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THE
INFALLIBLES SERIES

COMMANDER OF THE FAITHFUL

ALI
(AS)

YASIN T AL JIBOURI

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This text is a prelude, a brief introduction, for what will be coming: a detailed biography of the Commander of the Faithful (as), his family members, many-faceted genius, superiority to all his contemporaries with the exception of only his father-in-law and cousin, the most revered Prophet of Islam (P), his literary legacy, including Nahjul-Balagha..., and much, much more. I very badly need the prayers of my brothers and sisters who read and appreciate this material in order to fulfill this pledge. Since I returned from the United States back home to Iraq in September of 2003, I have been living here in Iraq where people struggle for basic necessities: water and electricity, and where one who goes out of his house does not know if he will return to his family. Many do not. And it happens every day. This morning, June 28, 2012, three bomb explosions rocked our city, al-Kadhimiyya, waking my two children up frightened. The explosions were so violent, they shook our house. Many such explosions are not even reported in the news media... So, if you like this material, please pray for me and for my family especially since I am getting old... Yet even old people have to be productive; they must pay the rent of being on this planet!

Commander of the Faithful Ali (as) needs no introduction, but for the benefit of those who do not know much about him, we would like to state the following:

Ali was born in May of 600 A.D. inside the Ka'ba, the holiest of all holy places in Islam, the cubic symbol of "Allah's House" in Mecca, Hijaz, northern part of today's Saudi Arabia, the only country in the world named after its ruling dynasty! No other human being was ever born in the holiest of holies besides him. Ali (as) was raised and cared for by his cousin Muhammed (P), the Messenger of Allah, who wished to return the favor Ali's father had done him when he was a child. You see, when Muhammed (P) was orphaned, Ali's father, Abu Talib, took him in his custody and raised him, so Muhammed (P) wanted to return the favor especially after seeing how Abu Talib's trade business was not doing well in his old age. Muhammed (P)'s upbringing of Ali (as) polished the lad's personality and prepared him to play a major role in the dissemination of the Islamic creed. He was the first male to believe in Muhammed (P) and to offer prayers with him. The second was another young man who was also raised and cared for by Muhammed (P), namely Zaid ibn Harithah who later commanded the army of the Muslims during the Battle of Mu'ta of 629 A.D., and so did his son Usamah in 632 A.D., both proving their military ability, insight and wisdom. The third to embrace the Islamic faith was Muhammed's longtime friend Abu Bakr.

When pagan Meccans wanted to assassinate Muhammed (P) in 622 A.D., Ali (as) slept in his (Muhammed's) bed, offering his life as a sacrifice to save his, while the Prophet succeeded in leaving his house safely even under the nose of the infidels, having recited the first eight verses of Surat Yaa-Seen (Chapter 36 of the Holy Qur'an) and thrown a handful of dust before their eyes. They could not see him leave. Muhammed (P) safely reached Quba, a suburb of Medina where he camped and waited for Ali (as) to rejoin him. He did not want to enter Medina triumphantly without Ali (as). After a few days, Ali (as) walked all alone the entire distance from Mecca to Medina, about 250 Arabian miles, arriving there with swollen and lacerated feet, bleeding and fatigued.

Ali (as) defended Islam in the Battle of Badr (624 A.D.) and married Fatima, the Prophet's only surviving offspring, in the same year. He also fought in the Battle of Uhud in the next year, in the Battle of Moat (Khandaq) in 627 A.D., in the Battle of Khayber (against the Jews of Medina) in 628 A.D., and took part in the Conquest of Mecca in 630 A.D. He also fought in the Battle of Hunain in the same year. On Thul-Hijjah 18, 10 A.H., corresponding to March 19, 632 A.D., and according to divine

orders which Muhammed (P) had received from his Lord in the form of Qur'anic verse No. 67 of Surat al-Ma'ida (Chapter 5), the Prophet of Islam delivered a speech at a place between Mecca and Medina known as Ghadir Khumm in the Juhfa valley wherein he enumerated some of Ali's merits and informed the huge crowd of an estimated 132,000 pilgrims who had accompanied him during his last pilgrimage, the Farewell Pilgrimage, that just as they had accepted him as the Prophet, they were bound to accept Ali (as) as "Ameerul-Mu'mineen," Commander of the Faithful, title of one who rules the Muslims as the supreme political leader and, at the same time, as the highest religious authority. Details of and references to this historic event are recorded, with the entire original Arabic text (23 pages) of the Prophet's historic sermon, are in the Glossary to my book titled *Kerbala and Beyond: An Epic of Immortal Heroism* which Author House of Indiana, U.S.A., published and started marketing on August 26, 2011.

Because of the numerous battles in which Ali (as) participated and the number of those whom he killed, he was not popular with those who considered blood relations more important than earning the Pleasure of the Almighty; therefore, only a few months after that date did some people promote Abu Bakr, a wealthy Meccan and a very successful businessman, to the post of "Ameerul-Mu'mineen." This took place in 11 A.H./632 A.D. He ruled for two years and a half, dying on a Tuesday, 13 A.H./634 A.D. at the age of 63... They promoted Abu Bakr to be "Ameerul-Mo'minnen" instead of Ali (as), forgetting or pretending to forget what they had heard from and pledged to the Prophet (P) only two months and nine days ago at Ghadir Khumm. This took place immediately after the Prophet's demise on Safar 28, 11 A.H./May 28, 632 A.D. (By the way, like all lunar Hijri years, the solar calendar year 632 of the Christian Era coincided with both the 10th and the 11th Hijri years.)

Imam Ali (as) did not receive any significant recognition during the reign of the first three caliphs, and even his wife's property, Fadak, was confiscated; thus, his family was deprived of a good source of income. Abu Bakr ordered the confiscation in 632 A.D. The only just and fair Umayyad ruler, namely the last one, Omer ibn Abdul-Aziz, returned Fadak to Fatima's offspring in 718 A.D., 86 years after its confiscation with profound apologies. When Ali (as) was elected as caliph in 36 A.H./657 A.D., tribalism and racism were as rampant as they used to be during the pre-Islamic era. Islam's teachings were either forgotten or distorted. In Syria, Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan had declared himself "caliph" and was buying people's conscience and loyalty. He was, once more, raising one army after another to fight Ali (as) just as his father Abu Sufyan had raised one army after another to fight Muhammed (P), causing tens of thousands of Muslims to be killed in the process. Most of Ali's time was spent in defending law and order; he hardly had time to rest and to improve the conditions which he knew were in need of improvement because of the injustices of past regimes that did not protect the Islamic creed from liars and fabricators of traditions, indirectly assisting in the distortion of the Sunnah.

Caliph Ali (as) had to fight the Battle of Jamal (Camel), which broke out at the end of Rab'i II 36 A.H./June 28, 632 A.D., the forces of dissent which had been herded and led by Aisha daughter of the same Abu Bakr mentioned above and one of the Prophet's wives. She was then nineteen years old and was riding a huge camel named Askar, hence the name of the battle: Harb al-Jamal, battle of the camel. She kept urging her men to fight Ali (as) and his men. It was the first time that Muslims killed Muslims, and such killing has been going on ever since. Look at Afghanistan, Algeria, Iraq and Iran (during the 1980s when more than a million Muslim lives were lost), and remember the civil wars in Lebanon, Somalia, Yemen, and elsewhere... History repeats itself. Those who do not learn from the mistakes of past generations are doomed, condemned and destined to repeat them, rest assured. Aisha

accused Ali (as) of having collaborated with those who had killed her Umayyad relative Othman ibn Affan who became caliph in 24 A.H./645 A.D. and ruled till he was killed in 35 A.H./656 A.D. when he was 89. Ali (as), in fact, had sent both of his sons, Imam al-Hassan (as) and Imam al-Hussain (as) (the latter being the hero of this brief report), to defend Othman who was placed by the angry protesters under virtual house arrest and his mansion was twice subjected to a siege. Water and food supplies were blocked from reaching him. Ali (as) used to get water and food smuggled to Othman's mansion during the night passed on from one person to another from one flat rooftop to another till they reached Othman's mansion. The public outrage stemmed from Othman's mismanagement of public funds and preference of his own relatives over all others for top government jobs even when such relatives were not fit at all to occupy any government post. He himself lived in luxury unseen before, getting mansions built for him and for his wife, and silk clothes and exotic perfumes were being imported especially for him and for her. His wife, Na'ila daughter of al-Qarafisah, used to wear so much jewelry that people could hear the jingle from a distance! Such should not be the conduct of successors of Prophets. While defending Othman, Imam al-Hassan (as) received a wound on his forehead. But the huge number of the angry crowd finally assaulted Othman's mansion and dealt him blows with their swords, killing him instantly. It was the first time Muslims killed their caliph. Na'ila tried to defend her husband with her bare hands, getting four of her fingers cut off. She sent those fingers together with the copy of the Holy Qur'an which Othman was reciting when he was killed and which was stained with his blood to Mu'awiyah in Damascus to use them to excite people and to urge them to seek revenge for Othman's murder.

Aisha, ironically, was one of those who had urged the Muslims to kill Othman, making her historic statement which we would like to quote here in its original Arabic text verbatim: **أقتلوا نعثلاً فقد كفر** "Uqtulu Na'thalan faqad kafar," that is, "Kill Na'thal, for he has committed apostasy." Na'thal was a contemporary Jew famous for his untidy and too long beard; hence, Aisha was comparing Othman with a Jew. She, in fact, was trying to get either Talhah ibn Ubaydullah, her cousin who aspired to marry her after the demise of the Prophet (P), something which Islam prohibited, or az-Zubair ibn al-Awwam, son of her older sister Asma' daughter of Abu Bakr, become caliph instead of Ali (as). Az-Zubair ibn al-Awwam did, in fact, succeed in declaring himself as the caliph after rebelling against the Umayyads as the reader will come to know in the chapter dealing with the Harra incident. Aisha disliked Ali (as) very much despite all the praise lavished on him by her husband, the Messenger of Allah (as), and although he did not do anything to warrant such an attitude.

There is no room here to detail all the grievances the Muslims raised against their caliph, Othman, in addition to the above, for these would fill an entire volume, and books have, in fact, been already written about this subject. One such book is titled **الفتنة الكبرى** *Al-Fitnatul-Kubra* (the greatest dissension) by the renown Egyptian scholar Dr. Taha Hussain (winner of a Nobel prize for literature) and published in Cairo, Egypt, a book which the author may have modelled after at-Tabari's book bearing the exact title and dealing with the same theme. One of the best references written about the Battle of the Camel is al-Mas'udi's famous book **مروج الذهب** *Muraj at-Thahab*. Ali (as) won the battle; 13,000 men from aisha's camp and 5,000 from Ali's were killed, according to p. 177, Vol. 5, of *Muraj at-Thahab*. The heaviest casualty was the loss of thousands who knew the entire text of the Holy Qur'an by heart and whose knowledge, during that critical time, was crucial. The Prophet of Islam has said: **موت العالم موت العالم** "Mawt al-aalim mawt al-aalam," that is, "The death of a scholar spells the death of the world." What is the world without scholars? It is darkness without light, trees without fruit, river without water... Islam very much encourages scholarship and reveres scholars, writers, intellectuals, researchers, scientists, etc.

After the Battle of Camel, Ali (as) had to fight the Battle of Siffeen (40 A.H./661 A.D.) against the army of Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan, Yazid's father. Shortly after that, and in the same year, and to be exact on the 19th of the month of Ramadan, 40 A.H./January 29, 661 A.D., Ali (as) was killed by Ibn Muljim al-Muradi, one of the Kharijites, those who were fed-up with certain Muslim caliphs and with some of the latter's un-Islamic practices. These Kharijites had been crushed by Ali (as) in the Battle of Nahrawan, which started on Safar 6, 38 A.H./July 17, 658 A.D., but their remnants scattered thereafter throughout the Islamic lands. When he was killed, Ali (as) was leading the morning prayers at Kufa's grand mosque. Ali (as) was the embodiment of everything Islam stands for. Even his name, Ali (as), is derived from "Al-Aliyy," one of the Almighty's ninety-nine Attributes known as Asma' Allah al-Husna, Allah's most beautiful names. Scholars of tafsir, exegesis of the Holy Qur'an, have identified numerous Qur'anic verses praising Ali (as) and his family, his Ahl al-Bayt أهل البيت. The most widely known of such verses is No. 33 of Chapter 33 of the Holy Qur'an (Ayat at-Tathir, Surat al-Ahzab).

This much should suffice the reader to form an idea about Imam al-Hussain's father, so let us now discuss the hero of our story.

The Messenger of Allah (ص) has said, "Hussain is of me, and I am of Hussain; Allah loves whoever loves Hussain."

Peace with al-Hussain, with Ali son of al-Hussain, with the offspring of al-Hussain and with the companions of al-Hussain

Chapter 1

ALI AND HIS ANCIENT FOES: MU`AWIYAH AND ABU SUFYAN

Abu Sufyan was a wealthy and influential man who belonged to the Banu Umayyah clan of the once pagan tribe of Quraish of Mecca, Hijaz, that fought the spread of Islam relentlessly during the time of the Prophet of Islam (as). He was contemporary to the Prophet of Islam (as) whom he fought vigorously. His date of birth is unknown, but he died in 31 A.H./652 A.D. "Abu Sufyan" is his kunya, surname; his name is Sakhr ibn Harb ibn Umayyah. He is father of Mu'awiyah and grandfather of Yazid.

Abu Sufyan led pagan Quraish in its many wars against Prophet Muhammed (P) and his small band of supporters, making alliances with other pagan tribes and with the Jews of Medina against the new rising power of Islam. He kept leading one battle after another till the fall of Mecca to the Muslims in 630 A.D. It was then that he had to either accept the Islamic faith or face a sure death for all the mischief he had committed against the Muslims, so he preferred to live in hypocrisy as a "Muslim," though only in name, rather than accept death. He was the most cunning man in all of Arabia and one of its aristocrats and men of might and means. He saw Islam as the harbinger of the waning of his own personal power and prestige and those of his tribe, Quraish, not to mention the decline of his faith, paganism, and the pre-Islamic way of life to which he and his likes were very much accustomed, the life of promiscuity, lewdness and debauchery, with all the wine, women and wealth aristocrats like him very much enjoyed. His likes are present throughout the Islamic lands in our time and in every time and clime... This has always been so, and it shall unfortunately remain so...

Chapter 2

MU'AWIYAH AND YAZID

Mu'awiyah son of Abu Sufyan was born out of wedlock in 602 A.D. during the *jahiliyya*, the time of ignorance, the period that preceded Islam. His mother, Maysun, was one of his father's slave-girls. Maysan had a sexual intercourse with one of Mu'awiyah's slaves and conceived Yazid by him. Mu'awiyah, in total disregard for Islamic or traditional Arab traditions, claimed Yazid as his son. A testimony to this fact is the well-documented tradition of the Prophet (P) wherein he said, "The murderer of my [grand]son al-Hussain is a bastard." This tradition is quoted on p. 156, Vol. 1, of *Kanz al-Ummal* of al-Muttaqi al-Hindi. The stigma of being a bastard applies actually not only to Yazid but also to both Shimr ibn Thul-Jawshan and Ubaydullah ibn Sa'd, the accomplices about whom the reader will read later; all of these men were born out of wedlock.

Mu'awiyah played a major role in distorting the Islamic creed by paying writers to tailor design "traditions" to serve his interests and support his deviated views. He installed himself as ruler of Syria in 40 A.H./661 A.D. and ruled for twenty long years till his death at the age of seventy-eight. Shortly before his death, which took place in the month of Rajab of 60 A.H./May of 680 A.D., he managed to secure the oath of allegiance to his corrupt and immoral son Yazid as his successor. He did so by intimidation once and once by buying loyalty and favours, spending in the process huge sums of money that belonged to the Muslims. The weak-minded majority of the Muslims of his time swore allegiance to him. This proves that the majority does not necessarily have to be right. Imam al-Hussain (as), together with a small band of devotees to the cause of truth, refused to bow their heads to the oppressive forces, hence this tale of heroism.

Mu'awiyah declared himself "caliph" in Syria when he was 59 years old and assumed authority by sheer force. He was not elected, nor was he requested to take charge. He did not hide this fact; rather, he bragged about it once when he addressed the Kufians saying, "O people of Kufa! Do you think that I fought you in order that you may establish prayers or give zakat or perform the pilgrimage?! I know that you do pray, pay zakat and perform the pilgrimage. Indeed, I fought you in order to take command over you with contempt, and Allah has given me that against your wishes. Rest assured that whoever killed any of us will himself be killed. And the treaty between us of amnesty is under my feet."¹

Mu'awiyah's rule was terror in the whole Muslim land. Such terrorism was spread by many convoys sent to various regions. Historians have narrated saying that Muawiyh summoned Sufyan ibn 'Awf al-Ghamidi, one of the commanders of his army, and said to him, "This army is under your command. Proceed along the Euphrates River till you reach Heet. Any resistance you meet on your way should be crushed, and then you should proceed to invade Anbar. After that, penetrate deeply into Mada'in. O Sufyan! These invasions will frighten the Iraqis and please those who like us. Such campaigns will attract frightened people to our side.

¹Ibn Abul-Hadid, *Sharh Nahjul-Balagha* شرح نهج البلاغة , Vol. 16, p. 15.

Kill whoever holds different views from ours; loot their villages and demolish their homes. Indeed, fighting them against their livelihood and taking their wealth away is similar to killing them but is more painful to their hearts."² Another of his commanders, namely Bishr ibn Arta'ah, was summoned and ordered to proceed to Hijaz and Yemen with these instructions issued by Mu'awiyah: "Proceed to Medina and expel its people. Meanwhile, people in your way, who are not from our camp, should be terrorized. When you enter Medina, let it appear as if you are going to kill them. Make it appear that your aim is to exterminate them. Then pardon them. Terrorize the people around Mecca and Medina and scatter them around."³

During Mu'awiyah's reign, basic human rights were denied, not simply violated. No one was free to express his views. Government spies were paid to terrorize the public, assisting the army and the police in sparing no opportunity to crush the people and to silence their dissent. There are some documents which reveal Mu'awiyah's instructions to his governors to do just that. For instance, the following letter was addressed to all judges: "Do not accept the testimony of Ali's followers (Shi'a s) or of his descendants in (your) courts." Another letter stated: "If you have evidence that someone likes Ali and his family, omit his name from the recipients of rations stipulated from the *zakat* funds." Another letter said, "Punish whoever is suspected of following Ali and demolish his house."⁴ Such was the situation during the government of Mu'awiyah, Yazid's infamous father. Historians who were recording these waves of terror described them as unprecedented in history. People were so frightened, they did not mind being called atheists, thieves, etc., but not followers of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (as), Prophet Muhammed's right hand, confidant and son-in-law.

Another aspect of the government of Mu'awiyah was the racist discrimination between Arabs and non-Arabs. Although they were supposed to have embraced Islam which tolerates no racism in its teachings, non-Arabs were forced to pay *khiraj* and *jizya* taxes that are levied from non-Muslims living under the protection of Muslims and enjoying certain privileges, including the exemption from the military service. A non-Arab soldier fighting in the state's army used to receive bare subsistence from the rations. Once, a dispute flared up between an Arab and a non-Arab and both were brought to court. The judge, namely Abdullah ibn Amir, heard the non-Arab saying to his Arab opponent, "May Allah not permit people of your kind (i.e. Arabs) to multiply."

²*Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 86.

³*Ibid.*

⁴*Ibid.*

The Arab answered him by saying, "O Allah ! I invoke You to multiply their (non-Arabs') population among us!" People present there and then were bewildered to hear such a plea, so they asked him, "How do you pray for this man's people to multiply while he prays for yours to be diminished?!" The Arab opponent said, "Yes, indeed, I do so! They clean our streets and make shoes for our animals, and they weave our clothes!"

Imam al-Hussain's older brother, Imam al-Hassan (as), was elected in Medina on the 21st of the month of Ramadan, 40 A.H./January 28, 661 A.D. as the caliph, but his caliphate did not last long due

to the terrorism promoted by Mu'awiyah who either intimidated, killed, or bribed the most distinguished men upon whom Imam al-Hassan (as) depended to run the affairs of the government. Finally, Mu'awiyah pushed Imam al-Hassan (as) out of power after signing a treaty with him the terms of which were, indeed, honourable and fair, had they only been implemented. Finding his men too weak or too reluctant to fight Mu'awiyah, Imam al-Hassan (as) had no alternative except to sign the said treaty with a man whom he knew very well to be the most hypocritical of all and the most untrustworthy. Since there are too many ignorant folks who dare to blaspheme and cast doubt about the integrity of Imam al-Hassan (as), we have to review the terms of that treaty and leave the reader to draw his own conclusion; those terms, in brief, were:

- 1. Mu'awiyah shall rule according to the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (P) in the territories under his control.**
- 2. Mu'awiyah shall have no right to nominate his successor.**
- 3. All people in Syria, Iraq, Hizaj and Yemen shall lead their lives safely and securely.**
- 4. The lives and properties of the followers (Shi'as) of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (as), wherever they may be, shall remain safe and secure.**
- 5. Mu'awiyah shall not try, openly or secretly, to harm or to kill Imam al-Hassan (as) son of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (as), his brother Imam al-Hussain (as), or any other member of the family of the Prophet (P), nor shall they be threatened or terrorized.**
- 6. The abusive language, the cursing of Imam Ali (as) during prayer services (ordered by Mu'awiyah and continued after his death for a long period of time) at the Grand Mosque of Damascus shall be stopped.**

Mu'awiyah had ordered all Imams who led congregational prayers not to descend from their pulpits before cursing Ali (as), a practice which they labeled as "Sunnah." It is documented that one such Imam forgot once to curse Ali (as), whereupon people shouted at him that he had violated the Sunnah. Those who prayed at home and who forgot to curse Ali (as) after their prayers felt obligated to repeat them, being convinced that such cursing was an integral part of the compulsory prayers without which they would not be accepted by Allah... Such abominable blasphemy continued from the year when Othman was killed, that is, 35 A.H./656 A.D. till it was terminated by orders of the only righteous Umayyad caliph, namely Omer ibn Abdul-Aziz, one year after his becoming caliph, that is, in 100 A.H./718 A.D., for a total of 62 years. Historians say that the public actually did not stop cursing Ali (as) even then but continued to do so for at least 18 more years, extending the total to 80 years... Omer ibn Abdul-Aziz was killed in 101 A.H./719 A.D. after having ruled for only two years and five months because he was fair and just and, most importantly, because he was sympathetic to the Prophet's family (Ahl al-Bayt); peace and blessings of Allah be with him.

Shortly after concluding the said treaty, Mu'awiyah lured Imam al-Hassan's wife, Juda daughter of al-Ash'ath ibn Qays, into poisoning her husband with the promise that he would marry her off to his son and heir apparent Yazid. Juda killed her husband who died on Safar 28, 50 A.H./March 30, 670 A.D. She was cursed by the Almighty with an embarrassing ailment for which nobody could find any cure. Mu'awiyah, as expected, did not fulfill his promise.

Having succeeded in getting Imam al-Hassan (as), Imam al-Hussain's older brother, killed, Mu'awiyah sent letters to one of his Umayyad relatives, namely Marwan ibn al-Hakam, a cousin of Othman ibn Affan and bearer of his seal, a seal which he used quite often for his own gains and even

without the knowledge of the aging caliph, instructing him to obtain the oath of allegiance for his son Yazid as his (Mu'awiyah's) successor. By the way, the Umayyads succeeded in making this same Marwan caliph in 64 A.H./683 A.D., and his government lasted for seventeen months till it ended in 65 A.H./684-85 A.D. when he died at the age of 63 and was buried in Damascus. Marwan, accordingly, delivered a speech following the prayers and concluded it by saying, "The commander of the faithful (meaning Mu'awiyah) is of the view that he chooses his son Yazid to succeed him as your ruler following in the footsteps of Abu Bakr and Omer ibn al-Khattab... " He was at that moment interrupted by Abdul-Rahman son of first caliph Abu Bakr. "Nay!," Abdul-Rahman ibn Abu Bakr shouted, "You mean in the footsteps of Kisra (Khosro, emperor of Persia) and Caesar (emperor of Rome)! Neither Abu Bakr nor Omer appointed their sons or relatives as their successors... !"

In 51 A.H./671 A.D., Mu'awiyah performed the pilgrimage then went to Medina where he called to his presence Abdullah son of second caliph Omer ibn al-Khattab. His father, Omer, succeeded Abu Bakr as the caliph in 13 A.H./634 A.D.; he remained caliph for ten years till he was killed by a Persian slave in the month of Thul-Hijja, 23 A.H./November 644 A.D. He was succeeded by Othman ibn Affan who ruled for eleven years (till 35 A.H./656 A.D.). Mu'awiyah said to Abdullah ibn Omer, "O son of Omer! You used to tell me that you never liked to sleep one night without knowing who your Imam (here the word means "ruler") is, and I warn you against spreading the seeds of dissension among the Muslims or corrupting their views." Abdullah praised Allah then said, "There were other caliphs before you who had sons who were not inferior to yours, yet they did not decide to do what you have decided to do regarding your son. Rather, they let the Muslims make their own choice. You warn me against dissension, and I am not an advocate of dissension. I am just one of the Muslims, and if they are unanimous regarding an issue, I will then add my voice to theirs." Having said so, Abdullah left. Then Muhammed, son of first caliph Abu Bakr, referred to above, was presented before Mu'awiyah. The latter started his rhetoric but Abdul-Rahman interrupted him by saying, "All you want to say is that you wish we obey your son after obeying Allah, and this, by Allah, we will never do. And, by Allah, we shall settle this issue by mutual consultation among the Muslims; otherwise, we will treat you as you were treated at the dawn of Islam... !" Then he, too, stood up and left.

Yazid son of Mu'awiyah was born in 17 A.H./645 A.D. and inherited his father's post in 60 A.H./680 A.D. He ruled for only three years and one month then died in mid-Rab'iul-Awwal of 64 A.H./December 14, 683 A.D. at the young age of 38. He was a playboy, a drunkard, and a man who used to enjoy seeing animals fight. He used to play with animals. Monkeys were dressed in gold-embroidered multi-colored clothes and trained to dance for him, and he had salaried "officials" to look after his animal collection. Such collection included monkeys and race dogs. He was fond of gambling and wine drinking, and he demonstrated disrespect towards the Mosque of the Prophet (P) and towards the Ka'ba itself, causing very serious damages to its structure as the reader will come to know in a later part of this book. He forced women to take their veils off and killed thousands of innocent people and encouraged the rape of women, girls, and children during the uprisings that took place in Hijaz, particularly in the Harra incident, details of which will follow. In short, Yazid did not have one iota of respect for Islamic tenets or moral ethics. Strange enough, there are some ignorant Muslims who sing his praise, justify and defend his barbaric conduct...

This much gives the reader an idea about what type of persons Abu Sufyan, Mu'awiyah, and Yazid were. Now let us review the brief biography of their opponents.

Chapter 3

THE NAHJUL-BALAGHA TREASURE

There is hardly any averagely educated Muslim who has not heard, read or acquired a copy of Imam Ali's treasure titled Nahjul-Balagha although this is not the only book credited for the Imam (as). The very first book which the Imam (as) was called by his Ahl al-Bayt (as) *Al-Jami`a*, the collective work, the "university". Unfortunately, very limited details are available about this work. The Imam (as) used to write its parts on pieces of deer skin and hang it on his sword, Thul-Fiqar, and he hang so much, it was not easy to lift the sword. His family and descendants inherited this precious work, and the reader knows that they all were subjected to the most cruel persecution which started immediately after the demise of the Messenger of Allah (P). For this reason, no part of this jami`a survived. But thanks to the efforts of al-Sharif al-Radi who was able to preserve a good number of the Imam's sermons, letters to rulers, army generals, government officials, etc. when he ruled the Islamic world, in addition to some speeches. He called his collection "Nahjul-Balagha" which means "the path or way or method of eloquence", a book which has been translated into more than 20 language and is now being read, studies and critiqued in the West more so than in the East. Allah Almighty has blessed me with opportunity to edit this treasure of knowledge for New York's Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, Inc. which so far has reprinted it 7 times and is preparing to do so in the next few weeks, Insha Allah, honoring me again with editing its 8th printing.

Chapter 4

LINGUISTIC GENIUS OF IMAM ALI (as) IN TWO OF HIS SERMONS

The text below is originally published on pp. 188 – 197 of my book titled *Mary and Jesus in Islam* which was published by Author House of Bloomington, Indiana, and released to the public on December 19, 2011. It is slightly edited from the original, and the editing includes the removal of accented characters, Arabic salutations, etc., so it may be easier to be read by any MS Word user. You are at liberty to quote this text, re-print it, circulate it, use it in your thesis, dissertation, term paper, post it on your web site or use it in any other way you see fit, and when you do, rest assured that the Almighty, Who loves the Imam (as) very much, will be very pleased with you and will reward you in the life of this world and in the Hereafter. May Allah enable all of us to achieve such a great blessing beyond which there is no other blessing at all, *Allahomma Aameen*.

Balagha or Balaghah: wise rhetoric, elocution, mastery of oratory and language; refer to *Nahjul-Balagha* book to which reference is made in this book in more than one place in order to enjoy and benefit from the wisdom of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (as). In order to portray for the reader the command which Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (as) had of Arabic, two miraculous sermons which he composed serve as testimonies not only to such mastership but also to his genius: One of them contains an Arabic text in which the Imam (as) did not use the “elongated aleef”, alpha, “A”, and in the other he did not use a single alphabet that has any dots in it:

One day, a heated discussion went on among the Arabs and Muslims during which it was said that there is no alphabet that recurs in speech more often than the "aleef", alpha ("A"). All attendants agreed. It was then that the magnificent lantern of language, its deep ocean and precise philosopher, namely Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (as), stood up and delivered a lengthy sermon which included praise of Allah Almighty, prayers and salutations unto His Prophet, Muhammed ibn Abdullah ibn Abdul-Muttalib (P) (peace and blessings of Allah be with him and his progeny). The statements of the entire sermon, from beginning to end, did not contain a single word having the "elongated aleef" (alpha). The author's humble translation of it is as follows:

I praise the One Whose boon is great, whose blessing overwhelms, whose mercy is faster than His anger, the One whose word is perfect, whose will reigns, whose argument (issue) is wise, whose case is just. I praise Him as one recognizing His Godhead, submissive while adoring Him, dissociating himself from his sin, recognizing His Unity, seeking refuge with Him against His warning, hopeful for the mercy (forgiveness) of his Lord that saves him [from the Fire] on a Day when everyone will be distracted even from his offspring and tribe. We seek His help, guidance and directions. We believe in Him and depend on Him. I have testified to Him as a sincere and convinced servant/slave; I recognize His Uniqueness as a pious believer, and I have recognized His Unity like a submissive servant/slave.

He has no partner in His domain; He relies on none in doing whatever He does. He is exalted above having an advisor or a vizier. He is above using a model or an assistant or a helper or a peer. He knows, so He covers; He is acquainted with the innermost, so He is most familiar [with our intentions]. He cast a look, so He assisted; He owns everything, so He subdues. He is disobeyed, yet He forgives; He is adored, so He thanks. He rules, so He affects justice, and He is generous and grants favors. He shall never come to an end, and He has always been as He is; there is nothing like Him. He, first and foremost, is a unique Lord in His exaltation, able through His might, holy through His sublimity, proud of His Majesty; no (mental) vision can realize Him, nor can anyone ever see Him. He is strong, invincible, seeing, hearing, clement, wise, affectionate and kind. One who attempts to describe Him can never do so; one who attempts to describe His attributes can never do so [either]. His blessing reaches those who get to know Him: He is near, so He is far [above mental or physical vision]; He is far yet He is near [closer to us than anything else]. He responds to the call of those who call on Him; He sustains His servant and surrounds him with His love; His niceties are hidden [from our comprehension]; His power is mighty; His mercy is wide; His penalty is painful; His mercy is broad, a Garden of grandeur (Paradise); His punishment is Hell filled with horrors and chains.

I have testified that He sent Muhammed (P) as His servant and messenger, prophet, chosen one, loved one, friend, a link [with the Almighty] that grants him [Muhammed (P)] fortune, bringing him closer to Him, elevating him, granting him nearness and closeness [to the Almighty]. He sent him during a good (opportune) period of time, when there was disbelief, as mercy for His servants and a boon for more. Through him He sealed His prophetic messages, strengthened (explained) His argument. So he admonished, advised, conveyed the message and worked hard [for people]. He was affectionate towards every believer, merciful, easy to please, the friend of anyone who is generous and pure: mercy, salutation, blessing and honor with him from a forgiving, affectionate, kind, near, responsive and wise Lord.

I have admonished you, O folks who are present here with me, to be pious towards your Lord (as He has admonished), and I have reminded you of the Sunnah of your Prophet; so, take to awe that calms your hearts, fear that draws your tears, piety that saves you on a Day which will puzzle your minds and put you to the test, a day on which one shall win if the weight of his good deeds is heavy while that of his sins is light. Let your plea be in humility and surrender, appreciation and submission, repentance and dissociation [from sin], regret and return [to righteousness]. Let everyone of you seize the opportunity when he is healthy before the time when he is sick, when he is young before he is aged, old and sick, [the opportunity] of his ease before he is poor, of having free time before he is busy, of being wealthy before being impoverished, of being present at home before he is away traveling, of being alive before his death. He shall grow old, become weak, aged, sick, ailing, so much so that even his doctor is fed-up with him, even those who love him turn away from him. His lifespan will have come to an end. His color of complexion is changed. His mental power is decreased, so it is said that he is ailing and his body is failing. He is having a hard time as he finds himself suffering from the throes of death: He is attended by those who are close and who are distant. He gazes, yearns as he turns his eyes, his forehead sweating, his [physical] senses being snatched away from him [one by one]. His sighs are now silent, his soul has departed, so he is mourned by his wife. His grave is dug, his children are now orphans, those who were around him (his friends or foes) are now dispersed from him. What he had accumulated (legacy) has now been divided [among his heirs]. Gone are now his faculties of seeing and hearing; so he receives Talqeen; he is stretched [on the ground] and directed [towards the Qibla]. He is stripped of his clothes, bathed naked, body wiped then directed [towards the Qibla]. Something has been spread on the floor for him as his shrouds are being prepared. His chin

has been tied, his soul has already departed from his body and he has been bidden farewell by all. He is now shrouded, his head wrapped, so is his body, and he has been handed over [for burial]. He is carried in a wooden box (coffin); his funeral prayers have been performed with Takbir but without prostration or the rubbing of the forehead. He is taken away from a decorated abode [this life], from well-built mansions and chambers topping each other, so he is now in an enclosure of a grave which is very narrow and separated from others; it is built with baked clay on top of each other and is sealed with a head stone. Dust has been heaped on him, so he now is sure about that of which he was warned; his chest is now heavy; he is now a thing of the past. His friends, chosen ones, companions, in-laws and close friends have all left him behind. His company and loved ones are now changed, for he is now nothing but the filling of a grave and the pawn of a waste: Worms crawl all over his body, his pus drips from his nostrils on his neck and chest. Soil crushes his flesh as his blood dries and bone decays. He remains in his grave till the Day when he is herded with others and is given a new life; so, he is taken out of his grave. His trumpet is blown, he is called on to gather with others and stand trial. Graves are scattered around, the innermost in the hearts is recorded and computed. Every prophet, Siddiq, martyr, anyone who speaks is brought and made to stand for the final judgment of an Able God Who is fully knowledgeable of His servants, seeing [all what they do]. Countless exhalations engulf him, sighs fade him (distance him), in a horrific position and an awesome scene before a Great King Who knows about everything small and big. He is reined by his sweat, his worry crushing him, yet his tear has none to feel sorry for, his scream (defense) is not accepted. His record of deeds is brought, his innermost becomes visible, and every part of his body now speaks of his wrongdoings: His eyes testify about what he had seen, his hands about those whom he beat, his legs about where he had gone, his skin about what he had contacted, his private parts about with whom he had had intercourse. He is threatened by Munkir and Nakeer; and it is unveiled for him where he is heading; so his neck now is tied with chains and his hands are cuffed. He is taken alone, dragged and brought to Hell as he is in a great distress and hardship. He remains in the torment of hell given to drink of very hot pus that grills his face and separates his skin from his body. He is beaten by the torture angels of hell with iron clubs. His skin returns again and again anew after having been baked. He cries for help, yet even the angels in Hell turn away from him. He pleads for mercy, so he stays for a while regretful, yet he finds none to care about his regret. His regret will then be in vain.

We seek refuge with an Able Lord from the evil of any final end such as this, and we plead for forgiveness similar to that of one with whom He is pleased and for an overlooking similar to that of one whose good deeds He has accepted; for He is my Master, ultimate pursuit and the one Who grants success to what I seek. Surely one who is pushed away from the torment of his Lord shall reside in Paradise near Him and shall remain forever in well-built mansions, having huris with large lovely eyes and servants. He is given to drink of fresh cool water mixed with ginger and sealed with musk and fragrance that perpetuates happiness and provides the sense of pleasure. He drinks of wines in an orchard filled with all types of pleasures, wine that does not cause any headache to one who drinks it, and it never runs out; such is the ultimate end of one who fears his Lord, who is on guard about his sin, about the insinuations of his nafs (self), and that was the penalty of one who goes against the [sinless] way [in which] he was created, the one whose evil self-decorates for him to do what is against his nature. Such is the final judgment and the ruling of One Who is just: He narrated parables, admonished through texts, sent revelations from a Praiseworthy Wise One, revelations which He sent down with a clear (able) Holy Spirit [arch-angel Gabriel] from a Glorious Lord unto a Prophet who is rightly guided and who guides others, one who shows others the right way, a mercy to the believers, clearly from a Great Lord, a master frequented by messengers (angels) who are honored and obedient [of their Lord].

I have sought refuge with a Lord Who is knowing, wise, able, merciful, from the evil of an enemy who is cursed and stoned; so, let everyone who pleads plead, and let everyone who seeks [favours of his Lord] seek and ask forgiveness of the Lord of lords for myself and for you all.

Having finished his miraculous sermon, the Imam (as) recited this following verse of the Holy Qur'an: "We shall grant that (eternal) abode of the hereafter to those who intend neither highhandedness nor mischief on earth, and such end is (the best reward) for the righteous" (Qur'an, 28:83).

Following is a sermon by the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (as) all Arabic letters of which do not contain any dots at all:

Praise to Allah Who is the praiseworthy, the affectionate owner of everything, the One who forms everyone born, the ultimate end of everyone who is expelled, the One Who spreads out the earth, Who firms the mountains, Who sends out rain, who facilitates the attainment of goals, Who knows the secrets and realizes them, Who destroys the possessions and annihilates them, who folds out times and repeats them, who causes matters and is their source. His forgiveness covers all, His creation of the clouds is perfected: Rain showers succeed it. He prolongs pursuits and hopes, broadens sands and places them. I praise Him an extended praise, and I recognize His unity just as those who love Him the most recognize: He is Allah, there is no god for the nations besides Him, nor is there anyone to cause a defect to what He straightens and does. He sent Muhammed (P) as a banner for Islam and an Imam for those who rule, a helper to the commoners and one who puts an end to the judgments of Wadd and Suwa' (idols). He knows and He informs, He rules and He perfects: He is the origin of origins. He [Muhammed (P)] paves the path [to the Almighty] and emphasizes the Promised Day, warning about it. Allah has made honors in order to reach him, depositing in his soul Islam, blessing his honorable family and offspring so long as there is anything that shines like lightning, anyone who hurries his pace towards his pursuit, whenever a crescent appears and the announcement about it is made.

Do, may Allah look after you, righteous deeds, tread the paths of what is permissible, put what is prohibitive aside and abandon it, listen to the command of Allah and realize it, keep in touch with your kinsfolk and look after them. Disobey your inclinations and curb them, give your daughters by way of marriage to the people of righteousness and piety, and stay away from the folks who sport and who covet, so your marriage ties may produce the most pure of freemen, the most eminent descent, those who will let you achieve your dreams. This should be before your eyes, your domain will thus be rightful, your brides honored, and let her dower be just as the Messenger of Allah (P) had paid Umm Salamah, while he is the most honored of all in-laws, the most kind of all offspring, and he had whatever he wanted, though having it was not easy, nor did it worry him, nor did his epics ever diminish, nor was he ever stigmatized. I plead to Allah to grant you the most praiseworthy of connection with Him, the perpetuation of pleasing Him; may He inspire each of you about that which reforms your condition and prepares you for what you shall receive [in the Hereafter]. Eternal praise belongs to Him; lauding belongs to His Messenger Ahmed (P).

Chapter 5

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"Wisdom is the lost property of the Believer, let him claim it wherever he finds it" - Imam Ali (as)"