

Al-Muqaddimah al-Zahra' fī Īḍāḥ al-Imāmat al-Kubrā

(Navigating the complexities of Leadership
(Imamah))

By:

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Transliteration key

أ- 'ā	ض - ḍ
آ - ā	ط - ṭ
ب - b	ظ - ḏ
ت - t	ع - 'c
ث - th	غ - gh
ج - j	ف - f
ح - ḥ	ق - q
خ - kh	ك - k
د - d	ل - l
ذ - dh	م - m
ر - r	ن - n
ز - z	و - w, ū
س - s	ه - h
ش - sh	ي - y, ī
ص - ṣ	

Introduction

In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

All praise is for Allah ﷻ alone; and sufficient is He ﷻ (for us). May peace be upon His chosen servants.

The *Ahl al-Sunnah*, *Mu‘tazilah*, *Murji‘ah*, *Shī‘ah* and *Khawārij*—with the exception of the *Najdiyyah*—all agree on the necessity of *imāmah* (leadership), and that obedience to an *imām ‘ādil* (just imām) is compulsory upon the Ummah. However, the *Najdiyyah*—a sect within the *Khawārij*—say that *imāmah* is not necessary; and that it is sufficient that people uphold truth (alt. each other’s right) amongst themselves. This is obviously an invalid opinion.

The said groups also agree that there should only be one imām at any given time. However, Muḥammad ibn Karrām¹, Abū al-Ṣabbāḥ al-Samarqandī² and their respective supporters disagree; permitting the co-existence of two or more imāms at any given time. They draw support for their view from the Anṣār’s statement:

مِنَّا أَمِيرٌ وَمِنْكُمْ أَمِيرٌ.

... [Let there be] a leader from us and a leader from you.³

They also substantiate their viewpoint by citing the situation of ‘Alī, and his son, Ḥasan ﷺ, with Mu‘āwiyah ﷺ.⁴

However, in disproving this we rely on what the Prophet ﷺ said:

1 Muḥammad ibn Karrām al-Sijastānī was the founder of the Karrāmiyyah sect. [translator’s note]

2 Abū al-Ṣabbāḥ al-Samarqandī was a heretical extremist. Ibn Ḥazm in his *al-Fiṣl* said (about him): He (referring to Abū al-Ṣabbāḥ al-Samarqandī) used to say that Allāh’s creation has always been in His presence with Him (physically). He believed that the *Ahl al-Kitāb*’s slaughtered meat was unlawful (to consume) and also felt Abū Bakr ﷺ was mistaken in his judgement to wage war against the apostates. Ibn Ḥajr al-‘Asqalānī. *Lisān al-Mizān*, vol. 9, p. 98.

3 Imām al-Bukhārī: *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth no. 3667, 3668.

4 Mu‘āwiyah did not relinquish control of al-Dhām during ‘Alī’s khilāfah and after his assassination which led to his son, Ḥasan ﷺ assuming the khilāfah. [translator’s note]

إِذَا بُوعَ أَحَدُ الْخَلِيفَتَيْنِ، فَاقْتُلُوا الْآخَرَ مِنْهُمَا.

When the pledge of allegiance has been taken for two khalīfahs, kill the one for whom the pledge was taken later.¹

Allah ﷻ says:

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

And do not be like the ones who became divided and differed after the clear proofs had come to them. And those will have a great punishment.²

In this verse, Allah ﷻ forbade division and dissention. If we permitted two imāms, then a third or even a fourth imām would also be permitted. In fact, every city and town would have their own imām! This would result in widespread disorder and utter destruction.

Furthermore, the Anṣār retracted their view and conceded (to having one imām). As for the situation with ‘Alī and Ḥasan رضي الله عنهما, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم forewarned that a group would emerge from one of two dissenting parties; the party closest to the truth would (eventually) fight them.³

The one to fight this faction was none other than Amīr al-Mu‘minīn, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه. Thus, he was the rightful leader without a doubt. It was for this reason the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said that the transgressing party will kill ‘Ammār (ibn Yāsir).⁴

‘Alī رضي الله عنه was the forerunner to imāmah; whoever differed with him (referring to Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه), was mistaken. However, Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه was considered a (legitimate) mujtahid⁵ and so he will be rewarded by Allah ﷻ nonetheless.

1 Imām Muslim: *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ḥadīth no. 1853.

2 Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān, 105.

3 Imām Muslim: *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ḥadīth no. 1064.

4 Imām Muslim: *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 2916.

5 A mujtahid is someone who is permitted to formulate an independent decision based on his interpretation and application of the various sources of law. [translator’s note]

With reference to the Anṣār's statement:

مِنَّا أَمِيرٌ

[Let there be] a leader from us...

Their intent thereby was simply to say, “Let there be a ruler (*wālī*) from us. When he dies then let there be a ruler from among you (the Muhājirīn); and like this, *in perpetuum*.” They were not suggesting that there be two simultaneous imāms.¹

The situation with ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا was such that neither of them surrendered to the other.² Likewise, Amīr al-Mu‘minīn Ḥasan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ did not surrender at first. However, he eventually abdicated in favour of Mu‘āwiyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.³

We find that the Anṣār nominated Sa‘d ibn ‘Ubādah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, and the Muhājirīn Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ; all the while ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was in his house alone with no one save his family and Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. He did not try to rally support (for himself) or demand they should pledge allegiance to him. The truth dawned upon him sometime later (and he too pledged his allegiance to Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ). He went on to explain that the only reason he delayed was out of benign reproach; as Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ did not consult with him in this matter. Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ explained to him that the only reason for haste was his fear that the people of the *saqīfah*⁴ may rush into a premature decision.

In the end everyone—with the exception of S‘ad رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ—pledged their obedience to Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ as they recognised him most competent for this task; not out of fear of him or that he was desirous of it.

1 Al-Dhahabī is presenting his interpretation of their statement.

2 Although their differences were not rooted in either of them contesting the khilāfah.

3 Had the Imāmah of both Imāms running simultaneously been valid there would have been no need for Ḥasan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to surrender the khilāfah.

4 The Saqīfah refers to the canopy under which the Anṣār used to assemble when discussing pertinent matters. [translator’s note]

If an ignorant person claimed that their pledge of allegiance to Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was indeed out of fear; one wonders what brought this on since he recommended ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ as khalīfah.

Are we to imagine that in the matter of leadership they would pledge their lives in obedience to a fellow from Banū Taym (i.e. Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) whilst disobeying the Prophet of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ by suppressing and concealing his ‘categorical appointment’ (*naṣṣ*) of his cousin, ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ? By Allah, so grave is this statement that one shudders to think the consequences if even a child uttered it! A statement such as this is a stepping stone towards heresy!

Furthermore, if ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ—notwithstanding his valour, nobility, high standing, and (the fact) that he was the first to embrace Islam—really did contest the issue of leadership, and truly desired it, he would have immediately been supported by his uncle, ‘Abbās—a nobleman of Quraysh, his cousin, Zubayr—the disciple (*ḥawārī*) of the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, and Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥarb of Banū Umayyah, among others.

How true are the words of the most honest man who ever lived:

يَأْتِي اللَّهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ أَنْ يُخْتَلَفَ عَلَى أَبِي بَكْرٍ

Allah and the believers refuse any disagreement about Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.¹

Tell me, what would bring people to love Abū Bakr, prefer him over others [for leadership], and finally pledge allegiance to him? Was it because of his brute force; or was it because of Banū Taym’s large numbers and their position of leadership in society? Could it be due to their vast wealth and abundance of slaves?² Are we to imagine this for a man, who, after having been given the pledge of allegiance went out to earn a living? Why then would his people stop him from selling a few items of clothing to provide for his family, and instead fix a stipend for him from the Bayt al-Māl.

1 Ibn S‘ad: *Ṭabaqāt ibn S‘ad*, 3:180.

2 Al-Dhahabī appears to have adopted a tone of sarcasm with his opposition.

Through him, and his successor, ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, the Dīn became well-established. Empires were conquered, the kingdoms of *Kisrā*, *Qaysār*, and *Muqawqis* were obliterated, and *shirk* (polytheism) dissipated. May Allah cause your nose to grovel in the dust out of humiliation for your hatred towards these two!¹

But, as the saying goes, “Your love of something is blinding and deafening.” Had Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَعَالِي truly desired your salvation you would have instead abundantly recited the verse:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

And [there is a share for] those who came after them, saying, “Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts [any] resentment toward those who have believed. Our Lord, indeed You are Kind and Merciful.”²

What then can be said of the Anṣār? Loving them is part of faith. It is they who pledged their loyalty to the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ until death. It was they who provided sanctuary for him, supported him, and in so doing declared their opposition towards the entire Arabian Peninsula. They even fought the armies of the Byzantines, Persians, and Coptic’s despite their large numbers. It is remarkable how such individuals, despite being around their leader and senior, S‘ad رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, turned their attention away from him upon the arrival of three ‘outsiders’ from Quraysh.³ By Allāh, they did not submit to them and pledge their allegiance to Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ except that they became aware of the truth.

Let us assume that they were spineless and incapable of standing up to these three to instate one of their own—as preposterous as this sounds—would they not have at least said, “It is not for us or for you; instead it is for he whom the

1 Referring to the Rawāfiq. [translator’s note]

2 Sūrah al-Ḥaṣhr, 10.

3 The three people referred to here are: Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and Abū ‘Ubaydah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. They were all present at Saqīfah Banī Sā‘idah. [translator’s note]

Messenger ﷺ has explicitly nominated.” as you claim?

Can you not see that your felony has been exposed? How spurious are your arguments! How repulsive your bigotry! You resemble the Jews; who rejected the truth and massacred the prophets. You possess the nature of Abū Jahl and the obstinacy of Iblīs.

If you simply set aside your bias, cast aside ignorance, adopt sound knowledge, and submit to impartiality, you would be granted success. May Allah ﷻ protect us and you from stubborn resistance and arrogance in the face of truth.

Think about what you are saying! You are attacking the *al-sābiqīn al-awwalīn* (forerunners of Islam); the participants of Badr and Bay‘at al-Riḍwān; the best nation produced as an example for mankind; those about whom Allah ﷻ says:

أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصُّدُوقُونَ

Those are the truthful.

Yet still you accuse them of such dishonour which will not even be attributed to mercenaries for hire, the Tatars, the thugs of Khawārizm, or even the munāfiqīn! Where is your intelligence?

Look at what you are saying and reflect upon the consequences thereof! You portray them as the most evil and oppressive of people! You attribute hypocrisy to them, and the crime of concealing (knowledge of) Dīn.

By Allah, if there truly was a dispute among them, and a power struggle—Allah forbid—that still would not dissuade us from loving and honouring them. The Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم had their differences, which at times, caused them to become upset with each other, but they would always settle their affairs and maintain mutual love. Even Mūsā عليه السلام became annoyed at his brother, Hārūn عليه السلام, to the extent that he grabbed him by the beard. However, he regained his composure afterwards and sought Allah’s ﷻ forgiveness for himself and his brother.

Such was the case with Abū Bakr and ‘Umar رضي الله عنهما. They too disputed as mentioned in a reliable ḥadīth.¹ Those that (initially) did not pledge their allegiance to Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه also disputed. ‘Alī and ‘Abbās رضي الله عنهما had a dispute on the issue of Fadak and so they raised their complaints to ‘Umar رضي الله عنه. So what happened? Similarly differences arose between ‘Alī and Zubayr رضي الله عنهما, and between Mu‘āwiyah and ‘Alī رضي الله عنهما. These differences reached a point where blood was shed; with each party having exercised their discretionary judgment. Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى forgave them and is still pleased with them رضي الله عنهم.

Even our own Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم felt upset and dissatisfaction for his daughter, Fāṭimah’s رضي الله عنها sake when news reached him that Amīr al-Mu‘minīn ‘Alī رضي الله عنه decided on marrying the daughter of Abū Jahl. When ‘Alī رضي الله عنه sensed that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was annoyed, he broke off his proposal to avoid displeasing the

1 Abū al-Dardā’ رضي الله عنه narrates the following incident:

I was sitting with the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم when Abū Bakr headed towards us holding onto the edge of his cloak to the extent that he exposed his knees.

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “As for your friend he is upset.”

Abū Bakr greeted and said, “O Messenger of Allah! Something happened between me and Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (‘Umar). I hastened (after the incident) towards him and regretted (my action) and asked him to forgive me but he refused. Therefore I came to you.”

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “May Allah forgive you, O Abū Bakr;” Repeating it thrice.

Then ‘Umar regretted his action and went to the house of Abū Bakr and asked, “Is Abū Bakr home,” and they replied that he was not.

He then went to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and when the Prophet saw him, his face turned red to the point that Abū Bakr regretted (taking the matter to the Prophet).

Abū Bakr sat up and said, “O Messenger of Allah! I was the one in the wrong;” repeating it twice.

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم then said, “Allah sent me to you and you all said, ‘You are lying,’ and Abū Bakr said, ‘You speak the truth,’ he provided me with both physical and financial assistance. Will you not leave my companion for my sake?” repeating it twice.

He (Abū Bakr) was never inconvenienced again after that.

Imām al-Bukhārī. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ḥadīth no. 3388. [translator’s note]

Prophet ﷺ. This did not lower his status with the Prophet ﷺ in any way.

Moreover, where did ‘Alī, Zubayr رضي الله عنه, and Banū Hāshim’s strength and courage disappear? Were they unable to kill a simple cloth merchant; someone with little wealth or family backing; a person who had no bodyguards for protection? Were they incapable of dealing with a ‘hypocrite’ who transgressed; and concealed the ‘unambiguous appointment’ of ‘Alī’?

What stopped ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and his family from assassinating Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه in defence against ‘falsehood’ and establishing the ‘truth’? On the contrary, he recognised virtue in those deserving of it, and pledged allegiance to Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه out of his excellence and superiority, may Allah be pleased with them both.

If it is said that the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم simply forgot the unequivocal appointment then from where did the Rawāfiḍ receive this information, and who transmitted it to them? All this speculation is nothing but foolishness and simply impossible.

If they say: ‘Alī رضي الله عنه had, in the past, killed some members of Quraysh and this left bitterness, hatred and rancour for him in their hearts.

We say: This is a weak attempt at distorting the facts and a blatant lie! This could possibly apply for Banū ‘Abd Shams, Banū Makhzūm, Banū ‘Abd al-Dār, and Banū ‘Āmir, since ‘Alī رضي الله عنه killed at least one or two from each of these clans. He killed ‘Amr ibn ‘Abd Wudd from Banū ‘Āmir; al-Walīd ibn ‘Utbah, al-‘Ās ibn Sa‘īd al-‘Ās and ‘Uqbah ibn Abī Mu‘īṭ (according to one narration) from Banū ‘Abd Shams; and a few men from both Banū Makhzūm and Banū ‘Abd al-Dār. However, anyone who possesses any knowledge of history will know that not a single one of these tribes had a major role to play on the day of the Saqīfah. If anyone then only Abū Sufyān رضي الله عنه, who was inclined towards ‘Alī رضي الله عنه out of tribal bias and rivalry, only because the matter of leadership had reached Banū Taym; not for religious reasons.

How does that account for the fact that Yazīd ibn Abī Sufyān, Khālīd ibn Sa‘īd ibn al-‘Ās, and Ḥārīth ibn Hishām were all inclined to the Anṣār for religious reasons? Bear in mind the Anṣār were responsible for killing of Abū Jahl, the brother of

Hārith ibn Hishām. Furthermore, Muḥammad ibn Abī Ḥudhayfah ibn ‘Utbah sided with ‘Alī رضي الله عنه against Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه.

Set aside this impudence and tell us: Whom from the Anṣār did ‘Alī رضي الله عنه kill that spawned such jealousy which led to his right (to khilāfah) being concealed and delayed? Most of them did not fight with him.

In a similar manner Ṭalḥah, Zubayr, and S‘ad رضي الله عنه had killed a number of mushrikīn, so why would they single out ‘Alī رضي الله عنه for resentment and not include these others as well?

The Rawāfiḍ have been known to possess little shame—just as they are known for being insolent and foolhardy—to the extent that they say that it was the underlying hostility and resentment that caused Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, Rabī‘ah ibn Zayd, Ibn ‘Umar, Usāmah, Muḥammad ibn Maslamah, Abu Ayyūb, Abu Hurayrah, Zayd, among others from the Muhājirīn and Anṣār رضي الله عنه to delay in pledging their allegiance to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه.

In response to this I say: How I wish I knew which classified report describes the situation between them as such!

All that can be said is that the aforementioned Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم, and others like them, considered it incorrect to fight during internal conflict and hence refrained from fighting (alongside ‘Alī رضي الله عنه against Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه).

When Ḥasan رضي الله عنه abdicated in favour of Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه the Ummah was once again united under a single ruler. Hence this year was named *‘ām al-jamā‘ah* (The Year of Unification). The entire Ummah accepted to be led by a single man.

This demonstrates that those present in the Islamic world—that year—agreed on validity of the khilāfah of a person other than the most suited for it in terms of religious superiority. A number of Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم pledged allegiance to Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه even though they were others who were undeniably superior to him such as Sa‘d, Ibn ‘Umar, Ḥasan, and a number of participants of Badr and Ḥudaybiyah رضي الله عنهم. Is there any issue with this?

Mu‘āwiyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was certainly competent for leadership. He was noble, brave, generous, awe-inspiring, and possessed many other great qualities, despite some foibles. May Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى overlook them and pardon him. He was the first of the monarchs; and the most resolute of them though he did not reach the prominence of the Khulafāh Rāshidūn. Not nearly.

A number of great people abstained from pledging allegiance to both Ibn Zubayr and Marwān. But as soon as ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān assumed control they pledged allegiance to him and accepted him as a leader. This was not done in spite of Ibn Zubayr, or because they were necessarily pleased with ‘Abd al-Malik, or that they preferred him over others with greater merit and virtue. The deception of the Rawāfiḍ exceeds all bounds.

If we were to assume the correctness of their fabricated narrative, why then did ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ include ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ in the shūrā when he excluded own relatives¹ from it? Among those excluded were Sa‘īd ibn Zayd al-‘Adawī, a participant at Badr and one of the ten who were promised paradise by the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ; and ‘Umar’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ own son, ‘Abd Allah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. The persons entrusted with making major decisions—the *ahl al-ḥall wa al-‘aqd*, the best of this Ummah—accorded ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ his rightful position, with impartiality and without prejudice.

When ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ called for everyone to pledge allegiance to him and a group of Muhājirīn and Anṣār went ahead with it, we find that none of them were afraid of him reproaching them for having concealed his ‘unequivocal nomination’. Furthermore, no excuse was presented for having pledged allegiance to those before him. Further still, he did not reprimand anyone for disclaiming his ‘unequivocal nomination’ not did he criticise them. This is despite him now having full control, and being in a position of authority over his ‘adversaries’ and there remained no reason to warrant *Taqiyyah* (dissimulation).

These are your minds which Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى allowed to be deluded and led astray. Perhaps He سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى did not intend true guidance for them.

1 He excluded them because he did not want to show them any sort of favouritism. [translator’s note]

After Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was killed and no one remained whom 'Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ ought to fear. Yet we never find 'Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ as having said to the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ “What is with you? How grave of a crime is this? For how long will this denial continue? For how long will you conceal my ‘direct appointment’ by the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ? For how long will you deny my obvious merits over you?”

Assume for a moment that he suppressed his anger and remained silent, was there no one bold enough and willing to stand up for the truth from the Banū Hāshim? Was 'Abbās—despite his loftiness and esteem—incapable of being frank with them about this? Was 'Aqīl ibn Abī Ṭālib—someone for whom Mu'āwiyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ afforded a great deal of courtesy—also incapable? By Allah, how strange is this! For how long will these extremist Shī'āh be blinded by their prejudice?

Tell me: Did the moral decency and fear of Allah سُبْحَانَكَ وَبِعَازِلِكَ disappear from the hearts of the believers and honourable mujāhidīn to the extent that they were no longer willing to uphold the Prophet's صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ nomination of 'Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ?

Were they only going to disclose this information after 'Uthmān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was killed; that too under trying circumstances and even though the killers of 'Uthmān and other seniors appointed 'Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ as their leader relying on ijtihād? Add to this the fact that they did not substantiate their position citing prophetic nomination.

لَقَدْ أَسْمَعْتَ لَوْ نَادَيْتَ حَيًّا | وَلَكِنْ لَا حَيَاةَ لِمَنْ تُنَادِي

You could have made someone hear if he was alive

Alas the person you are calling is lifeless

What a travesty indeed! The best Ummah—those who have been taken out as an example for mankind and whose territory stretches over the breadth of nearly two continents—not only agreed in its entirety to remain silent about 'Alī's رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ right to succession but denied him such rights! All of this whilst they never feared him or encountered difficulty in opposing him? Impossible!

Then amazingly, the following day, they pledge allegiance to him, thereby entering into his obedience, and then sacrificing themselves for his sake—as

they did in Jamal and Şiffin? Under such circumstances heads were rolling, blood flowing, the Qur’āns are being raised onto spears; and still no one to raise their voice and speak out?

Woe unto you! Fear Allah **سُبْحَانَكَ وَبِحَمْدِكَ**! Adhere to the nomination of your Prophet **صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ**!

Why did ‘Alī **رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ** not utter a single word of these on the Day of Şiffin? Instead, he eventually settled for arbitration.

Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam al-Rāfiḍī¹ says, “Is it inconceivable for them (the Şaḥābah **رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ**) to have concealed the naṣṣ even though they perpetrated even more heinous crimes such as killing one another?”

We say: This is actually the greatest proof against you, you fool! When he perceived the dissention emerging ‘Alī **رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ** was the first to fight! It was he who came to fight them and not the other way around. However, both of the parties legitimately exercised their discretion in terms of ijtihād and both parties earnestly read the situation differently, May Allah **سُبْحَانَكَ وَبِحَمْدِكَ** forgive them.

‘Alī **رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ** and his party were closer to the truth than the army from Shām. The Prophet **صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ** referred to the latter as *al-fi’at al-bāghiyah* (the transgressing party). We refrain from speaking about what transpired between the Şaḥābah **رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ** whereas you, on the other hand—with your ignorance—make a distinction between them. You undermine the lofty status of the rest of the Şaḥābah even in issues where they did not fight with one another. Which of us then exercised greater caution and deserves divine safety?

When ‘Alī **رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ** was martyred and Ḥasan **رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ** emerged with an army the size of a mountain, and a cavalry in excess of one-hundred thousand that were willing to die for his sake. What made it so easy for him to put down his arms and hand the matter over to Mu‘āwiyah **رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ**, thereby aiding him with his ‘misguidance’? In so doing, he relinquished his right—and that of his father’s since the time of the Prophet **صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ**.

1 Hishām ibn Ḥakam was a shīṭī scholar from the second century (A.H). [translator’s note]

Thereafter his brother, Ḥusayn—the martyr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ—comes along and follows suit. He too, remains silent without breaking his allegiance to Mu‘āwiyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. When Mu‘āwiyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ died Ḥusayn رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ stood up and pursued leadership; he found it difficult to remain silent and refrain from fighting. He fought until he too was martyred رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. If it was that he did not consider his allegiance to Mu‘āwiyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ acceptable, he would have acted with him in the same way he did with Yazīd.

Any fair-minded person cannot object to this, the noble grandsons of the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ Ḥasan and Ḥusayn رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا handed over complete authority to Mu‘āwiyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. They entered into his obedience without being forced, at a time when they yielded strength and force with the backing of an enormous army. This proves that they acted willingly. Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى restored unity in the Ummah through Ḥasan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. People’s blood was spared and the masses became subdued. The Ummah settled on someone who, despite the existence of those who were superior to him, still yielded the necessary skills for political leadership. To Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى belongs all praise.

If the noble grandsons رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا of the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ refused to relinquish their positions, and Ḥasan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ remained in power, there is no doubt that they would have had the upper hand against the people of Shām.

Take the case of Ziyād. Who is Ziyād? He was an unknown entity with no family and legitimate lineage. who refused (an order of) Mu‘āwiyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. Mu‘āwiyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ had to appease him to keep him in line to the extent that he appointed him as a governor and eventually recognised him as a brother. There are insights to be gained from this incident for those who are fair-minded.

We accept that ‘Alī’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ precedence among the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ, we recognise his experience, his remarkable fighting skills, his virtues, and that he was the best of people in his time; but what was it that raised Sayyid Ḥasan and Ḥusayn رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا to the same status? At that time, there were others who held a relatively higher and closer status, like Sa’d and Sa’īd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا. Ibn ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا too, were it not for something prior¹, could have been a candidate for khilāfah when they agreed to arbitration.

1 Al-Dhabābī is referring to ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ excluding him from the candidates for Khilāfah.

Similarly, Zayn al-‘Ābidīn, ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn—despite his prominence and nobility—he does not appear to exceed the likes of Sa‘īd ibn al-Musayyib, al-Qāsim, Sālim, and ‘Urwah in knowledge and action. The same can be said for Abū Ja‘far, Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī—despite his eligibility for khilāfah— he is not a peer to his brother Zayd, Ibn Shihāb ‘Abd al-Raḥman ibn al-Qāsim, and ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz in terms of knowledge and action. Likewise Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad—despite his suitability for leadership—he too was not superior in terms of his knowledge and action to ‘Umar ibn ‘Umar, Ibn Abī Dhi‘b; and Mūsā ibn Ja‘far too was not greater than ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Zāhid al-‘Umarī; and ‘Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā over Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi‘ī al-Muṭṭalibī. As for al-Riḍā’s son, Muḥammad, his grandson, ‘Alī (al-Hādī) and his great-grandson, al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad al-‘Askarī they all possessed great nobility and authority, but between them and the likes of Zayn al-‘Ābidīn, his son, al-Bāqir, and his grandson, al-Ṣādiq there is a stark difference in their knowledge and virtue.

As for their ‘awaited’ twelfth—imaginary—Imām, of him there are only two views, no third. Either he was born and later died, or he was never born to begin with. The latter view is more likely. As for the claim that he was in fact born and has been living in the cave of Samarra for the last four hundred and seventy years¹; and that he is alive today being sustained (by Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى; and that he will return and “fill the world with justice and equity”); and that he possesses the knowledge of both the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and Imām ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ—as a matter of fact knowledge of all that passed and will be—and that he is not susceptible to error, he does he forget, he is infallible, among other amazing traits. These are fabrications of the Rawāfiḍ liars; the forgeries of people who display absolutely no shame before Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى in the claims they make. We know of no ‘awaited’ person who is alive—even before the advent of Islam—except for the two Messiahs: the Messiah of guidance (who is currently in the heavens) and the Messiah of misguidance (who is shackled up on an island off the coast of the Mediterranean Sea). He is the Dajjāl, the worst possible thing awaited. The Messiah of guidance, ‘Īsā ibn Maryam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام will eventually kill him near the Gate of *Ludd*.²

1 This is the period of his absence until the time of al-Dhahabī. If we extend that period until our times it exceeds a thousand years.

2 Imām Muslim: *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ḥadīth no. 2937.

And then there is the flower of Nabī صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, Ḥusayn رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. He lived relatively later yet he rarely narrated ḥadīth or issued fatwā. All of his narrations combined would not even reach two pages. And on the other hand we find Ibn ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ—the most learned of the ummah (ḥabr al-ummah), his fiqh alone reaches twenty volumes, as do his narrations of ḥadīth. Similarly, Ḥusayn’s رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ son, ‘Alī, his fatāwā and ḥadīth do not exceed more than three pages at most. If all of Sa‘īd ibn al-Mussayib’s knowledge, fiqh, and ḥadīth were gathered it would fill an entire large volume! Abū Ja‘far has narrations and sayings that reach about two small volumes. Even his son, Ja‘far, transmits similar knowledge if not more. But Mūsā al-Kāẓim, the knowledge he transmits does not reach even half of that. Yet they claim these twelve Imāms possess knowledge of the entire Sharī‘ah.

What then is to be said about those scholars whom we have just mentioned? With their renowned status and extra-human ability to communicate with everyone, did these Imāms simply disclose some of their knowledge and conceal the rest? If they intentionally concealed their knowledge then this is a very repugnant and unfortunate act indeed! Even so, why would they announce something that was necessary to conceal in the first place?

Set aside these baseless claims and assertions, for true knowledge only comes with learning. If you claim that Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى taught them directly or revelation descended upon them then you have likened them to the Ambiyā’.

We seek refuge with Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى from being forsaken; for there is neither strength, nor power save in Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى, the Most High, (and) the Most Great. May the blessings of Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى be upon our Master; Muḥammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, his (blessed and pure) Family and Companions.