

"I am the City of Knowledge; and verily Ali is the Gate of it."

- Rasulallah

ELECTIONS

After Sayyiduna 'Uthman (radi Allahu anhu) passed away, Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu) was elected as the fourth Caliph by the Muslims. During the period of the first three Caliphs, Madinatul Munawwarah continued to be the capital of the Muslim world, but Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu) transferred the Islamic capital to Kufah in Iraq.

EARLY LIFE

Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu) was the son of Abu Taalib, an uncle of Sayyiduna Rasulallah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu) was married to Sayyadah Bibi Fathima (radi Allahu anha), the daughter of Sayyiduna Rasulallah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). They had 3 sons, Sayyiduna Hassan, Sayyiduna Hussain and Sayyiduna Mohsin (radi Allahu anhumul ajma'in). Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu) took part in the battle of Badr, Khandaq and Khaibar. At Khaibar, it was Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu) who subdued the Jews with his furious assault. He also held many important positions during the time of Sayyiduna Rasulallah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) and the first 3 Caliphs before him.

He had a love for learning and was a great and learned person himself. He had been given the title of "Baabul 'Ilm" or "Gate of Learning" by Sayyiduna Rasulallah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). He was also called "Asaadullah" or "Lion of Allah."

OPPOSITION

The situation in Madinatul Munawwarah after the murder (Shahaadah) of Sayyiduna 'Uthman (radi Allahu anhu) was serious. Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu's) first task was to rid Madinatul Munawwarah of the rebels and to return the situation to normal.

Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu) was able to force the rebels to withdraw from Madinatul Munawwarah and to establish peace and order in the city. The powerful governor of Syria, Sayyiduna Mu'awiyah (radi Allahu anhu), challenged Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu) and refused to

pay homage to him. Sayyiduna Mu'awiyah (radi Allahu anhu) insisted that Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu) arrest the murderers of Sayyiduna 'Uthman (radi Allahu anhu) and hand them over to him.

Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu) was a man with a deep sense of justice and did not want to accuse the wrong people. He needed a peaceful period to trace the culprits. But, Sayyiduna Mu'awiyah (radi Allahu anhu) began accusing him of protecting the murderers, and in this way the old enmity between the two families were revived.

SAYYIDUNA MU'AWIYAH (RADI ALLAHU ANHU)

Unlike most of Sayyiduna 'Uthman (radi Allahu anhu's) governors, Sayyiduna Muaawiyah (radi Allahu anhu) displayed great administrative ability and was very popular. He was a God-fearing man and especially known for his mercy. Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu) was very strict in piety and straight forward. Sayyiduna Muaawiyah (radi Allahu anhu) declared his disobedience to him, because he felt that he was better qualified to lead the Muslim world.

BATTLE OF THE CAMEL

Another serious development took place. Sayyadah Aishah (radi Allahu anha) and two leading Sahaba, Sayyiduna Talha and Sayyiduna Zubair (radi Allahu anhuma) declared their opposition to the Khilaafat of Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu). They left Madinatul Munawwarah for Makkatul Mukarramah and from there travelled to Basrah where they rallied men and new supporters.

Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu) had to crush all opposition. A bloody battle took place near Basrah on the 9th of December 656 A.C. This battle was sparked off by a third force who were the real troublemakers. Just before the battle, both parties had already reached an agreement to settle the dispute. But this third force, the real assassins of Sayyiduna 'Uthman (radi Allahu anhu), launched an overnight attack on both camps simultaneously. Each side were under the impression that the other had attacked. The battle began. Several thousand men were lost including the two Sahaba. Sayyadah Aishah (radi Allahu anha) was safe. She was riding a camel during the battle-hence the name "Battle of the Camel." Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu) treated her in a most noble and dignified manner and respectfully sent her back to Madinatul Munawwarah. She praised him and deeply regretted opposing Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu). Kufa was now made the capital of the Islamic world.

BATTLE OF SIFFIN

Sayyiduna Muaawiyah (radi Allahu anhu) rallied an army to face Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu). A battle took place at Siffin on the Syrian border in the July of 567 A.C. Sayyiduna Muaawiyah (radi Allahu anhu) was no match for Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu) and began to retreat. By the clever proposal of Sayyiduna Amr bin Al As (radi Allahu anhu), the retreating army raised pieces of the Holy Quran on their spears demanding judgement between the two parties. Many pious Muslims on the side of Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu) refused to fight seeing the Holy Quran displayed in the air.

JUDGEMENT

Two men, one from each side, were appointed to settle the dispute. Sayyiduna Abu Musa (radi Allahu anhu), a pious Sahaba from Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu's) side, and the skilled Sayyiduna Amr (radi Allahu anhu) from Sayyiduna Muaawiyah (radi Allahu anhu's) side. Sayyiduna Musa (radi Allahu anhu) declared in front of the Muslims that it was decided to recommend the removal of both Sayyiduna Ali and Sayyiduna Muaawiyah (radi Allahu anhu) and that the Muslims should select another man for the Khilaafat. Sayyiduna Amr (radi Allahu anhu) replied that: "He has declared the removal of his leader, while I would conform Muaawiyah as the Caliph." Chaos followed.

KHAARIJEES

Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu) prepared to meet Sayyiduna Muaawiyah (radi Allahu anhu) again in battle, but he was moved from his task by a serious conflict that occurred among his men. Some narrow-minded people accused Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu) of accepting a man-made judgement. Their slogan was: "There is no judgment but with Allah." They declared that Sayyiduna Ali, Sayyiduna Muaawiyah and Sayyiduna 'Uthman (radi Allahu anhumul ajma'in) were unbelievers and that Jihad should be declared against them. Ever since this event, they have been known as the "Khaarijees", which means, "those who left the fold." They maintained that the Khilaafat should be given to the most eligible Muslim, regardless of his origin. The Kharijeers are not regarded as Muslims.

ASSASSINATION

On the 17th of July 659 A.C., Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu) overcame the Khaarijees in a battle near Nahrawan, in which, it is said, that 40 000 lives were lost.

In the early morning of the 24th of January 661 A.C., Abdul Rahman bin Muljim, a Khaariji fanatic lay in ambush in the Masjid of Kufah and stabbed Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu) when he entered the masjid. He passed away from the wound. He was 63 years old.

PERSONAL LIFE

Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu) lived a simple life. He refused any luxury food and wore simple clothes thinking of the poor. He should sleep on the ground and even sit on the floor. He repaired his own clothes and shoes and even did manual labour. He spent nights in Salaah and should fast for three days in a row. Honesty, piety, justice and love of truth were the main marks of his character.

Introduction

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was born thirty years after the birth of Rasulallah . He belonged to the most respectable family of Quraish, the Banu Hashim.

His father, Abu Talib, was the real uncle of Rasulallah who brought him up after the death of Rasulallah 's grandfather. Rasulallah took care of Hazrat Ali and brought up him like his own son.

First youth to accept Islam

When Rasulallah started to spread Islam, Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was about ten years old. When Rasulallah told Hazrat Ali about Islam, he accepted it immediately and thus he became the first youth to enter the folds of Islam.

When Rasulallah started to preach openly, he invited all of his family members to a feast and announced his mission before them. None listened to him, but the young Hazrat Ali stood up and said, "Though my eyes are sore, my legs are thin and I am the youngest of all those present here yet I will stand by you, Oh Messenger of Allah."

Hearing this all the leaders of Quraish laughed, but Hazrat Ali proved his words to be true after supporting Rasulallah in his mission from the beginning till the end.

The night when Rasulallah was migrating to Madinah, his house was surrounded by tribesmen who had plotted to assassinate him. They were ready to kill any person who left the house. In such a situation, Rasulallah asked Hazrat Ali (R.A.) to sleep in his bed, and he followed the command gladly and immediately jumped in the bed.

Although the Makkans did not accept his mission, they still considered Rasulallah the most trustworthy man of Makkah and continued keeping their trusts (cash and gold etc.) with him.

It was Hazrat Ali (R.A.) to whom Rasulallah gave the duty to return the trusts to the owners when he was leaving Makah for Madinah. Hazrat Ali (R.A.) migrated to Madinah after fulfilling his duty of returning people's goods.

Life in Madinah

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was very close to Rasulallah, and the closeness became a permanent relationship when he married his most beloved daughter, Hazrat Fatima (R.A.) to Hazrat Ali (R.A.).

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) also had a most distinguished honour; that the progeny of Rasulallah continued through Hazrat Ali's sons, Hazrat Hassan and Hazrat Hussain (R.A.). The two children were the most beloved of Rasulallah and he, in turn, was very dear to them.

When Rasulallah went to the expedition of Tabuk in 9 A.H., he left Hazrat Ali in charge of Madinah. On this, some hypocrites remarked that Rasulallah did not like Hazrat Ali. On this, Rasulallah remarked, "You are in the same position in relation to me as Aaron was with relation to Moses. But the only difference is, there is no Prophet after me."

His Bravery and the Zulfiqar

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was extremely brave and his courage knew no limits. He participated in almost all the battles against the non-believers during the time of Rasulallah . History is full of stories about his bravery.

In the first battle of Islam at Badr, he was holding the flag of Islamic army. When three famous warriors of Quraish challenged the Muslims according to Arab tradition, Hazrat Ali (R. A.) along with Hazrat Hamzah and Hazrat Abu Ubaidah (R.A.) accepted the challenge. Hazrat Ali killed his opponent, Walid, with just one thrust of his sword and cut him into two pieces. Then he went on to help Hazrat Abu Ubaidah (R.A.) in defeating the next Quraishi warrior.

In the battle of Uhud, Hazrat Mus'ab bin Umair, the holder of the Islamic flag and a fearless warrior, was martyred. Then it was Hazrat Ali (R.A.) who upheld the flag. Seeing this, one of the non-believers, Abu Sa'd challenged him. Hazrat Ali fought him and he fell down to the ground naked. Hazrat Ali (R.A.) felt pity on him and left him in that condition.

In the battle of the Trench, a famous warrior by the name of Abdwood challenged the Muslims after jumping on his horse across the trench. Nobody dared to accept his challenge except Hazrat Ali. Rasulallah warned Hazrat Ali about Abdwood but Hazrat Ali insisted on going and fighting him. Then Rasulallah gave him his famous sword, the Zulfiqar, and put a turban on his head. A few minutes later, people saw Abdwood's head cut off from his body by Hazrat Ali.

Hazrat Ali gets title of Asadullah

Due to his bravery, Hazrat Ali was popularly called Asadullah, the Lion of Allah.

In the battle of Khaibar against the Jews, the Muslims tried to conquer the strongest Jewish fort, Qumus, but were not successful in the beginning.

Then Rasulallah said, "Tomorrow, I will give the command to such a brave person who loves Allah and His Prophet, and whom Allah and His Prophet love." Everybody had a great desire to be that fortunate man. The people were rather surprised when, the next morning, Rasulallah called Hazrat Ali, who was ill and his eyes were sore. Rasulallah applied his saliva over the eyes of Hazrat Ali (R.A.); they were cured immediately. Then he gave the command, and advised him, "Firstly, call them towards Islam. Even if one man is guided towards Islam because of you, it would be better than red camels."

Following the advice of Rasulallah , Hazrat Ali invited the Jews towards Islam. Instead of accepting the Right Path, they sent their commander Marhab, a great warrior of Arabia and one of the bravest men of his time. He challenged Hazrat Ali to fight. Hazrat Ali (R.A.) accepted the challenge and slew him in one attack. His famous sword cut Marhab's body into two pieces.

He showed great bravery in each and every battle he fought, thus he was famous throughout Arabia. He was one of the greatest warriors of Arabia.

Hazrat Ali (R.A.), the great scholar of Islam

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was not only a great warrior but a great scholar as well.

Rasulallah said about him, "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate."

He was one of the great jurists among the Companions. Rasulallah appointed him as the Qadi (Judge) of Yemen during his life time. He was a master of Arabic and his writings were as effective as his speech. More about his scholarly services to Islam are mentioned later on in this article.

Special Messenger of Rasulallah

In 9 A.H., the first Hajj of Islam took place. Hazrat Abu Bakr (R.A.) was appointed as the leader of the Hajj group. After he left Madinah, revelation came to Rasulallah , according to which, the treaty with the non-believers had to be dissolved.

The announcement was to be made on the great day of Hajj. Rasulallah asked Hazrat Ali to carry the message on his behalf. He gave Hazrat Ali (R.A.) his own she-camel, Qaswa, on which Hazrat Ali rode and went to Makkah to read out the message in front of the crowd on the occasion of Hajj.

The excellence of Hazrat Ali

There are so many virtues and services of Hazrat Ali (R.A.) that it is difficult to mention them all here. On many occasions, Rasulallah had prayed for him specifically. When he sent Hazrat Ali to Yemen in Ramadan 10 A.H., he blessed Hazrat Ali (R.A.) with the following prayer, "Oh Allah, put truth on his tongue, and enlighten his heart with the light of guidance." Then, he himself put a turban on his head and gave him the black flag.

On one occasion Rasulallah said to Hazrat Ali, "You pertain to me and I pertain to you, " He also said, "When I am patron of anyone, Ali is also his patron."

Once Rasulallah said, "Only a hypocrite does not love Ali, and a believer does not hate him."

According to a Hadith transmitted by Imam Ahmad, Rasulallah said to Hazrat Ali, "You have a resemblance to Jesus, whom the Jews hated so much that they slandered his mother and whom Christians loved so much that they placed him in a position not rightly his."

Hazrat Ali afterwards said, "Two types of people will perish on my account, one who loves me so excessively that he praises me for what I do not possess, and one who hates me so much that he will be impelled by his hatred to slander me."

Shock of Rasulallah 's death

The death of Rasulallah was a great and painful shock to Hazrat Ali (R.A.).

He had attended to him day and night during his illness, and after his death he himself bathed the Blessed Body and enshrouded it.

Pledge of loyalty (Bai'at) to the former Khalifahs

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) had taken pledge of loyalty at the hands of all the past three Khalifahs.

However, he was late in taking pledge at the hand of Hazrat Abu Bakr (R.A.) due to the serious illness of his beloved wife, Hazrat Fatima (R.A.) and that he was also busy in the collection of the Holy Qur'an.

It is mentioned in the famous history book, Tabaqat ibn Sa'd, that when Hazrat Abu Bakr (R.A.) enquired of Hazrat Ali (R.A.) as to why he was so late in taking the pledge of loyalty and whether he disliked his Khilafat, Hazrat Ali (R.A.) replied, "I do not dislike your leadership but I had taken an oath after the death of the Holy Prophet not to put on my sheet (i.e. not to engage in any work) except for performing Salat until I have collected all the parts of the Holy Qur'an."

Then Hazrat Ali (R.A.) took pledge of loyalty at the hand of Hazrat Abu Bakr and helped him throughout his Khilafat. He was very active during the time of Hazrat Umar and also married his daughter, Hazrat Umm e Kulthum to him. In the matter of Hazrat Usman's election, he voted in his favour as has been mentioned before.

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was one of the very important members of Shura (Advisory Council) during the time of the first three Khalifahs. He was also the great jurist (Mufti) of Madinah during the time of past Khalifahs. He was among the panel of six persons who had to select the Khalifah amongst themselves after Hazrat Umar (R.A.). Hazrat Usman had great regard for him and consulted him in all matters. His sons were the main guards at Hazrat Usman's residence when the rebels laid siege to his house.

Thus, without doubt, Hazrat Ali (R.A.) gave everything possible to support to all of his predecessors.

Hazrat Ali (R.A.), the fourth Khalifah of Islam

The insurgents' shameful act of assassinating Hazrat Usman could have never been imagined by Hazrat Ali or any other eminent Companion in Madinah. It came as a total shock to Hazrat Ali (R.A.) whose two sons, Hazrat Hassan and Hussain (R.A.) were guarding the gate of Hazrat Usman's residence. The insurgents, after climbing the back wall of the residence, had assassinated the Khalifah.

The assassination of Hazrat Usman was in fact an idea used to create division amongst the Muslim Community, which was the goal of the cursed Abdullah Bin Saba and his followers (the insurgents), and they achieved it.

After the assassination of Hazrat Usman, the insurgents virtually controlled the Capital of Madinah for several days. The Muslims were in pain and shock, and sat behind closed doors. After the

assassination of Hazrat Usman (R.A.), an unprecedented calamity had befallen the Muslims and for three days, Madinah was without any government.

Afterwards, the insurgents approached Hazrat Ali (R.A.) to be the Khalifah. Egyptians led by Ibn Saba and Ghafiqi were the main group of insurgents behind the proposal for the Khilafat of Hazrat Ali (R.A.). Hazrat Ali first declined to bear the responsibility of this great office. But the insurgents pressed him to accept it. As a matter of fact, Hazrat Ali wanted to approach Hazrat Talha and Hazrat Zubair (R.A.) who were included in the panel of the six persons appointed by Hazrat Umar (R.A.) to select a Khalifah. He wanted to take pledge of loyalty at the hands of any of these two gentlemen.

But in the end, pressed by the threats of the regicides, he decided to put the matter before the Muslim public in the Mosque of Rasulallah . Most of the Companions in Madinah considered him to be the fittest person for Khilafat after Hazrat Usman (R.A.). He then agreed to take the responsibility and gave his consent.

On 21st Dhul-Hijjah 35 A.H., pledge of loyalty took place at the hands of Hazrat Ali . First of all, the leading insurgents took the pledge of loyalty at his hands, followed by the general public of Madinah. Hazrat Talha and Zubair (R.A.) did not want to take a pledge until the case of Hazrat Usman's assassination was decided. Before that, Hazrat Ali had offered the office of Khilafat to both of them but they had declined.

However, under the threats of insurgents, they took the pledge of loyalty at Hazrat Ali's hands, on one condition, "You (i.e. Hazrat Ali) have to decide matters according to the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah, and punish the guilty according to Islamic Law." Hazrat Ali (R.A.) agreed to their conditions. Hazrat Sa'd bin Waqqas said that he would take pledge when all the Muslims had done so. The following Companions did not take pledge at the hands of Hazrat Ali (R.A.): Hazrat Muhammad bin Muslimah, Usamah bin Zaid, Hassan bin Thabit, Ka'b bin Malik, Abu Sa'id Khudri, Nu'man bin Bashir, Zaid bin Thabit, Mughirah bin Shu'bah and Abdullah bin Salam. Most of the members of Banu Umayyah (Hazrat Usman's family) also did not take pledge of loyalty at Hazrat Ali's hands. Some of those who did not take the pledge of loyalty went to Syria.

However, the majority of the Muslims in Madinah took pledge at the hands of Hazrat Ali. According to Ahle Sunnah wal Jamaat, Hazrat Ali was the most suitable and the fittest person for Khilafat after Hazrat Usman (R.A.). If some of the Companions did not take pledge at his hands, it was because of the political situation of that time, and it did not mean that his Khilafat was not accepted by the Muslim majority.

Besides Hazrat Ali (R.A.), nobody including Hazrat Mu'awiyah (R.A.) claimed to be the Khalifah at that time. The difference between them was the question of how to punish the assassins, which took the shape of various battles. As it would be seen afterwards, Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.) declared his Khilafat only after the death of Hazrat Ali (R.A.). Hazrat Ali was declared to be the Khalifah, not only by the insurgents, but by the Muslim public as well including the leading Ansar and Muhajirin.

Disobedience of Abdullah bin Saba and his followers

On his third day as the Khalifah, Hazrat Ali asked all the Sabaites (the insurgents) to return to their places. Some of them started to go back but a party lead by Abdullah bin Saba did not obey the Khalifah, pretending all the while to be his friends.

In the history of Islam, this was the first incident of disobedience to a Khalifah. Their aim was to be with him in order to create mischief as it would be observed later.

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) faced a very difficult situation. His three main problems were:

1. To establish peace in the State and to set right the deteriorating political situation.
2. To take action against the assassins of Hazrat Usman (R.A.). Some of them were amongst the persons who requested Hazrat Ali (R.A.) to accept Khilafat, but neither he nor any other Muslim at that time knew the identity of the real assassins. It was the hardest job at that time to find the real assassins because the persons who recognised them had already left Madinah, and those among the Sabaites who were present there did not tell Hazrat Ali the truth.

All of the Sabaites told Hazrat Ali (R.A.) that they did not want to assassinate Hazrat Usman, and that was done only by some wicked persons whom they did not recognise. Therefore, some time was required to investigate the matter and that was possible only after the peaceful atmosphere was restored in the State which, unfortunately, never occurred during the caliphate of Hazrat Ali as the situation continued to worsen.

3. The third problem was the attitude to be adopted towards those Companions (R.A.) who would not pledge loyalty at the hands of Hazrat Ali unless he either handed over the assassins to them, or punished them according to Islamic Law. Though we cannot criticise the sincerity of their intention but in fairness to Hazrat Ali, it has to be said that it was a rather impossible job for Hazrat Ali (R.A.) to fulfil their demands immediately, considering the situation.

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was a very straight-forward man who considered the Khilafat as a great trust. His aim was to establish peace in the State, which should be the first aim of every good ruler in such a place where rebels try to destroy the order.

According to leading Islamic Jurists, it is quite right for a Muslim ruler to delay the cases of murder etc. in order to establish peace in the Islamic State (as mentioned by Qadi Abu Bakr Ibn al-Arabi in his book "Ahkam-ul-Qur'an", Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was quite right in his decision to tackle the assassins on restoration of normality). The majority of the Muslims, ie. the Ahle Sunnah wal Jamaat, have agreed with him on this point.

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) seeks to find the identity of Hazrat Usman's assassins

After assuming office, Hazrat Ali (R.A.) tried to find out the identity of the assassins of Hazrat Usman (R.A.). He called Marwan bin al-Hakm, the chief secretary of Hazrat Usman who was present in the house at the time of the assassination, but he had already left for Damascus along with a number of Banu Umayyads.

The only other witness was Hazrat Nailah, the wife of Hazrat Usman (R.A.). But she was a housewife and she could not tell the names of the persons present at that time, except the features of some of them. She could only name Muhammad bin Abi Bakr who had entered the house, but as stated before, he had left the house before Hazrat Usman's assassination. Moreover, Muhammad bin Abi Bakr took an oath (in accordance to Islamic Law) that he was not an assassin and he had left the house as soon as Hazrat Usman (R.A.) recognised him and said, "O my dear nephew, if your father (Hazrat Abu Bakr) were alive you would have not committed this." Hazrat Nailah gave her evidence in favour of Muhammad bin Abi Bakr and had confirmed that he was not one of the assassins. In spite of his efforts, Hazrat Ali could not locate the assassins.

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) dismisses the governors

In the opinion of Hazrat Ali (R.A.), the governors appointed by Hazrat Usman (R.A.) were basically responsible for all the events as they did not pay much attention to the activities of the insurgents. So he dismissed all the governors appointed by Hazrat Usman (R.A.).

Some of the Companions did not agree with Hazrat Ali (R.A.) on this. Among such persons were Hazrat Mughirah bin Shu'bah and Hazrat Ibn Abbas (R.A.). They advised Hazrat Ali not to take such a hasty action. According to them, it was not wise to dismiss them unless they pledged loyalty to Hazrat Ali, because Hazrat Usman's assassination could be an easy excuse for them to refuse the pledge of loyalty to Hazrat Ali. Hazrat Ali did not listen to their advice because he believed that expediency should not be the guiding factor. Hazrat Mughirah bin Shu'bah (R.A.) was totally against Hazrat Ali's action. He left Madinah and went to Makkah.

Hazrat Ali then appointed Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas as the governor of Yemen; Hazrat Usman bin Hanif as the governor of Basrah; Hazrat Ammarah bin Hassan of Kufa, and Qais as the governor of Egypt. Hazrat Sahl Bin Hanif was asked to take charge of governorship of Syria from Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.).

When the new governors went to take charge, they were faced with difficulties.

Egypt was one of the provinces in favour of Hazrat Ali (R.A.) but when the new governor, Qais, reached there the public was divided into three groups. Some of them accepted him but others demanded that the assassins must be punished first. There was a third group, belonging to Sabaites and the insurgents, who demanded that the assassins must not be punished in any case.

The same difficulty was faced by the newly appointed governor of Basrah. A group of people were in favour of the insurgents while the other was against them. While the governor of Kufa was on his way a spokesman of Kufis came and asked him to return to Madinah because they did not want to change their governor Hazrat Musa Ash'ari (R.A.) in any case. So Hazrat Ammarah bin Hassan (R.A.), the governor designate, returned to Madinah.

The new governor of Yemen, Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas did not face any difficulty because Ya'la, the old governor, had already left Kufa for Makkah before Hazrat Ibn Abbas reached there. When Hazrat Sahl bin Hanif, the governor designate of Syria, reached Tabuk (the out-post of Syria), Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah's cavalry men stopped him from proceeding any further and asked him to go back to Madinah. Thus, Kufa and Syria were the two provinces which had openly flouted Hazrat Ali's authority.

Hazrat Ali then sent his special messengers to Kufa and Syria. The governor of Kufa, Hazrat Abu Musa Ash'ari (R.A.) sent a satisfactory reply and assured Hazrat Ali of his loyalty to him. Not only this, but he also wrote to him that he had already taken pledge of loyalty for him from the people of Kufa.

The case of Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.) was entirely different.

Hazrat Amir Muawiyah's demand for assassins

After the assassination of Hazrat Usman (R.A.), his family (except his wife Nailah) reached Damascus and told Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.) the details. They also carried with them the blood stained shirt of Hazrat Usman (R.A.) and the chopped off fingers of his wife Hazrat Nailah.

Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah, a kinsman of Hazrat Usman (R.A.), was shocked on hearing the news, and when it was made public, all the Muslims of Syria were greatly perturbed. Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.) was a great statesman and was in Syria for about 20 years. He hung the blood stained shirt and the chopped off fingers of Hazrat Usman's wife on the Mimbar (pulpit) of the Jami' Mosque of Damascus which caused great disturbance amongst the Syrian Muslims. This was the situation of Syria when Sahl bin Hanif, the governor designate of Syria, was forced to return to Madinah from Tabuk.

On receiving the special messenger from Hazrat Ali, Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.) did not reply for about three months and detained the messenger. Then, he sent his own messenger to Hazrat Ali (R.A.) in Rabi'ul Awwal, 36 A.H. The messenger handed over the letter to Hazrat Ali addressed as "From Mu'awiyah to Ali".

When the letter was opened it was a blank piece of paper on which only "Bismillahir rahmanir raheem"(In the name of Allah, most Gracious, most Merciful) was written. Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was amazed to see the letter, which was in fact, an insult to the office of the Khalifah. The messenger also told Hazrat Ali (R.A.) that 50,000 Sheikhs of Syria were bemoaning the death of Hazrat Usman and were determined to fight until the assassins were handed over to them. Hazrat Ali replied, "O Allah! You know it well that I am free from any charge of Hazrat Usman's assassination. I swear by Allah that the assassins have escaped."

The Sabaites pretending to be friends of Hazrat Ali, tried to create another disturbance by trying to kill the messenger, but Hazrat Ali (R.A.) did not allow it. However, an exchange of hot words took place between them and the messenger.

Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah's reply was a clear indication of his intention. The matter was not going to be settled without force. Therefore, Hazrat Ali decided to use force against Hazrat Mu'awiyah (R.A.) and started preparations for it.

Hazrat Ali's elder son, Imam Hassan (R.A.) was a man of rather mild temper. He requested his father to give up the Khilafat and not to think of fighting against Muslims (i.e., to start a civil war). But there was no other way and Hazrat Ali (R.A.) had to handle the situation with an iron hand in order to keep the provinces under the centre, as they were since the time of Hazrat Abu Bakr (R.A.).

This was the first time in the history of Islam that the Muslims were preparing to fight against each other. As a Khalifah, Hazrat Ali was quite right in his decision. Not to pledge loyalty was an open revolt against his authority and he had to deal boldly with any type of internal rebellion. Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.), as a matter of fact, was understandably driven by strong emotion on the tragic assassination. The family of Hazrat Usman (R.A.), which had reached there after the assassination, was also a cause of this attitude. Moreover, some of the Sabaites, whose only aim was to divide the Muslim community, had reached Syria and incited the Muslims against Hazrat Ali. They were playing a double role. On the one side, a group of them was with Hazrat Ali (R.A.) to stir him up against Hazrat Mu'awiyah (R.A.), while on the other side some of them went to Syria only to inflame the feelings of Muslims over there.

Under such conditions, Hazrat Mu'awiyah (R.A.) had no alternative but to insist upon his demand for punishment of the assassins before pledging loyalty to Hazrat Ali (R.A.).

Hazrat Aisha's demand for the chastisement of assassins

While Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was preparing for war against Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah, another difficulty arose. After the assassination of Hazrat Usman (R.A.), some members of his family went to Hazrat Aisha (R.A.) who was in Makkah to perform the Hajj.

They and a number of Madinites informed her about the tragedy while she was on her way from Makkah to Madinah after the Hajj.

Hearing the news of assassination of Hazrat Usman, she returned to Makkah and appealed to the people over there to avenge the death of Hazrat Usman (R.A.). Hundreds of people, including the governor of Makkah, came out at Hazrat Aisha's call. The governor of Yemen, Ya'la bin Munabbah also joined her in Makkah. Among Banu Ummayyads who joined Hazrat 'Aisha in Makkah were Sa'id bin 'As, Walid bin 'Uqbah and Marwan bin Hakam.

In the meantime, Hazrat Talha and Zubair (R.A.) demanded Hazrat Ali to punish the assassins. He told them, "Please wait. I will do my duty as soon as conditions allow me."

Hazrat Talha and Zubair were not satisfied with Hazrat Ali's reply and left Madinah for Makkah to join Hazrat Aisha (R.A.). However, they had not correctly assessed the delicate situation in Madinah. The city was not free from the grip of Sabaites and there was a general feeling against Umayyads in the public. Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was anxious to restore peace first so that the assassins could be punished.

In Makkah, Hazrat Aisha (R.A.) started to march to Madinah at the head of about two thousand men with the object of dealing with the assassins. Hazrat Abdullah bin Zubair was also there. They also asked him to join, but he declined to do so and remained neutral.

When Hazrat Aisha was about to march to Madinah, proposals came to visit Basrah first to collect more supporters. So, she decided to go to Basrah.

Hazrat Aisha goes to Basrah

While Hazrat Aisha was on her way to Basrah, more people joined her on the way. By the time she reached Basrah, there were three thousand men under her flag.

The governor of Basrah, Usman bin Hanif (appointed by Hazrat Ali), sent some men to find out the object of her visit. She and other Muslims told them that they wanted to tell people of their duty towards the late Khalifah so that proper action would be taken to punish the assassins.

The messenger of the governor asked Hazrat Talha and Zubair for what reason they were breaking the pledge at the hands of Hazrat Ali. They told them that the pledge was taken from them at the point of sword, and that they would have kept the pledge if Hazrat Ali had avenged Hazrat Usman's assassination.

The governor of Basra decided not to allow them to enter the city till he got help from Hazrat Ali. He called a public meeting and asked people to fight against them. In the meeting, some people favoured the governor while some of them supported Hazrat Aisha, Talha and Zubair.

The supporters of Hazrat Ali (R.A.) and the governor came out to fight.

Hazrat Aisha takes over Basra

Hazrat Aisha gave a stirring speech before the Muslims. It was so impressive that half of the supporters of the governor left him and joined Hazrat Aisha. Seeing this, she tried to settle the matter peacefully instead of fighting. But the same agents of Abdullah bin Saba (Sabaites) especially his famous disciple, Hakim bin Hublah, did not allow any settlement.

He attacked Hazrat Aisha's army before the governor gave him permission to do so.

The fight then took place but no result came out till the evening. In the meantime, the governor got instructions from Hazrat Ali to resist Hazrat Aisha's army if they did not agree to pledge loyalty to him. Then a furious battle took place in which Usman bin Hanif, the governor, was defeated and captured. Hakim bin Hublah and some of his followers were killed, and Basra was occupied by Hazrat Aisha and her supporters.

The capture of Basra by Hazrat Aisha (R.A.) made the situation very grave. The Islamic state was really on the verge of serious civil war. Hazrat Ali (R.A.) never wanted to start war against the Muslims but the internal situation at that time compelled him to do so. War was unavoidable.

The Khalifah, therefore, postponed his march to Syria for the time being in order to set things right in Iraq. He decided to march on to Basra. A number of Ansar and other Companions were not in favour of Hazrat Ali (R.A.) leaving Madinah, instead they asked him to send his army. When Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was leaving Madinah, Hazrat Abdullah bin Salam (R.A.) took hold of his camel and said, "O Amirul Mumineen (Leader of the believers), don't leave Madinah. If you leave at this moment, you will never come back and the Capital will be changed." But he decided to go ahead with his mission due to the seriousness of the situation.

Some of the Companions remained neutral and did not join Hazrat Ali (R.A.) even though he asked them to do so. Among such persons were Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar, Muhammad bin Muslimah, Sa'd bin Waqqas and Usamah bin Zaid (R.A.)

Hazrat Ali started for Basra towards the end of Rabi'ul Awwal, 36 (A. H.) i.e. Nov. 656 A.D.

Abdullah bin Saba and his followers were accompanying Hazrat Ali.

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) asked Abu Musa Ash'ari to send help but he got no response because Hazrat Abu Musa (R.A.) dreaded a civil war. Therefore, Hazrat Ali (R.A.) sent his eldest son, Hazrat Hassan (R.A.),

to Kufa who addressed the people and pleaded for Hazrat Ali (R.A.). The people were stirred on the appeal and about nine thousand men marched on to join Hazrat Ali (R.A.).

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) seeks peace

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) assured all the people accompanying him that he would try his best to avoid bloodshed and to set things right peacefully. On reaching Dhi Qar (a place near Basrah), Hazrat Ali with his characteristic aversion to bloodshed, sent his cousin Abdullah bin Abbas and Qa'qa bin Amr (R.A.) to negotiate peacefully with Hazrat Aisha, Talha, and Zubair (Rid. A.) who were preparing to face Hazrat Ali (R.A.) with a big army.

The messengers of Hazrat Ali (R.A.) assured Hazrat Aisha, Talha, and Zubair (Rid. A.) that Hazrat Ali would avenge the assassins of Hazrat Usman (R.A.) as soon as peace was established in the state. Hearing this, they were satisfied and there were hopes for a peaceful settlement.

But in the army of Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was Abdullah bin Saba and his henchmen, to whom peace was fatal. At the possibility of a peaceful settlement, they were much disturbed. They met in a secret council and whispered to each other that Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was prepared to avenge the death of Hazrat Usman (R.A.). They were determined to make the peaceful settlement a total failure. They sent their agents to Basrah to incite the Muslims population by saying that if Hazrat Ali (R.A.) entered Basrah he would enslave all the inhabitants and would kill all the youths. The Basrites, therefore, must check and fight him back.

Hazrat Ali (R.A.), hoping for a peaceful settlement, marched towards Basrah to talk personally with Hazrat Talha and Zubair (R.A.). The two armies came face to face with each other.

Hazrat Ali gave an address to the Basrites in which he said, "I am but your brother. I will avenge Hazrat Usman's assassins," Hazrat Talha, Zubair and the Basrites were fully satisfied with what Hazrat Ali (R.A.) told them. Hazrat Ali (R.A.) also returned to his camp very satisfied. He gave strict orders to his men not to fight in any case, and prayed all night to Allah.

But Ibn Saba and his henchmen had planned otherwise.

In the darkness of night, they made a sudden attack on Hazrat Aisha's army. Hazrat Talha and Zubair were startled by the sudden attack and said that Hazrat Ali (R.A.) could not desist from shedding Muslim blood and he has ordered a night attack. On the other hand, Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was shocked

when he was told by Sabaites that Hazrat Talha and Zubair had taken them by surprise. He also remarked in the same way that they did not stop from taking the blood of Muslims.

According to Tabari, the following Sabaites were the leaders behind this plan: Ashtar Nakh'i Ibn Sauda, Khalid bin Muljam, Alba bin Haitham and Shuraib bin Aufa. Ibn Saba was the ring leader.

The Battle of the Camels (Jamal)

Soon a full scale war started. Hundreds of Muslims fell on each side. Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was greatly pained at the situation. He tried to stop the battle but it had already flared up.

At dawn, the troops of Hazrat Aisha (R.A.) apprised her of the situation and suggested that she should mount on a camel in Hijab (Pardah) so that the situation might ease. But it had the opposite effect, and the Basrites thought that Hazrat Aisha was in the field to fight with them.

During the fight, Hazrat Ali reminded Hazrat Talha and Zubair (R.A.) of the words of Rasulallah : "One day, you (Talha and Zubair) will fight Ali wrongly." They remembered the saying and left the battlefield, but when Hazrat Talha was leaving the field somebody rained arrows on him and he was killed.

When the fight did not come to an end, Hazrat Ali (R.A.) ordered one of his men to cut the hind legs of the camel on which Hazrat Aisha was mounting in a howdah (carriage positioned on the back of the camel). The order of Hazrat Ali was carried out and the camel fell on its forelegs. Hazrat Aisha was taken out of the howdah with due respect.

The battle came to an end in favour of Hazrat Ali (R.A.). Hazrat Aisha (R.A.) was sent with due respect to Madinah, escorted by her own brother, Muhammad bin Abi Bakr. In this battle, about ten thousand Muslims on both sides lost their lives.

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) felt deeply moved because of the loss of Muslim blood.

Hazrat Zubair, who had already left the field after remembering the Holy Prophet's saying, was going to Makkah. He stopped in a valley to perform his Salat, but was slain by a man, named Amr bin Jarmoz while he was busy in his Salat. When Hazrat Ali came to know, he rebuked the murderer by saying, "I have seen him fight for the Prophet of Allah several times. I give the murderer the news of hell-fire."

After the battle, Hazrat Ali took pledge of loyalty from the people of Basrah and appointed Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas as the governor of Basrah. He granted general amnesty to all those who fought against him including Marwan bin Hakam and other persons of the Banu Umayyah family. The address which Hazrat Ali (R.A.) gave at Jami' Mosque of Basrah before the pledge of loyalty moved the Muslims, and they were convinced that Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was a just Khalifah.

Change of the Islamic capital

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was very much grieved at seeing the disrespect shown to the blessed city of Madinah when the insurgents laid siege to the late Khalifah's house and then assassinated him. He wanted to change the Capital to save Madinah from future political disturbance.

After staying at Basrah for a few days, Hazrat Ali (R.A.) went to Kufa. There he was given a warm welcome. He got more supporters at Kufa and thought it to be a more suitable place as the Capital of his Khilafat. Therefore in Rajab 36 A.H., he decided to transfer the capital from Madinah to Kufa.

Hazrat Ali's Final Invitation to Hazrat Mu'awiyah

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) now turned his attention towards Hazrat Mu'awiyah (R.A.). He was then ruling over the whole Islamic State with the exception of Syria. The peace-minded Hazrat Ali (R.A.) wanted a peaceful settlement. He, therefore, wrote a letter to Hazrat Mu'awiyah (R.A.) asking him to take pledge of loyalty at his hand in the interest of Islam and the unity of the Muslims.

But Hazrat Mu'awiyah again demanded of him to avenge Hazrat Usman's assassins first.

The show of Hazrat Usman's blood-stained shirt and the chopped-off fingers of his wife, Hazrat Nailah, was still going on in the Jami' Masjid of Damascus. The powerful Syrians had rallied round Hazrat Mu'awiyah.

On the other hand, Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was still unable to overcome the insurgents. When Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah's messenger came to Hazrat Ali demanding him to hand over the assassins, 10,000 men of Hazrat Ali's army said with one voice, "All of us are the assassins of Hazrat Usman (R.A.)." Hazrat Ali (R.A.) then said to the messenger, Hazrat Muslimah, "You can see for yourself the situation. I am still unable to find out the real assassins."

But Hazrat Mu'awiyah was determined not to give up his demand. Hazrat Ali (R.A.), finding no other way, was compelled to declare war against Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.).

The Battle of Siffin

The above situation forced Hazrat Ali (R.A.) to march out against Syria. In the beginning, there was not much response for Hazrat Ali's call. But when Hazrat Ali explained the position to the Muslims, a large army gathered around Hazrat Ali and 50,000 Muslims came out under his banner to fight the Syrians.

When Hazrat Mu'awiyah (R.A.) came to know about Hazrat Ali's advance, he too proceeded with a vast army and occupied a better position in the field. Hazrat Ali (R.A.) encamped at Siffin, and Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah on the other side of Siffin.

Hazrat Ali's intention was not to shed Muslim blood in vain. He, therefore, tried to make peace again and sent a deputation of three men on a peace mission to Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.). Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.) again demanded that the assassins of Hazrat Usman must be slain before any compromise can be reached and that he was demanding this as the next of kin of Hazrat Usman. The demand was again refused by Hazrat Ali (R.A.) on the ground that he was not able to locate the real assassins and it would need some time, and that the pledge of loyalty must be taken without any condition.

In the month of Dhul Hijjah 36 A.H., Hazrat Ali (R.A.) ordered his troops to take positions. But there seemed unwillingness to fight on both sides; Muslims were facing Muslims.

However, in the beginning the fighting began with single combats followed by light encounters of single battalions. Thus, the whole month of Dhul Hijjah ended without any big fight.

When the moon of Muharram appeared, Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Mu'awiyah made a truce for one month. During this time, he again had an opportunity for renewed peace talks. Hazrat Ali (R.A.) sent another mission led by 'Adi bin Hatim Tai to Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.). But this time, Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.) took it as a threat and refused to recognise Hazrat Ali (R.A.) as the Khalifah unless he avenged Hazrat Usman's assassination. In this way, the last attempt proved to be fruitless.

On the evening of the last day of Muharram, 37 A.H. Hazrat Ali (R.A.) gave orders to his army to attack the Syrian forces because they had been given enough time to think.

The war started the following morning. Hazrat Ali (R.A.) gave strict orders that no person should be killed if he left the field or ran away. Women and old people would be safe and secure.

Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.) also gave the same orders to his army.

The war started on Tuesday 1st Safar, 37 A.H.

On the first day, a battalion of Hazrat Ali's army led by Ushtar fought with the Syrians who were led by Habib bin Muslimah. On the second day, another battalion led by Hashim bin 'Utbah from Hazrat Ali's side fought with the Syrians led by Abul A'war Salama.

On the third day, the battalion from Hazrat Ali's side was led by Hazrat Ammar bin Yasir and the Syrians were led by Amr Bin As (R.A.).

During the battle, Hazrat Ammar bin Yasir (R.A.) was martyred but no result came out. The martyrdom of Hazrat Ammar bin Yasir, however, proved that Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was right because of the following Hadith mentioned in Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi and other authentic books of Hadith.

According to this Hadith, Rasulallah said, "Ammar bin Yasir will be killed by a group of rebels." Since Hazrat Ammar (R.A.) was fighting in favour of Hazrat Ali, and was killed by the army of Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.), Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was in the right and his opponents were the rebels.

For seven days, the battle continued in this way. A new battalion would fight from each side under a new commander.

On the 8th day, the whole army of Hazrat Ali (R.A.) clashed with that of Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.). A fierce battle was fought but with no end in sight. According to most of the historians, Hazrat Ammar bin Yasir was martyred on that day. However, no result came out till the evening.

The death of Hazrat Ammar bin Yasir was a shock to Hazrat Ali (R.A.). The battle went on the whole night. At one point, Hazrat Ali reached the tent of Hazrat Mu'awiyah and challenged him to fight personally with him, instead of shedding Muslim blood and the winner would be the Khalifah. But Hazrat Mu'awiyah (R.A.) did not accept the challenge because Hazrat Ali was one of the greatest warriors of Arabia.

On the second day of the battle, Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.) was about to lose the battle. But, Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah was a person of sharp intelligence and had been the governor of Syria from Hazrat Umar's time. He had with him Hazrat Amr bin As (R.A.), the conqueror of Egypt and a recognised statesman of Arabia.

Seeing the impending defeat, he consulted Hazrat Amr bin 'As (R.A.), who advised Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah to give orders to the troops of the front ranks to fasten the Holy Qur'an to their lances, as a sign that war would cease and that the decision would be referred to the Holy Book.

Seeing copies of the Holy Qur'an on lances, Hazrat Ali (R.A.) recognised it as a clever move of the enemy, but a many of his men did not share his view and stopped fighting. Being helpless, Hazrat Ali then ordered his troops to stop fighting.

Arbitration

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) sent his envoy to Hazrat Mu'awiyah (R.A.) to find out what he meant by making the Holy Qur'an a judge. Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah told him that he wanted an arbitration through judges, one from his side and the other from Hazrat Ali's side, and that both the parties should abide by the decision of the judge.

Hazrat Ali accepted. He tried to make Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas the arbitrator from his side, but some of his followers objected to it, on the ground that he was related to Hazrat Ali. They proposed the name of Hazrat Musa Ash'ari (R.A.). Hazrat Ali accepted their proposal and he was appointed as the arbitrator of Hazrat Ali's (R.A.) side. Hazrat Mu'awiyah appointed Hazrat Amr bin 'As (R.A.) as the arbitrator from his side, and none of his followers questioned his choice although he was related to Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah.

This shows that the followers of Hazrat Mu'awiyah were more united than the followers of Hazrat Ali. There were many Sabaites in Hazrat Ali's camp and they were the real cause of such differences. Whenever they saw the Muslims uniting, they tried to create confusion with the aim of disuniting them.

In case the two arbitrators could not come to an agreement, the decision was to lie with eight hundred men (four hundred from Hazrat Ali's camp and four hundred from Hadrat Mu'awiyah camp) and it would be settled by the majority.

A place named Dumatul Jandal, in between Syria and Iraq, was proposed for the talks. Both the judges, with the 800 men, would go there to finalise their decision by the month of Ramadan, and to make it public. A temporary agreement was signed on 13th Safar, 37 A.H. between Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Mu'awiyah.

The two armies then left for their homes leaving about 90,000 men dead in the field of Siffin, which number exceeded the total Muslim casualties in all the Islamic battles against the non-Muslims in the past.

The Kharajites (or Khawarij)

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) who was almost winning the battle against Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.) marched back from Siffin with a sense of loss. There was a tremendous loss of Muslim lives in Siffin. Never before in the history of Islam had the loss of Muslim blood been so heavy.

Hazrat Ali after all wanted a peaceful solution, although the price was heavy.

When Hazrat Ali announced the agreement before his troops, they formed of various tribes. Two brothers of the Tribe of Anza stood up and opposed the appointment of Arbitrator between the two parties, for Allah's commandments were with them in the form of the Holy Qur'an which is the best Judge. Other people also followed this example, and a good many people were against the arbitration.

According to them, the Arbitration was against the spirit of Islam. Some of these men requested Hazrat Ali to throw away the agreement, but he said, "I did not want any agreement at that stage but you forced me to do so. When I have given my word of honour, you are forcing me to give it up. I would never do that." The followers of Hazrat Ali then split into two groups. One group stood by the agreement, while the other said that the arbitration was un-Islamic.

The second group, which was opposing arbitration, were known as Kharijites ("Khawarij" in Arabic). By the time Hazrat Ali returned to Kufa, their number reached 12,000. They did not stay with other Muslims in Kufa; instead, they encamped at Harorah and appointed Sheith bin Rabi'i as their commander-in-chief, and Abdullah bin Kawa as their Imam to lead Salats.

The Kharajites announced their policy which was as follows:

"The Bai'at (pledge of loyalty) is only for Allah, and He alone is to be obeyed. To spread good and forbid evil according to the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah is our foremost duty. There exists neither a Khalifah nor an Amir. Both Ali and Mu'awiyah are in error. Mu'awiyah is in error because he did not accept Ali, while Ali is in error because he agreed on arbitration. After gaining power, we will set up a social order based on Allah's Book (the Holy Qur'an)."

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) sends his emissary to the Khawarij

After returning to Kufa, Hazrat Ali sent Abdullah bin Abbas to remove the misunderstanding of the Khawarij. Instead of returning to the right belief, they started a lengthy argument with him. Seeing this, Hazrat Ali himself went to them. He gave them all the assurances that the arbitration would only be accepted if it was based upon the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah. He was successful in his efforts after great difficulty, and the Khawarij joined him again temporarily.

Verdict of the Arbitrators

The two arbitrators thought over the matter for six months, then met at the frontier town of Dumatul Jandal in Sha'ban, 37 A.H. (Jan. 658). Each of them had four hundred men with him. The commander of men from Hazrat Ali's side was Shuraih bin Hani, and the Imam was Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas. The four hundred men from Hazrat Mu'awiyah's camp were under the command of Surjil bin Samah. Besides these, some neutral Companions like Abdullah bin Umar, Abdullah bin Zubair, and Sa'd bin Waqqas were also present there.

Hazrat Amr bin As, the judge appointed by Hazrat Mu'awiyah, was a famous statesman and diplomat of Arabia. On the other hand, Abu Musa Ash'ari, the judge from Hazrat Ali's side, was a simple Muslim, unacquainted with diplomatic tactics.

In the beginning, a discussion between the two judges took place. A scribe was ordered to write down the points of agreement during the discussion. They reached on the following agreement after a long discussion:

"Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Mu'awiyah both withdraw their right for the Khilafat. The Muslims should appoint a third person as their Khalifah."

According to some historians, the discussion was not recorded and the agreement was reached verbally. However, they could not reach an agreement on the choice of the most suitable person to be approved as the Khalifah in place of Hazrat Ali or Hazrat Mu'awiyah.

After the agreement, Hazrat Amr bin As asked Hazrat Abu Musa Ash'ari to make it public by announcing it in the mosque before the Muslims. Hazrat Abu Musa (R.A.) announced, "We have agreed that neither Ali nor Mu'awiyah would be considered as the Khalifah. You may elect any other man you think fit."

After this Hazrat Amr bin As (R.A.) stood up and said, "I do not consider Ali fit for the Khilafat, but in my opinion Mu'awiyah is fit for it."

This statement of Hazrat Amr not only showed the split of opinion between the arbitrators, but also meant a one sided decision according to which Hadrat Ali (R.A.) was supposed to lose his power but not Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.).

Hearing the statement of Hazrat Amr ibn As (R.A.), there was a huge uproar. The result of the arbitration was a mere confusion. In this way, the arbitration proved to be futile and the hope of peace was gone. Both the parties left the place in great disgust. The acceptance of such arbitration really proved to be disastrous to Hazrat Ali. Hazrat Ali lost the case before it opened.

When Hazrat Ali (R.A.) heard the result of the arbitration, he said, "The judgement is not based upon the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah which was the condition for arbitration. Therefore it cannot be accepted."

He then delivered a lecture in the Jami' Masjid of Kufa and asked the Muslims to prepare to attack Syria.

The split in the Muslim community

As soon as the Khawarij knew the result of arbitration, they again separated and this time rose in an open revolt. A new group was thus created in the history of Islam which proved to be more dangerous than any other group existing before then.

As it has been discussed in connection with the assassination of Hazrat Usman (R.A.), the Muslim community was divided into four main groups viz, Usmanis, Shi'an e Ali, Marhabah and Ahle Sunnah wal Jamaat. The Marhabis were absorbed in other groups but the remaining three groups were still existing. Now the fourth group, the Kharajites, was formed. Before proceeding further, here are the main beliefs of these groups:

1. Usmanis: They were now confined to Syria under the banner of Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.). They demanded that until the assassins of Hazrat Usman were punished or handed over to them, they would not accept the Khilafat of Hazrat Ali. But after the so-called judgement of the arbitrators, they totally rejected the Khilafat of Hazrat Ali and took Bai'at (pledge of loyalty) at the hand of

Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah after declaring him as the Khalifah. This will be discussed in more detail later on.

2. Shi'an e Ali (or Shia): They called themselves the friends of Hazrat Ali (R.A.) in the beginning, but later on they developed their own beliefs and considered Hazrat Ali as Wasi i.e., the Administrator of Rasulallah , and the only fit person for Khilafat. They not only criticised and condemned Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.) but also condemned Hazrat Umar, Hazrat Abu Bakr, and Hazrat Usman (R.A.) and discarded the authority of the first three Khalifahs. However, they did not criticise the first two Khalifahs openly during the time of Hazrat Ali (R.A.). As years passed, this group became an exponent of a separate school of thought in Islamic Law and Jurisprudence and they wrote their own books of Hadith, history of Islam and commentaries of the Holy Qur'an based upon their beliefs.

They disagreed with most of the works produced by Sunni Scholars.

3. Ahle Sunnah wal Jamaat: The majority of the Companions and Muslims at the time were not only in favour of Hazrat Ali but all the preceding Khalifahs i.e. Hazrat Abu Bakr, Hazrat Umar and Hazrat Usman (R.A.). They believed that the Right Path was to follow the Sunnah of Rasulallah and the traditions of his pious Jamaat (i.e. all the Companions), especially the first four Khalifahs who set great examples to solve various problems according to the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah. This group was the great majority not only at that time, but in all the periods of Islamic History.

They fully supported Hazrat Ali (R.A.) during his Khilafat. According to them, Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.) was not right in rejecting Hazrat Ali's authority. But they considered that mistake based upon Ijtihad. After all, he was a pious Companion and the sincerity of a Companion must never be questioned.

Hazrat Shah Waliullah, in his famous book, Izalarul Khafa writes, "Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.) was an excellent Companion of Rasulallah . Do not criticise or condemn him otherwise you will be committing a Haram (unlawful) act, because in a Hadith Rasulallah said, "Do not curse my Companions! Do not curse my Companions! I swear, by Him in Whose hand my life is, that even if one among you had as much gold as Mount Uhud and spent it in the way of God, this would not be equal in reward to a few handfuls of them or even to half of that." (Abu Da'ud)."

According to a number of Ahadith, it is forbidden for a Muslim to criticise a Companion. In a number of Ahadith, the virtues of Hazrat Mu'awiyah (R.A.) have been mentioned. Once, Rasulallah prayed for Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah as follows, "O Allah, make him a Muslim who would be with Your Guidance and such a Muslim who may guide others."

Ibn Sa'd says that Rasulallah prayed for Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah as follows, "O Allah, give him the knowledge of the Book (Holy Qur'an) and make him the ruler of the countries, and save him from the punishment (of the Hereafter)." Moreover, Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.) was one of the scribes of the Revelation during the time of Rasulallah .

It is necessary, therefore, that we must not question his sincerity. Due to political conditions at that time, he was strict in his demand of chastisement of the assassins of Hazrat Usman (R.A.). Most of the historians agree on this point that he did not declare himself a Khalifah during the life of Hazrat Ali, although people pledged loyalty at his hand.

4. The Kharajites or Khawarij: The Khawarij were more of a political group than theological. They accepted the authority of Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Umar (R.A.) but denounced Hazrat Usman, Hazrat Ali, and Hazrat Mu'awiyah (Rid. A.). They said that the Hakam (Arbitrator/Judge for the dispute between Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Mu'awiyah) was against the principles of Islam. Only Allah was to be obeyed through the Holy Qur'an, and not the Hakam. They also formulated a number of other beliefs as well. In the later period of Islamic history, this group became almost extinct.

The Kharijite trouble

The Khawarij set up their centre at Nahrwan and began to preach their cult. Many people gathered around them and they gained sufficient strength. They were very harsh to those who differed from them and regarded such Muslims as rebels against Islam, and murdered them. Loyalty to the Khalifah was a great crime in their eyes and they called it "the cult of personality".

The Kharijites seemed to be very pious as far as their appearance was concerned. They used to offer long Salats, wore simple dress and were honest in their dealings. But they were severely misguided in beliefs and killed all those who said that they were the followers of the Khalifah.

After the failure of arbitration, Hazrat Ali (R.A.) wanted to march to Syria but the Kharijite movement diverted his attention. It was a great danger not only to the Muslim unity but to Islamic beliefs and practices as a whole. There was an urgent need to wipe out such a movement in its early stage. Therefore, he set out for Nahrwan, the centre of Khawarij, instead of Syria.

Once he reached there, Hazrat Ali tried to negotiate with them peacefully. He sent some prominent Companions to persuade Khawarij leaders but they did not listen to them. Then Hazrat Ali asked them to hand over such people who have murdered innocent Muslims. He told them that he would leave the rest if they handed over the murderers. To this, they replied to the Khalifah, "All of us are murderers and we want to murder all of your followers. We will never stop doing this."

Then there came a point when there was no other way than to fight them. Before declaring war against them, Hazrat Ali declared that those who would be loyal to him or those who left Nahrwan

and did not fight would be granted amnesty. On his appeal, 3000 Kharijites repented and again took Bai'at at his hands. The rest did not move from their position.

The battle began. A fierce fight took place. The Kharijites fought desperately but were defeated. Most of their leaders were slain. After the battle, Hazrat Ali searched the slain body of the man about whom Rasulallah had prophesied, and had given some signs which were really the forecast of Kharijite trouble. Hazrat Ali (R.A.) found the body with all the signs told by Rasulallah and remarked, "Rasulallah was very true in his prophecy."

Unwillingness to march to Syria

After the battle at Nahrwan, Hazrat Ali (R.A.) wanted to march on to Syria but his men were in no mood to do so. They asked to rest when he was encamping at Nakhila, some miles away from the Capital. Hazrat Ali (R.A.) allowed them to take some rest over there but they started to slip away to their homes, and only a few of them were left with him. Seeing the situation, Hazrat Ali was also forced to return to Kufa.

After some time, Hazrat Ali again asked the Kufis to march on to Syria. He gave a stirring address in the Jami' Masjid of the Capital but the leaders of Kufa did not show any inclination. Despite many efforts, Hazrat Ali was not successful in raising another army against the Syrians.

The loss of Egypt

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) appointed Hazrat Qais bin Sa'd (R.A.) as the governor of Egypt. He took pledge of loyalty from the Egyptians for Hazrat Ali (R.A.). The inhabitants of the town of Khartaba were not loyal to Hazrat Ali. He left them alone on the condition of a peaceful conduct. Some friends of Hazrat Ali, who were keeping an eye on the governorship of Egypt, started to doubt the loyalty of Qais (R.A.) to Hazrat Ali. They told Hazrat Ali that Qais (R.A.) was more sympathetic to Hazrat Mu'awiyah and must be sacked.

When Hazrat Mu'awiyah noticed that the position of Hazrat Qais was doubtful in the eyes of Hazrat Ali, he declared him as his own man. Hearing this, Hazrat Ali (R.A.) dismissed him and appointed

Muhammad bin Abi Bakr as the governor of Egypt. Muhammad bin Abu Bakr was a young man and was not able to control the Egyptians in a tactful way. He forced the people of Khartaba to pledge loyalty for Hazrat Ali and remained busy with them for a long time. In the meantime, the battle of Siffin took place but he was so busy with the internal affairs of Egypt that he could not send any army to help Hazrat Ali (R.A.).

After the battle of Siffin, Hazrat Ali appointed Malik bin Ushtar as the governor of Egypt. Ibn Ushtar was a strong man, but he passed away while carrying out this duty. Muhammad bin Abi Bakr, therefore, continued as the governor of Egypt.

After the award of the arbitration, the Syrians declared Hazrat Mu'awiyah as their Khalifah and took Bai'at on his hands. According to a number of historians, Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah did not declare himself as the Khalifah during the life of Hazrat Ali (R.A.).

However, he tried to extend his control over the Islamic state after the award. The first step was to send his army under the command of Hazrat Amr ibn As to attack Egypt. Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr, the governor of Egypt wrote to Hazrat Ali for help. But before he got any help Amr ibn As (R.A.) reached Egypt with six thousand men. Ten thousand inhabitants of Khartaba also joined his army. They easily beat back two thousand men of Muhammad bin Abi Bakr. He himself took shelter in a house but was caught and slain.

In 38 A.H., Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.) became the master of Egypt. He appointed Hazrat Amir ibn As as the governor.

Unrest in Basra and Iran

Hazrat Abdullah ibn Abbas (R.A.) was the governor of Basra, controlling the whole of Persia and other parts of the Islamic State in the East. Basrites were pro-Hazrat Ali but there were Usmani (pro-Hazrat Mu'awiyah) elements present there too. In 38 A.H., Hazrat Abdullah ibn Abbas went to Kufa to pay a visit to the Khalifah. Abdullah ibn Hadrami, an Usmani (pro-Hazrat Mu'awiyah) was in Basrah in those days. In the absence of Ibn Abbas, he saw his chance and incited the people to avenge the assassination of Hazrat Usman. He gained support and was able to raise an army which invaded Basrah. The governor's deputy, Ziyad ibn Abi Sufyan, could not face him and fled.

Hearing the rising, Hazrat Ali sent Jariah ibn Qudamah who belonged to the Bani Tamim tribe. He went to Basrah with fifty people and negotiated with the Basrites, most of whom were from Bani Tamim tribe. He was successful in his mission and the rebellion was put down. Ibn Hadrami and seventy of his followers shut themselves in a house which was burnt by pro-Hazrat Ali Basrites.

When the people of Eastern Persia and Kirman heard the burning of Ibn Hadrami, they refused to pay Kharaj Revenue in protest. However, their rising was put down by police action.

After consulting with Abdullah ibn Abbas (R.A.), Hazrat Ali appointed Ziyad ibn Abi Sufyan as the governor of Basrah to control Persia and other Eastern parts of the State.

Pro-Hazrat Mu'awiyah parties invade various parts

After the award, Usmanis tried to create general unrest in the country. During the year 39 A.H., strong parties were set out from Syria. Hazrat Ali (R.A.) tried to stir his friends in Kufa but they would not come out at Hazrat Ali's call. Neither were they prepared to fight the Syrians again, nor did they try to check the invading parties of Usmanis.

One of such parties went to Ain al-tamr under the command of Nu'man ibn Bashir but he was defeated by Hazrat Ali's governor, Malik ibn Ka'b. Another party of six thousand men under Sufyan ibn Auf went to Ambar and Mada'in (Midian). They killed the officer in charge of Ambar. Hazrat Ali sent Sa'id ibn Auf with an army but they ran away. Another party of three thousand men under Dahak ibn Qais came as far as the neighbourhood of Basrah. Hazrat Ali sent four thousand men under Hajar ibn Adi. A fight took place in which 19 Syrians (Usmanis) were killed. The rest of them ran away in the darkness of the night.

In the same year (i.e., 39 A. H.), Hazrat Ali sent his deputy Ibn Abbas, to lead the Hajj. Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah also sent his deputy, Yazid ibn Sanjar to lead the Hajj. A tussle between the two men took place. At the end it was settled that a third person, Shaibah ibn Uthman ibn Abi Talha, would lead the Hajj. In this way, Hazrat Ali lost this symbol of Khilafat as well.

Hazrat Ali's hold weakened day by day. His most effective and eloquent speeches could not arouse his friends to action. Each day that passed witnessed the Khalifah growing more and more helpless.

A number of other incidents between pro-Mu'awiyans and pro-Alis also took place in the same year, the details of which are ignored here.

Loss of Hijaz and Yemen

Hijaz and Yemen were still under the control of Hazrat Ali (R.A.). In the year 40 A.H., Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah sent Busr ibn Abi Artat with three thousand men to Hijaz. First of all he went to Madinah. The governor of Madinah, Abu Ayyub was not able to check the Syrians and he left for Kufa. Busr took pledge of loyalty from the Madinites forcibly for Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (R.A.), and exclaimed, "Had Hazrat Mu'awiyah not forbidden me, I would not have left a single adult in Madinah alive."

After taking over Madinah, Busr reached Makkah and occupied it, unopposed. There too, he took the pledge of loyalty from the Makkans for Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah forcibly.

From Makkah, Busr went to Yemen. At that time, Hazrat Ubaidullah ibn Abbas was the governor of Yemen. Hearing of the Syrian army he fled to Kufa. Busr occupied San'a, the capital of Yemen and killed two little sons of Hazrat Ubaidullah. He also slew a number of Hazrat Ali's supporters in Yemen.

Hearing the cruelty of Busr, Hazrat Ali sent Jariah ibn Qudamah with two thousand men. But before he reached Yemen, Busr fled to Syria. He also sent Wahb ibn Mas'ud with another two thousand men to Hijaz. Jariah ibn Qudamah, after establishing Hazrat Ali's rule in Yemen, was advancing to Makkah. As soon as he reached the Holy city, he received the shocking news of Hazrat Ali's assassination which ended his campaign.

According to Ibn Jarir, at the end of the year 40 A.H. a treaty was signed between Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah and Hazrat Ali, on the request of Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah to avoid bloodshed among the Muslims. Under that treaty, Syria and Egypt remained under the control of Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah, and the rest of the state under the control of Hazrat Ali. Thus, the conflict between the two parties ended. This civil war which ended to the detriment of Hazrat Ali was the end of Islamic democratic rule.

But according to some other historians, no treaty took place between Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Mu'awiyah. While Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was preparing to attack Syria, (for which he had issued an ordinance compelling each and everyone under him to march to Syria) he was assassinated.

Victories

The civil war did not allow Hazrat Ali (R.A.) to launch Jihad (Holy War), and the Islamic Empire saw no further extension. However, some parts of Sistan (near Kabul) were conquered during this period. According to some historians, Muslims made a naval attack on Kohan (near Bombay, India) in the year 38 A.H.

The assassination of Hazrat Ali (R.A.)

After the battle of Nahrwan, the Khawarij had gone underground. As a matter of fact, they were as much against Hazrat Ali (R.A.) as they were against Hazrat Mu'awiyah (R.A.). They were still working against the Khilafat and were greatly disgusted with the civil war that seemed endless.

To end this state of affairs, they worked out a dangerous plot. According to them, Muslims were divided because of differences between Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah. They also disliked Hazrat Amr ibn As and considered him as chief planner for Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah. They decided, therefore, to assassinate all three of them. It was planned that the three personalities would be struck at the same time on the same day.

The three persons, appointed to assassinate Hazrat Ali, Hazrat Mu'awiyah, and Hazrat Amr ibn As (Rid. A.) were Abdur Rehman Muljam, Bark ibn 'Abdullah, and Amr ibn Bark respectively. The early hours of the 17th of Ramadan, 40 A.H., was fixed for the assassination.

After the Fajr Salat of the 17th Ramadan in the year 40 A.H. (661 A.D.), the three appointed Khariji assassins struck the three men. Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah escaped with a scratch, Hazrat Amr ibn As did not turn out for the Imam because he was sick that day thus he was unhurt, but Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was mortally wounded with the poisoned sword of Ibn Muljam.

He passed away in the evening of Ramadan 20, 40 A.H.

Ibn Muljam was caught by the people after he had struck Hazrat Ali. Hazrat Ali asked the Muslims to slay him if he died. While he was passing away, Hazrat Ali called his sons and advised them to serve Islam and to be good with the Muslims. When somebody asked him if the Muslims should take

pledge of loyalty at the hands of his elder son, Hazrat Hassan, he replied, "I leave this decision to the Muslims." He also advised people not to kill any person other than the assassin to avenge him.

He was 63 years old at the time of his death, which is the same age at which Rasulallah himself passed away. Hazrat Ali ruled for four years and nine months as the Khalifah.

According to a number of historians, his real grave is not known because his son Hazrat Hassan took out his body from the grave after he was buried, and in order to protect his father from the Kharijis, he buried him at an unknown place.

Period of his Khilafat

The period of Hazrat Ali's Khilafat extending to four years and about nine months, was marked by civil war. His rule was characterised by a series of revolts for the first time in the history of Islam. He was elected as the Khalifah in the most critical period of Islamic history.

The martyrdom of Hazrat Usman was an extraordinary event about which Rasulallah had already prophesied. Hazrat Ali was in a very difficult situation. On the one hand, the assassins and the insurgents were creating endless trouble for him, and on the other hand Banu Umayyah (Hazrat Usman's family) fled to Syria and incited Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah to insist on avenging Hazrat Usman's death.

Hazrat Ali faced these problems and difficulties with extraordinary courage and strength, and presented before us an exemplary character. He never had full support even from his friends in Kufa, but still remained firm in his position to uphold the Islamic State.

As it has been described before, he could never locate the real assassins of Hazrat Usman and this could not be achieved until peace was established. Therefore, his first task was to create an atmosphere of peace in the State. But the Sabaites (insurgents) never wanted peace. They worked on both sides. On the one side, they made it difficult for Hazrat Ali to find out assassins, and on the other hand they sent their agents to Syria to incite the people (especially Umayyads) against Hazrat Ali. Their main aim was to let the Muslims fight among themselves so that they might prosper. Although Hazrat Ali knew all this, he was unable to take any firm action because of the civil war.

The third problem faced by Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was the Kharijite movement. They were extremists and misled a number of innocent Muslims. They did not hesitate to use sword against persons who would not agree with them. They developed many beliefs foreign to Islam, and although they appeared to be very pious, they were extremely corrupt. Hazrat Ali dealt with them with an iron hand. He realised that if they were not wiped out in the beginning, they would mislead future generations. He was successful in destroying their stronghold. However some of them, who escaped, went underground but they were never in a strong position.

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) tried his utmost to unite the Muslims and bring them back on one platform, but he was not successful. The tragic death of Hazrat Usman (R.A.) was a signal for bloodshed among the Muslims. The Companions were not to be blamed for it at all. This was caused by anti-Islamic elements in the form of Sabaites, (Abdullah ibn Saba and his followers). Historical facts bear it out that Abdullah ibn Saba became the greatest enemy of Islam. It was he who shattered the unity of Muslims forever.

After completing their mission, the Sabaites made a pretence of being Hazrat Ali's friends but they never helped him nor the cause of the Muslim Unity. No sooner had Hazrat Ali assumed Khilafat than a group of the same miscreant Sabaites, who had brought about the cold-blooded assassination of Hazrat Usman (R.A.), began to demand due retribution for the murder of the Khalifah and started to incite Muslims only to create division among them. Thus, they played a double role. A group of them showed themselves as friends of Hazrat Ali and another group (much smaller than the first) went to Syria and other parts of Islamic State to incite the Muslims against Hazrat Ali (R.A.).

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) faced all these problems, and though they were not minor at all, he proceeded with great courage and faith. He never lost heart. He was a man of strong will power and determination, and to question his decisions would be absurd.

General Administration

Hazrat Ali (R.A.) followed the administrative pattern set by Hazrat Umar (R.A.) and did not make any noticeable changes. He tried to improve the administration of those places where it was not proper during the time of Hazrat Usman (R.A.).

He usually gave useful advice to his governors at the time of their appointment. When he appointed Hazrat Ka'b ibn Malik for supervision of various officers in various provinces he gave him the following instructions, "Check officers of each and every district of Iraq thoroughly so that they may not act wrongly".

Overall, Hazrat Ali was the last of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. He was steadfast in his faith, and courageous in his actions. He lived by the words of Rasulallah , and his only interest was to uphold the words that had been passed down from Rasulallah to the previous three Caliphs before him.

Tasawwuf and Hazrat Ali

The genealogical chain of Sufis (Islamic mystics) ends at Hazrat Ali (R.A.), and through him it is linked to Rasulallah in most of the Sufi orders; the Naqshbandiya chain is linked to Rasulallah through Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique.

Thus, Hazrat Ali (R.A.) has been considered as the great Imam of Tasawwuf (spiritual science/mysticism).

As it has been mentioned in the book, *Tasalsulat i Imdadiah*, Hazrat Shah Waliullah of Delhi holds the view that the genealogical chain of the great Sufis is linked to Rasulallah through all the first four Caliphs, amongst whom Hazrat Ali (R.A.) stands like a gateway between the Sufis on one hand, and the first three caliphs and Rasulallah on the other hand.

Spiritual secrets were transferred by Rasulallah to Hazrat Abu Bakr. From Hazrat Abu Bakr (R.A.), the secrets were transferred to Hazrat Umar; and from Hazrat Umar (R.A.) to Hazrat Uthman; and from Hazrat Usman (R.A.) to Hazrat Ali; and from Hazrat Ali to the Sufis, usually through Imam Hassan Basri (R.A.) as it is believed in most of the schools of thought of Tasawwuf.

It has been confirmed that Hazrat Hassan Basri met Hazrat Ali at the age of 15. In the science of Tasawwuf, training under the Sheikh (Murshid or Pir or Spiritual Guide) is not necessary and spiritual secrets can be transferred even in a single meeting from the Sheikh to the Mureed (the spiritual disciple). Therefore, the great Sufis do not doubt the fact that Hazrat Ali (R.A.) transferred spiritual secrets to Hazrat Hassan Basri (R.A.), from whom they were passed on to the succeeding generations.

Therefore, Hazrat Ali (R.A.) and Imam Hassan Basri are the most important links in the genealogical orders (or Shajrahs) of most of the schools of thought of Tasawwuf.

Wives and Children

1. Hazrat Ali's first wife was the most beloved daughter of Rasulallah , Hazrat Fatima (R.A.). He had three sons (Hazrat Hassan, Hussain and Mohsin), and two daughters (Hazrat Zainab and Umme Kulthum) from her. The youngest son, Hazrat Mohsin, died in childhood.

After the death of Hazrat Fatima, he married a number of wives from time to time:

2. Umm al-Banin bin Hizam. She gave birth to his sons, Hazrat Abbas, Ja'far, Abdullah and Uthman. All of these, except Hazrat Abbas were martyred at Karbala.
3. Saila bint Mas'ud, who gave birth to his sons, Hazrat Ubaidullah and Abu Bakr. They were martyred at Karbala.
4. Asma bint Umais who gave birth to sons, Hazrat Yahya and Muhammad Asghar.
5. Sahba bint Rabi'a who gave birth to Hazrat Umar and Ruqayyah.
6. Amamah bint Abil 'As: She was daughter of Zainab (R.A.), daughter of Rasulallah . She gave birth to Hazrat Ali's son, Muhammad Awsat.
7. Khaulah bint Jalfar who gave birth to Muhammad Akbar.
8. Umme Sa'id who gave birth to Ummul Hassan and Ramlah Kubra.
9. Mahyah bint Ummul Qais, she gave birth to a daughter who died in childhood.

He also had daughters whose mothers' names have not been identified:

Umme Hani, Maimunah, Zainab Sughra, Ramlah Sughra, Umme Kulthum Sughra, Fatima, Umamah, Khadijah, Umme Salama, Umme Ja'far, Jamanah and Nafisah.

According to Ibne Jarir, Hazrat Ali had 17 daughters and 14 sons. His family continued through five sons: Imam Hassan, Imam Hussain, Muhammad ibn Ali, Umar bin Ali, and Abbas ibn Ali.