; and Muḥammad Jawād Ṭabasī, *Durdānih-yi dildādih: Barrasī-yi taḥlīlī-yi zindagānī-yi Fāṭimah-yi Zahrā*, ed. ʿAlī Riḍā Kākāvand Burūjirdī (Qum, 1388 Sh/ 2009), pp. 417-425. The following book contains a detailed chronological account from the formation of the Saqīfah to the martyrdom of Fāṭimah al-Zahrā': ʿAdnān Dirakhshān, *Az riḥlat-i Rasūl-i Khudā*

the horrible, terror-filled atmosphere of Medina, Fāṭimah al-Zahrā was buried secretly at night time. Her son was miscarried, too. True Shiis never forget the oppression inflicted on Fāṭimah al-Zahrā, hence they ardently mourn her martyrdom.

The reign of Abū Bakr continued only around two years, that is from 11-13 AH/ 632-634. After him, another council was formed in Medina and appointed ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb as the next ruler. In this way, Imam ʿAlī was politically marginalized. The reign of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (b. ca. 581, r. 13-23 AH/ 634-644) witnessed many tragic events. ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, who used to be a staunch enemy of the Prophet Muḥammad whom he had intended to slay in Mecca, was finally selected as the ruler of the nascent Muslim state. Although he repeatedly confessed his being utterly ignorant and disqualified, he issued several orders which revived and brought about many earlier and long-abrogated Jahiliyyah-type standards. He also nominated Yazīd b. Abī Sufīyān as the ruler of the Levant. This nomination meant nothing but opposing the essence of the teachings of the Prophet Muḥammad and misrepresenting Islam in the territories that were lately conquered and annexed to the Muslim lands. He institutionalized racial discrimination among Muslims such that an Arab was regarded as superior to a non-Arab, although this was in strict contradistinction against the spirit of Islam as taught and practiced by the Prophet Muḥammad.[19]

Soon after being severely injured by a Persian slave named Fīrūz or Abū Luʾluʾ, ʿUmar ordered that after him ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān must seize the power as the third ruler. The reign of ʿUthmān (r. 23-35 AH/ 643-656) was filled with his collecting much wealth and gold and appointing his close relatives of Umayyad blood as governors of various regions in the then vast Muslim lands. The third ruler's conduct and mismanagement aroused much annoyance and led to several social uprisings and public riots. Although Imam ʿAlī, his sons, and his close associates tried hard to rescue ʿUthmān

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tā shahādat-i Ḥaḍrat-i Zahrā: Rūz shumār-i tashkīl-i Saqīfah tā shahādat-i bānū-yi du ʿālam (Tehran, 1391 Sh/ 2012).

[19] On the character, moral traits, and conducts of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, see ʿAbd al-Bāqī Qarnah al-Jazāʾirī, *al-Wahmī wa al-ḥaqīqī fī sīrah ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb* (Qum, 1428 AH /1386 Sh/ 1997); ʿAbd al-Bāqī Qarnah al-Jazāʾirī, *Nigāhī bih qarn-i awwal*, trans. Sayyid Ḥusaynʿalī Āl ʿAlī (Qum, 1393 Sh/ 2014), pp. 127-135; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Aḥmad al-Bakrī, *Min ḥayāt al-khalīfah ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb*, ed. and annot. Sayyid Murtaḍā al-Raḍawī (Beirut/ London, 1998), pp. 345-380; and Muḥammad Amīnī Najafī, *Angīzih-yi dowlathā-yi Umawī va ʿAbbāsī dar jaʾl wa tarwīj-i ḥikāyat-i izdiwāj-i ʿUmar bā Ḥaḍrat-i Umm Kulthūm* (Najaf, 1432 AH/ 2010), pp. 43-113.

from being surrounded by his opponents, he was finally killed at home in Medina in Dhu al-Ḥijjah 35 AH/ 656.

Just after a couple of days after the murder of ʿUthmān at home in 35 AH/ 656, people rushed to Imam ʿAlī and appealed to him to accept being their ruler. He was first reluctant to accept their earnest request; however, people insisted on their request so earnestly that Imam ʿAlī accepted to become their ruler. His reluctance was due to the fact that the prevailing situation was then so corrupt and agitated that the same people would hardly succumb to his purely Islamic standards. Imam ʿAlī was explicit in this way: "Leave me and seek someone else. … You should know that if I respond to you, I would lead you as I know and would not care about whatever one may say or abuse. If you leave me, then I am the same as you are." (Imam ʿAlī, *The Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon 92, p. 62) Elsewhere, he indicated that the situation had returned to the pre-Islamic modes of conduct. He maintained thus: "You should know that the same troubles have returned to you which existed when the Prophet was first sent." (Imam ʿAlī, *The Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon 16, p. 12). The prevailing situation was so disappointing that in a letter to one of his steadfast companions by the name of Mālik b. al-Ḥārith al-Ashtar (d. 37 AH/ 657), Imam ʿAlī declared thus: "…this religion has formerly been a prisoner in the hands of vicious persons [i.e., the three rulers who preceded him and usurped his right] when action was taken according to passion, and worldly wealth was sought." (Imam ʿAlī, *The Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 53, p. 243) He declared that he was going to act according to the precise teachings of the Holy Quran and the very conduct of the Prophet Muḥammad. Imam ʿAlī viewed it his religious duty to be faithful to the original version of Islam, announcing that "Certainly, there is no obligation on the Imam except what has been devolved on him from Allah, namely to convey warnings, to exert in good advice, to revive the Sunnah [i.e., conduct of the Prophet], to enforce penalties on those liable to them, and to issue shares to the deserving." (Imam ʿAlī, *The Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon 105, p. 72)

As announced and stipulated earlier, the rule of Imam ʿAlī was going to be strictly based on the precise teachings of the Holy Quran and the conduct of the Prophet Muḥammad. Soon after his becoming the caliph and ruler in Medina, some of his adversaries started collecting forces against him, for they could not find the ample money that they used to receive from the previous rulers be cut off at once. In fact, the usurping rulers, who intervened between the Prophet Muḥammad and Imam ʿAlī, used to personalize the public treasure and revenues for both themselves and their favorite agents. Their doing so meant the revival of the abolished pre-

Islamic Jahiliyyah-oriented standards albeit they always pretended to have become Muslims. Their indignation triggered them to contact the opponents of Imam ʿAlī and to set a ground for waging wars against him.

The first imposed civil war, the Battle of the Camel, took place in the vicinity of al-Baṣrah, southern Iraq. In this war, generally referred to as the Battle of the Camel, ʿĀʾishah, a widow of the Prophet Muḥammad and a daughter of Abū Bakr, Ṭalḥah and al-Zubayr were present as the commanders and leaders of the opponents of Imam ʿAlī. Despite her being a widow of the Prophet and that she had heard numerous hadiths on the virtues and superior character of Imam ʿAlī from the Prophet, she was persuaded to participate in the war. Although she used to lead the war, Imam ʿAlī never attacked her but returned her safely back to Medina simply because she was a widow of the Prophet. Despite her key role in the Battle of the Camel, Imam ʿAlī treated his staunch enemy ʿĀʾishah in such a way that she received no wound in the Battle; he returned her back to Medina with escort. In the Battle of the Camel, Imam ʿAlī never let any of his soldiers start the war; the battle started from the enemy side.

Soon after defeating the enemies in the Battle of the Camel, Imam ʿAlī went to al-Kūfah, Iraq, in Rajab 36 AH/ 656 and made it his seat of government. Instead of entering the governmental palace, he took a chamber in the Mosque of al-Kūfah as his office and resided at one of his relative's house for a short while. He received a massive and public welcome there.

The presence of Imam ʿAlī in al-Kūfah, Iraq, was important for various reasons. First of all, al-Kūfah was founded after the Battle of al-Qādisīyah against the ancient Persian Sasanian Empire under Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ in ca. 17 AH/ 638.[20] There are various views about why Imam ʿAlī chose al-Kūfah as the seat of his government. A plausible reason is that al-Kūfah was located in the best place in Iraq to be closer to Damascus where Muʿāwīyah, as a dangerous enemy, was ruling. At the same time, since certain tribes of al-Baṣrah, in southern Iraq, supported enemies of Imam ʿAlī, it never seemed a proper place as a new capital.[21] There must be other reasons, namely, a greater Shii population and the presence of the non-Arab, mainly Persian, clients (mawālī) who never had the same pro-Arab biases like those of Meccan and Medinan tribes.

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[20] For an authoritative history of the city of al-Kūfah, see Sayyid Ḥasan ʿĪsā al-Ḥakīm, *al-Kūfah: Bayn al-ʿumq al-taʾrīkhī wa al-taṭawwur al-ʿilmī* (Najaf/ Beirut, 2011).
[21] Al-Ḥakīm, *al-Kūfah*, pp. 19-23.

Another civil war was the battle that Muʿāwīyah b. Abī Sufīyān waged against Imam ʿAlī. As the founder of the Umayyad dynasty, Muʿāwīyah had no good profile and face whatsoever. His father Ṣakhr b. Ḥarb, commonly known as Abū Sufīyān, was a wealthy and powerful polytheist Meccan merchant who opposed the Prophet Muḥammad in Mecca and waged several wars against him after the Prophet Muḥammad's emigration to Medina. In fact, like many polytheists who could not do anything but merely pretending to have accepted the Islamic religion, Abū Sufīyān and Muʿāwīyah announced that they also accepted Islam on the day of the Conquest of Mecca. Like many polytheists, they did so simply to rescue themselves. Muʿāwīyah was dispatched to Damascus and the greater Levant region in the time of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. Since the people of the Levant were largely Christians and had long been under the socio-cultural influence of the Eastern Roman Empire, they had practically meager knowledge about the nature of the Islamic religion. In such a context, Muʿāwīyah introduced himself not as an Arab governor but as the deputy and representative of the Prophet Muḥammad. The reign of Muʿāwīyah was fraught with creating problems, arresting, and killing those who showed the least attention, let alone any practical inclination, toward the dynasty of the Prophet Muḥammad, in general, and Imam ʿAlī, in particular.[22]

As soon as Imam ʿAlī was chosen as the caliph, Muʿāwīyah started creating problems for him. Instead of succumbing to the central political authority, and in this particular case, to Imam ʿAlī, he claimed independence and showed much dissidence. Like his past master and appointer, ʿUmar, he had strictly banned transmission and recording the hadiths and quotations of the Prophet Muḥammad.[23] Muʿāwīyah knew well that Imam ʿAlī was really the most deserving personality for handling the affairs of the then far and wide Islamic empire, yet he never showed the least attention. On the other hand, Imam ʿAlī's letters and messages to him indicates that he was indeed well aware of Muʿāwīyah's wicked character and destructive aims.

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[22] For more information on Muʿāwīyah, see Muḥammad b. ʿAqīl al-ʿAlawī al-Ḥaḍramī, *Muʿāwīyah wa tārīkh*, trans. ʿAzīz Allāh ʿUṭāridī (Tehran, 1383 AH/ 1963; 2nd imp. 1364 Sh/ 2005). This is a Persian translation of the author's Arabic book, *al-Naṣāʾiḥ al-kāfīyah liman yatawallā Muʿāwīyah* (Baghdad, 1326 AH/ 1908; Beirut/ London, 1412 AH/ 1991).

[23] See, for example, Michael Cook, "The Opponents of the Writing of Traditions in Early Islam," *Arabica*, vol. 44 (1997), pp. 437-530; repr. in Mustafa Shah, ed., *The Ḥadīth: Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies*, 4 vols. (London, 2010), vol. 1, pp. 156-251.

Muʿāwīyah had several counselors who always helped him. One of them was ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ. At the instigation of ʿAmr, he prepared a massive army and launched it in the Levant, reached the River Euphrates, and got ready to fight against Imam ʿAlī. This battle that lasted for more than a hundred days in 37 AH/ 657, during which over 90 clashes took place. This battle has come to be known as the Battle of Ṣiffīn because it took place to the west of Riqqah in eastern present-day Syria near the River Euphrates.

Again, Imam ʿAlī never let any of his soldiers and commanders start the war. The Umayyad army captured part of the River Euphrates for a short time to exert pressure on the camp of Imam ʿAlī. Then Imam al-Ḥusayn, together with some of his soldiers, pushed the Umayyad soldiers away and freed the region and the water. Despite the Umayyad soldiers' unhumane conduct, they were never denied of water: the Umayyad soldiers had always easy access to water. Imam ʿAlī never thought about preventing the enemy soldiers from having easy access to water. Imam ʿAlī showed his high moralities even in the time of war in how to treat his enemies in the most possible humane way.

The Battle of Ṣiffīn was going to be finished by Mālik al-Ashtar's approaching close to the tent of Muʿāwīyah. At this time, some simplistic and imbecilic people on the side of Imam ʿAlī urged him to return Mālik and to stop the war. On the other hand, there were some Quran reciters on both sides of the battlefield who focused on merely reciting the Holy Quran, with little reflection or comprehension of its profound percepts and insightful verses. Those simplistic Quran reciters who were on Imam ʿAlī's front threatened him to death, or Mālik should have just returned from the front line of the battle. Mālik was urged to return, after all.

Some cunning advisors of Muʿāwīyah, like ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ (d. 43 AH/ 664), suggested him that to fool the simplistic soldiers on the side of Imam ʿAlī, some pages of the Holy Quran should be put on lances and raised, with the slogan "There is no verdict save that of Allah" (*Lā ḥukm illā li-Allāh*).[24] Unfortunately, this trick worked. Despite Imam ʿAlī and his perceptive commanders' warning that it was a war-time trick, none of those soldiers listened to them. To do otherwise, they said that Imam ʿAlī must accept

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[24] See the reproachful qasida that ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ composed in respect to Muʿāwīyah, called the Ringing Bell (Arabic *al-Juljulīyyah*) qasida, as included in ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn al-Amīnī al-Najafī, *al-Ghadīr*, vol. 2, pp. 114-117; yet another short poem of his is included in Sulaym b. Qays al-Hilālī, *Asrār-i Āl Muḥammad*, trans. Ismāʿīl Anṣārī (Qum, 1413 AH/ 1371 Sh/ 1992), p. 412.