Contradictions in Shīʿī Writings

An academic study that highlighting the Imāmiyyah Shīʿah's confusion in explaining why ʿAlī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ did not use the sword to claim his right to the Khilāfah.

ʿAbd al-Malik ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Shāfiʿī

— may Allah forgive him —

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Transliteration key

أ، إ - ’	ض - ḍ
آ - ā	ط - ṭ
ب - b	ظ - ẓ
ت - t	ع - ʿ
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	

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Introduction

All praise belongs to Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ. May salutations and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, his entire family, and all his Companions.

The Shīʿah Imāmiyyah continue to suffer from inconsistencies and contradictions, both in transmitted reports and its scholars' conclusions. These become especially clear through the well-researched academic objections raised by its opponents, particularly those touching the central question of Imāmah.

Despite the strength of these objections, the answers given by leading Shīʿī authorities have disappointed their followers because of their weakness and frailty, to the point that they appear unable to convince even those followers[1], let alone their opponents.

This study further shows how the contradictions and inconsistencies of the Shīʿah Imāmiyyah become apparent, especially since its subject concerns Imāmah, the foundational pillar on which the Imāmī doctrine rests. More specifically, it addresses a question repeatedly raised in both earlier and recent times:

Why did Sayyidunā ʿAlī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ remain silent and refrain from using his sword to reclaim his alleged right to the Khilāfah after the death of the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ?

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1 One desirous of academic proof for the contradiction of leading Shīʿī authorities and their inability to give convincing answers to objections about Imāmah should study my book *Ishkāl fī al-Imāmah: Taṣaddaʿat ʿindahū Thawābit al-Tashayyuʿ al-Imāmī*, in which I discuss an objection concerning the occultation of the Twelfth Imām; their responses destroy the beliefs and pillars of Shi'ism.

What is the reason for his silence according to the explanations given within Imāmī Shīʿī doctrine?

I ask Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ for success and soundness in this study, that He makes it sincere for His sake, places it heavily in the scale of my deeds, and makes it a means of guiding the people of my community; for the guidance of even one of them is better for me than the most prized red camels.

May Allah's peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muḥammad, his entire family, and all his Companions.

Preface

Having set out the basic question on which this study is built: Why Sayyidunā ʿAlī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ remained silent instead of demanding his alleged right to the Khilāfah, we may now present the reasons Twelver sources justify that silence. These reasons appear in their transmitted reports and are affirmed in the statements of their scholars.

They are as follows:

1. Sayyidunā ʿAlī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ lacked supporters and helpers with whom to fight the usurpers of the Khilāfah.
2. Believing descendants were in the loins of the alleged usurpers, so he refrained from killing them so that those descendants could be born.
3. Fear that the alleged usurpers would apostatise from Islam altogether.
4. Fear of civil strife and division among the Muslims.

These are the four reasons the Shīʿah Imāmiyyah present as their framework. I will demonstrate a decisive contradiction and inconsistency between them, especially between the first reason—the lack of supporters, which is affirmed by their reports and scholars—and the other three, since the conflict between them is explicit. This is what the study will reveal after the detailed and thorough explanation of those four reasons.

Reason One

Sayyidunā ʿAlī Lacked Supporters and Helpers With Whom to Fight the Usurpers of the Khilāfah

This reason is widely reported in their narrations and scholars' statements through an alleged prophetic instruction to Sayyidunā ʿAlī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to fight and recover his right if helpers and supporters were available. This instruction appears in two forms: one requiring supporters without specifying a number, and another specifying forty supporters.

1. The Prophetic Instruction requiring the Availability of Supporters Without Specifying Their Number

This appears in their narrations and scholars' statements as follows:

1. Their reliable authority, al-Kulaynī, reports from Sadīr:

> كنا عند أبي جعفر عليه السلام فذكرنا ما أحدث الناس بعد نبيهم صلى الله عليه وآله واستذلالهم أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام
>
> فقال رجل من القوم أصلحك الله فأين كان عز بني هاشم وما كانوا فيه من العدد
>
> فقال أبو جعفر عليه السلام ومن كان بقي من بني هاشم إنما كان جعفر وحمزة فمضيا وبقي معه رجلان ضعيفان ذليلان حديثا عهد بالإسلام عباس وعقيل وكانا من الطلقاء أما والله لو أن حمزة وجعفرًا كانا بحضرتهما ما وصلا إلى ما وصلا إليه ولو كانا شاهدَيْهما لأتلفا نفسيهما

We were with Abū Jaʿfar عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. We mentioned what the people did after [the demise of] their Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and how they deserted Amīr al-Mu'minīn[1] عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام.

A man in the group said, "May Allah set you right! Where was the strength and number of the Banū Hāshim?"

Abū Jaʿfar explained, "Who remained of the Banū Hāshim? Jaʿfar and Ḥamzah had passed away, and only two weak, despised men who were recent converts to Islam remained with him: ʿAbbās and ʿAqīl, and they were among those granted amnesty at the Conquest. By Allah, had Ḥamzah and Jaʿfar been present with them, they would not have achieved what they achieved; had the two of them witnessed it, they would have sacrificed themselves."[2]

2. Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, al-Ṣadūq, narrates several reports in ʿIlal al-Sharā'iʿ including:

A. Al-Haytham ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Rummānī said:

سألت علي بن موسى الرضا عليه السلام فقلت له يا ابن رسول الله أخبرني عن علي بن أبي طالب لِمَ لم يجاهد أعداءه خمسًا وعشرين سنة بعد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله ثم جاهد في أيام ولايته فقال وكذلك علي عليه السلام ترك مجاهدة أعدائه لقلة أعوانه عليهم

I asked ʿAlī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā, "O son of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, tell me why ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib did not fight

1 Amīr al-Mu'minīn (Commander of the Faithful): A title conferred upon Sayyidunā ʿAlī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, which the Shīʿah use extensively to refer to him in their works.

2 Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī: *Al-Kāfī*, 1/189-190.

his enemies for twenty-five years after the Prophet صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ and then fought during the days of his rule?"

He replied, "ʿAlī refrained from fighting his enemies because he had too few supporters against them."[1]

B. Ibn Abī ʿUmayr narrated from one of our companions:

أنه سأل أبا عبد الله عليه السلام ما بال أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام لم يقاتلهم قال الذي سبق في علم الله أن يكون وما كان له أن يقاتلهم وليس معه إلا ثلاثة رهط من المؤمنين

He asked Abū ʿAbd Allāh عَلَيْهِٱلسَّلَامُ, "Why did Amīr al-Mu'minīn not fight them?"

He replied, "Because of what had already been ordained in Allah's knowledge; and he was not able to fight them when he had with him only three believers."[2]

C. Abān ibn Taghlib narrated from ʿIkrimah, from Ibn ʿAbbās:

ذُكرت الخلافة عند أمير المؤمنين علي بن أبي طالب عليه السلام فقال فطفقت أرتئي بين أن أصول بيد جذاء أو أصبر على طخية عمياء

The Khilāfah was mentioned in the presence of Amīr al-Mu'minīn, ʿAlī ibn Abī Tālib عَلَيْهِٱلسَّلَامُ, and he said, "I began weighing whether to attack with a severed hand[3] or to endure a blinding darkness."[4]

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1 Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī: *ʿIlal al-Sharā'iʿ*, 1/146-151.

2 Ibid.

3 A severed hand: the intended meaning is the scarcity of supporters. Further explanation of this phrase from Imāmī scholars appears later.

4 Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī: *ʿIlal al-Sharā'iʿ*, 1/146-151.

3. Al-Ṣadūq Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī narrates from Ibrāhīm ibn ʿUmar al-Yamānī, from Sulaym ibn Qays al-Hilālī, who said:

> سمعت سلمان الفارسي رضي الله عنه يقول ... فقال له رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله فإن وجدت عليهم أعوانًا فجاهدهم وقاتل من خالفك بمن وافقك وإن لم تجد أعوانًا فاصبر وكف يدك ولا تلق بها إلى التهلكة
>
> I heard Salmān al-Fārisī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ saying ... The Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said to him, "If you find supporters against them, then strive against them and fight those who oppose you with those who agree with you. If you do not find supporters, then be patient, restrain your hand, and do not cast yourself into destruction."[1]

4. Al-Ṣadūq Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī narrates:

> فإن وجد أعوانًا يتقوى بهم جاهد وإن لم يجد أعوانًا فلا لوم عليهم لا عليه لأنهم أُمروا بطاعته على كل حال ولم يُؤمر هو بمجاهدتهم إلا بقوة
>
> If he found supporters by whom he could gain strength, he would fight. If he did not find supporters, then the blame was upon them, not upon him; for they were commanded to obey him in every circumstance, while he was commanded to fight them only when he had sufficient strength.[2]

5. Shaykh al-Ṭā'ifah al-Ṭūsī narrates from Sulaym ibn Qays al-Hilālī, from Jābir ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī, from ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbbās:

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1 Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī: *Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Niʿmah*, pg. 262-264.

2 Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī: *ʿUyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā*, 1/212.

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم في وصيته لأمير المؤمنين عليه السلام يا علي إن قريشًا ستظاهر عليك وتجتمع كلمتهم على ظلمك وقهرك فإن وجدت أعوانًا فجاهدهم وإن لم تجد أعوانًا فكف يدك واحقن دمك فإن الشهادة من ورائك لعن الله قاتلك

The Prophet ﷺ said in his instruction to Amīr al-Mu'minīn عليه السلام, "O ʿAlī, Quraysh will unite against you and agree upon wronging and overpowering you. If you find supporters, fight them; if you do not find supporters, restrain your hand and preserve your blood, for martyrdom lies ahead of you. May Allah curse your killer."[1]

6. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī narrates:

ثم بكى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله حتى سالت دموعه ثم قال يا علي الصبر الصبر حتى ينزل الأمر ولا قوة إلا بالله العلي العظيم فإن لك من الأجر في كل يوم ما لا يحصيه كاتب فإذا أمكنك الأمر فالسيف السيف فالقتل القتل حتى يفيؤوا إلى أمر الله وأمر رسوله

Then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ wept until his tears flowed. He then said, "O ʿAlī! Patience, patience, until the command descends; there is no power except through Allah, the Most High, the Mighty. For each day, you will receive a reward no scribe can enumerate. When the matter becomes possible for you, then the sword, the sword, then killing, killing, until they return to the command of Allah and the command of His Messenger."[2]

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1 Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī: *Al-Ghaybah*, pg. 193, 335.

2 Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī: *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 29/425-426.

7. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī narrates:

> ثم خلّوه مغضبًا فسمعته يقول ورفع رأسه إلى السماء اللهم إنك تعلم أن النبي صلى الله عليه وآله قد قال لي إن تموا عشرين فجاهدهم وهو قولك في كتابك إِنْ يَكُنْ مِّنكُمْ عِشْرُوْنَ صَابِرُوْنَ يَغْلِبُوْا مِائَتَيْنِ اللهم وإنهم لم يتموا عشرين حتى قالها ثلاثًا ثم انصرف
>
> Then they left him, while he was in an angry state, and I heard him say, raising his head to the sky, "O Allah! You know that the Prophet عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام said to me: If they reach twenty, then fight them. This is Your statement in Your Book, *'If there are twenty steadfast among you, they will overcome two hundred.'*[1] O Allah, they did not reach twenty." He repeated this thrice and then departed.[2]

8. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī writes: Amīr al-Mu'minīn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام said—as reported from him in *Nahj al-Balāghah:*

> فنظرت فإذا ليس لي معين إلا أهل بيتي فضننت بهم عن الموت وأغضيت على القذى وشربت على الشجا وصبرت على أخذ الكظم وعلى أمر من طعم العلقم
>
> I looked and found no helper except the members of my household, so I withheld them from death. I closed my eyes to the mote, swallowed the choking pain, and endured stifling grief and something more bitter than colocynth.[3]

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1 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 65.

2 Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī: *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 28/229.

3 Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī: *Mir'āt al-ʿUqūl Sharḥ Akhbār Āl al-Rasūl*, 26/333.

Statements of their scholars

1. Al-Mufīd says:

> وأما ترك النكير عليهم باليد فهو أنه لم يجد ناصرًا ولا معينًا على ذلك ولو تولاه بنفسه وحامته لربما أدى ذلك إلى قتله أو قتل أهله وأحبته فلأجل ذلك عدل عن النكير وقد بيّن ذلك عليه السلام في قوله أما والله لو وجدت أعوانًا لقاتلتهم فبيّن عليه السلام أنه إنما قاتل من قاتل لوجود الأنصار وعدل عن قتال من عدل عن قتاله لعدمهم

> As for his refraining from opposing them by force, it was because he found no supporter or helper for that purpose. Had he undertaken it himself with his close circle, it might have led to his death or the death of his family members and loved ones, so for that reason he refrained from forceful opposition. He explained this when he said, "By Allah, had I found supporters, I would have fought them." Thus, he explained that he fought those whom he fought when supporters were present, and refrained from fighting those whom he did not fight because such supporters were absent.[1]

2. Al-Mufīd says:

> فدل على أنه عليه السلام إنما ترك جهاد الأولين لعدم الأنصار وجاهد الآخرين لوجود الأعوان

> This indicates that he [ʿAlī] عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام refrained from fighting the former because supporters were absent, and fought the latter because helpers were present.[2]

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1 Al-Mufīd: *Mas'alatān fī al-Naṣṣ ʿalā ʿAlī*, 2/27.

2 Al-Mufīd: *Al-Ifṣāḥ*, pg. 47.

3. Shaykh al-Ṭā'ifah al-Ṭūsī says:

> وأما ترك النكير عليهم باليد فلأنه لم يجد ناصرًا ولا معينًا ولو تولاه بنفسه وخواصه لربما أدى إلى قتله وقتل أهله وخاصته فلذلك عدل عنه وقد بيّن عليه السلام ذلك بقوله أما والله لو وجدت أعوانًا لقاتلتهم
>
> As for his refraining from opposing them by force, it was because he found no supporter or helper. Had he undertaken it himself and with his close followers, it might have led to his death and the death of his family members and close companions, so he refrained. He explained this when he said, "By Allah, had I found supporters, I would have fought them."[1]

4. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī says:

> لولا عهد عهده وهو ما ورد في الأخبار المتواترة أن النبي صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم أوصى إليه عليه السلام أنك إن لم تجد ناصرًا فوادعهم وصالحهم حتى تجد أعوانًا
>
> "Were it not for a covenant he made," i.e., the mass-transmitted reports state that the Prophet ﷺ instructed ʿAlī, "If you do not find a supporter, make a truce with them and remain at peace until you find helpers."[2]

5. Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī says:

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1 Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī: *Al-Iqtiṣād*, pg. 209; *al-Rasā'il al-ʿAshr*, pg. 124.

2 Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī: *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 28/436; *Mir'āt al-ʿUqūl Sharḥ Akhbār Āl al-Rasūl*, 26/333.

فيا سبحان الله كأنه لم يراجع الأخبار الواردة في المقام الدالة على ارتدادهم عن الإسلام واستحقاقهم القتل منه عليه السلام لولا الوحدة وعدم المساعد من أولئك الأنام

Glory be to Allah! It is as though he did not consult the reports relevant to the subject, which indicate their apostasy from Islam and that they deserved to be killed by him [ʿAlī] عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ were it not for his isolation and lack of assistance from those people.[1]

6. Bāqir Sharīf al-Qurashī says:

إن الإمام أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام ترك حقه ولم يجاهد أعداءه وذلك لقلة الناصر فقد قال فطفقت أرتئي بين أن أصول بيد جذاء أو أصبر على طخية عمياء إن الإمام لم تكن له فئة ينصرونه ولم يكن يأوي إلى ركن شديد مع كثرة أعدائه ومناوئيه فصبر سلام الله عليه وترك حقه

The Imām, Amīr al-Mu'minīn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, left his right and did not fight his enemies because he had few supporters. He said, "I began weighing whether to attack with a severed hand or endure a blinding darkness." The Imām had no group to support him and no strong pillar to rely upon, despite the multitude of his enemies and opponents. So, he was patient and left his right.[2]

7. ʿAlī al-Kūrānī writes:

وأخبرتك بأن الأمة ستغدر بك بعدي وأوصيتك أن تحفظ دمك إن لم تجد أنصارًا

1 Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī: *Al-Ḥadā'iq al-Nāḍirah*, 5/180.

2 Bāqir Sharīf Qurayshī: *Ḥayāt al-Imām al-Riḍā*, 2/65.

I informed you that the Ummah would betray you after me, and I instructed you to preserve your blood if you did not find supporters.[1]

8. Jaʿfar Murtaḍā al-ʿĀmilī says:

ولولا وصية من أخيه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله له بأن لا يناهضهم إلا إذا وجد أنصارًا لبادر إلى اختلاس أرواحهم وإرواء الأرض من دمائهم وطمس ذكرهم

Were it not for the instruction from his brother, the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, not to rise against them unless he found supporters, he would have hastened to take their lives, drench the earth with their blood, and erase their memory.[2]

9. Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Muẓaffar says:

وأما ما زعمه من إمكان منازعة أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام فممنوع إذ لا ناصر له إلا أقل القليل ولذا قال عليه السلام في خطبته الشقشقية فطفقت أرتئي بين أن أصول بيد جذاء أو أصبر على طخية عمياء إلى غير ذلك من متواتر كلامه

As for the claim that Amīr al-Mu'minīn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ could have contested the matter, it is rejected, for he had no supporter except a very small number. Thus, he said in his Shaqshaqiyyah sermon, "I began weighing whether to attack with a severed hand or endure a blinding darkness..." and many other authentic statements of his to the same effect.[3]

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1 ʿAlī al-Kūrānī: *Qirā'atun Jadīdatun li al-Futūḥāt al-Islāmiyyah*, 1/58-59.

2 Jaʿfar Murtaḍā al-ʿĀmilī: *Al-Ṣaḥīḥ min Sīrat al-Imām ʿAlī*, 9/190.

3 Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Muẓaffar: *Dalā'il al-Ṣidq li Nahj al-Ḥaqq*, 4/280.

10.ʿAlī al-Mīlānī says:

> قوله إنهما لم ينازعا أبا بكر ولو لم يكن على الحق لنازعاه كما نازع علي معاوية لأن العادة تقضي بالمنازعة في مثل ذلك إن أريد من المنازعة خصوص المحاربة فإنه لم يكن له ناصر إلا أقل القليل وقد صرح بقلة ناصريه في غير واحد من خطبه وكلماته من أشهرها الخطبة الشقشقية حيث قال فطفقت أرتئي بين أن أصول بيد جذاء أو أصبر على طخية عمياء
>
> His statement, "They did not contest with Abū Bakr, and if he were not rightly guided, they would have disputed with him just as ʿAlī contested with Muʿāwiyah, because custom dictates disputing in such cases." If by 'contesting', one specifically means armed fighting, then he had no supporter except a very small number. He explicitly stated the scarcity of his supporters in more than one sermon and statement, among the best known being the Shaqshaqiyyah sermon, in which he said, "I began weighing whether to attack with a severed hand or endure a blinding darkness."[1]

11.Ḥabīb Allāh al-Hāshimī al-Khū'ī said:

> فقد استعار اليد الجذاء لعدم الناصر والجامع عدم التمكن من التصرف والصولة بهما وقال أيضاً أو أصبرَ على طَخْيَةٍ عمياء أي على ظلمة والتباس من الأمور... وأما مع عدم التمكن والقدرة من حيث عدم المعاون والناصر فلا يلزم شيء من ذلك بل يجب التحمل والصبر حذرًا من إلقاء النفس على الهلكة وتعريضها للعطب واستيصال آل محمد صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم

1 ʿAlī al-Mīlānī: *Al-Imāmah fī Ahamm al-Kutub al-Kalāmiyyah*, pg. 55.

He utilised the metaphor "severed hand" to signify the lack of a helper; the common link being the inability to act or exert influence and force.[1] He also said, "Or I endure a blinding darkness," meaning a state of darkness and confusion regarding matters... As for when there is a lack of ability and power due to the absence of an assistant or helper, none of that is required; rather, endurance and patience become obligatory to avoid casting oneself into destruction, exposing it to peril, and causing the eradication of the family of Muḥammad ﷺ.[2]

12. Muḥammad Taqī al-Naqawī al-Qāyinī al-Khurāsānī says:

وقوله عليه السلام بيد جذاء كناية عن عدم إقبال الناس إليه وإعراضهم عنه فكأنه عليه السلام من جهة كونه بلا أعوان وأنصار مقطوع اليد إذ الإنسان كما أنه إذا كان مقطوع اليد يعجز ولا يقدر على شيء مما لليد فيه مدخلية فكذلك إذا لم يكن له ناصر ومعين لا يقدر على إجراء منوياته التي لا يمكن الوصول إليها إلا بالأعوان والأنصار

His statement "with a severed hand" is a metaphor for the people not turning toward him and instead turning away from him. Since he was without helpers and supporters, it was as though his hands were severed. Just as a person with a severed hand is incapable of matters requiring the use of a hand, so too one who has no supporter or helper cannot carry out intentions that can be achieved only through helpers and supporters.[3]

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1 Ḥabīb Allāh al-Hāshimī al-Khū'ī: *Minhāj al-Barāʿah fī Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, 1/92.

2 Ibid.

3 Muḥammad Taqī al-Naqawī al-Qāyinī al-Khurāsānī: *Miftāḥ al-Saʿādah fī Sharḥ*

The Prophetic Instruction Makes Fighting Conditional on the Availability of Forty Supporters

This scenario is more specific than the previous one because it gives a required number of supporters and helpers for fighting and reclaiming the alleged right: forty. This is stated explicitly in their reports and statements, as follows:

1. Their most famous author, Sulaym ibn Qays, reports a few narrations in his book, as follows:

> ولو كنت وجدت يوم بويع أخو تيم تتمة أربعين رجلاً مطيعين لي لجاهدتهم
>
> Had I found, on the day the brother of Taym [a reference to Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ] was given the pledge of allegiance, a full forty men obedient to me, I would have fought them.[1]

> يا ابن قيس والذي فلق الحبة وبرأ النسمة لو أن أولئك الأربعين الذين بايعوا وفوا لي وأصبحوا على بابي محلقين رؤوسهم قبل أن تجب لعتيق في عنقي بيعته لناهضته وحاكمته إلى الله عز وجل
>
> O Ibn Qays! By the One who split the seed and created the soul, if those forty who pledged allegiance to me had remained faithful and come to my door in the morning with their heads shaved before allegiance to ʿAtīq became binding upon my neck, I would have risen against him and taken the matter with him to Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى.[2]

Nahj al-Balāghah, 3/37.

1 Sulaym ibn Qays al-Hilālī: *Kitāb Sulaym ibn Qays al-Hilālī*, pg. 217.

2 Ibid., pg. 219.

يا ابن قيس أما والذي فلق الحبة وبرأ النسمة إني لو وجدت يوم بويع أخو تيم الذي عيرتني بدخولي في بيعته أربعين رجلاً كلهم على مثل بصيرة الأربعة الذين قد وجدت لما كففت يدي ولناهضت القوم ولكن لم أجد خامسًا فأمسكت

O Ibn Qays! By the One who split the seed and created the soul, if on the day the brother of Taym was given the pledge of allegiance—the pledge you reproached me for entering—I had found forty men with the same insight as the four I found, I would not have restrained my hand and I would have risen against the people. But I did not find a fifth, so I held back.[1]

أما والله ما ألوم نفسي في جهادكم ولو كنت استمكنت من الأربعين رجلاً لفرقت جماعتكم ولكن لعن الله أقوامًا بايعوني ثم خذلوني

By Allah, I do not blame myself regarding fighting you. Had I been able to secure forty men, I would have crushed your group. But may Allah curse people who pledged allegiance to me and then abandoned me.[2]

فذكرهم حقه ودعاهم إلى نصرته فما استجاب له منهم إلا أربعة وأربعون رجلاً فأمرهم أن يصبحوا بكرة محلقين رؤوسهم معهم سلاحهم ليبايعوا على الموت فأصبحوا فلم يواف منهم أحد إلا أربعة

He reminded them of his right and called them to support him. Only forty-four men responded. He ordered them

1 Ibid., pg. 218.

2 Ibid., pg. 152.

to come in the morning with shaved heads and armed, to pledge themselves unto death. In the morning, none fulfilled the appointment except four.[1]

2. Aḥmad ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Ṭabarsī narrates:

فقلت له بأبي أنت وأمي يا نبي الله فما تأمرني أن أفعل إذا كان ذلك فقال إن وجدت عليهم أعوانًا فجاهدهم ونابذهم وإن لم تجد أعوانًا فبايعهم واحقن دمك فقال علي عليه السلام أما والله لو أن أولئك الأربعين رجلاً الذين بايعوني ووفوا لجاهدتكم في الله ولله

I said to him, "May my father and mother be sacrificed for you, O Prophet of Allah! What do you command me to do if that occurs?"

He said, "If you find supporters against them, fight them and oppose them openly; if you do not find supporters, then pledge allegiance to them and preserve your blood."

ʿAlī ﷺ then said, "By Allah, if those forty men who pledged allegiance to me had fulfilled their pledge, I would have fought you in Allah's cause for the sake of Allah."[2]

3. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī cites:

والذي بعث محمدًا بالحق لو وجدت يوم بويع أخو تيم أربعين رهطًا لجاهدتهم في الله إلى أن أبلي عذري

By the One who sent Muḥammad with the truth, had I found forty men on the day the brother of Taym [Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه]

1 Ibid., pg. 146.

2 Aḥmad ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Ṭabarsī: *Al-Iḥtijāj*, 1/214-215.

was given the pledge of allegiance, I would have fought them for Allah until my excuse wore out.1

4. Al-Majlisī writes:

فأما قوله لم يكن لي معين إلا أهل بيتي فضننت بهم عن الموت فنقول ما زال علي عليه السلام يقوله ولقد قاله عقيب وفاة رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله لو وجدت أربعين ذوي عزم ...

As for his statement, "I had no helper except my household, so I withheld them from death," we say that ʿAlī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام repeatedly said this. Indeed, he proclaimed after the death of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, "Had I found forty men of resolve..."[2]

Statements of their scholars

1. ʿAlī ibn Yūnus al-Bayāḍī says:

وأجاب عليه السلام الأشعث مرة أخرى بأنه عهد النبي إليّ أن لا أجاهد إلا إذا وجدت أعوانًا فلو وجدت أعوانًا لجاهدت ولو وجدت أربعين يوم بويع لأخي تيم لجاهدتهم

He answered al-Ashʿath on another occasion, "The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ had made a covenant with me not to fight unless I found supporters. Had I found supporters, I would have fought. And had I found forty on the day allegiance was given to the brother of Taym [Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ], I would have fought them."[3]

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1 Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī: *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 29/154.

2 Ibid., 29/160. Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim mentioned this in al-Ṣiffīn, as well as many other historians.

3 ʿAlī ibn Yūnus al-ʿĀmilī al-Bayāḍī: *Al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm*, 3/12.

2. Muḥammad Riḍā al-Muẓaffar says:

وأصرح من ذلك ما كان يقوله لو وجدتُ أربعين ذوي عزم منهم لناهضتُ القوم وهذا ما عدّه معاوية من ذنوبه وذلك فيما كتب إليه من قوله فمهما نسيتُ فلا أنسى قولَك لأبي سفيان لما حرّكك وهَيّجك لو وجدتُ أربعين ذوي عزم منهم لناهضتُ القوم فما يومُ المسلمين منك بواحدٍ ولم ينكر أمير المؤمنين هذا القول في جوابه على هذا الكتاب وفي التاريخ مقتطفات تؤيد ذلك كما في تاريخ اليعقوبي إن أصحابه الذين كانوا يجتمعون إليه طالبوه بمناهضة القوم وتعهدوا بالنصرة وكأنهم ظنوا أن قد بلغوا العدد المطلوب (٤٠ ذوي عزم) فقال لهم اغدوا على هذا محلقي الرؤوس وهو إنما يريد أن يريهم أنهم لم يبلغوا المنزلة التي تقام بها الحجة فلم يعد عليه إلا ثلاثة نفر

More explicit than that is what he used to say, "Had I found forty resolute men among them, I would have confronted the people." This is what Muʿāwiyah counted among his sins, in what he wrote to him saying, "No matter what I forget, I will not forget your words to Abū Sufyān when you stirred and urged him, 'Had I found forty resolute men among them, I would have confronted the people, for the day of the Muslims is not a match for you.'" Amīr al-Mu'minīn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ did not deny this saying in his reply to this letter.

In history, some excerpts support this, as in *Tārīkh al-Yaʿqūbī*: Indeed, his companions who used to gather around him demanded that he confront the people and pledged support, and it was as if they thought they had reached the required number (40 resolute men). He said to them, "Come tomorrow morning with your heads shaved," for he only wanted to show them that they had not reached the rank by which the

proof is established; and none returned to him except three individuals.[1]

3. Muḥammad Riḍā al-Muẓaffar says:

فإن الإمام في الأول يقول لو وجدت الأربعين على هذه الصفة لناهضت القوم ومعنى ذلك أنه لم يجد الأربعين فلم يناهضهم يعني أنه سالمهم

In the first report, the Imām says, "Had I found forty men possessing this quality, I would have risen against the people." This means that he did not find the forty and therefore did not rise against them, i.e., he remained at peace with them.[2]

4. Al-Sayyid ʿAlī Khān al-Madanī says:

وأما الذين كانوا معه عليه السلام فقيل إنهم لم يبلغوا الأربعين حتى روي عنه أنه قال لو وجدت أربعين رجلاً لقاتلتهم

As for those who were with him, it is said that they did not reach forty, to the point that it is narrated from him, "Had I found forty men, I would have fought them."[3]

1 Muḥammad al-Riḍā al-Muẓaffar: *Al-Saqīfah*, pg. 117.

2 Ibid., pg. 160.

3 Al-Sayyid ʿAlī Khān al-Madanī: *Al-Darajāt al-Rafīʿah fī Ṭabaqāt al-Shīʿah*, 1/176.

Reason Two

Believing Descendants Were in the Loins of the Alleged Usurpers, So He Refrained from Killing Them Until Those Descendants Were Born

This reason is stated explicitly in their reports and statements, as follows:

1. Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī narrates several reports in the chapter explaining why Amīr al-Mu'minīn refrained from fighting those who opposed him, including:

   A. Muḥammad ibn Abī ʿUmayr narrated from one whom he mentioned from Abū ʿAbd Allāh عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ:

> قال قلت له ما بال أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام لم يقاتل فلانًا وفلانًا وفلانًا قال لآية في كتاب الله عز وجل لَوْ تَزَيَّلُوا لَعَذَّبْنَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا قال قلت وما يعني بتزايلهم قال ودائع مؤمنين في أصلاب قوم كافرين وكذلك القائم عليه السلام لن يظهر أبدًا حتى تخرج ودائع الله تعالى فإذا خرجت ظهر على من ظهر من أعداء الله فقتلهم
>
> I asked him, "Why did Amīr al-Mu'minīn not fight so-and-so, so-and-so, and so-and-so?"
>
> He replied, "Because of a verse in the Book of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic: *Had they been separated, We would have punished those among them who disbelieved with a painful punishment.*[1]"

1 Sūrah al-Fatḥ: 25.

I asked, "What is meant by them being separated?"

He replied, "Seeds for future believing descendants in the loins of disbelieving people. Likewise, the Qā'im will never appear until Allah's trusts [those believing descendants] emerge. Once they have emerged, he will prevail over those enemies of Allah over whom he prevails and kill them."

B. Al-Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb narrated from Ibrāhīm al-Karkhī:

قال قلت لأبي عبد الله عليه السلام أو قال له رجل أصلحك الله ألم يكن علي عليه السلام قويًا في دين الله عز وجل قال بلى قال فكيف ظهر عليه القوم وكيف لم يدفعهم وما منعه من ذلك قال آية في كتاب الله عز وجل منعته قال قلت وأي آية قال قوله تعالى لَوْ تَزَيَّلُوا لَعَذَّبْنَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا إنه كان لله عز وجل ودائع مؤمنين في أصلاب قوم كافرين ومنافقين فلم يكن علي عليه السلام ليقتل الآباء حتى تخرج الودائع فلما خرجت الودائع ظهر علي على من ظهر فقاتله وكذلك قائمنا أهل البيت لن يظهر أبدًا حتى تظهر ودائع الله عز وجل فإذا ظهرت ظهر على من ظهر فقتله

I asked Abū ʿAbd Allāh عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, or a man asked him, "May Allah make you prosper! Was ʿAlī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام not strong in Allah's سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى religion?"

He replied, "Yes."

I or the man asked, "Then how did the people prevail over him? Why did he not repel them? What prevented him?"

He explained, "A verse in Allah's عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام Book prevented him."

"Which verse?"

"Allah's statement: *Had they been separated, We would have punished those among them who disbelieved with a painful punishment.* Allah had seeds for future believing descendants in the loins of disbelievers and hypocrites, so ʿAlī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام would not kill the fathers until the trusts [those believing descendants] had emerged. Once they emerged, ʿAlī prevailed over those he fought. Likewise, our Qā'im from the Ahl al-Bayt will never appear until Allah's trusts [those believing descendants] emerge; once they have emerged, he will prevail over those he prevails over and kill them."

C. Manṣūr ibn Ḥāzim narrated from Abū ʿAbd Allāh عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام:

قال في قول الله عز وجل لَوْ تَزَيَّلُوا لَعَذَّبْنَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا لو أخرج الله ما في أصلاب المؤمنين من الكافرين وما في أصلاب الكافرين من المؤمنين لعذب الذين كفروا

He said regarding Allah's statement, Had they been separated, We would have punished those among them who disbelieved with a painful punishment, "If Allah had brought forth the disbelievers in the loins of believers and the believers in the loins of disbelievers, He would have punished those who disbelieved."[1]

1 Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī: *ʿIlal al-Sharā'iʿ*, 1/147-148, chapter 122.

2. Shīʿī commentator, ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī, narrated from ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥusayn, from some of his companions, from a certain al-Karkhī who said:

قال رجلٌ لأبي عبد الله عليه السلام ألم يكن عليٌّ قويّاً في بدنه قويّاً في أمر الله فقال له أبو عبد الله عليه السلام بلى قال فما منعه أن يدفع أو يمتنع قال قد سألت فافهم الجواب منع عليّاً من ذلك آيةٌ من كتاب الله فقال وأيُّ آية قال فقرأ لَوْ تَزَيَّلُوا لَعَذَّبْنَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَاباً أَلِيماً إنه كان لله ودائع مؤمنون في أصلاب قوم كافرين ومنافقين فلم يكن عليٌّ صلوات الله عليه ليقتل الآباء حتى يخرج الودائع فلما خرجت ظهر على مَن ظهر وقتله وكذلك قائمنا أهل البيت لن يظهر أبداً حتى يخرج ودائع الله فإذا خرجت ظهر على مَن يظهر فيقتله

A man asked Abū ʿAbd Allāh عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, "Was not ʿAlī strong in his body, strong in the affair of Allah?"

Abū ʿAbd Allāh عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام replied, "Yes."

He enquired, "Then what prevented him from repelling or defending himself?"

Abū ʿAbd Allāh عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام said, "You have asked, so understand the answer. What prevented ʿAlī from that was a verse from the Book of Allah."

He asked, "Which verse?"

He recited, "*Had they been separated, We would have punished those among them who disbelieved with a painful punishment.* There were believers, trusts of Allah, in the loins of disbelievers and hypocrites. ʿAlī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام would not kill the fathers until the trusts [those believing descendants] came forth. When they

came forth, he overcame whoever appeared against him and killed him. Likewise, our Qā'im of the Ahl al-Bayt will never appear until the trusts of Allah come forth; when they come forth, he will overcome whoever appears and kill him."[1]

3. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī narrated from Ibrāhīm al-Karkhī:

قلتُ لأبي عبد الله عليه السلام أو قال له رجل أصلحك الله ألم يكن عليٌّ عليه السلام قويّاً على دين الله قال بلى قال فكيف ظهر عليه القوم وكيف لم يدفعهم وما منعه من ذلك قال آية في كتاب الله منعته قال قلت وأيُّ آية قال قوله لَوْ تَزَيَّلُوا لَعَذَّبْنَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَاباً أَلِيماً إنه كان لله تعالى ودائع مؤمنين في أصلاب قوم كافرين ومنافقين فلم يكن عليٌّ عليه السلام ليقتل الآباء حتى تخرج الودائع فلما خرجت الودائع ظهر على مَن ظهر فقاتله وكذلك قائمنا أهل البيت لن يظهر أبداً حتى تظهر ودائع الله فإذا ظهرت ظهر على مَن ظهر فقتله

I asked Abū ʿAbd Allāh عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, or a man asked him, "May Allah make you prosper! Was ʿAlī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ not strong in Allah's سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى religion?"

He replied, "Yes."

I or the man asked, "Then how did the people prevail over him? Why did he not repel them? What prevented him from that?"

He explained, "A verse in Allah's عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ Book prevented him."

He asked, "Which verse?"

1 ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī: *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, 2/316.

He explained, "Allah's words: *Had they been separated, We would have punished those among them who disbelieved with a painful punishment.*[1] Verily, there were believers, trusts of Allah, in the loins of disbelievers and hypocrites. ʿAlī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام would not kill the fathers until the trusts came out. When the trusts came out, he overcame whoever appeared and fought him. Likewise, our Qā'im of the Ahl al-Bayt will never appear until the trusts of Allah appear; when they appear, he will overcome whoever appears and kill him."[2]

Statements of their scholars

1. Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī says:

فهذا سبيل من في صلبه مؤمن إذا وجب عليه القتل لم يُقتل حتى يزايله ولا يعلم ذلك إلا من يكون حجة من قبل علام الغيوب وهذه هي العلة التي من أجلها ترك أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام مجاهدة أهل الخلاف خمسًا وعشرين سنة بعد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله

This is the rule regarding one in whose loins there is a [future] believer: if he deserves to be killed, he is not killed until that believer has separated from him. No one knows this except one who is a proof appointed by the Knower of the unseen. This is the reason for which Amīr al-Mu'minīn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام refrained from fighting the people of opposition for twenty-five years after the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.[3]

2. Al-Mufīd says:

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1 Sūrah al-Fatḥ: 25.

2 Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī: *Mir'āt al-ʿUqūl Sharḥ Akhbār Āl al-Rasūl*, 26/331.

3 Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī: *Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Niʿmah*, pg. 641.

ومنه أنه علم أن في ظهورهم مؤمنين لا يجوز قتلهم واجتياحهم فكان ترك قتلهم مصلحة

Among the reasons is that he knew there were believers in their loins whom it was not permissible to kill or annihilate, so refraining from killing them was beneficial.[1]

3. Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī says:

وشطر آخر من تلك الأخبار قد تضمن في بيان وجه العذر له عليه السلام أن في أصلاب أولئك الكفرة ودائع من المؤمنين وقتلهم يؤدي إلى فوات تلك الودائع

Another portion of those reports explains his excuse: in the loins of those disbelievers were believing trusts, and killing them would have caused the loss of those trusts.[2]

1 Al-Mufīd: *Mas'alatān fī al-Naṣṣ ʿalā ʿAlī*, 2/25.

2 Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī: *Al-Shihāb al-Thāqib fī Bayān Maʿnā al-Nāṣib*, pg. 220.

Reason Three

Fear That the Alleged Usurpers Would Apostatise from Islam Altogether

This reason is established in their narrations and their scholars' statements, as follows:

1. Al-Kulaynī narrates from al-Fuḍayl, from Zurārah, from Abū Jaʿfar عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ:

> إن الناس لما صنعوا ما صنعوا إذ بايعوا أبا بكر لم يمنع أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام من أن يدعو إلى نفسه إلا نظرًا للناس وتخوفًا عليهم أن يرتدوا عن الإسلام فيعبدوا الأوثان ولا يشهدوا أن لا إله إلا الله وأن محمدًا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله
>
> When the people did what they did by pledging allegiance to Abū Bakr, nothing prevented Amīr al-Mu'minīn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ from calling people to himself except his concern for them and his fear that they would apostatise from Islam, worship idols, and cease testifying that there is no deity but Allah and that Muḥammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ is the Messenger of Allah.[1]

2. Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī narrates several reports, including:

   A. ʿAlī ibn Ismāʿīl al-Maythamī says that Ribʿī narrated to him, from Zurārah who said:

> قلت لأبي عبد الله عليه السلام ما منع أمير المؤمنين أن يدعو الناس إلى نفسه قال خوفا أن يرتدوا قال علي بن حاتم

1 Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī: *Al-Kāfī*, 8/295-296.

وأحسب في الحديث ولا يشهدوا أن محمدا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم

I said to Abū ʿAbd Allāh, "What prevented Amīr al-Mu'minīn from calling the people to himself?"

He said, "Out of fear that they would apostatise."

ʿAlī ibn Ḥātim said, "And I assume in the narration: And that they would not testify that Muḥammad صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ is the Messenger of Allah."[1]

B. Burayd ibn Muʿāwiyah narrates from Abū Jaʿfar عَلَيْهِٱلسَّلَامُ:

إن عليًا عليه السلام لم يمنعه من أن يدعو الناس إلى نفسه إلا أنهم إن يكونوا ضلالاً لا يرجعون عن الإسلام أحب إليه من أن يدعوهم فيأبوا عليه فيصيروا كفارًا كلهم

ʿAlī عَلَيْهِٱلسَّلَامُ was prevented from calling people to himself only because it was preferable to him that they remain misguided yet not leave Islam, rather than him calling them, and they refuse him, thereby all becoming disbelievers.[2]

C. Muḥammad ibn Abī ʿUmayr narrated from one of our companions:

قلت لأبي عبد الله عليه السلام لِمَ كف علي عليه السلام عن القوم قال مخافة أن يرجعوا كفارًا

1 Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī: *ʿIlal al-Sharā'iʿ*, 1/149-150.

2 Ibid.

I asked Abū ʿAbd Allāh عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, "Why did ʿAlī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام withhold from the people?"

He replied, "For fear that they would return to disbelief."[1]

3. Al-Mufīd narrated from al-Ḥasan ibn Salamah:

لما بلغ أمير المؤمنين صلوات الله عليه مسير طلحة والزبير وعائشة من مكة إلى البصرة نادى الصلاة جامعة فلما اجتمع الناس حمد الله وأثنى عليه ثم قال ... وَأَيْمُ الله لولا مخافةُ الفرقةِ بين المسلمين وأن يعودوا إلى الكفر ويَعَوَرَ الدين لكنا قد غيّرنا ذلك ما استطعنا

When it reached Amīr al-Mu'minīn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام that Ṭalḥah, al-Zubayr, and ʿĀ'ishah were marching from Makkah to Baṣrah, he called out, "Prayer is gathering." When the people assembled, he praised and glorified Allah, then said: "... By Allah! Had it not been for the fear of division among the Muslims, that they would return to disbelief, and that the religion would be marred, we would have changed that to the best of our ability."[2]

4. Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī narrates:

أما حقي فقد تركته مخافة أن يرتد الناس عن دينهم

As for my right, I left it for fear that the people would apostatise from their religion.[3]

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1 Ibid.

2 Al-Mufīd: *Al-Amālī*, pg. 154.

3 Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī al-Shīʿī: *Dalā'il al-Imāmah*, pg. 137.

Statements of their scholars

1. Al-Mufīd says:

> وأيضًا فلو قاتلهم لربما أدى ذلك إلى بوار الإسلام وإلى ارتداد الناس وقد ذكر ذلك في قوله أما والله لولا قرب عهد الناس بالكفر لجاهدتهم
>
> Also, had he fought them, that might have led to the ruin of Islam and the apostasy of the people. He mentioned this when he said, "By Allah, were it not that the people had only recently left disbelief, I would have fought them."[1]

2. Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, titled ʿAlam al-Hudā, says:

> وقد تقدمت الوصية له من النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بالكف عن الحرب مخافة بطلان مرس الإسلام وقد بين ذلك في مقاله عليه السلام حيث يقول أما والله لولا قرب عهد الناس بالكفر لجاهدتهم
>
> The Prophet ﷺ had already instructed him to refrain from war out of fear that the traces of Islam would be effaced. He explained this in his own statement, "By Allah, were it not that the people had only recently left disbelief, I would have fought them."[2]

3. Shaykh al-Ṭā'ifah al-Ṭūsī says:

> فلو قاتلهم لربما أدى إلى ارتداد أكثرهم وفي ذلك بوار الإسلام وقد بيّن ذلك في خطبته بقوله لولا قرب عهد الناس بالكفر لقاتلتهم

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1 Al-Mufīd: *Mas'alatān fī al-Naṣṣ ʿalā ʿAlī*, 2/25.

2 Sharīf al-Murtaḍā: *Al-Fuṣūl al-Mukhtārah*, pg. 251.

Had he fought them, it might have caused most of them to apostatise, and that would have meant the ruin of Islam. He explained this in his sermon, "Were it not that the people had only recently left disbelief, I would have fought them."[1]

4. Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī says:

قد اختلفت الرواية في بيان وجه العذر له عليه السلام في ترك محاربة أولئك الفجرة الذين غصبوا الخلافة فالمستفاد من الخبر الأخير من الأخبار المتقدمة من الكافي أن العذر له عليه السلام كان من جهة خوف الارتداد عن الدين بالكلية والرجوع إلى عبادة الأصنام وإنكار كلمتي الشهادة

The reports differ in explaining his excuse for refraining from fighting those wicked people who usurped the Khilāfah. The last report cited above from al-Kāfī indicates that his excuse was fear that people would apostatise from the religion altogether, return to idol worship, and reject the two testimonies of faith.[2]

5. Jawwād ibn ʿAbbās al-Karbalā'ī says:

الثاني أن أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام إنما صبر على حقه بعد ما غصبوه ظلمًا نظرًا ورحمة للناس وتخوفًا عليهم أن يرتدوا عن ظاهر الإسلام فيعبدوا الأوثان ويتركوا الإقرار بالشهادتين

Second: Amīr al-Mu'minīn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was patient regarding his right after they unjustly seized it, out of concern and mercy

1 Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī: *Al-Iqtiṣād*, pg. 210; *al-Rasā'il al-ʿAshr*, pg. 124-125.

2 Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī: *Al-Shihāb al-Thāqib fī Bayān Maʿnā al-Nāṣib*, pg. 216.

for the people and fear that they would turn away from outward Islam, worship idols, and abandon acknowledging the two testimonies.[1]

1 Jawwād ibn ʿAbbās ibn Karbalā'ī: *Al-Anwār al-Sāṭiʿah fī Sharḥ Ziyārat al-Jāmiʿah*, 5/546.

Reason Four

Fear of Civil Strife and Division among the Muslims

1. Al-Mufīd narrates:

> ثم قال وأيم الله لولا مخافة الفرقة بين المسلمين لكنا قد غيرنا ذلك ما استطعنا
>
> Then he said, "By Allah, were it not for fear of division among the Muslims, we would have changed that as much as we were able to."[1]

Statements of their scholars

1. Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Qummī al-Shīrāzī says:

> أقول في هذا الكلام تصريح أيضًا بأنه عليه السلام كان كارهًا لبيعة الخلفاء ولم يكن راضيًا بها وتصريح أيضًا بأنه عليه السلام كان يجوز عنده محاربة أبي بكر لولا خوف الفرقة بين المسلمين
>
> I say: This statement also explicitly indicates that he [ʿAlī] عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ disliked pledging allegiance to the Khulafā' and was not pleased with it. It also explicitly indicates that he considered fighting Abū Bakr permissible were it not for fear of division among the Muslims.[2]

2. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Kāshif al-Ghiṭā' says:

> ثم لما رأى أن تخلفه يوجب فتقًا في الإسلام لا يرتق وكسرًا لا يجبر بايع وسالم وأغضى عما يراه حقًا له محافظة على الإسلام أن تتصدع وحدته وتتفرق كلمته ويعود الناس إلى جاهليتهم الأولى

1 Al-Mufīd: *Al-Amālī*, pg. 154.

2 Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Qummī al-Shīrāzī: *Al-Arbaʿīn*, pg. 166.

When he saw that holding back would cause a breach in Islam that could not be repaired and a break that could not be mended... he pledged allegiance, made peace, and overlooked what he considered his right, to preserve Islam from a shattered unity and divided word, and to prevent the people from returning to their former state of ignorance.[1]

3. Muḥammad Riḍā al-Muẓaffar says:

الرجوع عن وعده ووعيده لما تركوا له ما في يده وأمير المؤمنين قد صرح بغرضه هذا بعد ذلك في جوابه الذي أشرنا إليه عن كتاب معاوية كما في النهج والعقد الفريد إذ قال عن إبائه على أبي سفيان حتى كنت أنا الذي أبيت لقرب عهد الناس بالكفر مخافة الفرقة بين أهل الإسلام

Reneging on his promise and threat when they left to him whatever was in their hands, Amīr al-Mu'minīn had made his intention clear after that in his response, which we referred to regarding Muʿāwiyah's letter, as mentioned in *al-Nahj* and *al-ʿIqd al-Farīd*, where he said about his refusal to Abū Sufyān, "I was the one who refused, because the people had only recently left disbelief and because I feared division among the people of Islam."[2]

4. ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn al-ʿĀmilī says:

فوقف أمير المؤمنين بين هذين الخطرين فكان من الطبيعي له أن يقدم حقه قربانًا لحياة الإسلام وإيثارًا للصالح العام فانقطاع ذلك

1 Muḥammad Kāshif al-Ghiṭā': *Aṣl al-Shīʿah wa Uṣūluhā*, pg. 193.

2 Muḥammad Riḍā al-Muẓaffar: *Al-Saqīfah*, 156.

النزاع وارتفاع الخلاف بينه وبين أبي بكر لم يكن إلا فرقًا على بيضة الدين وإشفاقًا على حوزة المسلمين فصبر هو وأهل بيته كافة وسائر أوليائه من المهاجرين والأنصار وفي العين قذى وفي الحلق شجًا وكلامه مدة حياته بعد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم صريح بذلك

Amīr al-Mu'minīn stood between these two dangers, and it was therefore natural that he offer his right as a sacrifice for the life of Islam and to prefer the public good. The dispute ended, and the disagreement between him and Abū Bakr ceased, only out of fear for the heart of the religion and concern for the Muslim community. He, all his household, and his other supporters among the Muhājirīn and Anṣār remained patient, with a mote in the eye and a thorn in the throat. His words throughout his life after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ are explicit on this point.[1]

5. Jaʿfar Murtaḍā al-ʿĀmilī says:

لم يعترض علي عليه السلام على ذلك لأنه خاف من شتات الدين واضطراب حبل المسلمين ولقرب أمر الجاهلية وهذا مما قد نص عليه علي عليه السلام نفسه في أكثر من مورد وأكثر من مناسبة ... فرأيت أن الصبر على ذلك أفضل من تفريق كلمة المسلمين وسفك دمائهم

ʿAlī عليه السلام did not object to that because he feared the scattering of the religion and disturbance of the Muslims' unity, and because the period of pre-Islamic ignorance was still close... ʿAlī himself عليه السلام explicitly stated this on more

1 ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī: *Al-Murājaʿāt*, pg. 354; *al-Naṣṣ wa al-Ijtihād*, pg. 601.

than one occasion... "I saw that patience regarding this was better than dividing the Muslims' word and spilling their blood."[1]

6. Jaʿfar al-Bāqirī says:

وأنه إنما سكت عن حقه حفاظًا على وحدة المسلمين وحقنًا لدماء الأمة وخوفًا من وقوع الفتنة بينهم

He remained silent regarding his right only to preserve Muslim unity, spare the blood of the community, and out of fear that civil strife would break out among them.[2]

7. ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn al-Amīnī cites a sermon attributed to him when he intended to march to Baṣrah:

فرأيت أن الصبر على ذلك أفضل من تفريق كلمة المسلمين وسفك دمائهم والناس حديثو عهد بالإسلام

I saw that patience regarding this was better than dividing the Muslims' word and spilling their blood, while the people were still new to Islam.[3]

1 Jaʿfar Murtaḍā al-ʿĀmilī: *Ḥayāt al-Imām Riḍā*, pg. 340-341.

2 Jaʿfar al-Bāqirī: *Ṣalāt al-Tarāwīḥ Sunnah Mashrūʿah aw Bidʿah Muḥdathah*, pg. 193.

3 ʿAbd Ḥusayn al-Amīnī al-Najafī: *Al-Ghadīr fī al-Kitāb wa al-Sunnah wa al-Adab*, 9/381.

An Explanation of the Contradiction and Inconsistency between the Four Reasons

After the detailed presentation of the four reasons supplied within the Shīʿah Imāmiyyah framework, it is time for us to highlight the contradictions and inconsistencies between them:

Contradiction Between Reasons One and Two

The first reason asserts that the prophetic command to Sayyidunā ʿAlī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was to use the sword and kill the alleged usurpers if supporters became available. He cites the report in *al-Iḥtijāj*, "When the matter becomes possible for you, then the sword, the sword, then killing, killing, until they return to the command of Allah and His Messenger."[1]

By contrast, the second reason states that what prevented Sayyidunā ʿAlī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ from fighting the alleged usurpers was the need to preserve believing descendants in their loins, so he refrained from killing them until those descendants could be born.

To illustrate the contradiction, suppose that the required forty supporters had been available. In that case, Sayyidunā ʿAlī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ would face two conflicting obligations:

First obligation: to kill and eradicate them, as the alleged prophetic instruction says, "When the matter becomes possible for you, then the sword, the sword, then killing, killing."

1 Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī: *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 29/425-426; Aḥmad ibn Abī ʿAlī al-Ṭabarsī: *Al-Iḥtijāj*, 1/292.

Second obligation: not to kill them, to preserve the believing descendants in their loins.

Now that the inconsistency between the two is apparent, I now ask: Would Sayyidunā ʿAlī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ obey the alleged prophetic command to kill them, thereby eliminating the believing descendants in their loins? Or would he disobey that instruction and tell the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: I cannot carry out your instruction to kill them because there are believing descendants in their loins who must be preserved?

Contradiction Between Reasons One and Three

As stated above, the first reason makes the alleged prophetic command to Sayyidunā ʿAlī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to use the sword and fight the usurpers when supporters are available. The third reason, however, makes fear of their apostasy from Islam the reason that prevented him from fighting them.

If the required forty supporters were available, Sayyidunā ʿAlī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ would stand between two conflicting obligations: the first commands him to fight and eradicate them; the second commands him not to fight them, to avoid the harm of their apostasy from Islam.

Would ʿAlī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ obey the alleged prophetic command to fight them without regard for the grave consequence of their apostasy? Or would he disobey the instruction and tell the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: I cannot carry out your instruction to fight them because it entails the grave harm of their apostasy from Islam?

Contradiction Between Reasons One and Four

The first reason states that the alleged prophetic command to Sayyidunā ʿAlī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was to use the sword and fight the usurpers when supporters became available. By contrast, the fourth reason says that fear of civil strife and division among the Muslims prevented him from fighting them.

If the required forty supporters were available, Sayyidunā ʿAlī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ would face two conflicting obligations: one commanding him to fight and eradicate them, and another commanding him not to fight, to avoid the harm of civil strife and the division of the Muslims.

Would Sayyidunā ʿAlī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ obey the alleged prophetic command to fight them without regard for the harm of civil strife and the division of the Muslims? Or would he disobey the instruction and tell the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: I cannot carry out your instruction to fight them because it entails the grave harm of civil strife and the division of the Muslims?

Conclusion

This concludes this study. It has revealed a stark contradiction and inconsistency between the explanations found in Imāmī Shīʿī ideology for Sayyidunā ʿAlī's رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ silence concerning the alleged seizure of his right to the Khilāfah and his failure to use the sword to fight and recover that alleged right.

The fair-minded and rational Shīʿah ought to reflect impartially on the contradictions and inconsistencies that exist within Shīʿī thought on pivotal questions affecting its most important and consequential doctrine: Imāmah.

How can these mutually contradictory reasons be attributed to an infallible Imām in reports found in major sources and adopted by leading scholars and authorities in statements recorded in their books, which I have quoted verbatim in this study?

In conclusion, the Imāmiyyah are left with two options, both of which are bitter:

First option: the infallible Imām actually uttered these contradictory explanations for Sayyidunā ʿAlī's رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ silence. This would not only undermine the Imām's infallibility and invalidate his Imāmah, but would also place him outside the ranks of the wise because of the contradictions attributed to him.

Second option: these reasons, transmitted in numerous reports in major Imāmī sources, are false and fabricated upon the tongue of the infallible Imām. In that case, doubt would extend to the rest of the transmitted material of Shi'ism, leaving no confidence in it and causing the entire Imāmī religious system to collapse.

How fitting are their contradictions for the words of the poet:

حُجَجٌ تَهَافَتُ كَالزُّجَاجِ تَخَالُهَا حَقًّا وَكُلُّ كَاسِرٍ مَكْسُورُ

> Arguments that have crumbled like glass; you think them to be true, but every strong argument is itself refuted.

I ask Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى, through this study, to give sight to blind eyes and hearing to deaf ears, and to make it a means of guidance for whomever Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى wills to guide.

May Allah's peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muḥammad سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى, his entire family, and all his Companions.

Written by one who left Shi'ism: ʿAbd al-Mālik ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Shāfiʿī.

25 October 2022 / 29 Rabīʿ al-Awwal 1444 AH.

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