

LEADERSHIP

By DIVINE APPOINTMENT



Ahmed H. Sheriff

IN COMMEMORATION OF
1400TH ANNIVERSARY OF
'GHADEER-E-KHUM'

BISMILLAHI RRAHMANI RRAHIM

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DEDICATED TO
ALI BIN ABI TALIB (a.s)
THE MASTER AND LEADER OF
THE FAITHFULS

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INTRODUCTION

In this age of Islamic Revival, we come across pseudo authors bribed with money or big titles to write such material as to misrepresent facts or for the purpose of arousing division among different sects. One such example is the recent continuous unfounded propaganda against Shi'ite Islam with regard to their beliefs and history. To the Shi'ite Muslims, the subject of Imama and successorship to the Prophet is a central and important issue, upon which rests the continuance of divine guidance.

As such there is a dire need to publish such literature which not only answers false allegations but throws light on this important subject to expose the truth. This book by Brother Ahmed H. Sheriff goes a long way to fulfil the need, providing authentic well-known sources. It is a challenge to all Muslim youth and students of Islamic history to ponder over the origin of the Shi'ite faith and the historical event of 'Ghadeer'. Having checked its authenticity,

they should accept it in the spirit of brotherly debate, which the great Prophet of Islam made it incumbent on every Muslim and Muslimiah.

The book starts with the meaning of Shi'ism and its origin, then discusses of the belief of Imamah before finally arriving at the concept of the leadership by divine appointment in the event of 'Ghadeer', accepted by all Muslim historians. Among the useful contents of the book is a list of historically proven Shi'ite companions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) thus proving that Shi'ism is neither a splinter group nor a later date product as is alleged by some misguided writers, but it is Islam original.

F.A. Hameer
Chairman -Bllal Muslim
Mission -Tanzania

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE RAHMAN, THE RAHIM

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Praise be to Allah, The Lord of the worlds, and Peace and Blessings, be upon His beloved Messenger Muhammed and his Ahlal Bayt.

Every religion has in its background, some significant historical events. They are revered and annually observed with customary ceremonies. In so doing, they portray the culture of its followers and the highlights of their faith. It also helps in recalling the message and moral lessons contained in those events.

Islam also has its own past events of great historical significance. One such events, annually observed by the Shi'ite Community throughout the world with much fervor and rejoicing, is known as the day of Ghadeer-e-Khum. It was at the place of Ghadeer on the 18th of Zul Haj in the year 10 A.H. that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) proclaimed Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s) as his Successor. The hadith about this event is recorded in all books of history by Muslim and non-Muslim authors alike.

This year i.e. the 1410 A.H., according to Islamic Calendar, sees the 1400th year since that great event took place. To commemorate it befittingly, this book is being published with the aim of providing some useful material for the benefit of the students of Islamic history and creating awareness of the great significance behind this historical event.

I have also taken the liberty of adding a few pages on the origin of the Shia sect and faith to allay the presently prevailing misconception on this subject.

The aim of writing this book is to educate our youths to understand the logical basis of our beliefs.

Shi'ite Islam has always been and continues to be a misunderstood or at times deliberately a misrepresented sect of Islam. To those unbiased and free of prejudice students of Islamic History, I do sincerely hope that this book will help in opening their minds to understand the truth.

Ahmed H. Sheriff
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MEANING OF SHIA

The word 'Shia' is derived from the Arabic word 'At tashaiyo', which means to follow. It means 'partisan', 'follower' or 'friend'.

The word 'Shia' is generally used for those who love and follow Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s) and the people of his house.

When the word 'Shia' is used with the definite article 'Al' (As-Shia -The Shia) then it is said to mean the group which follows Ali (a.s) with love and the belief that he was the Imam after the Prophet without any gap.

IN THE QUR'AN

The word 'Shia' has been used for the followers of the Prophets of Allah :

"This was from his 'Shia' (followers) and "that from his enemies" (Sura Qasas ayah 15)

"And indeed-of his (Noah's) Shia's (followers) is Ibrahim (Sura Al-Saffat ayah 83)

IN THE HADITH

Similarly, in many sayings of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) reference to the ‘Shia of Ali’ and the ‘Shia of the Household of the Prophet’ can be found.

Jabir Ibn Abdillahi Al-Ansari says; “We were in the presence of the Prophet (s.a.w.w) when Ali appeared from far away. The Prophet said ‘I swear by Him who holds my life in His hands, this person i.e. Ali and his Shias will have salvation on the Day of Judgement”.

Abdullah Ibn Abbas says: “When the ayah ‘And Lo: those who believe and do good works are the best of the created beings’ (Sura Bayyinah v.7) was revealed, the Prophet (s.a.w.w) told Ali ‘This aya of the Qur’an pertains to you and your Shia who will possess felicity (bliss-happiness) on the Day of Judgement and God will also be satisfied with you’

(Durrul Manthur of Suyuti, Cairo, 1313, Vol. 6 p. 379)

ORIGIN OF SHI'ISM

Thus 'Shi'ism' is understood as the path of that sect of people who follow with love Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s) and believe him to be the first Caliph and Imam after the Holy Prophet Muhammed (s.a.w.w).

But when first was the successorship of Ali (a.s) to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w). declared and known to people?

The historical fact is that during the first days of his Prophethood, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an (Sura Al-Shura aya 214), was commanded to warn and invite his close relatives first to accept Islam. He told them clearly that the first to accept his invitation would become his successor and heir. It was Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s) who was the first to come forward and embrace Islam. The Prophet (s.a.w.w) accepted and fulfilled the promise of appointing him as his Successor.

(Al-Tabari, Musnad Ibn Hanbal etc.)

Thus we say that 'Shi'ism', which differs with other sects of Islam on the question of successorship, originated in the early days of Islam and its originator is the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) himself.

THE SHI'ITE COMPANIONS OF THE PROPHET

'Shi'ism' in following of Ali (a.s) and the rest of the members of the House of the Prophet is not a phenomenon that took place only after the death of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w). It is not a new opinion in Islam, adopted by some people who did not accompany the Prophet (s.a.w.w) and did not hear from him. Nay, it is a principle that was adopted by outstanding companions of the Holy prophet (s.a.w.w) whom the Prophet himself commended and testified to their truth and righteousness.

This group of outstanding companions included the following companions:

1. **ABU DHAR AL-GHAFFARI** about whom the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) said;
"Neither the Heaven shaded nor the earth carried a truer person than Abu Dhar. Certainly he does walk on the earth with the immaterialism of Jesus, son of Mary" (al-Tirmidhi,-Sunan v.5 p.334).
2. **AMAR IBN YASIR** who along with his parents were told by the Holy Prophet.

“Family of Yasir, be patient, for your destination is Paradise.” And the Holy Prophet also said to him “Ammar, be cheerful, the aggressor party shall kill you” (Al Hakim -Al Mustadrak v.3 p.383)

3. **AL-MIQDAD IBN AL-ASWAD** who was one of the four men whom the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) was commanded to love. “Allah commanded me to love four, and informed me that he loves them”. People asked “Oh the Messenger of Allah, who are they?” He said “Ali is from them (repeating three times) and Abu Dhar, Salman and Al-Miqdad”. (Ibn Majah -, Sunan v.l. p.53)
4. **SALMAN AL-FARSI** was one of the men about whom the Holy Prophet said “Paradise longs for three men: Ali, Ammar and Salman” (Al-Tirmidhi. Sunan v.5 p.332.)
5. **IBN ABBAS** about whom the Holy Prophet said: “Allah, I ask thee to teach him the interpretation and make him knowledgeable in religion and make him from the people of belief” (AI-Hakim, Al Mustadrak v.3 p.536)

And all these and many others from the companions were followers of Ali, even during the days of the first three Caliphs. They used to believe the succession is an exclusive right of the members of the House of the Holy Prophet. Had they any supporters, they would have fought to bring Ali to power. When the third Caliph was brought to power, Ammar and Al-Miqdad called upon Imam Ali to fight. But the Imam refused to do that.

Among the present Shi'ites then, who could be more Shi'ite than Abu Dhar who reported that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) had said:

“Whoever obeys Ali obeys me, and whoever disobeys Ali disobeys me”

(Al Hakim, Al-Mustadrak v.3 p.131)

Again Abu Dhar says that I heard the Holy Prophet saying:

“The position of the members of my House among you is the position of Noah's ark among his people. Whoever embarked on it was saved and whoever did not embark on it was drowned.”

(Al Hakim, Al-Mustadrak v.3 p.151)

IMAMAH -MEANING & STATUS

The word 'Imamah' means leadership. 'Imam' means a leader and the plural is 'Aimmah'. The word Imam is used for a person who leads a Congregational 'Jamaat' prayer. It is also used for the founders of Sunni schools of thought e.g. Imam Shafi, Imam Hanafi, Imam Malik and Imam Hanbal. Sunni compilers of hadith are also known as Imam e.g. Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim. Great philosophers are also at times called Imam like Imam Ghazali and Imam Fakhruddin Al-Razi.

The highest spiritual leaders and the mujtahideen of Shias are also given the designation of the Imam e.g. Imam Ruhullah Al-Khomeini the late supreme leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Imam Abul Qasim Al-Khoi in Najaf -Iraq.

IN THE QUR'AN & HADITH

Concerning the belief and following of Imam, Allah says:

“One day (i.e. Day of Judgement) We shall call together all human beings with their respective Imams” (Sura Bani Israel aya 71)

And the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) had strongly

emphasized on the need to recognize the Imams to be followed saying:

“One who dies but does not recognize the Imam of his time, dies the death of a pagan “

Imamah is a high eminent position of leadership designated by Allah Subhanahu Himself. This status had also been bestowed upon certain Prophets. For example Prophet Ibrahim (a.s) was appointed an Imam by Allah calling him Imam of the Nation. The Holy Qur’an says:

“I will make you (Ibrahim) an Imam to the Nation.”

He (Ibrahim) inquired “And also (Imams) from my offsprings?”

To this Allah answered:

“But my promise is not within the reach of the unjust”
(Sura Al-Baqarah aya 124)

Prophet Muhammed (s.a.w.w) was also honoured by Allah with the status of Imam.

IMAM AS SUCCESSOR TO THE PROPHET

The Shias believe that only Allah can make the appointment of an Imam and Caliph to succeed a Prophet. Since all the Prophets were divinely chosen and God-sent, similarly all their successors must be chosen and sent by Allah Subhanahu. The Muslim Community at large does not have any say in selecting or electing a successor. To be able to protect Islam as well as win over the fullest trust and confidence of all members of the public, an Imam like the Prophet, must be 'Masum' i.e. infallible and free from all sins, errors or mistakes.

Thus the Shias believe that all the twelve Imams are sinless and appointed by Allah through the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w)

MERITS OF THE SUCCESSOR

Like the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w), Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s) was the great grandson of Hashim and the grandson of Abd al-Muttalib. He was the son of Abu Talib, Muhammed's uncle, who had given the Prophet the care and love of the father Muhammed had lost before birth.

Ali was the cousin and son-in-law of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) married to his only daughter Bibi Fatima (a.s). He was the nearest and closest associate of Muhammed, for the Prophet had acted as his guardian during the famine of Makkah and he had subsequently adopted him as a brother, both before the Hijra (migration to Medina) and again during settlement in Medina. (Ibn Hisham, Vii, p.262). He was the first male to embrace Islam, Khadija being the first woman. Besides being the husband of the Prophet's daughter, he was the father of sons like Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein, both of whom the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) loved very dearly. Ali (a.s) is accepted by all Muslims as the most knowledgeable person in matters pertaining to all sciences in particular Islamic Fiqh (jurisprudence)

In supporting the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) in the cause of Islam, Ali performed valuable services and made remarkable sacrifices. It was Ali (a.s) who willingly slept on the bed of the Holy Prophet on that night when the infidels (kuffar) of Makkah decided to kill the Prophet and surrounded his house while he migrated to Medina. The victories achieved in battles of Badr, Uhad, Khaybar and

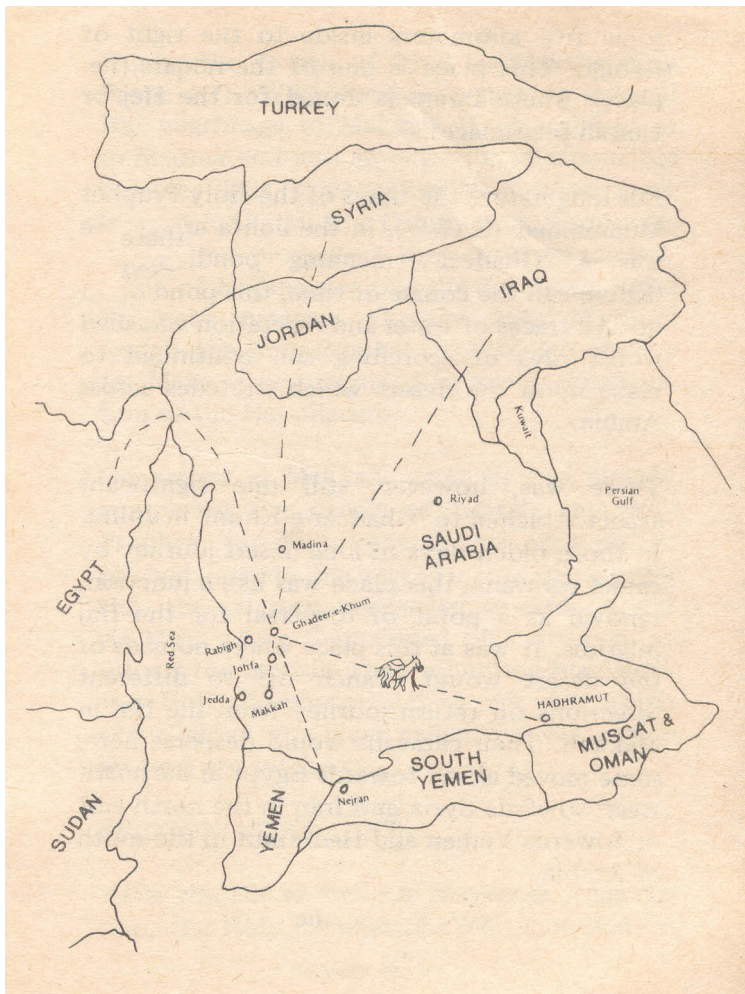
Khandaq were due to his bravery. Had Ali (a.s) not been present, the enemy would most likely have uprooted Islam and annihilated the Muslims.

Thus it was these inherent and demonstrated personal qualities and virtues that secured Ali (a.s) a unique and advantageous place over all other family members and companions of Prophet Muhammed (s.a.w.w) and earned him group of friends who were devoted to him with a special zeal and consideration during the life-time of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w)

It is evident from the foregoing facts why the Shias claim 'Shi'ism' to be Islam original in existence even during the life time of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w). The earliest non-Shi'ite historians like Sa'ad Al-Askari and An-Nawbakhti have clearly stated that 'Shi'ism' had already appeared in the Prophet's lifetime. (Firaq p.15 and 23)

GHADEER-E-KHUM

Some ninety kilometers northeast of Makkah in the district of Rabigh, there is a vast desert known as 'Sahra al-Johfa'. (See map on page 16) The highway from Jedda as well as from Makkah to



Madina passes through Rabigh, also a well developed town in Arabia. Johfa is some five kilometers inside to the right of Rabigh. This place is one of the miqats (i.e. places where Ihram is donned for the Haj or Umrah pilgrimage).

But long before the times of the Holy Prophet Muhammed (s.a.w.w), in the Johfa area there was a 'Ghadeer', meaning pond, named 'Khum'. In the course of time, this pond dried up. All traces of water and vegetation vanished whilst rays of scorching sun continued to blaze upon the desert which stretches across Arabia.

There was, however, still one significant aspect attached to 'Ghadeer-e-Khum' in Johfa. In those olden days of long desert journey by camel caravans, this place was like a junction, renowned as a point of dispersal for the Haj pilgrims. It was at this place where nomads of the desert would branch off to different directions on return journey from the Haj in Makkah. Their caravans would disperse here; some moved ahead towards Egypt in the north west, towards Syria and Iraq in the north east or towards Yemen and Hadramut in the south of Arabia.

THE FAREWELL HAJ

During the month of Dhul Qadah, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) decided to make a farewell Haj pilgrimage to Makkah. He proclaimed so in Madina and also amongst the Muslim tribes outside. This news naturally inspired great interest in the Muslim Community. Thousands of Muslims pitched up their tents on the outskirts of Medina awaiting the departure of the Prophet's caravan. On the 25th of Dhul Qadah, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) left Madina for Makkah accompanied by a large congregation of the Haj pilgrims.

On arrival at Makkah, when he had already completed the rituals of Umrah, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) ordered his tent to be pitched outside the city. On the 8th of Zul Haj, the pilgrims proceeded towards Arafat via Mina where they stayed till sunrise on the 9th of the month. Then mounting his camel, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) left for Arafat and alighted at a place called Numrah, where his tent was pitched.

SERMON AT ARAFAT

After the Dhuar and Asr prayers in congregation,

the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) mounted on a camel and addressed the large gathering of the pilgrims. This was a historical sermon, which was repeated by one of his companions who had a loud voice at a distance from him. In absence of loudspeakers in those olden days, this was the only way to ensure that an important sermon was heard by one and all.

In this important sermon, the Holy Prophe (s.a.w.w) informed this audience that this was his last Haj and he mlght not meet them again in future. He therefore urged them to listen to his advices. In the course of this sermon, he advised respect for blood and property of one another (i.e. honour and reputation). Every trust must be discharged honestly and property returned to its owner. Usury i.e. charging interest, was strictly prohibited in Islam, and Satan should not influence even small matters.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) also stressed upon the rights of women and exhorting men to treat them with kindness and love and to provide them with comfortable means of life as they were on trust from Allah. He also advised them to abide by the Holy Qur'an and his Sunnah (i.e his words and practice), which he left amongst them as two

memorable and valuable things. Muslims are brothers of one another, their property was only lawful when acquired with honest intention.

Of course, the foregoing advice in this memorable sermon were not meant only for the Arabs of the time but for all Muslims of the whole world for all time.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) thereafter completed the acts of this Haj which became known as “Hijjatul wida” i.e. the Farewell Haj. It is also at times referred to as “Hijjatul Balagh” i.e. the Haj of the Delivery of the message.

THE URGENT REVELATION

On the return journey to Madina, the caravan passed Ghadeer-e-Khum in Johfa and the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) decided to encamp here for he suddenly saw the signs of ‘Wahy’ i.e. the divine revelation. It was the 18th day of Zul Haj -the 10th year after Hijra. The voice of Arch-angel ‘Gibrael’ was heard by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) saying:

“Oh the Messenger! Convey what has been revealed to you from your Lord” And in order to impress the

urgency of the command, ‘Gibrael’ went on to say:

“And if you do not, then it would be as though you have not conveyed His Message”

And again in the same breath, to remove his fears and misgivings, ‘Gibrael’ added:

“Allah will protect you from the people”,
(The Holy Qur’an, Sura Al-Maida v.67)

On hearing this urgent command, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) ordered the place around to be swept. He also ordered Bilal (the Muezzin -caller to prayer) to recite the ‘Azan’ -call to prayer with the words: “Hayya Ala Khair-il-Amal” meaning “O people! hasten towards the best of deeds.”

Why this call? because surely, its acceptance was going to be crucial as upon it depended the continuation of the Prophet’s work of Islamic guidance and of leading people on the Right Path.

There were between 90,000 and 120,000 Muslims present in the caravans returning from Haj. There were those who had gone ahead and those who were still behind. There were also those who had begun

to depart in different directions. All were recalled to this junction of 'Ghadeer-e-Khum' and instructed to assemble in order to hear an important message of Allah through His Messenger.

It was midday and the weather was exceedingly hot. The people covered their heads with their cloaks and placed the other parts under their feet. A shade was arranged for the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w), made of a cloak which was thrown on a tree. He offered the noon prayers in 'Jama'at' i.e. congregation. .

SERMON AT GHADEER

Thereafter, as the people encircled him, he took his place on a platform which had been prepared with the saddles of the camels, and delivered the following sermon in a loud voice:

“All glory be specially for Allah. We seek His help and have faith in Him and rely upon Him. We seek refuge in Him from evil doings and indecent deeds. He is the Lord besides whom there is no guide. There will be none to mislead one whom He guides. I testify that there is no God but Allah and Muhammed is His Servant His Messanger.”

Having glorified Allah and affirmed his faith in Him, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) then added :

“Yes, O people! I may soon accept the Divine invitation and may depart from amongst you. I am responsible and you too are responsible. What is your opinion about me?”

At this stage those present said loudly:

“We testify that you have carried out your mission and made efforts in this behalf. May Allah reward you for this”.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) then put this question to his audience:

“Do you testify that the Lord of the world is One and Muhammed is His servant and His Messenger and that there is no doubt about Life in the other World?”

All of them said that it was correct and that they testified to it. Then the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) added:

“O my followers! I am leaving behind two valuable assets as my legacy: namely the Book of Allah and the other is my Ahl-alBayt, the people of my house. Allah has informed me that these two memorable things will not get separated from each other.

Therefore do not seek precedence (earlier decision) over the Qur'an and over my household. And do not be negligent in your behaviour towards them lest you should be stricken”.

TWO DECLARATIONS NON-CONTRADICTORY

A question may arise that how come in his sermon at Arafat in his farewell Haj, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) recommended the Holy Qur'an and his Sunnah (i.e. sayings and practice), whereas here in his sermon at Ghadeer, he recommended to them the Book of Allah and Ahl-al-Bayt (the family members of his house)?

The fact is that there is nothing contradictory between these two declarations which were delivered on two different occasions. There can be no objection to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) treating Sunnah as equivalent to the Holy Qur'an and announcing both of them as memorable things on one occasion and recommending his family and successors on another occasion. His insistence upon following them is in fact following The Prophet (s.a.w.w) and his Sunnah.

The Prophet's repeated introduction during his life time of his family members and strong recommendation to adhere and follow them is in fact part of his Sunnah i.e. his sayings and practice.

SUCCESSORSHIP ANNOUNCED

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) then held the hand of Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s) and raised it so high that the whiteness of the armpits of both of them became visible to the people. He introduced him to all the people and then asked:

“Do I not have more authority upon you than you yourselves have?”

All of them cried out that he certainly had more right on them than they had themselves. The Prophet (s.a.w.w) then said:

“Whoever whose Master I am, Ali is his Master”

In order to ensure that no misunderstanding arose afterwards, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) repeated this sentence thrice. Thereafter, he added :

“Oh Allah! Love those who love Ali and be an enemy to those who are the enemies of Ali; help him who helps Ali, and forsake him who forsakes Ali.”

When this ceremony was over. the Archangel ‘Gibrael’ came and brought this verse:

“This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed my favours to you, and have chosen for you the religion of Islam”

(The Holy Qur’an Sura Maida v.3)

HOMAGE TO ALI

At this moment the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) pronounced Takbir (i.e. ‘Allaho Akbar’) loudly and then added:

“I thank Allah for His having perfected His religion and for having completed His favour and for His having been pleased with the mastership and succession of Ali after me.”

Then the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) stepped down from the platform and said to Ali:

“Sit in a tent so that the chiefs and distinguished personalities of Islam may swear oath of allegiance with you and congratulate you.”

The two Shaykhs Abu Bakr and Omar both congratulated Ali before all others and called him their Mawla (Master). Hassan bin Thabit, the renowned poet, after obtaining the Prophet’s

permission recited the following verses:

“He said to Ali: stand up for I have selected you to succeed me and to guide the people after me. Of whomsoever I am Mawla, Ali is his Mawla. You love him sincerely follow him.”

AUTHENTICITY OF ‘GHADEER’

The historical event of “Ghadeer-e-Khum’ is recorded in almost all the major books a both Sunni and Shia alike. Traditionalists have recorded the hadith - narration of ‘Ghadeer’ in their books in every century and every era during the last 1400 years. Hereunder, we quote opinions of some of the famous Sunni traditionalists:

- a. Al-Hafiz Abu Ishaq al-Tirmidhi (died 279 A.H.) has said in his ‘Sahih’ (one of the Sihah as Sittah) that this is good and correct hadith, (al Tirmidhi as-Sahih v.2 p.298)
- b. Al-Hafiz Abu Ja’far Al-Tahawi (died 321 A.H.) has said in his Mushkilu-’l-Athar that “This hadith is sahih (correct) according to the chains of narrators and no one has said anything contrary to its narrators.” (al-Tahawi: Mushkilu-

'1-Athar v.2 p.309)

- c. Abu Abdillah al-Hakim an-Naysaburi (died 405 A.H.) has narrated this hadith from several chains in his al-Mustadrak and has said that this hadith is sahih (correct).

From the Shia learned men, the eminent alim, Shaykh Abdul Husain Al-Ameeni of Najaf has listed the names of one hundred and ten companions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) who have reported this tradition as eyewitnesses and eighty three 'Tabé'een' i.e. those who heard it from their elders. Also three hundred and fifty-nine Ulema of all sects, arranged chronologically through each century, since the time of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) upto the present day, who have recorded the 'Ghadeer' event in their books and acknowledged its authenticity.

SUMMARY

MEANING OF "SHIA"

1. The word 'Shia' means a follower, partisan or friend. It is generally used for those who love and follow Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s) and the people of his house.

2. The word 'Shia' as used in the Holy Qur'an for those who followed certain Prophets, also gives the same meaning of 'follower'.
3. In the hadith, the word 'Shia' has been used by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) to introduce the followers of Ali (a.s) and declare them as those who will be successful and attain happiness on the Day of Judgement.

'EXISTENCE AND BELIEFS OF 'SHIAS'

4. 'Shias' as followers and friends of Ali (a.s) have been existing from the time of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w). Abu Dhar, Salman, Ammar and Miqdad, the recognized trusted companions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w), were the well known 'Shias'. Besides there were several other companions, They always believed in Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s) and mentioned him as the God-appointed first Caliph of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w).
5. The 'Shias' believe that the twelve Imams like the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) are 'Masum' i.e. infallible; free of sins, errors or mistakes. This purity of sinlessness is essential for the

protection and guidance of Islam. Obviously people could only be expected to follow those leaders who are pure and free of faults and errors.

6. The 'Shias' believe that it was his inherent personal qualities and virtues that secured Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s) a special status of being chosen as the first successor of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) and not his family relationship with him.

MEANING OF IMAMAT

7. The word 'Imamat' means leadership and Imam (plural 'Aimma') means a leader. It is at times used for leader of congregational (Jamat) prayer or a spiritual high leader of a sect of Islam. But when 'Imam' is considered as an eminently high spiritual status bestowed by Allah, it is used only for certain Prophets or the twelve Imams of the Shias.

SHI'ISM -ISLAM ORIGINAL

8. 'Shi'ism' is linked with the love and following

of Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s) as the rightful and God-appointed first successor to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w). It had originated during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w). He had promised during early days of his mission that whoever accepted Islam first and offered help in propagating it would become his successor. And it was none else but Ali (a.s) who came forward first to embrace Islam and help in its mission throughout his life.

9. 'Shi'ism' is neither a splinter group nor a later development after the departure of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w). It teaches the same beliefs in 'Tawhid' -One God, 'Nubuwwa' -Prophethood, 'Qiyama' Day of Judgement, 'Qibla' -direction of prayers, 'Qur'an -the Holy Book and several other tenets as believed in by Muslims at large.
10. Thus Islam is 'Shi'ism' and 'Shi'ism' is Islam as propagated by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w). Its origin has been proven beyond doubt.

11. THE HOLY QUR'AN

From the following Qur'anic ayats (verses), we learn that the special right of choosing a Caliph or Imam

lies with Allah and Him only:

- a. “And your Lord creates what He wills and chooses, they have no right to choose.” (28:68)
- b. “Verily I am going to make a Caliph on the earth.” (2:30)
- c. “O Dawood! Verily we have made you (our) Caliph on earth.” (38:26)
- d. Surely I am going to make you an Imam for men.” (2:24)

Therefore, neither the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) nor the Muslim community had the right to select, elect or decide upon a successor nor to appoint a Caliph or an Imam of his own.

So, how could the Holy Prophet Muhammed (s.a.w.w) ever leave it upon the Muslims to choose his successor? How could the Muslim community take it upon themselves to elect and nominate one themselves?

12. THE PAST PRACTICE

The universal practice of the past Prophets before their deaths had always been to nominate their successors as commanded by Allah, without any interference from their followers.

Not a single instance of a past Prophet's successor having been elected and chosen by his followers can be quoted.

And Allah has in the Holy Qur'an said:
"And you shall never find a change in Allah's practice." (33: 62)

Is there a reason why there be a change in Allah's Law and practice when it came to choosing and appointing a successor to the last Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w)?

13. THE 'WASIYYA'

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) had established an Islamic state and guided in its administration, as well as the Muslims at large on every aspect of life till his last moment. He had advised them on the importance of making 'Wasiyya' i.e. a will saying:
"It is the truth and the duty of every Muslim."

Can it be imagined that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) would depart from this world without making a 'Wasiyya' as to who was to succeed him.? Would he ignore and not act himself upon what he had advised his followers to do?

14. PROPHET'S DEPUTIZING

Having established an Islamic State in Medina, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) had always appointed deputies, though temporary, during the following campaigns whenever he was obliged to depart from the City :

- a. Abu Lubabah to deputize for him in Medina when the Prophet (s.a.w.w) left for the Battle of Badr.
- b. Ibn Arfatah when he left Madina to Doumat Al-Jandal.
- c. Ibn Om Maktoum during the military operations against Banu Quraidah, and Banu Lihyan and Zi Qirad.
- d. Abu Dhar when he left for Banu Al-Mustaleg.
- e. Numeila during the time of the Battle of Khaibar.
- f. Ibn Al-Adbat during Omrat al-Qeda.

- g. Abu Rahman during the time of his military expedition to Makkah.
- h. Abu Dujanah during the Vale dictary pilgrimage to Makkah.

(according Ibn Husham-Biography of the Prophet (s.a.w.w))

Thus when the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) was so mindful of not leaving Madina without even a temporary deputy and representative, is there any reason why he should depart from this world, knowing beforehand that he was soon to, without appointing his deputy and successor.?

15. THE TONE OF ALLAH'S COMMAND

The Qur'anic ayat (Sura Al-Maida v.67) commanded the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) to convey the message as revealed from Allah, and if he would not do that, it would be as if he did not fulfil the assignment of conveying God's message.

As we have already seen that this Qur'anic command was fulfilled at 'Ghadeer', confirmed by historians of both Sunni and Shia persuasion.

Does not the harsh tone of the above Qur'anic ayat indicate the paramount importance of the message i.e. appointment of Ali (a.s), to succeed the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) in carrying on the noble work of religious guidance as well as the leadership of the Islamic state?

16. COMPLETION OF BLESSINGS

Only when the foregoing declaration of the appointment of Ali (a.s) was made at 'Ghadeer' that the Qur'anic ayat (Sura Al-Maida v.3) declaring the perfection of the religion of Islam and completion of Allah's blessings was revealed. This is confirmed by the famous Sunni historians Tabari-Hafiz Nae'em Isfahani and Kheteeb Baghdadi (Refer Al-Ameen -Al Ghadir v.1 p.230-2).

Does this not support the fact that the successorship to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) by divine appointment is so essential for guarding the religion and leadership of the Muslim community that only when this was fulfilled could the perfection of Islam and completion of blessings be declared?

17. INTERPRETATION OF “MAWLA”

The question the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) asked his audience before the ‘Ghadeer’ declaration, was “ALASTO AWLA BIKUM MIN ANFUSIKUM”. “Do I not have more authority upon you than you have upon yourselves.?” Only when they said “Yes, certainly, then did the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) proceed to declare:

MAN KUNTOO MAWLAHU FAHAZA ALIYUN MAWLAHU.

“Whoever whose ‘mawla’ (Master) I am, Ali is his ‘Mawla.’”

Does not the word ‘Mawla’ in this declaration have the same meaning as ‘AWLA BIKUM’ (having more authority upon you) in the preceding question? That is, was not Ali (a.s) to be considered as Master with authority over people the same way as the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) was accepted to have?

18. THE PROPHET’S PRAYER

Just after the ‘Ghadeer’ declaration, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) uttered the following prayer;

“ALLAHUMMA WALI MAN WALAHU WA ADI

**MAN ADAHU WANSUR MAN NASARAHU
WAKHZUL MAN KAZALAHU”**

“O Allah! Love him who loves Ali, and be the enemy of the enemy of Ali, help him who helps Ali, and forsake him who forsakes Ali.”

Does this prayer not indicate that Ali (a.s) on that day was entrusted with a responsibility of becoming a ruler over people which would make some people dislike this? And to carry out this great responsibility, he would need helpers and supporters, for which the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) so staunchly prayed.?

19. COMMON SENSE

Imagine the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) breaking his journey in midday and detaining nearly one hundred thousand travellers under the scorching sun of Arabian desert making them sit in a thorny place on the burning sand. Thereafter, mounting a specially made pulpit of camel saddles and delivering a long sermon and in the end just announcing that:

“Whoever whose friend I am, Ali is his friend!” as

the word 'Mawla' has been misinterpreted by some.

Would such an announcement be excusable before common sense? How dare any Muslim accuse the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) of such behaviour?

20. THE CONGRATULATIONS

Do the congratulations of the companions and their expression of joy following the 'Ghadeer' declaration leave room for any doubt as to its meaning that Ali (a.s) was certainly to succeed the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w) as their Master and Leader with full authority.?

MUSLIM UNITY ESSENTIAL

For Muslims to secure perfect guidance of the path of Islam original, the right understanding and belief about the Prophet's successorship and the doctrine of Imamah is essential. But different viewpoints and interpretation of this subject need not arouse any animosity between Muslims. Nor does Islam authorize any one group of Muslims to brand the other as Kaffir-disbeliever or use abusive language against one another.

Whilst enjoying the freedom of worship and propagation of religious beliefs in the light of their logic arguments, every Muslim need to exercise tolerance and willingness to read or hear opposite viewpoints rather than rushing to any conclusion.

“And do not abuse those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest exceeding the limits they should abuse Allah out of ignorance.” (Sura Ana'm v.109)
If the Qur'an teaches against abusive language even for non-believers of Allah, how can it permit it to be used against Muslims because of any sectarian differences.

In these days of increasing anti-Islamic propaganda, Muslims need to exercise more tolerance on religious matters and unity to face the common enemies of Islam.

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