

Battle of the Camel

adapted from

‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib: His Life and Times

by

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Transliteration key

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

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Events that preceded the Battle of the Camel

The murder of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه was a cause of many other difficulties, and it cast its shadow over the turbulent events that followed. Many factors contributed to the murder of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, including: prosperity and its impact on society; changes in the nature of society during his reign; the fact that ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه came after ‘Umar رضي الله عنه; the departure of the senior Ṣaḥābah from Madīnah; tribalism; the cessation of conquest; ignorant displays of piety; personal ambitions on them of some people; the conspiracy of those who were full of hate; careful preparation of a list of accusations against ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه; various ways and means that were used to stir up the people; and the role of ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Saba’ in the turmoil. These causes and reasons have been discussed in detail in my book *Taysīr al-Karīm al-Mannān fī Sīrat ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān*.¹

The people loved ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه very much because of his good conduct, his closeness to the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم, the aḥādīth that praised him, and the fact that he married two of the Rasūl’s صلى الله عليه وسلم daughters (which is why he was called Dhū al-Nūrayn).²

He was one of the senior Ṣaḥābah who were given the glad tidings of paradise. He was subjected to injustice during his lifetime by some of the thugs; He could have put an end to them, but he refrained for fear of being the first one to shed the blood of the ummah of Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم. His policy in dealing with the turmoil was based on forbearance, deliberation and justice. He prevented the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم from fighting the rebels and chose to protect the Muslims by giving his own life. Hence his killing was the cause of a great deal more turmoil, and his murder cast a shadow on the subsequent turbulent events.

His killing had a great impact on the Muslims. The Muslim society fractured as a result of this major event, and the people became divided. What may increase

1 Al-Sallabi: *‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān*, p. 311-340.

2 The one with the two lights [Editor].

his status and prove his innocence of everything that was attributed to him is the attitude of the other Ṣaḥābah towards his murder. They were all agreed that he was innocent and that those who shed his blood should be punished, but they differed as to how that was to be achieved. This will be discussed below, but first we want to shed some light on the role of 'Abd Allāh Ibn Saba' in the turmoil in general.

Impact of the Saba'iyyah in causing turmoil. The Saba'iyyah - fact or fiction?

The reality of 'Abd Allāh Ibn Saba'

The early scholars were unanimous in agreeing that the Saba'iyyah existed; there were no exceptions among them. A few modern scholars, most of whom are Shī'ah, disagreed with that. They claimed that the Saba'iyyah were a product of the imagination of Ṣayf Ibn 'Umar al-Tamīmī. Some of the scholars of biography criticised Sayf in the field of ḥadīth narration, but the scholars regard him as acceptable in the field of historical reports.

Moreover, Ibn 'Asākir narrated many reports that mention 'Abd Allāh Ibn Saba', and these reports do not include Sayf ibn 'Umar as one of the narrators. Al-Albānī ruled that some of these reports were sound in terms of their chains of narration.¹

These are in addition to the many reports narrated about Ibn Saba' in the Shī'ī books of sects, biographies and ḥadīth, in which there is no mention of this Sayf ibn 'Umar at all.

Creating doubts about the existence of 'Abd Allāh Ibn Saba' began with two purposes: on the one hand, to deny the role of the Jewish element in planting the seeds of turmoil among the Muslims, and on the other hand, to point the finger of accusation against the Ṣaḥābah. The rogue elements attempted to tarnish the bright image of the Ṣaḥābah in the minds of Muslims, by claiming that the Ṣaḥābah caused the turmoil.

Some contemporary writers, all of whom were Rāfiḍī Shī'ah, followed in their footsteps and denied the existence of 'Abd Allāh Ibn Saba' for their own purposes. These failed attempts were aimed at proving that their sect had nothing to do

¹ 'Awdah: *Da'wat al-Inqādh li al-Tarīkh al-Islāmī*, in which he refers to the chains of narration mentioned by al-Albānī.

with its real founder, contrary to the facts on which all earlier scholars, including the Shī'ah, were agreed.

It is worth pointing out that those so-called Sunnīs who denied the existence of 'Abd Allāh Ibn Saba' were among those who were influenced by, or studied under, the Orientalists. What level of shamelessness and ignorance have these people reached? His biography filled books of history and Muslim sects, his deeds were transmitted by narrators and his story was known throughout the Muslim world. The historians, scholars of ḥadīth and authors of books on sects and groups, biography, literature and genealogy who discussed the Saba'iyyah were all unanimously agreed that the 'Abd Allāh Ibn Saba' who appears in accounts of the turmoil was a real historical character.

The reports of Ibn Saba's role in the turmoil are not limited to *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* and are not based only on the reports of Sayf ibn 'Umar al-Tamīmī contained therein; there are widespread reports in the narrations of earlier scholars and throughout the books that record the events of Islamic history and discuss the views of different sects during that period. However, the advantage that Imām al-Ṭabarī had over others is that he had more abundant material and more details.

Hence shedding doubts on these events without any evidence, on the grounds that 'Abd Allāh Ibn Saba' is only mentioned in reports via Sayf ibn 'Umar, even after it has been proven that he is mentioned in sound reports that do not include Sayf ibn 'Umar in their chains of narration, as we have mentioned above, only leads to rejecting all these reports and labelling those narrators and scholars as foolish people who are distorting the historical facts.

Since when does an academic methodology based on pure rational thinking form a basis for rejection, as opposed to texts and corroborating reports? Is this methodology based on overlooking and ignoring all the sources, both earlier and later, which prove that Ibn Saba' was a real person?¹

1 Al-'Awadhī: *Da'wat al-Inqādh li al-Tarīkh al-Islāmī; Taḥqīq Mawāqif al-Ṣaḥābah fi al-Fitnah*, vol. 1 p. 70.

Ibn Saba' is mentioned in many books of Ahl al-Sunnah, including the following:

- » The Saba'iyyah are mentioned by A'sha Ḥamadān (d. 83 AH).¹

He lampooned al-Mukhtar Ibn Abī 'Ubayd al-Thaqafī and his supporters from Kūfah, after he fled with the nobles of the tribes of Kūfah to Baṣrah, by saying:

I bear witness that you are Saba'iyyah, and I am aware of you, O guardians of disbelief.²

- » There is a report from al-Sha'bī (d. 103 AH /721 CE) saying that the first one who told lies was 'Abd Allāh ibn Saba'.³ Ibn Ḥabīb⁴ (d. 245 AH/860 CE) mentioned Ibn Saba' and regarded him as one of the children of the Ethiopian women.⁵ Abū 'Asim Khushaysh ibn Aṣram (d. 253 AH) narrated a report about 'Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ burning some of the companions of Ibn Saba', in his book *al-Istiḳamah*.⁶
- » Al-Jahīdh⁷ (d. 255 AH) is regarded as one of the first to refer to 'Abd Allāh ibn Saba',⁸ but his report is not the first, as Dr. Jawad 'Alī thinks.⁹
- » The story of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ burning a group of heretics is mentioned in sound reports that are narrated in the books of ḥadīth.¹⁰ There is nothing strange about using the word 'heretic' with regard to 'Abd Allāh ibn Saba' and his group. Ibn Taymiyyah said:

1 His name was 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Ḥarith al-Ḥamadān, who was known as A'isha Ḥamadān.

2 *Diwān 'A'isha Ḥamadān*, p. 148.

3 Ibn 'Asākir: *Tārīkh Dimashq*, vol. 9 p. 331.

4 *Tārīkh Baghdad*, vol. 2 p. 277.

5 Al-'Awdah: *'Abd Allāh Ibn Saba'*, p. 53; Ibn Ḥabīb: *al-Muḥbar*, p. 308.

6 *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, vol. 2 p. 551; *Shadharāt al-Dhahab*, vol. 2 p. 129.

7 *Wafiyāt al-A'yān*, vol. 3 p. 470.

8 *Al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn*, vol. 3 p. 81.

9 *Tahqīq Mawāqif al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 1 p. 290.

10 Al-'Awdah: *'Abd Allāh ibn Saba'*, p. 53.

The Rāfiḍī ideas started with the heretic ‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’.¹

» Al-Dhahabī said:

‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’ was one of the extreme heretics; he was misguided and misled others.²

» Ibn Ḥajar said:

‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’ was one of the extreme heretics ... he had followers who were called Saba’iyyah, who believed in the divinity of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib عليه السلام. ‘Alī burned them with fire during his khilāfah.³

Ibn Saba’ is also mentioned in the books of ḥadīth criticism.

» Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 354 AH) said:

Al-Kalbī, Muḥammad ibn al-Sā’ib al-akhbārī, was a Saba’ī, one of the followers of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’, one of those who said that ‘Alī did not die and that he will come back to this world before the Hour begins. If they saw a cloud, they would say: ‘The Amīr al-Mu’minīn (meaning ‘Alī) is in it.’⁴

The books of genealogy also confirm that the Saba’ī group is named after ‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’, and that they are a group of extreme Rāfiḍī. ‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’ was originally from Yemen, a Jew who became a Muslim outwardly.

» Sayf ibn ‘Umar was not the only source for reports about ‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’. In his *Tārīkh*, ibn ‘Asākir narrated reports which have no connection to Sayf, which confirm the existence of Ibn Saba’.⁵

1 *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*, vol. 28 p. 483.

2 Al-Dhahabī: *Mizān al-‘itidāl*, vol. 2 p. 462.

3 Ibn Ḥajar: *Lisān al-Mizān*, vol. 3 p. 360.

4 Abū Ḥātim: *al-Mujrūhīn min al-Muḥaddithīn*, vol. 2 p. 253.

5 *Tahqīq Mawāqif as-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 1 p. 298; Al-‘Awdah: ‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’, p. 54.

- » Shaykh al-Islam ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 A.H) stated that the origins of the Rāfiḍī sect lay with the hypocrites and heretics, and that it was the invention of the heretic ibn Saba', who exaggerated about 'Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, claiming that he should have been khalīfah, that he was appointed by a clear text, and that he was infallible.¹
- » Al-Shaṭībī² (d. 790 AH) pointed out that the innovation of the Saba'iyyah was one that had to do with belief in the existence of another god besides Allah and this was an innovation that differed from others.³
- » In al-Khuṭaṭ by al-Maqrīzi (d. 845 AH), it says that 'Abd Allāh ibn Saba' appeared at the time of 'Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, saying that 'Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ as the rightfully appointed successor⁴ and would return, and promoting belief in the transmigration of souls.⁵

The Shia sources which mention ibn Saba' include the following:

- » Al-Kashī narrated that Muḥammad ibn Qawlawayyah said:

Sa'd ibn 'Abd Allāh told me: Ya'qūb ibn Yazīd and Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā told me, from 'Alī ibn Maḥziyār, from Faḍḍālah ibn Ayyob al-Azdī, that Abān ibn 'Uthmān said: "I heard Abū 'Abd Allāh say: 'May Allah curse 'Abd Allāh ibn Saba', for he claimed that ('Alī) was divine, but by Allah, ('Alī) was an obedient slave. Woe to the one who tells lies about us. If people say of us things that we do not say about ourselves, we disavow ourselves of them before Allah."⁶

The chain of narration of this report is sound.⁷

1 Ibn Taymiyyah: *Majmū' al-Fatāwa*, vol. 4 p. 435.

2 Ibrahīm ibn Mūsa, Muḥammad al-Gharnadi, d. 790 AH.

3 Abū Ishāq al-Lakhmi: *al-I'tisām*, vol. 2 p. 197.

4 Appointed heir, The Shia use this term for 'Alī, claiming that Rasūl صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ appointed him to be his successor, so 'Alī was his true heir. [Editor]

5 Al-Maqrīzi: *al-Mawā'idh wa l-I'tibār bī Dhikr al-Khuṭaṭ wa l-Āthār*, vol. 2 p. 256,257.

6 *Rijāl al-Kashī*, vol. 1 p. 324.

7 Muhammad 'Alī al-Mu'allim: *'Abd Allāh ibn Saba'-al-Ḥaqīqah al-Majhūlah*, p. 30.

» In *al-Khiṣāl*, al-Qummī narrated the same report, but in connection with a different chain of narration. The author of *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt* mentioned Ibn Saba' in a quotation from Imām al-Ṣādiq, who cursed Ibn Saba' and accused him of lying, fabricating, broadcasting secrets and misinterpreting.¹

In his book, Dr. Sulaymān al-ʿAwdah mentioned a number of texts with which the Shīʿī books are filled, and their reports from ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Saba', which are more akin to recorded documents that condemn anyone among the later Shīʿah who tries to deny the existence of ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Saba' or shed doubt on the reports that refer to him on the basis of paucity or weakness of the reports.²

Ibn Saba' was an actual historical figure, concerning whom there is no confusion in either the Sunnī or Shīʿah sources, earlier or later. This is also the view of most of the Orientalists such as Julius Wellhausen,³ Van Fulton,⁴ and Levi dela Vida,⁵ Goldziher,⁶ Ronald Nicholson,⁷ and Dwight Donaldson.⁸ For a few orientalist such as Caetani and Bernard Lewis,⁹ Ibn Saba' remains a doubtful figure or no more than a myth; Friedländer remains uncertain.¹⁰ However we should remember that we do not rely on these authors with regard to our history.

The one who studies these sources, ancient and modern, Sunnī and Shīʿah, will be certain that ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Saba' really existed and that his existence is supported

1 Sulaymān al-ʿAwdah: *ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Saba'* p. 62.

2 *ibid.*

3 Julius Wellhausen: *The Khārijis and the Shīʿah*, p. 170

4 Van Fulton: *al-Siyādah al-ʿArabiyyah wa al-Shīʿah wa l-Isrāʾīliyyāt*, p. 80.

5 *Tahqīq Mawāqif al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 1 p. 312.

6 Goldziher: *al-ʿAqīdah wa al-Sharīʿah al-Islamiyyah*, p. 229.

7 *Tarīkh al-ʿArab al-Adabi fi l-Jāhiliyyah* (Literary History of the Arabs during the Jāhiliyyah and early Islam), p. 235.

8 *ʿAqāʾid ash-Shīʿah*, p. 58.

9 *Uṣūl al-Ismlīyyah* (Origins of Ismailism), p. 86.

10 *Tahqīq Mawāqif al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 1 p. 312.

by the historical reports. The books of 'aḳīdah, ḥadīth, biography, genealogy, literature and language also mention him a great deal. This idea was accepted by modern scholars and researchers. It seems that the first ones to shed doubt on the existence of ibn Saba' were some of the Orientalists; then this doubt was shared by the majority of modern Shī'ah, and some of them denied his existence altogether. Among modern Arab researchers, there were some who admired the ideas of the Orientalists and were influenced by the books of the modern Shia. Nevertheless, none of them has anything to support the suspicions and denials except doubt itself, which is based on whims and desires, speculations and assumptions.¹

Whoever wishes to find out more about the Sunnī, Orientalist and Shia references which mention ibn Saba' may refer to *Taḥqīq Mawāqif al-Ṣaḥābah fī l-Fitnah* by Dr. Muḥammad Amhazon and *'Abd Allāh ibn Saba' wa Atharuhu fī Ihdāth al-Fitnah fī Ṣadr al-Islām* by Dr. Sulaymān ibn Ḥamād al-'Awdah.

1 ibid.

The role of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’ in stirring up fitnah

In the last years of ‘Uthmān’s ﷺ khilāfah, signs of trouble in the Muslim society began to loom on the horizon, due to the changes that we have listed previously. Some of the Jews seized this opportunity to stir up trouble, by using the tactic of taqiyyah and pretending to be Muslim. Among them was ‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’, who is also known as ibn al-Sowdā’.

We should not exaggerate his role in the fitnah, as some have done,¹ but we should not cast doubts on it either, or discount the role that he played. His role was only one of several factors, but it was the most prominent and the most dangerous. The atmosphere of turmoil paved the way for him, but there were other factors that helped him too. All that ibn Saba’ did was to spread views and beliefs that he fabricated himself.

They reflected his hateful nature, and he propagated them for his own purposes, namely to introduce new ideas into the Muslim society in order to destroy its unity and stir up unrest. He planted seeds of division among the people, and that was one of several factors that led to the murder of the khalīfah ‘Uthmān ﷺ and the division of the ummah into factions and parties.²

To summarise what he did, he began quoting correct ideas, but then he leapt to wrong conclusions that found acceptance among the simple-minded, the extremists and those who were swayed by whims and desires. He followed convoluted ways whereby he deceived those who gathered around him. He started quoting Qur’ān and misinterpreting it in accordance with his false claims, like when he said:

It is strange that people believe that ‘Īsā is coming back, but they do not accept that Muḥammad is coming back, when Allah says:

1 Such as Sa‘īd al-Afghānī in his book *‘Ā’ishah wa al-Siyāsah*.

2 *Tahqīq Mawāqif al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 1 p. 327.

إِنَّ الَّذِي فَرَضَ عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لَرَادُّكَ إِلَىٰ مَعَادٍ

Verily, He Who has given you (O Muḥammad ﷺ) the Qur'ān (i.e. Ordered you to act on its laws and to preach it to others) will surely, bring you back to Ma'ād (place of Return)).¹ And Muḥammad is more deserving of coming back than 'Īsā عليه السلام.²

He also resorted to false analogy in trying to claim that 'Alī رضي الله عنه was the rightful heir appointed by Rasūl ﷺ to succeed him, he said:

There were one thousand messengers, and each messenger had a rightfully appointed heir, and 'Alī was the rightfully appointed heir of Muḥammad.

Then he said:

Muḥammad was the seal of the prophets, and 'Alī was the seal of the heirs.³

When these ideas had become entrenched in the hearts of his followers, he moved on to his ultimate aim, which was to make the people rebel against the khalīfah 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه. That happened to coincide with the whims and desires of some of the people when he said to them:

Who does more wrong than the one who did not fulfil the final wishes of the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ, who pushed aside 'Alī, the rightfully appointed successor of the Rasūl of Allah and took control of the ummah?

After that, he told them:

'Uthmān took it unlawfully; here is the rightfully appointed successor of the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ. Get up and do something about it. Start by criticising your governors, and pretend that you are enjoying what is

1 Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ: 85.

2 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 347.

3 *ibid.*

good and forbidding what is evil, so that people will be inclined towards you, and call them to this matter.¹

He sent out his agents, and he wrote to people in the regions, who were corrupted by his ideas; they wrote to him and propagated their views in secret, pretending to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil. They started writing to people in the regions, mentioning the faults of their governors, and they corresponded with their counter parts in other regions, telling them what they were doing. They spread their false propaganda all over, aiming for something other than what they appeared to be seeking; they even sent letters to Madīnah. The people in the regions said:

We are free of what others are suffering from,” but the people of Madīnah received letters from all over and said: “We are better off than the rest of the people.²

From this, we can see the methods followed by ibn Saba’. He wanted to give the impression that there was a rift between two of the senior Ṣaḥābah by showing that one of them, ‘Alī رضي الله عنه had been deprived of his rights, whereas the other, ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, was a usurper.

Next, he tried to stir up the people against their governors, especially in Kūfah, in the name of enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, as a result they started revolting against their governors for the slightest reasons. He focused on the Bedouins in this campaign, because he found in them suitable material for carrying out his plan. He gained the support of the religious people among them by using the idea of enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil.

He gained the support of those who had worldly ambitions by means of false rumours against ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, such as the claim that he was biased in favour of

1 op. cit., vol. 5 p. 348.

2 ibid.

his relatives and was spending money from the public treasury of the Muslims on them, that he had allocated grazing land for himself only, and other accusations and criticisms by means of which ibn Saba' managed to rally the thugs against 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه.

Then he started inciting his followers to send letters relaying terrible news about their cities to people in other provinces, so that people in all regions would think that the situation everywhere had gotten so bad that it could not get any worse. Those who benefited from this situation were the Saba'iyyah, because when the people believed their propaganda, they would be able to light the spark of fitnah in the Muslim society.¹

'Uthmān رضي الله عنه realised that there were plots in other provinces, and that the ummah was facing a bad time. He said: "By Allah, the millstone (of fitnah) will soon start turning, and it will be better for 'Uthmān if he dies and does not set it in motion."²

The place where ibn Saba' found his niche was in Egypt. He started organising his campaign against 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه there; urging the people to go to Madīnah and stir up unrest on the premise that 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه had become khalīfah unlawfully by snatching it from 'Alī رضي الله عنه, who was the true heir of the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم.³

He deceived them by means of letters that he claimed to have received from the senior Ṣaḥābah, inciting the people against 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه.⁴

However, when the Bedouins came to Madīnah and met with the Ṣaḥābah, they denied writing the letters that had been attributed to them, and the Bedouins did not receive any encouragement from them. They found that 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه

1 Yūsuf al-'Ishsh: *Al-Dawlah al-Umawiyyah*, p. 168; *Tahqīq Mawāqif al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 1 p. 331.

2 *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 250.

3 *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 348; *Tahqīq Mawāqif al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 1 p. 330.

4 *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 365; *Tahqīq Mawāqif al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 1 p. 330.

paid attention to the rights of others, and he debated with them concerning the accusations against him.

He refuted their lies and explained that these deeds were based on sincere intentions, until one of these Bedouins, Mālik ibn al-Ashtar al-Nakha'i, said:

Perhaps it is a plot that has been drawn up against him and you.¹

Al-Dhahabī is of the view that 'Abd Allāh ibn Saba' started the fitnah in Egypt, where he planted the seeds of grudges and criticism against the governors first, then against the ruler 'Uthmān.²

Ibn Saba' was not alone; his agents were at work among the network of conspirators, using their craftiness and trickery to recruit the Bedouins, the religious people among them and others. Ibn Kathīr narrated that among the causes of the incitement against 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه was the emergence of Ibn Saba', who went to Egypt and spread rumours among the people that he fabricated himself, by which many people in Egypt were deceived.³

The famous historians and scholars of both the earlier and later generations of this ummah are agreed that Ibn Saba' appeared among the Muslims with ideas, plans and plots aimed at diverting the Muslims from their faith and from obeying their ruler, and spreading division and disputes among them. The thugs rallied around him, leading to the formation of the Saba'iyyah group, which was one of the factors in the fitnah that ended with the murder of the Khalīfah 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān رضي الله عنه.

It seems that the Saba'iyyah plots were very well organized. They were very skilled in directing their 'missionaries' and spreading their ideas, because they

1 *Taḥqīq Mawāqif al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 1 p. 331.

2 *Taḥqīq Mawāqif al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 1 p. 338.

3 *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 p. 167, 168.

had the means of propaganda to influence the thugs and dregs of society. They were also active in forming branches in Baṣrah, Kūfah and Egypt, exploiting tribal sentiments and exploiting the weaknesses of the Bedouins, slaves and freed slaves, based on knowledge of what they wanted to hear.¹

1 *Taḥqīq Mawāqif al-Ṣaḥābah fi al-Fitnah*, p. 339.

Different views among the Ṣaḥābah concerning the way to carry out retaliation against the murderers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه

The difference that emerged between Amīr al-Mu‘minīn, on the one hand, and Ṭalḥah, Zubayr and ‘Ā’ishah on the other, and after that between ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiyah, was not because these people rejected the khilāfah and leadership of Amīr al-Mu‘minīn ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, or that they denied that he was entitled to be the Khalīfah and ruler in charge of the Muslims. That was something upon which they all agreed.

Ibn Ḥazm said:

Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه never denied ‘Alī’s رضي الله عنه virtue or his entitlement to the khilāfah. But in his opinion, he believed that priority should be given to settling the issue of retaliation with regard to the murderers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه over the issue of allegiance, and he thought that he himself was most entitled to seek retaliation for the blood of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه.¹

Ibn Taymiyyah said:

Mu‘āwiyah did not claim to be the khalīfah, and allegiance was not sworn to him as khalīfah when he fought ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. He did not fight on the basis that he deserved that position. Mu‘āwiyah’s party affirmed that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was the khalīfah, and Mu‘āwiyah would confirm to anyone who asked him that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was the khalīfah. Neither Mu‘āwiyah nor his Ṣaḥābah thought of initiating fighting against ‘Alī and his Ṣaḥābah, and they did not do that.²

Ibn Taymiyyah also said:

Each of the two groups confirmed that Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه was not as qualified as ‘Alī رضي الله عنه with regard to being khalīfah, and that he could not be khalīfah

1 *Al-Faṣl fi l-Milal wa al-Aḥwa’ wa al-Niḥal*, vol. 4 p. 160.

2 *Majmū’ al-Fatāwā*, vol. 35 p. 72.

when it was possible to appoint ‘Alī رضي الله عنه to that position. ‘Alī’s رضي الله عنه superiority, seniority, knowledge, religious commitment, courage and all his virtues were obvious and well known to him, as was also the case with regard to his fellow khulafā’ Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه.¹

The difference of opinion did not result from rejection of ‘Alī’s khilāfah; the difference was only concerning the issue of bringing the murderers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه justice. Even then, their difference of opinion was not about this issue itself; rather it was about the way in which to bring them to justice. Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī رضي الله عنه agreed with Mu’āwiyah رضي الله عنه in principle that the killers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه must be brought to justice, but his view was that the issue of bringing them to justice should be set aside until things settled down and unity was achieved.²

Al-Nawawī said:

It should be noted that the reason for these battles was that the issues were not clear. Because they were so unclear, they held different views, and three groups emerged:

- a group whose view was that one party was in the right, and that those who differed with them were transgressors; they thought that they had to support this party and fight the transgressors, according to what they believed, and that it was not permissible for the one who reached that conclusion to withhold help and support from the leader who was in the right by fighting the transgressors, according to this belief;
- a group that held the opposite view; they thought that the other party was in the right, so it became obligatory for them to support that party and fight those who transgressed against them;
- a third party that was undecided about the issue and confused about it and did not reach any conclusion as to which party was more in the

1 ibid.

2 *Aḥdāth wa Aḥādīth Fitnat al-Ḥaraj*, p. 158.

right; they kept away from both and believed that this staying away was what they were required to do with regard to this situation, because it was not permissible for them to help anyone in fighting other Muslims unless it was clear to them that they deserved to be fought, and that if they concluded that one of the two parties was closer to the right, it would not be permissible for them to withhold their support in fighting the transgressors.¹

Zubayr, Ṭalḥah and ‘Ā’ishah and their supporters set out to Baṣrah to set things straight

Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنهما went to Makkah and met with ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها. Their arrival in Makkah came in the month of Rabī al-Ākhir 36 AH, approximately four months after the murder of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه.²

In Makkah, negotiations began with ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها about going out on a campaign in pursuit of the murderers. There was heavy psychological pressure on those who felt that they had done nothing to stop the murder of the wronged khalīfah.

They blamed themselves for letting him down, even though ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه was the one who forbade anyone who wanted to defend him from doing so, because he wanted to offer himself as a sacrifice for the sake of Allah. They thought that there was no way to expiate this sin except by going out to seek vengeance.

‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها said:

‘Uthmān was slain wrongfully, and by Allah, I shall certainly seek vengeance for his blood.³

Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه said:

1 *Sharḥ al-Nawawī ‘alā Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 15 p. 149.

2 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 469.

3 *op. cit.*, vol. 5 p. 485.

There were some shortcomings on my part with regard to ‘Uthmān, and there is no way I can ever repent except to shed my own blood in vengeance for his blood.¹

And Zubayr رضي الله عنه said:

Let us inspire the people so that we may seek vengeance for his blood, lest it be forgotten, because forgetting it will lead to the weakening of the authority of Allah among us forever. If we do not deter people from doing this again, there will be no leader except that people of that kind will kill him.²

This intense pressure on nerves and souls was sufficient to stir people up and motivate them to go out on the campaign. When they went, they realised that they were going out to face unknown turmoil’s, and each one of them left his home not expecting to return to it. The children bade farewell weeping, and the day when these people left Makkah for Baṣrah was known as the day of wailing, a day that was unprecedented with regard to weeping for Islam.³

A number of factors in Makkah made them think seriously of striving to achieve their goal. One was the fact that the Umayyad’s had fled from Maḍīnah and settled in Makkah. In addition, ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Āmir - the governor of Baṣrah at the time of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه - was in Makkah urging the people to go out and offering them material help.

Ya‘la ibn Umayyah, who had left Yemen to help the khalīfah ‘Uthmān, had learned upon his arrival in Makkah that the khalīfah had been killed. He had with him considerable amounts of money, weapons and mounts, all of which he offered as help in pursuing the murderer of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه. This was sufficient to encourage those who were looking for a way to pursue the murderers.

1 *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 1 p. 34.

2 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 487.

3 *ibid.*; al-Shujā‘: *Dirāsāt fi ‘Ahd al-Nubuwwah wa l-Khilāfah al-Rāshidah*; p. 417.

They had the means to gather a force to pursue the murderers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, but where would they begin? A discussion took place among them as to which direction they should take. Some of them, led by ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها, said that Madīnah was where they should go. Another view was that they should head towards Syria, so that they could rally there against the murderers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه.

After a lengthy discussion, they settled on Baṣrah. There were too many of the rebels in Madīnah, and they would not be able to confront them and fight them because they were fewer in number, and Syria was already under control because Mu‘āwiyah was there. Hence going to Baṣrah was most appropriate at that point, because it was the least strong of the cities; from there they hoped to be able to achieve their aims.¹

Their plan and mission was clear before they set out, during their march and when they reached Baṣrah: the intent was to seek vengeance for the murder of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, to set things straight, to inform the people of what the murderers had done and to enjoin good and forbid evil.² Their demand was to carry out one of the ḥadd punishments of Allah.³ If the murderers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه were not punished, then every leader would be vulnerable to murder by people of that nature.⁴

As for the way in which they envisaged doing that, they intended to enter Baṣrah and then Kūfah, seeking help from its people and others against the killers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه. Then they would call upon the people of other cities to join them, so that they could corner the murderers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه who were present in the army of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and seize them with the minimum possible casualties.⁵

The campaign to Baṣrah and the anger that stirred the Ṣaḥābah were not as straightforward as they may have appeared to people. Their purpose was not

1 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 476; *Dirāsāt fi ‘Ahd al-Nubuwwah*, p. 418.

2 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 489.

3 *Dirāsāt fi ‘Ahd al-Nubuwwah*, p. 419.

4 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 487.

5 *Dirāsāt fi ‘Ahd an-Nubuwwah*, p. 419.

simply to avenge the murder of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, as if he were just an ordinary person who had been killed, even though this also would involve a transgression of one of the sacred limits of Allah that dictated getting angry and sending armies to seek revenge.

This was much more serious because of the position and character of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, his status as khalīfah, and the way in which he was killed. It was the assassination of a sharī figure, the khalīfah, whom the Muslims regarded as the deputy of the Lawgiver in his role of protecting the religion and ruling worldly affairs in accordance with sharīah.¹

Hence unlawful transgression against him constituted transgressing against the Lawgiver and weakening His authority, as well as disturbing law and order for the Muslims.²

‘Ā’ishah, Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنه, along with the people who accompanied them, were striving to create a groundswell of Islamic public opinion to confront this Sabaī gang who had murdered ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه and had since gained significant power. They meant to do this by making the Muslims aware of what these Saba’iyyah thugs, who came from different regions and tribes, and the Bedouins and slaves who supported them, had done.

Among the group of Ṣaḥābah, who held the same view as ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها, it became clear that the criminals and Saba’iyyah had a presence in ‘Alī’s رضي الله عنه army. They believed that this was why it was difficult for ‘Alī رضي الله عنه to confront them, because he feared for the people of Madīnah.

Hence they had to try to explain the situation to the Muslims and garner support for the party that was demanding implementation of the ḥadd (punishments), so that this could be accomplished with minimal loss of innocent lives. That

1 *Muqaddimah Ibn Khaldūn*, p. 191.

2 *Dawr al-Mar’ah as-Siyāsiyyah*, p. 391.

was undoubtedly a goal which ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was striving to achieve too; in fact, the reports that we have seen about the discussion among Zubayr and Ṭalḥah and ‘Alī رضي الله عنه about what was happening and explaining matters to them, proves that they were fully aware of the situation.

They recognised that the Saba’iyyah had deceived the masses, and they understood how they had planted their ideas in a way which would continue to weaken the ummah to such an extent that it would not know any peace.

Hence, there was no alternative but to confront the Saba’ī plan in the field of ideas, so as to cancel out their actions. This can clearly be seen in the sound reports¹ in which ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها speaks of the aims of this campaign.

Al-Ṭabarī narrated that ‘Uthmān ibn Ḥunayf, who was ‘Alī’s رضي الله عنه governor in Baṣrah, sent word to ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها when she arrived in Baṣrah, asking her why she had come. She said:

By Allah, a woman in my position should not go out on a campaign without having a clear reason and making it clear to her children (meaning the Muslims). The thugs of various cities and tribes have invaded the sanctuary of the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم and have committed a great deal of wrong doing there, and they have offered refuge to the wrongdoers. Therefore they deserve the curse of Allah and of His Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم, as they killed the leader of the Muslims for no reason. They shed blood unlawfully, stole ḥarām wealth and violated the sanctity of the sacred land and the sacred month. They transgressed against honour and killed troops. They settled in the place of people who did not want them to settle among them; they caused a great deal of harm but did not bring any benefit. I have come out among the Muslims to inform them of what these people have done, and of

the pain and suffering of the people we have left behind, and to tell them (the Muslims) what they should do in order to help set things straight.

1 op. cit., p. 394.

Then she recited the verse:

لَا خَيْرَ فِى كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ نَّجْوَاهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ

There is no good in most of their secret talks save [in] him who orders sadaqah [charity in Allah's cause], or Ma'rūf [Islamic Monotheism and all the good and righteous deeds which Allah has ordained], or conciliation between mankind).¹

Thus people joined for the purpose of setting things straight for those who Allah ﷻ and the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ enjoined that, young and old, male and female.

This is what we are trying to achieve, to enjoin you to do what is right and forbid you from doing evil, and we urge you to change it.²

Ibn Ḥibbān narrated that 'Ā'ishah ﷺ wrote to Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī ﷺ, 'Alī's governor in Kūfah, saying:

You know about the murder of 'Uthmān, and I have come out to set things right among the people. Tell the people in your city to stay in their houses so that we can achieve what they like of setting the Muslims' affairs straight.³

'Alī sent al-Qa'qā' ibn 'Amr to 'Ā'ishah and the people with her to ask them why she had come. Al-Qa'qā' entered upon her, greeted her with salām and said:

O my mother, what caused you to leave your home and come to this city?

She said:

1 Sūrah al-Nisā': 114.

2 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 489.

3 Ibn Ḥibbān: *al-Thiqāt*, vol. 2 p. 282.

O my son, it is to set the peoples' affairs straight.¹

After the end of the battle on the day of the Camel, 'Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ came to 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا and said to her:

May Allah forgive you.

She said:

And you too. I only wanted to set things straight.²

Thus we learn that she only went out on this campaign to set things straight among the people, and this is the refutation of those among the Rāfiḍī Shī'ah who slandered 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا and said that she left her house after Allah had commanded her to stay in it, in the verse:

وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ

*And stay in your houses, and do not display yourselves like that of the times of ignorance.*³

The scholarly consensus is that travelling for the purpose of doing a righteous deed does not contradict the idea of staying in one's house and not going out. This is what 'Ā'ishah, the Mother of the Believers رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, thought when she went out to set things straight among the Muslims, accompanied by her maḥram and the son of her sister, 'Abd Allāh ibn Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.⁴

Ibn Taymiyyah said, refuting the Rawāfiḍ concerning this issue:

She did not display herself as in the times of ignorance. The command to stay in their houses does not mean that women should never go out

1 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 520.

2 *Shadharāt adh-Dhahab*, vol. 1 p. 42.

3 Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 33.

4 *Al-Intiṣār lī al-Ṣaḥbī wa l-Āl*, p. 444.

for some purpose that is enjoined, such as going out for ḥajj and ‘umrah, or going out with her husband when he travels. This verse was revealed during the lifetime of Rasūl ﷺ, and the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ took his wives with him on his journeys after that, as he took ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا and others with him during his farewell pilgrimage. He sent ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, who seated her behind him on his mount, and he took her to start her ‘umrah from Tanīm.

The farewell pilgrimage took place less than three months before the death of Rasūl ﷺ, after this verse was revealed. Hence the wives of Rasūl ﷺ performed ḥajj after he died as they had done with him, during the khilāfah of ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and others, and ‘Umar would appoint ‘Uthmān or ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf in charge of their caravan.

If the journey is for a legitimate purpose, then it is permissible. ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا believed that this journey was in the best interests of the Muslims, and that was her opinion.¹

Ibn al-‘Arabī said:

As for her going out to the Battle of the Camel, she did not set out to fight, but the people pinned their hopes on her and complained to her about how bad the turmoil and confusion had become. They hoped by her blessing to set things straight and that the people would show respect for her and comply when she took a stance among them. She also thought that herself, so she set out in compliance with the words of Allah:

لَا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ نَّجْوَىٰ إِلَّا مَن أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ

There is no good in most of their secret talks save [in] him who orders ṣadaqah [charity in Allah’s cause], or ma’rūf [Islamic Monotheism and all the good and righteous deeds which Allah has ordained], or reconcile between mankind.²

1 Minhāj as-Sunnah, vol. 4 p. 317-570.

2 Surah, al-Nisā: 114.

The command to reconcile between people and set things straight is addressed to all people, male or female, free or slave.¹

The following are a number of important issues having to do with her going out:

1. Was ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها forced to go out?

Al-Ya‘qūbī claimed that Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām رضي الله عنه forced ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها to go out.² This was the view of the author of *al-Imāmah wa al-Siyāsah*³ and ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd,⁴ it was also the opinion of al-Daynūri.⁵ The report narrated by al-Dhahabī indicated that the one who forced her was ‘Abd Allāh ibn Zubayr رضي الله عنه,⁶ the son of her sister Asma’ رضي الله عنها.

This report was relied on and quoted by many researchers, such as Muḥammad Sayyid al-Wakīl,⁷ who claimed that Zubayr and Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه encouraged ‘Ā’ishah to go out; this claim was also made by Zāhiyah Qadūrah⁸ and others, but it is not correct. ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها began to demand vengeance for the slaying of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه from the moment she learned of his murder, long before Zubayr and Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه and other senior Ṣaḥābah reached Makkah.

It is narrated that when she set off to return to Makkah, ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Āmir al-Ḥaḍramī came to her and said:

Why are you coming back, O Mother of the Believers? She replied: “I am coming back because ‘Uthmān has been killed unlawfully, and the affairs of

1 *Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, vol. 3 p. 569, 570.

2 *Tarīkh al-Ya‘qūbī*, vol. 2 p. 180, 209.

3 *Al-Imāmah wa al-Siyāsah*, vol. 1 p. 58, 69.

4 *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol. 9 p. 18.

5 *al-Akḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, p. 145.

6 *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 2 p. 193.

7 *Jawlah Tarīkhiyyah fi ‘Asr al-Khulafā’ al-Rāshidīn*, p. 526.

8 *‘Ā’ishah Umm al-Mu’minīn*, p. 184.

the Muslims cannot be sound if these thugs continue to cause trouble. Seek vengeance for the blood of ‘Uthmān and thus support Islam.”

‘Abd Allāh was the first one to respond.¹ Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنهما had not yet left Madīnah; they did not leave until four months after the murder of ‘Uthmān.²

2. Was she in control of those who were with her?

Among those who went out on the campaign with her were a number of Ṣaḥābah.³ ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها was not a woman who was in control of others and able to make people do what she wanted, as Brockelmann claims.⁴

Al-Ṭabarī’s reports confirm that the rest of the Mothers of the Believers supported her, as did those who were with her in the effort to put things straight; indeed, a considerable number of the people of Baṣrah supported her too.⁵

These supporters, whose numbers were not small, were not insignificant people; Ṭalḥah and Zubayr described them as the best and most wise of the people of Baṣrah,⁶ and ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها described them as the righteous.⁷

The fact that this number of righteous people supported her cause could only be the result of strong belief in the cause, confidence that something could be achieved by this campaign, and certainty that its purpose was sound. Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī رضي الله عنه knew that, and he refuted the claim made by some people that those who went out with ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها were a group of fools, thugs and hooligans.⁸

1 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 475.

2 *Dawr al-Mar’ah al-Siyāsiyyah*, p. 383; *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 469.

3 op. cit., p. 384.

4 *Tarīkh al-Shu’ūb al-Islāmiyyah* (History of the Islamic People), p. 111, 114, and 117.

5 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 475.

6 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, quoted in *Dawr al-Mar’ah al-Siyāsiyyah*, p. 385.

7 *ibid.*

8 See what was said by the author of *al-Imāmah wa al-Siyāsah*, vol. 1 p. 57.

After the Battle of the Camel, Amīr al-Mu'minīn stood among those of 'Ā'ishah's ﷺ party who had been slain, praying for mercy for them and recounting their virtues.¹

We shall see below that it was not an unruly campaign in which 'Ā'ishah ﷺ controlled and directed immature people; rather it was campaign in which some of the senior Ṣaḥābah took part.²

3. Attitude of the wives of Rasūl ﷺ towards those who sought vengeance for the murder of 'Uthmān

The wives of Rasūl ﷺ had gone for ḥajj that year to get away from the turmoil. After news reached the people in Makkah that 'Uthmān ﷺ had been murdered, they stayed on in Makkah. They had left the holy city, but they went back and followed news of the situation, waiting to see what people would do. When allegiance was sworn to 'Alī ﷺ, a number of the Ṣaḥābah left Madīnah, not wanting to stay there because of the presence of troublemakers from other regions. Many of the Ṣaḥābah and the Mothers of the Believers ﷺ gathered in Makkah.³

The other Mothers of the Believers agreed with 'Ā'ishah ﷺ about going to Madīnah to seek justice. When 'Ā'ishah ﷺ, and the Ṣaḥābah who were with her, decided to go to Baṣrah instead, the others changed their minds and said:

We will not go anywhere except Madīnah.⁴

So the idea of seeking vengeance for 'Uthmān was not something on which the Mothers of the Believers differed, but they disagreed when the plan changed from Madīnah to Baṣrah. The Mother of the Believers Ḥafṣah bint 'Umar ﷺ agreed

1 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 574.

2 *Dawr al-Mar'ah al-Siyāsiyah*, p. 385.

3 *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 p. 241.

4 *ibid.*

with ‘Ā’ishah about going to Baṣrah, but her brother ‘Abd Allāh رضي الله عنه insisted that she should not go; this was not based on her personal conviction.¹

She sent her apologies to ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها, saying:

‘Abd Allāh has prevented me from going on the campaign.²

The commonly known reports indicate that the Mother of the Believers Umm Salamah رضي الله عنها did not share the view of ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها with regard to going out on campaign to Baṣrah; rather she shared ‘Alī’s view.³

The sound reports indicate that she sent her son ‘Umar ibn Abī Salamah to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه with the message:

By Allah, he is dearer to me than my own self; he will go out with you to fight alongside you.

He went out with ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and remained with him.⁴

This is a report which, upon examination, does not mean that by sending her son she had a different opinion from the other Mothers of the Believers with regard to setting things straight among the Muslims.

‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها herself, along with those who were with her, did not think that this campaign meant that they were going against ‘Alī رضي الله عنه or rebelling against his khilāfah, as we have seen and as events will confirm to us. We also find nothing in the sound reports to indicate that Umm Salamah went against the consensus of the believers with regard to the importance of setting things straight.⁵

1 *Dawr al-Mar’ah al-Siyāsiyyah*, p. 386.

2 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 487.

3 *Anṣāb al-Ashrāf*, vol. 4 p. 224.

4 *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 4 p. 169; *al-Iṣābah*, vol. 4 p. 487; *Dawr al-Mar’ah al-Siyāsiyyah*, p. 387; *al-Mustadrak Marwiyāt Abī Mikhnaf*, p. 257.

5 *Dawr al-Mar’ah al-Siyāsiyyah*, p. 387.

The Mothers of the Believers knew that this category of a communal obligation and the guideline concerning such obligations is that it is not expected of all Muslims to carry out that duty; it is expected only of those who are qualified to carry it out. ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها was fully qualified to carry out that duty because of her status, age; knowledge and ability. She was the most knowledgeable of the Mothers of the Believers regarding Islam and Sharīah, according to Muslim consensus.¹

Moreover, she took a keen interest in current events and was highly educated and cultured. Her education had begun when she was growing up in the house of Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه, who had a vast knowledge of Arabic history and lineages; then she had lived in the house of the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم from which had emerged the principles on which the Muslim state was based. Furthermore, she was the daughter of the first khalīfah of the Muslims.

The scholars confirmed this high status of ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها. ‘Urwah ibn Zubayr said:

I was acquainted with ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها, and I have never seen anyone at all who was more knowledgeable of any verse that was revealed, any obligatory duty, any sunnah, anyone who was more well-versed in poetry or narrated more poetry; anyone who was more knowledgeable of Arabic history and lineage and so forth, anyone who had more knowledge of judiciary matters or medicine than her.²

Al-Sha‘bī used to mention her and express his admiration for her understanding and knowledge, and then he would say:

No wonder, when she learned from the Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم!

‘Aṭā’ used to say:

1 *Siyar A’lām al-Nubala’*, vol. 2 p. 193.

2 *ibid.*

‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها was the most knowledgeable of people and the most wise.¹

Al-Aḥnaf ibn Qays, the chief of Banū Tamīm and one of the most eloquent of the Arabs use to say:

Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī and the khulafā’ who came after them, and I never heard words from the mouth of any person that were more powerful and more beautiful than those of ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها.

Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه used to say something similar.²

The Mothers of the Believers bade farewell to ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها when she left for Baṣrah, and this is indicative of their support and encouragement for her in what she was doing.³

4. ‘Ā’ishah passing by the oasis of al-Ḥaw’ab⁴

It is proven with sound chains of narration that ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها passed by the oasis of al-Ḥaw’ab. It was narrated from Yaḥyā ibn Sa‘īd al-Qaṭṭān, from Ismā‘īl ibn Abī Khālid, from Qays ibn Ḥāzīm that the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said to his wives:

How will one of you be when the dogs of al-Ḥaw’ab bark at her?⁵

It was also narrated via Shu‘bah from Ismā‘īl that when ‘Ā’ishah came to al-Ḥaw’ab, she heard the barking of dogs, and she said:

I think I should go back, because the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “Which one of you will the dogs of al-Ḥaw’ab bark at?”

1 op. cit., vol. 2 p. 185.

2 op. cit., vol. 2 p. 183.

3 *Dawr al-Mar’ah al-Siyāsiyyah*, p. 389.

4 Al-Ḥaw’ab: one of the oases of the Arabs on the road between Makkah and Baṣrah, close to the latter.

5 *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 6 p. 97.

Zubayr رضي الله عنه said to her:

Are you going back? Perhaps Allah will put people's affairs straight by means of you.¹

This version was narrated by Ya'la ibn 'Ubayd from Ismā'īl, and was recorded by al-Ḥākim.²

Al-Albānī said:

Its chain of narration is very sound.

He also said:

It was classed as such by senior a'immaḥ of ḥadīth such as ibn Ḥibban, al-Dhababī, ibn Kathīr and ibn Ḥajr.³

These are sound reports in which there is nothing misleading or false, because the Ṣaḥābah would not stoop to that level, contrary to what is claimed in false reports,⁴ as we shall see below. The one who studies these reports, which have been classified as sound by the scholars, will not find anything in them to suggest that 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها should or should not have done the things that she did.

Rather what may be understood from them is that Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم was wondering which one of his wives would pass by the oasis of Ḥaw'ab. The reports that contain the word 'beware', indicating that Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم warned against going there were not classified as sound by the scholars; in fact, they were classified as weak. One example is the report which says:

1 *ibid.*

2 *al-Mustadrak*, vol. 3 p. 120.

3 *Silsilat al-Aḥādith al-Ṣaḥīḥah*, vol. 1 p. 767 no. 474.

4 *Dawr al-Mar'ah al-Siyāsiyyah*, p. 405.

Beware lest you be there, O Ḥumayrah.¹

Hence the correct view, which we follow, is that the fact that ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا passed by the water of al-Ḥaw’ab did not have the negative effect which was suggested by the fabricated reports. It did not have any far-reaching effect on ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا herself to the point that she started thinking seriously of turning back and giving up the cause for which she had set out, namely to set matters straight among the Muslims and correct their mistakes.

The matter did not go beyond a passing thought on her part, in which the possibility of turning back merely crossed her mind. This is how she expressed it when she said:

I thought about going back, but it was only an idea that did not last for long.

Then her mission became clear again, after Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ reminded her of what Allah might bring about at her hands in terms of setting things straight among the Muslims.²

The issue of the oasis of al-Ḥaw’ab, and the aḥādīth in which al-Ḥaw’ab is mentioned, were and still are fertile ground for the Shī’ah and others, which they use to criticise the Mother of the Believers ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا. They criticised her for going out and campaigning to seek vengeance for the murder of ‘Uthmān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, and they even went so far as to deny that her decision was based on valid ijtihād on her part; they claimed that she went against the instructions of Rasūl صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ not to go to the oasis of al-Ḥaw’ab.

The historical sources mentioned this story, and it is mentioned by al-Ṭabarī in a lengthy report that was narrated by Ismā’īl ibn Mūsā al-Fazārī, of whom ibn ‘Adī said:

1 Al-Dhahabi said: No report which contains the words: “O Ḥumayrah.” [a nickname of ‘Ā’ishah] is sound. *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 2 p. 167, 168.

2 *Dawr al-Mar’ah al-Siyāsiyyah*, p. 406.

They (the scholars) criticised him for being an extremist and a Shī'ah.¹

Al-Fazārī narrated this report from 'Alī ibn 'Abis al-Azraq, who is weak according to Ibn Ḥajar and al-Nasā'ī.²

He also narrated this report from al-Khaṭṭāb al-Ḥajarī, who is unknown.³ This unknown al-Ḥajarī narrated from another unknown narrator, whose name was Ṣafwān ibn Qubay'ah al-Aḥmasī.⁴ Finally, an even more unknown character is al-'Aznī, the alleged owner of the camel. He was not the owner of the camel; rather its owner was Ya'lā ibn Umayyah.⁵

In the text of this report, the reader may detect a clear whiff of Shī'ah and Rāfiḍī influence at the end of the report, where it is claimed that 'Alī رضي الله عنه thought himself more entitled to the khilāfah than Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه. On the contrary, the reports that are proven to be sound indicate something completely different.⁶ Based on the above, it becomes clear to us that this report is not sound.⁷

There are other reports concerning this matter, all of which are false in both chain of narration and text. The message and aim of these reports is to cast aspersions on the senior Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنه and to prove that the goal of this campaign was to achieve worldly, personal gains such as wealth, leadership and so on; that the ends justified the means; and that in trying to achieve that, they would not refrain from creating war and turmoil among the Muslims. These reports focus on two great Ṣaḥābah, Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنه.⁸

1 *Al-Kāmil fī Ḍu'afa' al-Rijāl*, vol. 1 p. 528; *Mizān al-I'tidāl*, vol. 1 p. 413.

2 *Taqrīb al-Taḥdhīb*, vol. 1 p. 697.

3 *Taqrīb al-Taḥdhīb*, vol. 2 p. 392; *Dawr al-Mar'ah al-Siyāsiyyah*, p. 400.

4 *Mizān al-I'tidāl*, vol. 3 p. 434; *Lisān al-Mizān*, vol. 3 p. 225.

5 *Asad al-Ghābah*, vol. 5 p. 486; *Dawr al-Mar'ah al-Siyāsiyyah*, p. 400.

6 *Dawr al-Mar'ah al-Siyāsiyyah*, p. 402.

7 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 483.

8 *Muṣannaḥ ibn Abi Shaybah*, vol. 15 p. 283. It is weak, and its chain of narration is interrupted; *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, vol. 2 p. 47 with the same chain of narration. These reports are contrary to what is sound and proven.

The fabricators of these reports also wanted to confirm that these two Şaḥābah and the members of the army who were with them dared to violate the sacred limits of Allah. The reports allege that Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنهما swore in the strongest terms to the Mother of the Believers that this was not the water of al-Ḥaw'ab; furthermore, they brought seventy people - and according to another report, fifty people - to testify that what they said was true. This action, according to the Rāfiḍī Shī'ah al-Mas'ūdī, was the first false witness given in Islam.¹

These reports tried to show that Ṭalḥah, Zubayr and 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها were not in harmony and were not united on one goal. They tried to show that 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها sided with Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه and that deep down in her heart; she was hoping that he would become khalīfah because he was from the tribe of Taym just like her.

These reports also suggest that there was intense competition and rivalry between Ṭalḥah and Zubayr, and that they were both eager to become the leader. One cannot ignore the fact that these reports are not free of severe weakness. In some of them, the chain of narration is interrupted, and in some, there are narrators about whom nothing is known; in some cases both serious faults are present.²

Many writers and historians were influenced by these reports, relied on them and played a part in propagating them, but they have no basis. These writers include al-'Aqqād in 'Abqariyat 'Alī, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn in 'Alī wa Banūhu³ and other contemporary writers.

5. Their actions in Baṣrah

When Ṭalḥah, Zubayr, 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها and the people with them arrived in Baṣrah, they stopped beside al-Khuraybah.⁴ When proceeding from there they sent word

1 Murūj adh-Dhahab, vol. 2 p. 367.

2 Tarīkh adh-Dhahabi. Its chain of narration includes two unknown narrators. 'Abdul-Ḥamīd: *Khilāfat 'Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib*, p. 133.

3 *Khilāfat 'Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib*, p. 132.

4 A Place near Basra. See: *Khuṭaṭ al-Basrah wa Manṭiquha*, p. 114-122.

to the prominent figures and nobles of the tribes, seeking their help against the killers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه. Many of the Muslims in Baṣrah and elsewhere wanted to bring the murderers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه to justice, but some of them thought that this was the job of the khalīfah alone, and that going out on a campaign for this purpose without his instructions was wrong.

Many of the people of Baṣrah, regardless of their different tribal backgrounds, joined them because these were Ṣaḥābah whom Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم had testified were guaranteed paradise; they were members of the consultative committee; they were accompanied by the Mother of the Believers ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها, the beloved of the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم and the most knowledgeable of all women; their quest was undoubtedly legitimate; and none of the Ṣaḥābah denounced it.

Zubayr رضي الله عنه sent a message to al-Aḥnaf ibn Qays al-Sa’dī al-Tamīmī, asking for his support in seeking vengeance for the murder of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه. Al-Aḥnaf was one of the leaders of Tamīm, a man whose word carried weight. He said, describing the seriousness of the situation:

There came to me the most serious decision I was ever faced with, and I said: “If I let these people down when they have the Mother of the Believers and the two disciples of the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم with them, it will be something very serious indeed.¹

However, he decided to keep out of it, and he took with him six thousand men who obeyed him, but many others disobeyed him with regard to this matter and joined Ṭalḥah, Zubayr and the Mother of the believers.²

Zuḥrī stated that most of the people of Baṣrah followed them.³

1 ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd: *Khilāfat ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, p. 133.

2 *Ṭabaqāt ibn Sa’d*, vol. 5 p. 456; it has corroborating reports which strengthen it.

3 *Muṣannaf ‘Abd al-Razzāq*, vol. 5 p. 456, with a sound mursal chain of narration going back to Zuḥrī.

Ṭalḥah, Zubayr, ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها and their followers were joined by new supporters of the cause for which they had come out. Ibn Ḥunayf tried to calm things down and sort things out as much as he could, but the matter was beyond his control, so much so that one of them said concerning Baṣrah:

Some of the people of Syria have descended among us.¹

Even Mu‘āwiyah, later on, tried to take over Baṣrah with the help of its people.²

Some unreliable sources say that ‘Uthmān ibn Ḥunayf allowed Ḥukaym ibn Jablah to fight, but this is not proven, and the sound sources do not confirm that.³

6. The slaying of Ḥukaym ibn Jablah and the thugs who were with him

After ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها had addressed the people of Baṣrah, Ḥukaym ibn Jablah came and started fighting. The Ṣaḥābah of ‘Ā’ishah, Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنهم brandished their spears at them, but they did not engage in combat. They were hoping that the other side would stop, but Ḥukaym and his gang continued fighting and did not stop. Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنهم refrained from fighting except to defend themselves, while Ḥukaym was urging his horse on and charging at them.⁴

Despite that, ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها was very keen to avoid all-out fighting, so she ordered her companions to move to the right in order to avoid the fighters. They remained like that until nightfall.⁵

The next morning, Ḥukaym ibn Jablah, making noise and with his spear in his hand, made his way to where ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها and her companions were. Whenever

1 Al-Ṭabaqāt, vol. 6 p. 333.

2 *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 13 p. 26; ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd: *Khilāfat ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, p. 137.

3 ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd: *Khilāfat ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, p. 137, 138.

4 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 494.

5 *ibid.*

he passed a man or woman who criticised him for slandering ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها, he killed him or her.¹ At that point, the people of the tribe of ‘Abd al-Qays became angry and said to Ḥukaym:

You did what you did yesterday, and you have repeated it today. By Allah, we will not let you off until we bring you to justice.

Then they went back and left him, and Ḥukaym ibn Jablah continued on his way with those who had taken part in the murder of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, accompanied by the thugs of different tribal backgrounds. They realised that they could no longer stay in Baṣrah, so they all rallied behind him and engaged the army of ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها, and fierce fighting took place.²

The caller of Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها continued calling out and urging them to stop fighting, but they insisted.³ ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها continued to say:

Do not fight anyone but those who are fighting you.

Ḥukaym did not pay any attention to the caller; he continued to instigate the fighting. At this point, the nature of these people who were fighting became clear to Zubayr and Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه, they realised that they would not refrain from committing any crime, and that their aim was to provoke the fighting. They said:

Praise be to Allah, who has brought together for us the people of Baṣrah who took part in the murder of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه so that we may wreak revenge on them. O Allah, do not leave any of them alive. Help us to bring them to justice today, and cause them all to die.

They strove hard in fighting and called out:

1 op. cit., vol. 5 p. 495.

2 op. cit., vol. 5 p. 499.

3 ibid.

Whoever was not one of the killers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, let him stop fighting us, for we are only seeking the killers of ‘Uthmān, and we will not initiate fighting with anyone else.

They fought fiercely,¹ and none of the killers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه among the people of Baṣrah escaped, except for one. The caller of Zubayr and Ṭalḥah called out:

If you know anyone from your tribes who took part in murdering ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه in Madīnah, then bring him to us.²

A group of these ignorant thugs - as ‘Ā’ishah said - had come to her house at dawn to kill her. They got as far as the door of her room with the help of a guide, but Allah protected her by means of a group of Muslims who had surrounded her house. The Muslims prevailed over them, then they paraded them about and executed them.³

Zubayr, Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه and those who were with them managed to gain control of Baṣrah, but they needed food and supplies because several weeks had gone by, and no one had offered them hospitality. The army of Zubayr went to the governor’s palace and then to the public treasury to get provisions for the army; ‘Uthmān ibn Ḥunayf was released and went to join ‘Alī رضي الله عنه.⁴

Thus Ṭalḥah, Zubayr and the Mother of the Believers رضي الله عنها gained control of Baṣrah and killed a large number of those who had taken part in the attack on Madīnah, some seventy men, including the most prominent leader of the rebels of Baṣrah, Ḥukaym ibn Jablah, who had been very keen to fight and start the war.⁵

1 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 499.

2 op. cit., vol. 5 p. 501.

3 op. cit., vol. 5 p. 503.

4 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 43; Abdul-Ḥamīd: *Khilāfat ‘Alī*, p. 138.

5 *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, vol. 2 p. 93; Abdul-Ḥamīd: *Khilāfat ‘Alī ibn Abi Ṭalib*, p. 139.

7. The letters of ‘Ā’ishah to other regions

‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها was keen to explain what had really happened during the fight with the people of Baṣrah, so she wrote to the people of Syria, Kūfah and al-Yamāmah, and the people of Madīnah also, telling them what they had done and how things had ended up. Among the things that she wrote to the people of Syria was:

We only set out to put an end to the turmoil and to establish the rule of the Book of Allah. Once we achieve that, our campaign will be over. The best of the people of Baṣrah and their prominent figures pledged their support for us, and their evil ones and thugs opposed us and confronted us with weapons. Among the things they said was: “We will take the Mother of the Believers as a hostage, as she is the one who is enjoining them and urging them to adhere to the truth.” The Muslims gave them opportunity (to reconsider) time after time, then when there was no excuse left for them, the murderers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه were fought. None of them escaped except for Ḥurqūs ibn Zuhayr and Allah will bring him to justice. We urge you by Allah that you should carry out the same mission as us, so that we and you may meet Allah having done what is expected of us.¹

1 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 501.

8. Difference of opinion between ‘Uthmān ibn Ḥunayf and the army of ‘Ā’ishah, Zubayr and Ṭalḥah

Al-Ṭabari narrated from Abū Mikhnaf from Yūsuf ibn Yazīd that Sahl ibn Sa’d said:

When they caught ‘Uthmān ibn Ḥunayf, they sent Abān ibn ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān to ‘Ā’ishah to consult her as to what should be done with him, and she said: “Kill him!” A woman said to her: “We adjure you by Allah, O Mother of the Believers, concerning ‘Uthmān (ibn Ḥunayf) and the fact that he was a Companion of the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ.” She said: “Bring Abān back.” So they brought him back, and she said: “Detain him, and do not kill him.” He said: “If I had known that you were calling me back for this reason, I would not have come back.” Majāshī’ ibn Mas‘ūd said to them: “Beat him and pluck out the hair of his beard. So they gave him forty lashes and plucked out the hair of his beard and his head, and his eyebrows and eyelashes, and they detained him.”¹

But the chain of narration of this report includes Abū Mikhnaf, who is an extremist, hate-filled, Rāfiḍī Shī‘ah. This report was not proven by any sound chain of narration that can be relied on. The noble Ṣaḥābah (may Allah be pleased with them) are far above doing such an abhorrent action.

What may be understood from the report of Sayf is that the thugs were the ones who did that, and that Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنهما regarded it as abhorrent and unacceptable. They sent news of that to ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها, who said:

Release him, and let him go wherever he wants.²

This report contradicts the details mentioned by Abū Mikhnaf because it does not mention the command to kill him or detain him, or the command to pluck out

1 op. cit., vol. 5 p. 497.

2 ibid.

his facial hair. This report, which is the sound one, was favoured by al-Nuwayrī and ibn Kathīr.¹

Al-Dhahabī stated that Majāshi' ibn Mas'ūd was killed before he entered the house of 'Uthmān ibn Ḥunayf.²

Even if we assume that Majāshi' ibn Mas'ūd was not killed, he was not in a position of leadership to issue such instructions.³

1 *Nihāyat al-'Arab*, vol. 20 p. 38; *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 p. 233.

2 Al-Dhahabī: *Tarīkh al-Islām*; *Marwiyat Abī Mikhnaf fi Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, p. 359.

3 *Marwiyāt Abī Mikhnaf fi Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, p. 259.

Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib عليه السلام sets out for Kūfah

The Ṣaḥābah in Madīnah did not approve of 'Alī's عليه السلام leaving Madīnah. That became clear when 'Alī عليه السلام decided to march to Syria, to visit its people and see what Mu'āwiyah was thinking and doing.¹

He thought that at that stage, Madīnah no longer possessed the advantages that other cities possessed, and he said:

Man, power and wealth are in Iraq.²

When Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī عليه السلام found out about this idea, he said to the khalīfah:

O Amīr al-Mu'minīn, stay in this land, because it is the shield that can give protection, the place to which the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم migrated. In it is his grave and his mimbar, and it is the heart of Islam. If the Arabs show obedience to you, you will be fine like the khulafā' who came before you; if some people cause trouble to you, then send their armies against them, then if you are forced to leave, then you may leave, after exhausting all possible means of staying.

The khalīfah followed the advice of Abū Ayyūb عليه السلام and decided to stay in Madīnah and send governors to provinces.³

A number of political developments then took place that forced the khalīfah to leave Madīnah, and he decided to head for Kūfah so that he could be close to the people of Syria.⁴

While he was preparing to leave, news reached him that 'Ā'ishah, Ṭalḥah and Zubayr عليه السلام had set out for Baṣrah.⁵

1 Ibn Ḥibbān: *al-Thiqāt*, vol. 2 p. 283; *al-Anṣār fi l-'Asr al-Rāshidi*, p. 161.

2 Ibn Ḥibbān: *al-Thiqāt*, vol. 2 p. 283; *al-Anṣār fi l-'Asr al-Rāshidi*, p. 161.

3 Ibn Ḥibbān: *al-Thiqāt*, vol. 2 p. 283; *al-Anṣār fi l-'Asr ar-Rāshidi*, p. 161.

4 *Istishhād 'Uthmān wa Waq'at al-Jamal*, p. 183.

5 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 507.

He asked the people of Madīnah to mobilise and support him, but he encountered reluctance on the part of some of the people of Madīnah because of the presence of the troublemakers in ‘Alī’s army and the way in which they were dealt with. Many of the people of Madīnah thought that the turmoil was still going on, and that they should wait until things became clearer. They said:

No, by Allah we do not know what to do. This matter is not clear to us, so we are going to stay where we are until the matter becomes clear to us.

Al-Ṭabarī narrated that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه set out with his army for the purpose of confronting the people of Syria, and some of the people of Kūfah and Baṣrah went out with him, a group of seven hundred lightly armed men.¹

There is a great deal of evidence that many of the people of Madīnah were reluctant to respond to ‘Alī’s رضي الله عنه call to go out on a campaign, such as the speeches of the khalīfah in which he complained about this reluctance.²

Many of the Ṣahābah withdrew after the murder of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, as is apparent. Some of the men who had been present at Badr stayed in their houses after the murder of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه and never left until they went to their grave.³

Abū Ḥumayd al-Sā‘idī al-Anṣārī, who had been present at Badr, expressed his sorrow at the murder of the Khalīfah ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه and said:

O Allah, I promise You that I will not smile until I meet You.⁴

They thought that leaving Madīnah at that time would lead to getting embroiled in the turmoil, the bad consequences of which, they feared,⁵ would cancel out

1 *Tarīkh al- Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 481.

2 *al-Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 3 p. 237; *al-Anṣār fī l-‘Aṣr al-Rāshidī*, p. 163.

3 *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, quoted in *al-Anṣār fī l-‘Aṣr al-Rāshidī*, p. 164

4 *Tarīkh al-Islam fī ‘Ahd al-Khulafā’ al-Rāshidīn*.

5 *al-Anṣār fī l-‘Aṣr al-Rāshidī*, p. 164.

what they had achieved in the past of righteous deeds and jihād with the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ.¹

What is mentioned above does not mean that none of the Ṣaḥābah joined the khalīfah's campaign; there were some who joined him, but they were few. Al-Sha'bī said:

None of the Ṣaḥābah of the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ were present at the Battle of the Camel except for 'Alī, 'Ammār, Ṭalḥah and Zubayr; if they prove that there was a fifth, then I am a liar.²

According to another report:

Whoever tells you that more than four of those who were present at Badr were present at the Battle of the Camel, do not believe him. 'Alī and 'Ammār رضي الله عنه were on one side, and Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنه were on the other."³

According to another report:

No one joined 'Alī رضي الله عنه when he marched to Baṣrah apart from six of the people of Badr; there was no seventh.⁴

This is what is meant by the report mentioned above, which referred only to those Ṣaḥābah who had been at Badr. Whatever the case, those of the Anṣār who took part in the turmoil were few. Ibn Sirīn and al-Sha'bī said:

When the turmoil occurred in Madīnah, the Ṣaḥābah of the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ were more than ten thousand, but those who got involved were no more than twenty men. The battle between 'Alī and Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنه and the Battle of Siffīn were called fitnah."⁵

1 ibid.

2 *Tarīkh ibn Khayyāt*, p. 16; *Musannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah*, vol. 8 p. 710.

3 al-Jāhidī: *al-Uthmāniyyāt*, p. 175; *al-Anṣār fī l-'Aṣr al-Rāshidī*, p. 165.

4 Kan'ān: *al-Khilāfah al-Rāshidah min Tarīkh ibn Kathīr*, p. 356.

5 ibid.

From the above, it is clear that the number of Ṣaḥābah who went out with the Khalīfah ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to Baṣrah were very few, and we cannot be certain that they took part in the Battle of the Camel; even though this battle was so fierce and so many events took place during it, the sources do not mention the Ṣaḥābah who took part in it or say that any of them were martyred or wounded.¹ One of the reports says:

Some seven hundred lightly armed men of Kūfah and Baṣrah went out with him.²

These reports seem to be more in line with how things were developing at that time and more in harmony with the course of events and with the attitude of the people of Madīnah, which varied between keeping away completely and reluctance to take part in any events.³

Advice of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Salām to Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī

‘Abd Allāh ibn Salām, the companion of the Rasūl of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, tried to make Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ change his mind and not go out. He came to him when he had made preparations to march and expressed his fear for him. He told him not to go to Iraq, saying:

I am afraid that you may be struck by the sword.

He also told him that if he left the mimbar of the Rasūl of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ he, would never see it again. ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ knew these things from the Rasūl of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and he said:

By Allah, the Rasūl of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ told me about that.

1 *al-Anṣār fi l-‘Aṣr al-Rāshidī*, p. 165.

2 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 481.

3 *Al-Insāf fi’ ma waqa’ah fi al- Tarīkh al- ‘Aṣr al-Rāshidī min al-Khilāf*, p. 338.

The people of Baṣrah and Kūfah who were with ‘Alī رضي الله عنه had reached such a level of audacity that they said to him:

Let us kill him.

Killing Muslims who stood in their way or who could pose a danger to their lives with their words and deeds had become something very easy, and they did not see anything wrong with it; but ‘Alī رضي الله عنه told them not to do that, saying:

Abd Allāh ibn Salām is a righteous man.¹

What they said, and their aggressive attitude, was indicative of their lack of piety and their lack of respect towards the noble Ṣaḥābah, which the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم had enjoined upon the people who came after him.

Advice of Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī to his father

Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī رضي الله عنه left Madīnah, and when he reached al-Rabḍah,² he and those who were with him camped there. A number of Muslims, approximately two hundred, came to him.³

In al-Rabdhah, his son Ḥasan came to him, weeping and not hiding his sorrow and dismay at what had befallen the Muslims of division and dissent. Ḥasan said:

I told you, but you did not listen to me, and next you will be killed when you are alone with no one to support you.

‘Alī رضي الله عنه said:

You are still nagging like a little girl.⁴ What is it that you told me to do and I did not listen to you?

1 *Musnad Ibn Abī Ya’la*, vol. 1 p. 381. Its editors said: Its chain of narration is sound.

2 Al-Rabḍah: 204 km east of Madīnah.

3 *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, vol. 2 p. 45; *Khilāfat ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, p. 143.

4 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 482.

He said:

I told you on the day that ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه was besieged to leave Madīnah, so that if he was killed, you would not be there. Then I told you on the day that he was killed not to accept the oath of allegiance until the delegations from different regions and Arab tribes had each sworn their allegiance. Then I told you, when these two men did what they did, to stay at home until things settled down, so if any evil doing took place, it would be at the hands of people other than you, but you did not listen to me in any of that.

‘Alī رضي الله عنه said:

O my son, as for you telling me to leave Madīnah when ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه was surrounded, by Allah, we were surrounded as he was surrounded. As for you telling me not to accept the oath of allegiance until the allegiance of the regions came, this matter was something to be decided by the people of Madīnah, and we did not want this decision to be made by others. As for what you said when Ṭalḥah and Zubayr set out, that was demeaning to the people of Islam. By Allah, I have continued to be saddened and aggrieved since I was appointed, feeling helpless and not able to achieve anything I should achieve. As for your saying that I should stay home, what about my duties? Who do you want me to be? Do you want me to be like the hyena that is surrounded, that is helpless and just yelping? If I do not pay attention to my duties concerning this issue, who will take care of that? Stop worrying about it, O my son.¹

‘Alī’s attitude concerning this matter was clear, and no one could deter him from what he had decided to do. He sent word from al-Rabḍah, urging the people of Kūfah to mobilise and calling upon them to support him. The two envoys were Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr al-Siddīq and Muḥammad ibn Ja’far, but they did not succeed in their mission because Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī رضي الله عنه, who was ‘Alī’s رضي الله عنه governor in Kūfah, discouraged the people and told them not to go out and fight

1 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 482.

in the turmoil. He told them what he had heard from the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ warning against taking part in fitnah.¹

After that, ‘Alī عليه السلام sent Hāshim ibn ‘Utbah ibn Abī Waqqās, but he also failed in his mission because of the influence of Abū Mūsā عليه السلام on the people.²

Request of Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī عليه السلام from the oasis of Dhū Qār for support from the people of Kūfah.³

‘Alī عليه السلام and his army moved towards Dhū Qār and camped there, eight days after leaving Madīnah, with approximately nine hundred men.⁴

At that time, he sent ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās to Kūfah, but they did not respond to him. Next he sent ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir and Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī and he dismissed Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī, replacing him with Qarḍha ibn Ka‘b.⁵

Al-Qa‘qā‘ played a major role in convincing the people of Kūfah to join ‘Alī. He addressed them and said:

I am an adviser to you, and I care sincerely about you. I want you to follow true guidance, and I shall tell you something that is true ... There should be no alternative but to have a leadership to organise the people’s affairs, deter wrongdoers and support those who are wronged. This is ‘Alī عليه السلام who has been appointed to a position of leadership, and his message to the people is fair and just. He is only calling people to that which is best and to set affairs straight, so join him and be in the forefront of support.⁶

1 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 514.

2 *Khilāfat ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, p. 144; *A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 3 p. 486.

3 Dhū Qār: an oasis belonging to Bakr ibn Wā’il, near Kūfah. *Mu‘jam al-Buldān*, vol. 4 p. 393

4 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 519-521.

5 *Faḥ al-Bārī*, vol. 13 p. 53; *al-Tarīkh al-Ṣaghīr*, vol. 1 p. 109.

6 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 516.

Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī had a clear effect on the people. He stood up and addressed them, saying:

O people, respond to the call of your leader. Join your brothers, because no doubt there will be many people who will support him in this matter. By Allah, it is better that this matter of leadership be taken care of by people of reason and wisdom, both in the short and long term. Respond to our call, and help us with regard to this crisis that we and you are going through.¹

Many of the people of Kūfah responded, and between six and seven thousand went out with ‘Ammār and Ḥasan رضي الله عنهما. They were joined by two thousand men from Baṣrah, from the tribe of ‘Abdul-Qays. Then other tribes came to him until his army, when the battle began, was approximately twelve thousand strong.²

When the people of Kūfah met Amīr al-Mu‘minīn ‘Alī رضي الله عنه at Dhū Qār, he said to them:

O people of Kūfah, you confronted the Persians and their kings, you destroyed their armies and inherited what they left behind, and you grew stronger against your enemies. I am calling you to join us in order to deal with our brothers in Baṣrah. If they turn back, that is what we want, but if they persist, we will try to deal with them on the basis of kindness, and we will avoid confrontation unless they wrong us first. We will never leave anything that could lead to putting things straight and achieving something good, but we will prefer it over that which could lead to evil, if Allah wills, and there is no strength except with Allah.³

1 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 516.

2 *Muṣannaf ‘Abd ar-Razzāq*, vol. 5 p. 456, 457, with a sound mursal chain of narrations going back to Zuhri. *Khilāfat ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, p. 146 the chain of narration is reliable because of corroborating evidence as ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd ‘Alī said.

3 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 519.

Difference of opinion should not affect the love between people

This applies to the situation of the Ṣaḥābah during this turmoil. Even though they had differences of opinion, none of them developed any resentment against his brother. Let us read this story about an incident that took place in Kūfah:

Al-Bukhārī narrated that Abū Wā'il said:

Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī, Abū Mas'ūd and 'Uqbah ibn 'Amr al-Anṣārī entered upon 'Ammār when 'Alī رضي الله عنه sent him to the people of Kūfah to urge them to join him. They said:

We have never seen anything from you that we dislike since you became Muslim like you are hastening to take sides in this matter.

'Ammār رضي الله عنه said:

And I have never seen anything from you that I dislike since you became Muslim like your reluctance in this matter (supporting 'Alī).

According to another report: Abū Mas'ūd, who was well off, said:

O slave, bring me two suits and give one to Abū Mūsā and one to 'Ammār.

He said:

Wear it when you go to the Friday prayer.¹

Here we see Abū Mas'ūd and 'Ammār, each thinking that the other is wrong, yet despite that, Abū Mas'ūd gave 'Ammār a suit to wear for the Friday prayer because he was wearing travel clothes and battle dress, and Abū Mas'ūd did not want him to have to attend the Friday prayer wearing those clothes.

¹ Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Fitan.

This conduct is indicative of deep friendship, even though they each regarded the other's attitude towards the turmoil as wrong. 'Ammār thought that Abū Mūsā and Abū Mas'ūd reluctance to support 'Alī was wrong, and Abū Mūsā and Abū Mas'ūd thought that 'Ammār's haste to support Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) was wrong. Each of them had an argument of which he was convinced.

Those who were reluctant to support the khalīfah thought that it was right to refrain from taking part in fighting in the event of fitnah, adhering to those aḥādīth concerning this, which warned against taking up arms against fellow Muslims. 'Ammār had the same point of view as 'Alī (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) with regard to fighting those who transgress the limits or commit outrages and he adhered to the words of Allah:

فَقَاتِلُوا النَّبِيَّ تَبِغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَىٰ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ ۗ

Then fight you [all] against the one that rebels.¹

He interpreted the warning against fighting as applying to those who were transgressing against their brothers. Neither party wanted to kill the other, and both sides would try to find any reason to prevent fighting before it took place. When fighting did occur, it occurred even though both parties were reluctant to fight.²

1 Surah al-Ḥujurāt: 9.

2 *Al-Madīnah al-Nabawīyah al-Anṣār fī l-'Aṣr al-Rāshidī*, vol. 2 p. 304.

Questions on the road

1. The questions asked by Abū Rifā‘ah ibn Rāfi‘ ibn Mālik al-‘Ajlān al-Anṣārī when ‘Alī wanted to leave al-Rabḍah

Abū Rifā‘ah said: O Amīr al-Mu‘minīn, what do you want? Where are you taking us?

‘Alī عليه السلام said: What we want is to set things straight; if they accept that from us and respond, all well and good.

Abū Rifā‘ah said: What if they do not respond?

‘Alī عليه السلام said: We will leave them with the reason they have in their mind (their own justification for their conduct) and acknowledge their right to differ, and we will be patient.

Abū Rifā‘ah said: What if they are not content with that?

‘Alī عليه السلام said: We will leave them alone as long as they leave us alone.

Abū Rifā‘ah said: What if they do not leave us alone?

‘Alī said: We will defend ourselves against them.

Abū Rifā‘ah said: Then yes (I will join you).

He listened to that series of questions and answers, and mind was put at rest, so he said:

I shall impress you with my deeds as you have pleased me with your words.¹

2. The people of Kūfah, including al-A‘war ibn Banān al-Manqarī, asked questions of ‘Alī

When the people of Kūfah came to Amīr al-Mu‘minīn ‘Alī عليه السلام in Dhū Qār, some of them asked him the reason why he had come; among those who asked these questions was al-A‘war ibn Banān al-Manqarī. ‘Alī عليه السلام said to him:

1 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 510.

I am coming to put things in order and extinguish the fire of enmity, in the hope that Allah ﷻ will bring this ummah together by means of us and prevent fighting. If they respond to me, all well and good.

Al-A‘war said: What if they do not respond to us?

‘Alī ﷺ said: We will leave them alone as long as they leave us alone.

Al-A‘war said: What if they do not leave us alone?

‘Alī ﷺ said: We will defend ourselves against them.

Al-A‘war said: Do they have the same rights and duties as us?

He said: Yes.¹

3. Abū Salāmah al-Da’lānī, one of those asked questions of Amīr al-Mu‘minīn ‘Alī

Abū Salāmah said: Do you think these people have valid grounds for their demand of vengeance for ‘Uthmān, if they are seeking Allah thereby?

‘Alī said: Yes.

Abū Salāmah said: Is there any valid reason for you to delay that (the seeking vengeance)?

‘Alī ﷺ said: Yes. If there is something that cannot be done, then the ruling concerning it should be based on precautions and what is in the people’s best interests.

Abū Salāmah said: What is our situation and theirs if we end up fighting tomorrow?

‘Alī ﷺ said: I hope that no one who is sincere towards Allah among us or them will be killed except that Allah will admit him to paradise.²

1 *Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 p. 250; *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*. vol. 5 p. 529.

2 *Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 p. 250.

4. Mālik ibn Ḥabīb asked questions of Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib

Mālik said: What will you do if you meet these people (in battle)?

'Alī عليه السلام said: It has become clear to us and to them that what is best is to refrain from that. If they give us allegiance, all well and good, but if they and we insist on fighting, then there is nothing we can do about it.

Mālik said: If we start fighting, what is the situation of those among us who are slain?

'Alī said: Whoever is sincere towards Allah will benefit from that, and it may be his salvation.¹

The aim of Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī عليه السلام was to set things straight and put an end to the fitnah. Fighting was not something that he was considering; if it happened, it would be because he could not help it. With regard to whoever was killed on either side, his ultimate fate would depend on his intention, regardless of whether he fought on 'Alī's عليه السلام side or against him.

Thus Amīr al-Mu'minīn confirmed that the Muslims who went out for this purpose, after the martyrdom of 'Uthmān عليه السلام, were seeking to set things straight and put an end to turmoil, and their decision was based on sincerity. Their reward would commensurate with the sincerity of their intentions and the purity of their hearts.²

Attempts to reconcile

Before 'Alī عليه السلام moved towards Baṣrah with his army, he stayed in Dhū Qār for a few days. He tried, with all the powers and means at his disposal, to put an end to this division and turmoil by peaceful means and to spare the Muslims the evils of fighting and armed confrontation. The same is also true of Ṭalḥah and Zubayr

1 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 52; *al-Insāf fī mā waqa'a ah fī Tarīkh al-'Aṣr al-Rāshidī*, p. 406.

2 Dr. Ḥāmid: *al-Insāf*, p. 406.

ﷺ. A number of the Ṣaḥābah and senior Tābīʿīn who had refrained from getting involved also took part in the attempts to bring about reconciliation, including:

1. ʿImrān ibn Ḥusayn

He sent word to the people discouraging both parties (from engaging in fighting). Then he sent word to Banū ʿAdī, a large group of whom had joined Zubayr ﷺ. His envoy came and said to them in their maṣjid:

I have been sent to you by ʿImrān ibn Ḥusayn, the Ṣaḥābī of the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ to advise you; he swears by Allah, besides Whom there is no other god, that he would rather be an Abyssinian slave with a cut-off nose, tending goats at the top of mountain until death comes to him, than to shoot an arrow against either of these two parties, whether it misses or hits its target. So refrain from fighting, may my father and mother be sacrificed for you.

The people said:

Leave us alone, for we will never abandon the wife of the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ for anything.¹

2. Kaʿb ibn Sūr

He was one of the senior Tābīʿīn. He did his utmost and pushed himself beyond his limits, playing a role that many men would be unable to play. He persisted in striving to bring about reconciliation until the thing that he was trying to prevent happened. He died as a victim of his efforts, slain as he stood between the two armies calling each to put down their weapons and refer to the Book of Allah for judgment.²

1 *Ibn Saʿd: al-Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 4 p. 87; ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd: *Khilāfat ʿAlī*, p. 148.

2 *Ibn Saʿd: al-Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 7 p. 92, via two sound chains of narration; ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd: *Khilāfat ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, p. 149.

3. Al-Qa‘qā‘ ibn ‘Amr al-Tamīmī

Amīr al-Mu‘minīn ‘Alī رضي الله عنه sent al-Qa‘qā‘ ibn ‘Amr al-Tamīmī رضي الله عنه on a mission of reconciliation to Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنهما, instructing him:

Meet with these two men, call them to brotherhood and unity and warn them of the seriousness of differences and division.

So al-Qa‘qā‘ went to Baṣrah, and he started with ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها.

He said to her: What has brought you to Baṣrah, O my mother?

She said to him: O my son, (we have come) for the purpose of setting things straight among the people.

Al-Qa‘qā‘ asked her to send word to Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنهما asking them to come, and he spoke to them in her presence.

The discussion between al-Qa‘qā‘ and Ṭalḥah and Zubayr

When they came, he asked them why they had come, and they said the same as ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها had said:

(We have come) for the purpose of setting things straight among the people.

He said to them: Tell me, in what way are you going to set things straight? For by Allah, if we agree with you, then we will join you in your efforts; and if we disagree with you, we will not join you.

They said: The murderers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه must be executed; if they are left alone and are not punished in accordance with the Qur’ān, this will be forsaking the Qur’ān and disregarding its rulings. If the prescribed punishment is carried out on them, this will be keeping the Qur’ān alive.

Al-Qa‘qā‘ said: In Baṣrah, there were six hundred of the murderers of ‘Uthmān and you killed them all except one man, namely Ḥarqūṣ ibn Zuhayr al-Sa‘dī. When he fled from you, he sought protection with his people of Banū Sa‘d. When you wanted to seize him from them and kill him, his people prevented you from doing that; six thousand men got angry for his sake and deserted you and stood against you as one. If you leave Ḥarqūṣ alone and do not kill him, you will be abandoning your principles and what you are calling others to and demanding ‘Alī رضي الله عنه to do. But if you fight Banū Sa‘d because of Ḥarqūṣ, and they overwhelm and defeat you, then you will have come to the opposite of what you are trying to achieve; you will have made them stronger, and you will be greatly harmed. By going after Ḥarqūṣ, you are angering Rabī‘ah and Muḍar in this land, as they have come together to fight you and defeat you in support of Banū Sa‘d. This is what happened with ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and the murderers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه who are in his army.

The solution according to al-Qa‘qā‘

He advocated deliberation and calming things down first, then carrying out the prescribed punishment. The Mother of the Believers and those who were with her were influenced by the logical argument of al-Qa‘qā‘.

She said to him: So what do you suggest, O Qa‘qā‘?

He said: I say that the best thing is to calm things down. It is essential to give it time until the murderers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه are brought to justice. Then when the division is ended, and the ummah is united behind Amīr al-Mu‘minīn, he will be free to deal with the killers of ‘Uthmān. If you give your allegiance to ‘Alī and support him, this will be a good sign and a blessing, and ‘Alī will be able to avenge ‘Uthmān. But if you refuse and continue to be stubborn and insist on fighting, this will be a bad sign and will lead to the diminishing of Muslim power. So be on the side of caution, and be the means of good as you have always been; do not expose us to ruin, because that will affect you too, and Allah may bring about our doom and yours. By Allah, I say this and call you to it, and I am worried lest we do not reach any agreement before Allah brings destruction upon this ummah, which

has lost a great deal and been stricken by calamity. What has befallen it is very serious; it is not like one man killing another or a group killing a man, or even a tribe killing a tribe.

They were convinced by the sincere and persuasive words of al-Qa'qā' and agreed to his call for reconciliation. They said to him:

You have spoken well. Go back, and if 'Alī رضي الله عنه comes and tells us the same as you have said, the matter will be settled, Allah willing.

So al-Qa'qā' went back to 'Alī رضي الله عنه in Dhū Qār, having succeeded in his mission, and told 'Alī رضي الله عنه about what had happened. 'Alī رضي الله عنه was pleased with that, and the people were about to reach a peaceful conclusion, regardless of who approved or disapproved.¹

Good signs of a deal between the two parties

When al-Qa'qā' went back and told 'Alī رضي الله عنه what had happened, 'Alī رضي الله عنه sent two envoys² to 'Ā'ishah and Ṭalḥah and the people who were with them, to verify what al-Qa'qā' ibn 'Amr had said. They came to 'Alī رضي الله عنه and told him that they were still agreeing with what al-Qa'qā' had said. So 'Alī رضي الله عنه set out and came to a halt near them, and the members of various tribes on each side met with one another, Muḍar with Muḍar, Rabī'ah with Rabī'ah, Yemenis with Yemenis. None of them had any doubt that a peace deal was imminent. They camped close to one another and went out to meet one another, and they did not talk about anything except the peace deal.³

Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī رضي الله عنه decided to move on and he announced his important decision:

1 *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 p. 739; *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 521.

2 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 525.

3 *op. cit.*, vol. 5 p. 539.

I will leave tomorrow, so leave and go back (meaning to Baṣrah). No one should come with us tomorrow who contributed to the murder of ʿUṯmān in any way.¹

1 op. cit., vol. 5 p. 525.

The outbreak of fighting

The role of the Saba'iyyah in the outbreak of fighting

In the camp of 'Alī رضي الله عنه, there were some of those evildoers and rebels who had killed 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه. There were those who were not known by name, those who were known but were protected by their tribes, those concerning whom there was no evidence about their role in the murder of 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه, and those who had hypocrisy in their hearts but were not able to show it openly.¹ The followers of Ibn Saba' were eager to fan the flames of fitnah so that they could avoid justice.²

When the people had settled down in their camps, 'Alī رضي الله عنه came out, as did Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنه. They met and spoke about that which they differed on, and they did not see anything better than reconciling and giving up war when they saw that things were becoming clearer. They parted on that note. 'Alī رضي الله عنه returned to his camp, and Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنه returned to theirs. Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنه sent word to the commanders of their army, and 'Alī رضي الله عنه sent word to the commanders of his army, apart from those who had besieged 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه.

The people went to sleep intending to reconcile and avoid trouble, and they did not doubt that there would be a peace deal. They were close to one another, going to meet one another, and not talking about or planning anything but reconciliation. Those who had been behind the turmoil spent their worst night ever because they felt that the end was looming for them.

They spent the entire night in discussion, and one of them said:

As for Ṭalḥah and Zubayr, we know where they stand, but as for 'Alī, we did not know where he stands until today. That was when he told the people to move on the next day, but none of those who had helped in the murder of 'Uthmān in any way were to move with them. And, by Allah, the people's

1 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 526.

2 op. cit., vol. 5 p. 527; *Tahqīq Mawāqif al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 2 p. 120.

view concerning us is the same; if they reconcile, then their agreement will be to shed our blood.¹

Ibn al-Sawdā' 'Abd Allāh ibn Saba', who was the leader, spoke and said:

O people, your opportunity will be when the people (from both camps) are mixing; show kindness to them, and when the people meet tomorrow, start the fight and do not give them any time to think. The ones whom you are with will have no option but to defend themselves. Allah will distract 'Alī and Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنه, and those with them will be distracted from that which you hate. So think about it and then disperse without making the people suspicious about you.²

So they agreed to start the fight secretly.

The next morning, they came when it was still dark and neighbours were unaware of what they were doing. Those from Muḍar went to their counterparts from Muḍar, those from Rabī'ah went to their counterparts from Rabī'ah, and those from Yemen went to their counterparts among their fellow Yemenis. They attacked them, and the people of Baṣrah started fighting back, each group fighting those who attacked them.

Zubayr, Ṭalḥāh رضي الله عنه and some prominent figures from Egypt came out and sent word to the right flank, who were from Rabī'ah, led by 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Hishām, and the left flank, who were led by 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Usayd, while they remained steadfast in the core. They said: "What is this?" They said: "The people of Kūfah attacked us this night ... We knew that 'Alī would not give up until he shed blood and transgressed the sacred limits, and that he is not going to agree with us." Then they retreated with the people of Baṣrah, and the people of Baṣrah shot arrows at those who attacked them until they pushed them back to their camp.³

1 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 526.

2 op. cit., vol. 5 p. 527.

3 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 541.

‘Alī رضي الله عنه and the people of Kūfah heard the noise. The Saba’iyyah had planted a man close to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه so that he could tell him what they wanted him to hear. When he said: “What’s going on?” that man said: “We have been taken by surprise. Some of them attacked us at night, and we pushed them back.” ‘Alī رضي الله عنه said to his commander on the right flank: “Stay on the right flank” and he said to his commander on the left flank: “Stay on the left flank.”

The Saba’iyyah continued their efforts to keep the battle raging.¹ Despite the way the battle began, the two sides did not rush to fight until they found out what happened. ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and those who were with him agreed not to start fighting until the other side started, so as to establish that they were the wrongdoers. Even if they engaged in fighting, they agreed that they would not kill anyone who was running away and would not finish off anyone who was wounded. But the Saba’iyyah were trying hard to instigate the fighting.²

On the other hand, Ṭalḥah, who was on his mount with the people rushing around him, called out: “O people, can you listen?” But they continued to rush and did not listen to him. He did not say any more than: “Woe to you, moths to the flame, and greed is killing them!”³

Were there any moths other than those Saba’iyyah, and was there any greed other than among them? Rather the attempts to bring about reconciliation continued until the last moment of the battle.

From this discussion, the impact of ibn Saba’, and his helpers the Saba’iyyah, on the battle becomes clear. We can also see clearly, beyond any shadow of a doubt, the keenness of the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم to reconcile and unite. This is the truth which is confirmed by the texts and of which one may feel certain.⁴

1 *ibid.*

2 *ibid.*

3 *Tarīkh Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt*, p. 182.

4 ‘*Abd Allāh ibn Saba’ wa Atharuhu fī iḥdāth al-Fitnah fī Ṣadr al-Islām*, p. 192, 193.

Before discussing the stages of the battle, we should point out that the impact of the Saba'iyyah in the Battle of the Camel is something that all scholars agree upon, whether they called them the evildoers, thugs of the two parties, the murderers of 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه, the fools or hooligans, or they referred to them clearly as Saba'iyyah.¹

The following are some texts that confirm this:

- a. It says in Akhbār al-Baṣrah, by 'Umar ibn Shubbah that those to whom the murder of 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه was attributed were afraid that the two parties might reconcile and agree to kill them, so they started the fight between them and there happened what happened.²
- b. Imām al-Ṭaḥāwī said:

The fitnah of the camel broke out against the wishes of both 'Alī and Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه, rather it was stirred up by wrongdoers against the wishes of the aforementioned."³

- c. Al-Bāqillānī said:

A deal was reached, and they parted when both groups were content with the deal, but the killers of 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه were afraid that they would be caught and brought to justice. So they got together and discussed the matter, and they differed concerning it; then they agreed to split into two groups and start the fight at dawn in both camps, when they were scattered throughout the camps. The group in 'Alī's camp would shout out: "Ṭalḥah and Zubayr have betrayed us!" and the group in the camp of Ṭalḥah and Zubayr would shout out: "'Alī has betrayed us!" They succeeded in their plan, and fighting broke out. Each of the two parties was limiting itself to defending itself and trying not to let the bloodshed go beyond that. This

1 op. cit., p. 194.

2 *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, vol. 13 p. 56.

3 *Sharḥ al-'Aqīdah aṭ-Ṭaḥḥāwīyah*, p. 546.

is the correct approach on the part of both parties, showing restraint for the sake of Allah as fighting broke out and they had to defend themselves. This is what happened according to the sound reports, and this is what we believe.¹

d. Al-Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār narrated the views of the scholars, which is that ‘Alī, Ṭalḥah, Zubayr and ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنهم reached a peace deal and agreed to avoid war and to defer dealing with the issue (of murderers). Those of the enemies of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه who were in the camp did not like that, and they were afraid that the Muslims would focus their efforts on dealing with them, so they planned to disrupt that, as is well known, and that was achieved.²

e. Al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr ibn al-‘Arabī said:

‘Alī came to Baṣrah, and the two groups came together to talk, but the people of whims and desires did not leave them alone; they hastened to shed blood, and war broke out. There were a large number of thugs who decided to start the fight so that the murderers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه would not be brought to justice. One person in the army could spoil its plans, so what if there were one thousand?³

f. Ibn Ḥazm said:

The evidence for that is that the two armies drew close together and no fighting broke out, but when night came, the murderers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه realised that any agreement reached by the two parties would be against them. They attacked the camp of Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنهم at night, wielding the sword against them. The people had to defend themselves, so they pushed them back until they reached the camp of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. Then ‘Alī’s رضي الله عنه people had to defend themselves, each group no doubt thinking that the

1 *at-Tamhīd*, p. 233.

2 al-Ḥamadānī: *Tathbīt Dalā’il al-Nubuwwah*, p. 299.

3 *al-‘Awāšim min al-Qawāšim*, p. 156, 157.

other had initiated the fighting. There was a great deal of confusion, but no one went beyond defending himself. The evildoers and killers of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه persisted in their attempts to make the fighting continue, and each group thought that it was doing the right thing in itself. Ṭalḥah was hit by a stray arrow while he was standing, not knowing what was happening. The arrow struck a wound in his lower leg, which he had received at Uḥud while defending the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم. He left the battlefield and died soon after رضي الله عنه. Zubayr رضي الله عنه left while the battle raged; he was killed after he had withdrawn from the battle, in Wādī al-Sibā’, which is less than a day’s march from Baṣrah. That is what happened.¹

g. Al-Dhahabī said: “The Battle of the Camel was stirred up by the foolish among the two groups.”² He also said: “The two groups had reconciled, and neither ‘Alī رضي الله عنه nor Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه intended to fight; rather their intention was to bring about unity. But the thugs of the two parties traded arrows, and fighting broke out and engulfed everyone.”³

h. In the book *Duwal al-Islam* it says: “Fighting broke out because of the thugs, and ‘Alī, Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنه were no longer in control.”⁴ Dr. Sulaymān ibn Ḥamad al-‘Awdah said:

We may say the report of al-Ṭabarī, which speaks of the Saba’ī role in the Battle of the Camel, is referring to the same people who are described as thugs in other reports. Even if these thuggish groups, which are referred to in other reports, did not have a direct connection to the Saba’iyyah or share the same aims and goals, it is possible that these groups became the element that Ibn Saba’ and his helpers took advantage of, which is usually the case in some movements that may be taken advantage of by some evildoers.⁵

1 *al-Faṣl fil-Milal wan-Niḥal*, vol. 4 p. 157, 158.

2 *al-Ibar*, vol. 1 p. 37; al-‘Awdah: ‘*Abdullah ibn Saba*’, p. 195.

3 *Tarīkh al-Islam*, vol. 1 p. 15; al-‘Awdah: ‘*Abdullah ibn Saba*’, p. 195.

4 *Tarīkh al-Islam*, vol. 1 p. 15; al-‘Awdah: ‘*Abdullah ibn Saba*’, p. 195.

5 Al-‘Awdah: ‘*Abd Allāh ibn Saba*’, p. 195.

We should not forget that the atmosphere of turmoil played a major role in these events. There can be no doubt that at times of chaos; people may not be able to see things that others can see very clearly. They may have their own justification for doing things while others can clearly see the reality of what they are doing, without any effort. The darkness of turmoil is sufficient to prevent a person thinking carefully and seeing clearly.¹

For example, we may note that al-Aḥnaf ibn Qays, who is one of those who lived through the events of this battle, went out with the aim of joining ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه, but he was met by Abū Bakrah, who said:

O Aḥnaf, go back, for I heard Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم say: “If two Muslims face one another with swords, then the slayer and the slain will be in hell.” I said - or it was said: “O Rasūl of Allah, as for the slayer (his case is clear), but what about the one who was slain?” He said: “He wanted to kill his companion.”²

Fighting alongside ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was right and correct, and whoever was killed fighting alongside him is a martyr and will have two rewards. However, Abū Bakrah رضي الله عنه was quoting a ḥadīth which was mentioned in a different context to that in which ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was fighting those who were transgressing. This was his own understanding, but it was not appropriate in ‘Alī’s رضي الله عنه case.

From this report, we understand that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه faced many obstacles when he fought others, including rulings such as these, which reflect piety more than the correct ruling issued for the correct situation.³

Al-Aḥnaf refused to join ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, so he was not present with either side in the Battle of the Camel.⁴

1 op. cit., p. 196.

2 *Muslim*, vol. 4 p. 2213, Kitāb al-Fitan.

3 *Al-Asās fī al-Sunnah wa Fiqh, Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah* vol. 4 p. 1711.

4 *Saḥīḥ Muslim ‘alā Sharḥ al-Nawawī*, vol. 18 p. 10.

Furthermore, Zubayr رضي الله عنه who was one of the main figures in the battle explains to us more about the reality of the matter:

This is the fitnah that we were told about.

His freed slave said to him:

Are you calling it fitnah when you are fighting in it?

Zubayr رضي الله عنه replied:

Woe to you! Sometimes we see clearly, and sometimes we do not see clearly. There was no matter in which I was uncertain where I stood except this matter, for I do not know whether I should go ahead or give up.¹

Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه also referred to that when he said:

We used to be one against others, but now we are like two mountains of iron, each seeking out the other.²

On the other hand, the companions of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه also confirmed that there was fitnah. ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه said in Kūfah, regarding ‘Ā’ishah’s coming out on the campaign:

By Allah, she is the wife of your Rasūl in this world and in the hereafter but Allah may He be blessed and exalted, is testing you by means of her.³

The first round of the Battle of the Camel

The Saba’iyyah intensified their efforts to stir up fighting, attacking the other side and inciting each side against the other. A tough battle broke out, which

1 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 506.

2 *ibid.*

3 *op. cit.*, vol. 5 p. 516.

was the Battle of the Camel. It is called that because the Mother of the Believers ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا was in the midst of the army of Baṣrah during the second round, riding a camel that had been given to her in Makkah by Ya’la ibn Umayyah, who had brought it from Yemen. She set out on this camel from Makkah to Baṣrah, and then she rode it during the battle.

The battle took place on Friday, 16 Jamād al-Thāniyyah 36 AH, in an area called al-Zābūqah, near Baṣrah. ‘Alī was upset about what happened, and his caller called out:

Stop fighting, O people!

But no one listened; everyone was busy fighting his opponent.¹

There were two rounds in the Battle of the Camel; in the first round, the two commanders of the army of Baṣrah were Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا, and this round lasted from dawn until just before noon.²

‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ called out to his army, as Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا called out to theirs:

Do not kill anyone who wants to flee, do not finish anyone who is wounded, and do not chase anyone who is leaving the battlefield and giving up the fight.³

Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ asked his son ‘Abd Allāh to pay off his debt and said:

No one is killed today except the wrongdoer or one who is wronged, and I think that I will be killed wrongfully; what I am most worried about is my debt.⁴

1 op. cit., vol. 5 p. 541.

2 op. cit., vol. 5 p. 541; al-Khālidi: *al-Khulafa’ ar-Rāshidūn*, p. 245.

3 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 541.

4 *Musannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah*, vol. 15 p. 543; al-Khālidi: *al-Khulafa’ al-Rāshidīn*, p. 245.

At that point, a man came to Zubayr رضي الله عنه and offered to kill ‘Alī رضي الله عنه by infiltrating his army and then killing him. Zubayr رضي الله عنه objected strongly to that and said:

No, none should kill a believer, for faith protects a believer from killing.¹

Zubayr رضي الله عنه had no desire to kill ‘Alī رضي الله عنه or anyone else who was innocent of the murder of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه. Amīr al-Mu‘minīn ‘Alī رضي الله عنه called Zubayr رضي الله عنه and spoke to him kindly and gently. It was said that he reminded him of a ḥadīth that he had heard from the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم who had told Zubayr:

You are going to fight him (‘Alī) unlawfully.²

This ḥadīth has no sound chain of narration, though.³

Some reports explain that the reason why Zubayr رضي الله عنه left just before the battle was because he realised that ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir رضي الله عنه was on the other side. Even though he did not narrate from the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم the ḥadīth:

‘Ammār will be killed by the group that is in the wrong.⁴

He may have heard it from other Ṣaḥābah, because it was very well known.⁵

Some reports give as the reason for his leaving to be his doubt as to whether his stance towards this turmoil (fitnah, as he called it) was correct.⁶

According to another report that suggests his reason for leaving, Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه reminded him of his blood ties with ‘Alī رضي الله عنه by saying:

1 *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 3 p. 19; the editor Aḥmad Shākir said its chain of narration is sound

2 *Istishhād ‘Uthmān wa Waq‘at al-Jamal*, p. 201. He listed the chains of narration of the ḥadīth and judged it to be weak.

3 *Al-Madīnah al-Nabawiyyah Fajr al-Islām*, vol. 2 p. 324; *al-Maṭālib al-Uliyah* no. 4468.

4 *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 11 p. 47-49, vol. 11 p. 38. Its chain of narration is sound. Aḥmad Shākir.

5 *khilāfat ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, p. 154.

6 *op. cit.*, p. 154; *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 506.

How would Safiyyah bint ‘Abd al-Muṭṭālib feel if you fought ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭālib with your sword?¹

Whatever the reasons, Zubayr رضي الله عنه left the battlefield and was met by ibn Jurmūz, who killed him,² as we shall see in detail below.

Zubayr رضي الله عنه was aware of his goal, which was to set things straight, but when he saw that fighting had broken out instead of peace, he left and did not fight. The words of Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه: “You fight ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib with your sword?” implying an unspoken question: “or have you come to set things straight and bring unity?”³

As a result of this conversation, Zubayr رضي الله عنه left the battlefield and departed. Perhaps numerous, interconnected factors played a role in his decision to abandon the battlefield.

As for Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubaydullah رضي الله عنه, Zubayr’s second-in command of the army of Baṣrah, he was wounded at the beginning of the battle when he was struck by a stray arrow. It is not known who shot it, but it was a direct hit and caused him to bleed heavily. His soldiers said to him:

O Abū Muḥammad, you are wounded. Go in among their houses so that you can be treated.

Ṭalḥah said to his slave:

Carry me, and look for a suitable place for me.

He entered Baṣrah and was placed in a house there to be treated, but his wound continued to bleed until he died in that house. Then he was buried in Baṣrah رضي الله عنه.⁴

1 *Al-Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 3 p. 110 - its chain of narration is sound; *Khilāfat ‘Alī*, p. 155.

2 *Al-Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 3 p. 10; *Tarīkh Khalīfah*, p. 186.

3 *al-Madīnah an-Nabawīyyah Fajr al-Islam*, vol. 2 p. 248.

4 *al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 p. 253.

As for the report indicating that Zubayr and Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنهما urged the people to carry on fighting, and that Zubayr رضي الله عنه only left the battlefield when he saw that the people of Baṣrah were going to be defeated, this report is not sound.¹

It is contradicted by that which is proven of the dignity and sound character of the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم. It is also contrary to the sound reports stating that the army of the Camel only went out to set things straight and bring about reconciliation.

How could this alleged action of Zubayr رضي الله عنه be in harmony with the aim for which he left Makkah and went to Baṣrah, namely to set things straight among the people? In fact, the attitude of Zubayr رضي الله عنه was one of keenness to set things straight up to the very last moment. Al-Ḥākim, via Abū Ḥarb ibn Abī-Aswad al-Du'alī, narrated that Zubayr رضي الله عنه strove to bring about reconciliation between the sides, but when the battle began and chaos prevailed, Zubayr رضي الله عنه left the battlefield,² as did Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه.

He had come to set things straight, not to shed blood. With regard to the killing of Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه, that occurred at the beginning of the battle, as was clearly stated by al-Aḥnaf ibn Qays.³

Zubayr رضي الله عنه departed the battlefield, and Ṭalḥah was martyred رضي الله عنه. With the fall of the slain and wounded, the first round of the Battle of the Camel ended, and the army of 'Alī رضي الله عنه had prevailed. 'Alī رضي الله عنه had been following progress of the battle and saw the slain and wounded on both sides; he was distressed and saddened by that. He went to his son Ḥasan and embraced him. 'Alī رضي الله عنه began weeping and saying to him:

O my son, would that your father had died twenty years before this day.

1 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 540.

2 *al-Mustadrak*, vol. 3 p. 366; *Istishhād 'Uthmān*; p. 200.

3 *Tarīkh Khalīfah*, p. 185; *Istishhād 'Uthmān*, p. 202.

Hasan said:

O my father, I warned you about this.

‘Alī رضي الله عنه said:

I did not think that it would go this far. What good is life after this? What good can be hoped for after this?¹

The second round of the Battle of the Camel

News reached the Mother of the Believers ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها of the fighting that had taken place. She came out on her camel, surrounded by the ‘Azdī tribes and accompanied by Ka’b ibn Sūr, to whom she had given a mushāf to use to call the people to stop fighting. The Mother of the Believers advanced. She hoped that people would listen to her because of her status in their hearts, and that she would be able to stop them fighting one another and stop the fitnah that begun to spread.²

Ka’b held up the mushāf and went before the army of Baṣrah, calling to the army of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه saying:

O people, I am Ka’b ibn Sūr, the judge of Baṣrah; I call you to the Book of Allah, to act upon it and bring about reconciliation on that basis.

The Saba’iyyah, who were in the forefront of the army of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, were afraid that Ka’b’s effort would succeed, so they targeted him with their arrows as one man, and he died with the mushāf in his hand.³

The arrows of the Saba’iyyah also struck the camel and ḥowdah⁴ of ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها and she started calling out:

1 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 p. 521.

2 *Musannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah*, vol. 5 p. 456, with a sound chain of narration going back to al-Zuhrī.

3 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 p. 253.

4 A covered carriage placed on the back of the camel for ‘Ā’ishah to ride in [Editor].

O my sons, Allah, Allah, remember Allah and the Day of Reckoning, and refrain from fighting!

The Saba'iyyah did not respond to her; they continued striking the army of Baṣrah. 'Alī رضي الله عنه was in the rear, ordering his troops to refrain from fighting and not to attack the Baṣrans, but the Saba'iyyah in the forefront of his army did not respond to him; they persisted advancing, attacking and fighting. When 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها saw that they were not responding to her call and saw Ka'b ibn Sūr killed in front of her, she said:

O people, curse the killers of 'Uthmān and their supporters.

'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها began to pray against the murderers of 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه and to curse them, and the people of Baṣrah raised their voices in supplication against the murderers of 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه their supporters, and they cursed them. 'Alī رضي الله عنه heard the supplication coming in loud voices from the army of Baṣrah and asked: "What is this?" They said: "It is 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها praying against the murderers of 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه and the people praying with her." 'Alī رضي الله عنه said: "Pray with me against the murderers of 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه and their supporters, and curse them." So the army of 'Alī رضي الله عنه raised their voices, cursing the murderers of 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه and praying against them."¹

'Alī رضي الله عنه said:

O Allah, curse the killers of 'Uthmān in the plains and in the mountains.²

The fighting intensified and spread. The people fought with spears until the spears broke,³ then they unsheathed their swords and fought until the swords broke, and finally they fought at close quarters.⁴

1 *al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 p. 253.

2 *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah*, vol. 15 p. 268 with a sound chain of narration; *Sunan Sa'īd ibn Mansūr*, vol. 2 p. 236, with a sound chain of narration.

3 *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah*, vol. 15 p. 258 -its men are sound.

4 *aṭ-Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 5 p. 2.

The Saba'iyyah directed their efforts towards hamstringing the camel and killing 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها, the Mother of the Believers, so the army of Baṣrah rushed to protect 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها and her camel. They fought to defend the camel, and they killed anyone who grabbed its reins. The battle raging in front of the camel was so fierce and violent that the ḥowdah began to resemble a hedgehog because of all the arrows that had been shot at it.¹

Many Muslims from the tribes of al-ʿAzd and Banū Ḍabbah and young men of Quraysh were killed around the camel, after displaying unparalleled bravery and courage.²

'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها was very upset and frustrated. She had not wanted any fight, but fighting broke out despite her wishes, and she ended up in the midst of the chaos, calling out for it to stop, but to no avail. Everyone who took hold of the camel's reins was killed, then Muḥammad ibn Ṭalḥah (al-Sajjād) came and took hold of the reins, and he said to his mother, the Mother of the Believers:

O my mother, what do you want me to do?

She said:

Be like the better of the two sons of Adam.

Meaning that he should refrain from fighting. He sheathed his sword, after having unsheathed it, and he was killed, may Allah have mercy on him.³

Also killed was 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Itāb ibn Usayd, who tried to kill al-Ashtar even if it meant that he died too. He wrestled him, and they both fell to the ground. 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Itāb said to those who were around him:

Kill for me, Mālik.⁴

1 *al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 p. 253; *Tarīkh Khalīfah*, p. 190, with a reliable chain.

2 *al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 p. 254.

3 *Naṣab Quraysh*, p. 281; *Bukharī: Al-Tarīkh al-Saghīr*, vol. 1 p. 110, with a sound chain of narration.

4 *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah*, vol. 15 p. 228; *Marwiyāt Abī Mikhnaf*, p. 268; its chain of narration is sound.

Because of his hatred for him due to the prominent role he had played in inciting the people against ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه. But the people did not know al-Ashtar as ‘Mālik’, and his time had not yet come. If ‘Abd al-Raḥmān had said ‘al-Ashtar’, many swords would have struck al-Ashtar.¹

As for ‘Abd Allāh ibn Zubayr رضي الله عنه, he fought in an unparalleled fashion, throwing himself among the swords. He was taken from among the slain with forty-odd wounds, the most severe and last of which was inflicted by al-Ashtar. Due to the latter’s hatred for ibn Zubayr, he did not sit on his horse when he hit him; rather he stood up in the stirrups and struck ibn Zubayr on the head, thinking that it had killed him.²

A large number of people were also killed from the tribes of Banū ‘Adī, Banū Ḍabbah and al-‘Azd. Banū Dabbah showed a great deal of courage and sacrifice for the Mother of the Believers رضي الله عنها.

Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, by virtue of the wisdom, strength and military skill with which he had been blessed, realized that as long as the camel remained on the battlefield, the fighting would continue and a large number of people would be killed. The people of the camel would not be defeated or give up fighting as long as the Mother of the Believers remained on the battlefield. Her staying on the battlefield also posed a great danger to her life; the ḥowdah in which she was sitting was bristling with arrows like a hedgehog.³

‘Alī رضي الله عنه ordered some of his troops, including Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr, the brother of the Mother of the Believers, and ‘Abd Allāh ibn Badīl, to hamstring the camel and take ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها out of the ḥowdah and to the ground; in other words, they were to strike the camel’s feet with their swords.⁴

1 ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd: *Khilāfat ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭalīb*; p. 159.

2 *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah*, vol. 15 p. 228, with a chain of narration which was classed as sound by Ibn Ḥajar in *al-Fath*, vol. 13 p. 57, 58.

3 Al-Balādhurī: *Anṣāb al-Ashrāf*, vol. 2 p. 43, with a chain of narration that is connected all the way to Rasūl صلی الله عليه وسلم.

4 Al-Khaṭṭābi: *A’lām al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 3 p. 1611.

Her brother Muḥammad and ‘Abd Allāh ibn Badīl carried her ḥowdah and placed it in front of ‘Alī عليه السلام, who ordered that she be taken into the house of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Badīl.¹

‘Alī’s military intuition proved to be correct; as soon as Mother of the Believers left the battlefield, the motive that was making the people of Baṣrah eager to fight to the death disappeared, and they turned and fled. If he had not taken this step, the battle would have continued until the entire army of Baṣrah, which was defending the camel, had been destroyed or the army of ‘Alī had been defeated.

When the rout began, ‘Alī عليه السلام or his caller shouted out to his army, telling them not to pursue anyone who was running away, not to finish off anyone who was wounded, and not to take any booty except for equipment or weapons that had been brought to the battlefield or the camp only; they were not to take anything more than that.

He also forbade them to enter the houses. Not only that; ‘Alī عليه السلام also said to the people of Baṣrah who had fought him that if any of them found any of his property with one of ‘Alī’s companions, he had the right to take it back. A man found a group from ‘Alī’s army cooking some meat in a pot that belonged to him. He took the pot from them and threw away the meat that was in it, out of spite.²

The number of people killed

This intense battle led to a large number of people being killed but there are differing reports as to the actual numbers. Al-Mas‘ūdī said that these differences were due to the bias of the narrators.³

Qatādah stated that the number of people killed at the Battle of the Camel was twenty thousand.⁴

1 *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah*, vol. 15 p. 286, 287, with a good chain of narration; *al-Fath*, vol. 13 p. 57.

2 *Muṣannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah*, vol. 15 p. 286, 287, with a good chain of narration; *al-Fath*, vol. 13 p. 57.

3 *Murūj adh-Dhahab*, vol. 3 p. 367.

4 *ibid.*

It seems that this is greatly exaggerated, because the number of the two armies put together was close to this or less. The Rāfiḍī Shia Abū Mikhnaf exaggerated greatly because of his bias, and he did wrong when he thought that he was doing right. He said that the twenty thousand were from the people of Baṣrah.¹

Sayf stated that the number was ten thousand, half from among the companions of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and half from among the companions of ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها. According to another report, he said:

It was said that the number was fifteen thousand: five thousand from among the people of Kūfah and ten thousand from among the people of Baṣrah; half of them were killed during the first round and half during the second round.²

But these two reports are weak because of the interruptions in their chains of narration and other faults; they are also grossly overstated. ‘Umar ibn Shaybah mentioned, with his chain of narration, that the number of slain was more than six thousand, but this report is also weak in its chain of narration.³

Al-Ya‘qūbī exaggerated further and gave a higher figure; he put the number of slain at thirty-two thousand.⁴

This figure is highly inflated; the reasons for this overstatement include the following:

- » The desire of the enemies of the Ṣaḥābah, namely Saba’iyyah and their followers, to deepen the dispute and division among the members of the ummah who are united by the love of the Ṣaḥābah and who are following their example, after that of the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم.

1 *Tarīkh Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt*, p. 186, with a mursal chain of narration.

2 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 542-555.

3 *Tarīkh Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt*, p. 186; its chain of narration is interrupted, but it is reliable as far as Qatādah.

4 *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah*, vol. 7 p. 546; *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 13 p. 62.

- » The contribution of some poets and ignorant people from numerous tribes to inflating and magnifying the number, so to match the poetry that they attributed to some of their leaders and knights. In addition to that, the storytellers wanted to attract people's attention with the exciting events of which they spoke.
- » The building of confidence for the followers of the thug's and Saba'iyyah in order to prove the success of their plans arrangements.¹

As for the true number of people slain in the Battle of the Camel, it is probably very small, for the following reasons:

- The short duration of the fight. Ibn Abī Shaybah narrated with a sound chain of narration² that the combat started in the afternoon and that by the time the sun set, no one who had been defending the camel was still there
- The defensive nature of the fighting, since each side was merely defending itself and doing no more than that
- The true number of those slain at the Battle of the Camel is regarded as very low in comparison to the number of Muslim martyrs at the Battle of Yarmūk (3,000) and the Battle of Qādisiyyah (8,500), and those were battles that went on for a number of days. This is also taking into account the ferocity and intensity of those other battles which were decisive battles in the history of nations.
- Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt narrated a list of those among the slain of the Battle of the Camel whose names were known; there were approximately one hundred names.³

1 *al-Inṣāf*, p. 455.

2 *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah*, vol. 7 p. 546; *Faṭḥ al-Bārī*, vol. 13 p. 62.

3 *Tarīkh Khalīfah*, p. 187, 190.

If we assume that the total number was double that, this would mean that the number of people slain at the Battle of the Camel was no more than two hundred. This is what Dr. Khālid ibn Muḥammad al-Ghayth suggests is most likely, in his dissertation *Istishhād ‘Uthmān wa Waq‘at al-Jamal fī Marwiyāt Sayf ibn ‘Umar fī Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī - Dirāsah Naqdiyyah* (*The martyrdom of ‘Uthmān and the Battle of the Camel in the reports of Sayf ibn ‘Umar in Tarīkh aṭ-Ṭabari - A critical study*).¹

1 *Istishhād ‘Uthmān wa Waq‘at al-Jamal*, p. 215.

Is it true that Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam killed Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh?

Many reports indicate that the killer of Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh رضي الله عنه was Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam.¹

However, if one studies these reports, it becomes clear that Marwān ibn al-Marwān is innocent of this accusation for the following reasons:

- a. Ibn Kathīr said: “It was said that the one who shot this arrow was Marwān ibn al-Marwān, and it was said that the one who shot this arrow was someone else. In my view, the latter is more likely, even though the former is a well-known view. And Allah knows best.”²
- b. Ibn al-‘Arabī said: “They said that Marwān killed Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh, but how can anyone know that except the One Who knows the unseen? It was not narrated by anyone trustworthy.”³
- c. Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb said: “This report about Ṭalḥah and Marwān is a mystery; no one knows where it came from.”⁴
- d. The reason given for Marwān’s desire to kill Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه — that Marwān accused Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه of helping in the murder of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه — is invalid. There is no proof by any sound chain of narration that any of the Ṣaḥābah helped in the murder of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه.
- e. At the Battle of the Camel, Marwān and Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه were both on the same side, which was the side of those who were for putting things right among the people.⁵

1 *Al-Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 3 p. 223; *Tarīkh al-Madīnah*, vol. 4 p. 1170; *Tarīkh Khalīfah*, p. 185.

2 *al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 p. 248.

3 *al-‘Awaṣim min al-Qawaṣim*, p. 157-160.

4 *ibid.*

5 *Istishhād ‘Uthmān wa Waq’at al-Jamal*, p. 202.

- f. Mu'āwiyah رضي الله عنه appointed Marwān in charge of Madīnah and Makkah. If it were true that Marwān had done this, Mu'āwiyah رضي الله عنه would not have put him in charge of the Muslims in the places that are most sacred before Allah.
- g. There is a report from Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.¹ *Bukhārī* is known for being very thorough and careful in accepting reports; if it were true that Marwān killed Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه that would have been sufficient reason to reject his reports and question his character.²

The call of Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī رضي الله عنه after the battle

As soon as the battle started to die down, the caller of 'Alī رضي الله عنه cried out:

Do not finish off anyone who is wounded, do not pursue anyone who is fleeing, do not enter any house. Whoever lays down his weapon is safe, and whoever locks his door is safe.

His army had no right to any booty except what had been brought onto the battlefield of weapons and mounts, and nothing beyond that. The caller of Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī رضي الله عنه informed those who had fought him of the people of Baṣrah that if one of them found any of his property with 'Alī's troops, he could take it back.³

Some people thought that the army of 'Alī رضي الله عنه was going to distribute the female captives among themselves, so they spoke about that and spread that notion among the people. 'Alī رضي الله عنه soon surprised them when he announced:

You have no right to any female captive, and the estates are to be divided according to the law of Allah. Any woman whose husband has been killed must observe 'iddah of four months and ten days.

1 *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 2 p. 520; *Istishhād 'Uthmān*, p. 203.

2 *Istishhād 'Uthmān wa Waq'at al-Jamal*, p. 202.

3 *Khilāfat 'Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib*, p. 168; 'Abdul-Hamīd: *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah*, vol. 15 p. 286, with a sound chain of narration.

They objected to that, asking:

O Amīr al-Mu'minīn, is their blood permissible for us and not their women?

‘Alī عليه السلام said:

This is the right approach when fighting people of the qiblah (fellow Muslims).”

Then he said:

(if you insist on this then) Bring your arrows and draw lots concerning ‘Ā’ishah عليها السلام, for she is the one who was leading these people!

They were shocked and said:

We ask Allah for forgiveness.

It had now become clear to them that what they were saying and thinking was very wrong. In order to please them, though, ‘Alī عليه السلام gave each of them five hundred from the public treasury.¹

Checking on the slain and praying for mercy for them

After the battle ended, ‘Alī عليه السلام went out with a group of Ṣaḥābah to check on the slain. He saw Muḥammad ibn Ṭalḥah (as-Sajjād) and said:

To Allah do we belong and unto Him shall we return. By Allah, he was righteous young man.

Then he sat down sorrowfully and prayed for forgiveness and mercy for the slain, and he spoke highly of them.²

1 *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah*, vol. 15 p. 286, with a sound chain of narration; *Ibn Ḥajar*, vol. 13 p. 57.

2 *Muṣannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah*, vol. 15 p. 261; *al-Mustadrak*, vol. 3 p. 103, 104, 375. Its chain of narration is reliable because of corroborating evidence; *Khilafāt ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, p. 169.

After that, he went back to his house and saw his wife and two daughters weeping for ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه and his relatives and for Zubayr, Ṭalḥah and others among their Qurayshī relatives. It was narrated that he said to them:

I hope we will be among those of whom Allah says:

وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِّنْ غَلٍّ إِخْوَانًا عَلَىٰ سُرُرٍ مُّتَقَابِينَ

*And We shall remove from their breasts deep feeling of bitterness [that they may have]. [So they will be like] brothers facing each other on thrones.*¹

Then he said:

Who are they if not us? Who are they if not us?

And he kept repeating it until the narrator wished that he would fall silent.²

1 Surah al-Ḥijr: 47.

2 *Muṣannaḥ Ibn Abi Shaybah*, vol. 15 p. 268-269; *Khilāfat ‘Alī*, p. 169, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd.

The allegiance of the people of Baṣrah

Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī عليه السلام was very keen to unite the people, to respect the people under his authority and to treat them honourably. This treatment had a far reaching effect by convincing the people of Baṣrah to swear allegiance to Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī عليه السلام. In the evening following the Battle of the Camel, he put the captives in a special place. When he prayed the dawn prayer, he asked for Mūsā ibn Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubayd Allah. He brought him close, welcomed him and seated him next to him, and asked him how he and his brothers were.

Then he told him:

We did not seize your land because we want to take it away from you; we seized it lest the people plunder it.

He gave him the harvest of the land and said:

O son of my brother, if you have any need, come to us.

He did the same with his brother 'Imrān ibn Ṭalḥah, and the two brothers swore allegiance to him. When the other captives saw that, they entered upon 'Alī عليه السلام to swear allegiance to him, and he accepted their allegiance. He accepted allegiance from each tribe, one by one.¹

He also asked about Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam, saying:

There is compassion for him because of blood ties; in addition to that, he is one of the noble young men of Quraysh.

Marwān sent word to Ḥasan, Ḥusayn and Ibn 'Abbās عليه السلام, asking them to speak to 'Alī عليه السلام on his behalf. 'Alī عليه السلام said:

1 *Al-Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 3 p. 224, with a reliable chain of narration; *al-Mustadrak*, vol. 3 p. 376,377.

He is safe. Let him go wherever he wants.

Because of this generous and noble treatment, Marwān did not want to leave until he had sworn allegiance to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه.¹

Marwān رضي الله عنه praised the actions of Amīr al-Mu‘minīn ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, telling his son Ḥasan:

I have never seen anyone more generous in victory than your father. As soon as we began to flee on the day of the Camel, his caller called out: “Do not finish off anyone who is wounded, do not pursue anyone who is fleeing.”²

Thus the people of Baṣrah swore allegiance to Amīr al-Mu‘minīn ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. He appointed his nephew ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه as their governor and Ziyād ibn Abīhi in charge of the land tax. ‘Alī رضي الله عنه wanted to stay there longer, but he hastened to leave because of Mālik (al-Ashtar). Al-Ashtar had been hoping to become governor of Baṣrah; when he found out that ibn ‘Abbās had been appointed to the post, he became angry and left with his people. ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was afraid that he might cause trouble, so he went quickly with the remainder of his army and caught up with him. ‘Alī رضي الله عنه reprimanded him for leaving, but he pretended that he had not heard anything else about him.³

The ḥadīth of Abū Bakrah from the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم: “If two Muslims face one another with swords, then slayer and the slain will be in hell.”⁴

Al-Qurṭubī said:

Our scholars said that this ḥadīth, the ḥadīth of Abū Bakrah, is not speaking about the Ṣaḥābah of Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم because Allah says:

1 *Sunan Sa‘īd ibn Manṣūr*, vol. 2 p. 337, with a reliable chain of narration.

2 Al-Mawardī: *Kitāb Ahl al-Baghī min al-Hāwi al-Kabīr*, p. 111; *Faḥ al-Bārī*, vol. 13 p. 62.

3 *Faḥ al-Bārī*, vol. 13 p. 57; ‘Abdul-Ḥamīd: *Khilāfat ‘Alī*, p. 174.

4 *Muslim*, Kitāb al-Fitan, vol. 4 p. 233.

وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا ۚ فَإِنْ بَغَتْ أَحَدُهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَىٰ
فَقَاتِلُوا النَّبِيَّ تَبَعِي حَتَّىٰ تَفِيءَ إِلَىٰ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ ۚ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا ۗ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٩﴾ إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

If two parties among the believers fall into a quarrel, make peace between them; but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight [all] against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah; but if it complies, then make peace between them with justice, and be fair: for Allah loves those who are fair [and just]. The believers are but a single brotherhood: So make peace and reconciliation between your two [contending] brothers: And fear Allah so that you may receive Mercy.¹

Allah enjoined fighting the group that is in the wrong. If the Muslims fail to fight the group that is in the wrong, then one of the obligations enjoined by Allah will have been abandoned. This proves that the words of Rasūl ﷺ, ‘The slayer and the slain will be in hell,’ are not about the Ṣaḥābah of Rasūl ﷺ because they only fought because of a misunderstanding.

Al-Qurtubī also said:

If what is required of Muslims, in the case of any difference between two groups of Muslims, is to run away from it and stay in their houses and break their swords, then no ḥadd punishments would be carried out and no falsehood would be confronted. Then the hypocrites and evildoers would find it easy to violate all sacred limits, confiscate the Muslims’ wealth, take their women captive and shed their blood, because they would gang up against them, and the Muslims would refrain from confronting them by saying: “This is fitnah. We are forbidden to fight in this case; we are instructed to be passive and run away from it.”²

1 Surah, al-Ḥujirāt: 9-10.

2 *Al-Tadhkirah*, vol. 2 p. 232, 233.

Al-Nawawī said:

With regard to the slayer and the slain being in hell, this applies to cases where there is no sharī justification, when they are fighting for tribal reasons and the like. Moreover, what is meant by hell is that they deserve it and may be punished there in or may be pardoned by Allah. This is the correct view. One may judge or evaluate any incident of fighting between Muslims on this basis, but it should be noted that the blood that was shed among the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم is not included in this warning. According to the view of the Ahl al-Sunnah, which is the correct view, we should think positively of them and refrain from debating about the disputes among them. We should understand their fighting on the basis that they had what they thought was a valid reason for it. They did not intend to commit sin or to seek worldly gains; rather each group believed that it was in the right and that its opposite number was transgressing, so it was obliged to fight it and bring it back to compliance with the command of Allah. Some of them were right, and some of them were wrong, but they are to be excused for their misjudgement; if the one who makes a mistake has based his decision on what he thinks is a valid reason, there is no sin on him. The view of Ahl al-Sunnah is that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was the one who was in the right in this conflict. The issues were so ambiguous that some of the Ṣaḥābah were uncertain, so they stayed away from both groups and did not fight; they were not certain who was in the right, so they refrained from helping them.¹

The date of the Battle of the Camel

The historians’ differed concerning the date of the Battle of Camel, and there are numerous opinions, including the following:

- a. Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt narrated via Qatādah that the two groups met on a Thursday halfway through the month of Jamād al-Ākhirah in 36 A.H, and that the battle took place on Friday.²

1 *Sharḥ. Saḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 8 p. 227, 228.

2 *Tarīkh Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt*, p. 184, 185.

- b. ‘Umar ibn Shabbah narrated that the battle took place in the middle of Jamād al-Ākhirah in 36 AH.¹
- c. Al-Ṭabari narrated via al-Wāqidī that the battle took place on Thursday, 10 Jamād al-Ākhirah 36 AH.²
- d. Al-Mas‘ūdī stated that the battle took place on Thursday, 10 Jamād al-Ūla.

The most correct opinion is that narrated by Khalīfah ibn Khayyāṭ via Qatādah, as the chain of narration of this report is the soundest concerning this matter.

Should we not leave them alone when they are Muslim women?

Amīr al-Mu‘minīn ‘Alī عليه السلام came to the house where Mother of the Believers ‘Ā’ishah عليها السلام was staying, and he asked for permission to enter. He greeted her with salām, and she welcomed him. The women in the house of Banū Khalaf were weeping for those who had been killed, including ‘Abd Allāh and ‘Uthmān, the sons of Khalaf. ‘Abd Allāh had been killed fighting on ‘Ā’ishah’s عليها السلام side and ‘Uthmān had been killed fighting on ‘Alī’s عليه السلام side. When ‘Alī عليه السلام entered, Safiyyah, the wife of ‘Abd Allāh, Umm Ṭalḥah, said to him:

May Allah make your children orphans as you have made my children orphans!

‘Alī عليه السلام did not respond. When he left, she repeated her words, and he again kept quiet. A man said to him:

O Amīr al-Mu‘minīn, are you going to keep quiet when this woman is saying what you can hear?

1 *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, vol. 13 p. 61.

2 *Istishhād ‘Uthmān*, p. 206, quoting from *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*.

‘Alī عليه السلام said:

Woe to you. We were commanded to leave women alone when they were polytheists, so should we not leave them alone when they are Muslims?¹

Abū Bakrah al-Thaqafī’s request to not be appointed as governor of Baṣrah

‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakrah al-Thaqafī came to Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī عليه السلام and swore allegiance to him. ‘Alī asked about his father, saying:

Where is the one who is sick?

‘Abd al-Raḥmān said:

By Allah, he is indeed sick, O Amīr al-Mu’minīn, but he is very keen to please you.

‘Alī عليه السلام said:

Walk in front of me.

He went and visited him, and he offered him the position of governor of Baṣrah, but Abū Bakrah عليه السلام refused and said:

How about a man from among your relatives whom the people trust?

He suggested Ibn ‘Abbās عليه السلام, so ‘Alī عليه السلام appointed Ibn ‘Abbās as governor of Baṣrah, and appointed Ziyād ibn Abīhī to be in charge of the land tax and the public treasury; then he ordered Ibn ‘Abbās عليه السلام to listen to Ziyād.²

1 *al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah*; vol. 7 p. 357.

2 *ibid.*

The attitude of Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī towards those who reviled 'Ā'ishah

A man said:

O Amīr al-Mu'minīn, there are two men at the door who are reviling 'Ā'ishah.

'Alī عليه السلام ordered al-Qa'qā' ibn 'Amr عليه السلام to flog each of them with one hundred lashes and to strip them of clothes, and al-Qa'qā' did that.¹

'Ammār ibn Yāsir's defence of the Mother of the Believers 'Ā'ishah

It was narrated that Muḥammad ibn 'Urayb said:

A man stood up and mentioned 'Ā'ishah عليها السلام in 'Alī's عليه السلام presence. 'Ammār عليه السلام came and said: "Who is this man who is reviling the wife of our Rasūl? Shut up! You ugly, obnoxious and blameworthy man!"²

According to another report, he said:

Get lost, you ugly man, do you insult the beloved of the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم?³

According to another report:

Mention was made of 'Ā'ishah عليها السلام in the presence of 'Alī عليه السلام, and he said: "She is the wife of the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم."⁴

1 op. cit., vol. 7 p. 258.

2 *Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥābah*, vol. 2 p. 110.

3 *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 2 p. 179; a reliable ḥadīth, according to al-Dhahabī.

4 op. cit., vol. 2 p. 176. a reliable ḥadīth.

‘Ā’ishah the Mother of the Believers and Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib

‘Ā’ishah, the Mother of the Believers رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا is al-Ṣiddīqah, the daughter of al-Ṣiddīq Abū Bakr ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Uthmān, Her mother was Umm Rūmān bint ‘Uwaymir al-Kinānī, and she was born four or five years after Rasūl’s صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ mission began. Rasūl صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ married her when she was six years old and consummated the marriage with her when she was nine years old, in the month of Shawwāl 1 AH (or it was said in 2 AH). She was declared innocent from above the seven heavens. She was the dearest of Rasūl’s wives to him and the only virgin that he married.

She was the most knowledgeable of all the women of the ummah; all of the most prominent among the Ṣaḥābah would consult her if they were uncertain about any religious matter. Rasūl صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ died when she was eighteen years old, and she رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا died on the night before 17 Ramadan in 58 AH. Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ led the funeral prayer for her, and she was buried in Baqī Cemetery - May Allah be pleased with her and make her pleased.¹

Her virtues are many and well known, and there are sound aḥādīth describing virtues that were unique to her among all the Mothers of the Believers, including the following:

1. The angel brought her image to Rasūl صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ on a cloth of fine silk² before her marriage to him

The two Shuyūkh, *Bukhārī* and *Muslim*, narrated that ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا said that the Rasūl of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

I was shown in my dreams for three nights that an angel brought you to me wrapped in a cloth of silk, saying: “This is your wife.” I uncovered your

1 *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 2 p. 135-201; *Ṭabaqāt ibn Sa’d*, vol. 8 p. 58; *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 8 p. 95.

2 Ibn al-Athīr: *Al-Nihāyah*, vol. 2 p. 362.

face and saw that it was you, and I said: “If this is from Allah, then He will bring it to pass.”¹

2. The most beloved of the wives of Rasūl ﷺ

He stated his love for her clearly when he was asked about the dearest of people to him. Al-Bukhārī narrated, with his chain of narration going back to ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āsh that Rasūl ﷺ sent him at the head of the army of Dhāt al-Salāsīl.² He said:

I came to him and said: “Who among the people is dearest to you?” He said: “‘Ā’ishah.” I said: “Who among men?” He ﷺ said: “Her father.”³

Al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī said:

This is a proven report in spite of the Rāfiḍī. Rasūl ﷺ never loved anyone except those who were good, and he said: “If I were to have taken a close friend (khalīl) from among this ummah, I would have taken Abū Bakr as a close friend, but the brotherhood of Islam is better.”

So he loved the best man among his ummah and the best woman among his ummah. Whoever hates the two who were beloved to the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ deserves to be hated by Allah and His Rasūl ﷺ. The Rasūl’s ﷺ love for ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها is well known and widely reported.⁴

3. Rasūl ﷺ received revelation when he was under her blanket with her, but never with his other wives

Al-Bukhārī narrated, with his chain of narration going back to Hishām ibn

1 Muslim, Ḥadīth: 2438

2 Dhāt al-Salāsīl - the name comes from the word *al-Salsal*, which refers to pure, sweet water. Ibn al-Athīr: *Al-Nihāyah*, vol. 2 p. 389.

3 Bukhārī, Ḥadīth: 4358.

4 *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 2 p. 143

‘Urwah that the people would try to take their gifts to Rasūl ﷺ when it was ‘Ā’ishah’s day. ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها narrates:

My co-wives went to Umm Salamah and said: “O Umm Salamah, by Allah, the people try to bring their gifts when it is ‘Ā’ishah’s day, and we want some of this goodness as ‘Ā’ishah wants it. Tell the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ to instruct the people to bring their gifts to him wherever he is and wherever he goes.” Umm Salamah mentioned that to Rasūl ﷺ, and she (later) said: “He turned away from me. When he turned back to me, I mentioned it to him again, and he turned away from me. The third time I said it to him, he said: ‘Umm Salamah, do not annoy me with regard to ‘Ā’ishah, for by Allah, the revelation never comes down to me when I am under the blanket of any of you except her.’”¹

Al-Dhahabī said:

This response indicates that the superiority of ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها to the other Mothers of the Believers was something that was divinely ordained and was not just because he loved her; rather this was one of the reasons he loved her.²

4. Jibra’īl عليه السلام sent his greeting of salām to her with Rasūl ﷺ

Al-Bukhārī narrated, with his chain of narration going back to ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها, that the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ said to her one day:

O ‘Ā’ishah, this is Jibra’īl sending greetings of salām to you.

She said:

And upon him be peace and the mercy of Allah and His blessings. You see what I cannot see — referring to the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ.³

1 Bukhārī, Ḥadīth: 3775, Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah.

2 Siyar A’lām an-Nubalā’, vol. 2 p. 143.

3 Bukhārī, Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah, Ḥadīth: 3768.

5. Rasūl ﷺ went to her first when the verse instructing him to give his wives the choice was revealed

That was also accompanied by the instruction to consult her parents about the matter, because he knew that they would not tell her to leave him. She chose Allah and His Rasūl ﷺ and the home of the hereafter, and the rest of his wives followed her example.

Al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrated, with their chain of narration back to ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا, that she said:

When the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ was commanded to give his wives the choice, he started with me, and he said: “I am going to tell you something, but you do not have to rush until you consult your parents.” He knew that my parents would never tell me to leave him. Then he said: “Allah, may He be glorified and praised, said:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لَأَزْوَاجِكَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُرِيدْنَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا فَتَعَالَيْنَ أُمْتِعَنَّ وَ
أَسْرَحُكُنَّ سَرَاحًا جَمِيلًا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُرِيدْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالذَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
أَعَدَّ لِلْمُحْسِنَاتِ مِنْكُنَّ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

O Rasūl [Muhammad]! Say to your wives: “If you desire the life of this world, and its glitter, then come! I will make a provision for you and set you free in a handsome manner [divorce]. But if you desire Allah and His Rasūl, and the Home of the hereafter, then verily, Allah has prepared for al-muḥsināt [good-doers] amongst you an enormous reward.”¹

I said: “Do I need to consult my parents about this? I desire Allah and His Rasūl and the Home of the hereafter.” Then the other wives of the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ did the same as I had done.²

1 Surah, al Aḥzāb: 28-29.

2 Bukhārī, Kitāb at-Tafsīr, Ḥadīth: 4789.

6. The revelation of verses of the Book of Allah because of her

These include verses that speak about her in particular and others that are for the ummah as a whole. Those that are about her particular, which speak of her virtue and high status, are the verses in which Allah testifies that she is innocent of the accusations and slanders against her. He says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا بِالْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ ۗ لَا تَحْسَبُوهُ شَرًّا لَّكُم ۚ بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۚ لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ
مَا أَكْتَسَبَ مِنَ الْإِثْمِ ۗ وَالَّذِي تَوَلَّى كِبْرَهُ مِنْهُمْ لَهُ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

*Verily, those who brought forth the slander [against ‘Ā’ishah] wife of the Rasūl] are a group among you. Consider it not a bad thing for you. Nay, it is good for you. Unto every man among them will be paid that which he had earned of the sin, and as for him among them who had the greater share therein, his will be a great torment.*¹

الْخَبِيثَاتُ لِلْخَبِيثِينَ وَالْخَبِيثُونَ لِلْخَبِيثَاتِ ۖ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ لِلطَّيِّبِينَ وَالطَّيِّبُونَ لِلطَّيِّبَاتِ ۚ أُولَئِكَ مُبَرَّءُونَ
مِمَّا يَقُولُونَ ۚ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ

*Bad statements are for bad people [or bad women for bad men] and bad people for bad statements [or bad men for bad women]. Good statements are for good people [or good women for good men] and good people for good statements [or good men for good women]: such [good people] are innocent of [every] bad statement which they say; for them is forgiveness, and Rizq Karīm [generous provision i.e. paradise].*²

Ibn al-Qayyim said:

One of her virtues is that Allah declared her innocent of that which the people of the slander accused her of, and He ﷺ sent down concerning her innocence revelation that will be recited in the masājid and prayers of the Muslims until the Day of Resurrection. He testified that she is one of the good, and He promised her forgiveness and a generous provision (referring to paradise). He stated that the lies that were told about her

1 Sūrah al-Nūr: 11.

2 Sūrah al-Nūr: 26.

were good for her and that what was said about her was not bad for her and did not undermine her position; rather Allah raised her in status thereby, and her goodness and innocence became well-known among all the inhabitants of heaven and earth. What a great virtue this is! About this honour that stemmed from her extreme modesty and humbleness when she said: “I thought of myself as too insignificant for Allah to speak about me in revelation that would be recited, but I was hoping that the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ would see a dream in which Allah would prove my innocence.”¹

This is the Ṣiddīqah of this ummah, the Mother of the Believers, and the beloved of the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ. She knew that she was innocent and had been wronged, and that those who were accusing her were wrongdoers and fabricators. Their accusations also hurt her parents and the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ.²

Ibn Kathīr said:

When the people of the slander spoke against her on the basis of fabrications and lies, Allah got angry and sent down, to prove her innocence, ten verses of Qur’ān that will be recited until the end of time. The scholars are unanimously agreed that whoever slanders her after she has been proven innocent is a disbeliever.³

With regard to that which was revealed because of her but for the ummah in general, it is the verse that permits dry-earth to be performed when no pure water is available. This was a mercy and made things easy for the entire ummah. Al-Bukhārī narrated, with his chain of narration going back to ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا, that she borrowed a necklace from Asmā’ and lost it, so the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ sent some of his Ṣaḥābah out to look for it. The time for prayer came, and they prayed without wuḍhū’. When they came to Rasūl ﷺ, they

1 Bukhārī, Ḥadīth: 4141.

2 Jalā’ al-Afhām, p. 124, 125.

3 Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, vol. 8 p. 95; Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm, vol. 3 p. 268.

complained to him about that, and the verse of earth-ablution was revealed. Usayd ibn Ḥudayr said:

May Allah reward you with good, for by Allah nothing happened to you that you dislike but Allah caused it to bring good to you and to the Muslims.¹

7. When the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ was ill, he wanted to be cared for in ‘Ā’ishah’s house

He ﷺ passed away leaning on her chest, on the day of her turn. Allah caused his saliva to be mixed with hers during his last moments in this world and his first moments in the hereafter, and he was buried in her house.²

Al-Bukhārī narrated, with his chain of narration going back to ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها, that when the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ was ill, he used to go around to his wives and say: “Where will I be tomorrow?” Because he looked forward to being in ‘Ā’ishah’s رضي الله عنها house. She said: “When it was my day, he settled down there.”³

Muslim narrated that she said:

The Rasūl of Allah ﷺ used to check and ask: “Where will I be today? Where will I be tomorrow?” hoping that my turn was close. When it was my day, Allah took his soul when he was between my neck and my chest.⁴

His wives gave him permission to go wherever he wanted, and he remained in ‘Ā’ishah’s house until he passed away there. ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها said:

He passed away on the day that was my day, in my house. Allah took his soul when his head was between my neck and my chest and his saliva was mixed with mine.

1 Bukhārī, Ḥadīth: 336.

2 *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 2 p. 189; *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 8 p. 95.

3 Bukhārī, Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah, Ḥadīth: 3774.

4 *Muslim*, Kitāb al-Ṣaḥābah, Ḥadīth: 2443.

Then she said:

‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr came in, with a *miswāk* (stick used as a natural toothbrush). The Rasūl of Allah ﷺ looked at it, and I said to him: “Give me this miswāk, O ‘Abd al-Raḥmān.” He gave it to me and I cut it, then I chewed it and gave it to the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ who brushed his teeth with it while he was leaning on my chest.

Another report adds:

So Allah mixed my saliva with his on his last day in this world and his first day in the hereafter.¹

8. Rasūl ﷺ told her that she was one of the people of paradise

Al-Ḥākim narrated, with his chain of narration going back to ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها, that she said:

I said: “O Rasūl of Allah, who will be your wives in paradise?” He said: “You will be one of them.”

She said:

I thought that the reason was that he did not marry any other virgin except me.²

Al-Bukhārī narrated with his chain of narration going back to al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad that when ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها fell sick Ibn ‘Abbās came to her and said:

O Mother of the Believers, you are going to meet those who went ahead of you, the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ and Abū Bakr.³

1 *Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 4450, 4451.

2 *Al-Mustadrak*, vol. 4 p. 13; its chain of narration is sound although it was not narrated by *Bukhārī* and *Muslim*; adh-Dhahabi agreed with him.

3 *Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 3771.

This is indicative of the great virtue of ‘A’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا because he confirmed to her that she would enter paradise; he would not have said that on the basis of his own thoughts, so he must have heard it from Rasūl صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.¹

9. The superiority of ‘Ā’ishah over other women is like the superiority of tharīd² over other kinds of food

Al-Bukhārī and *Muslim* narrated, with their chain of narration going back to ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, that he heard Anas ibn Mālik رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ say:

I heard the Rasūl of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ say: “The superiority of ‘Ā’ishah over other women is like the superiority of tharīd over other kinds of food.”³

Al-Nawawī said:

The scholars said that it means that tharīd is better than broth, and tharīd with meat is better than broth without meat, and the tharīd that has no meat is better than broth. What is meant by better is that it is more nutritious, more filling, easier to digest, more enjoyable and easier to eat, a person may eat his fill quickly, and so on. It is better than all kinds of broth and all kinds of food. The superiority of ‘Ā’ishah over other women is great, as great as the superiority of tharīd over other kinds of food. This does not clearly state that she is better than Maryam and ‘Āsiyah, it could be that what is meant is that she is superior to the women of this ummah.⁴

These are a few of the aḥādīth which point to the virtue, status and seniority of ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا and to the high esteem in which she held in Islam. Despite that, ‘Ā’ishah, the Mother of the Believers, has been subjected to slander, criticism, lies and fabrications by the Rāfiḍī Shī‘ah and those who were influenced by their reports. They also discussed sound reports and sound aḥādīth, but they

1 *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 7 p. 108; *al-‘Aqīdah fī Ahl al-Bayt*, p. 95.

2 A dish made from pieces of flat bread soaked in a meat stew [Editor].

3 *Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 3770.

4 *Sharḥ Saḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 15 p. 208, 209.

misinterpreted them and understood them in a way that differed from the actual meanings.

This is what was done by the author of the book *Thumma Ihtadaytu*, who did not come up with anything new; he simply followed in the footsteps of his predecessors among the Rāfiḍī Shī'ah. He slandered the Mother of the Believers by misinterpreting the words of 'Ammār:

By Allah, she is the wife of your Rasūl in this world and in the hereafter but Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, is testing you by means of her, so that He may know whether you will obey Him or her.¹

There is nothing in these words of 'Ammār that could be understood as undermining 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا; in fact, it mentions her greatest virtue, which is that she is the wife of our Rasūl صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in this world and in the hereafter. What virtue could be greater than that?

The aim of every believer is to please Allah and attain paradise, and 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا attained that, according to the testimony of 'Ammār رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. He held a different view than hers with regard to that turmoil, but he testified that she would be in the highest degrees of paradise, in the company of the Rasūl of Allah.²

Thus the sound ḥadīth, which can be attributed to Rasūl صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, according to what al-Ḥākim narrated in al-Mustadrak from 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا, says that Rasūl صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said to her:

Would it not please you to be my wife in this world and in the hereafter?

She replied:

Yes, by Allah.

1 Bukhārī, Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥābah, Ḥadīth: 3772.

2 Al-Intiṣār li al-Ṣaḥbi wa l-Āl, p. 448.

He said:

You are indeed my wife in this world and in the hereafter.¹

This ḥadīth points to one of the greatest virtues of ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها. Hence al-Bukhārī narrated the previous report from ‘Ammār under the heading of “The virtues of ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها.”²

As for his words in the last part of the report: “...but Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, is testing you by means of her, so that He may know whether you will obey Him or her,” this is not undermining the position of the Mother of the Believers ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها at all, for the following reasons:

- a. ‘Ammār’s رضي الله عنه words represent his own opinion; ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها (held a different opinion and thought that what she was doing what was right. Each of them was a noble Ṣaḥābī and possessed a high level of religious commitment and knowledge, so the view of one of them was not binding upon the other).³
- b. All that may be understood from the words of ‘Ammār is that she was going against the command of Allah in a particular case, but not everyone who takes a contrary stance is blameworthy unless proof is shown to them and they realise that they are wrong. Otherwise, they may be excused if they did not deliberately go against the command of Allah, because they may have been unaware, or their actions may have been based on misinterpretation, so they are not to be blamed for that.
- c. ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه did not intend thereby to criticise or undermine ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها; his intention was to point out her mistaken stance out of sincerity towards the ummah. Nevertheless, he recognised her status.⁴

1 *Al-Mustadrak*, vol. 4 p. 10; Muṣṭafā al-‘Adawī: *al-Sahīḥ al-Musnad*, p. 356.

2 *Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 3772.

3 *al-Intisār liṣ-Ṣaḥbi wal-Āl*, p. 449.

4 *al-Intisār liṣ-Ṣaḥbi wal-Āl*, p. 450, 451.

According to some versions of this report from ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه, he heard a man reviling ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها and he said:

Shut up, you ugly, hateful man! By Allah, she is the wife of your Rasūl in this world and in the hereafter, but Allah is testing you by means of her, so that He may know whether you will obey Him or her.¹

The Rāfiḍī Shī‘ah says that Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم once stood up to deliver a speech, and he pointed towards ‘Ā’ishah’s house and said:

Here is fitnah, from where the horns of the Satan emerge.

This is a slander against ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها, as they claim that Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم meant that fitnah would emerge from her house. These are misleading words, which turn the facts upside down and confuse those among the common people who have no knowledge. They explained what the narrator said: “Then he pointed (at ‘Ā’ishah’s house),” as meaning that he was pointing towards ‘Ā’ishah’s house and that she would be the cause of turmoil. But the ḥadīth does not indicate that in any way whatsoever, and this phrase cannot be interpreted as meaning that by anyone who has the slightest knowledge of what words mean.

The narrator said he pointed ‘towards ‘Ā’ishah’s house’; he did not say ‘at ‘Ā’ishah’s house’. The difference between the two expressions is quite clear. The report in question was narrated by Bukhārī in Kitāb Farḍ al-Khums² and was also narrated in the books of Sunnah, the two *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Bukhārī and Muslim and elsewhere, with a number of chains of narration and in more than one version. The text states the land referred to, which refutes the claim of the Rāfiḍī Shī‘ah, and there is no need to refute the argument in any other way. The following are some of the versions of the ḥadīth via many chains of narration from Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه:

1 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 p. 248.

2 *Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 3104.

It was narrated from Layth from Nāfi' from Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنهما that he heard the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم say, when he was facing towards the east:

Verily fitnah is there, where the horn of the Satan will emerge.¹

It was narrated that 'Ubayd Allah ibn 'Umar said: Nāfi' narrated to me from Ibn 'Umar that the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم stood at Ḥafsah's door and pointed towards the east and said:

Fitnah will appear from where the horn of the Satan is.²

He said it two or three times. It was narrated from Sālim ibn 'Abd Allāh from his father that the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said: while facing towards the east:

Verily fitnah is there, verily fitnah is there, and verily fitnah is there, where the horn of the Satan will appear.³

In these reports, the direction referred to is clearly specified; it is the east. This explains what is meant by the pointing that is referred to by the Rāfiḍī Shī'ah.⁴

In some other versions of the ḥadīth, the country referred is specified. It was narrated from Nāfi' that ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنهما said:

Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "O Allah, bless us in our Syria; O Allah, bless us in our Yemen." They said: "O Rasūl of Allah, in our Najd."⁵ I think he said the third time: "There are earthquakes and fitnah there, and in it the horn of the Satan will appear."⁶

1 *Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 7093; *Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 2905.

2 *Muslim*, Kitāb al-Fitan, vol. 4 Ḥadīth: 2229.

3 *Muslim*, Kitāb al-Fitan, vol. 4 Ḥadīth: 2229.

4 *al-Intisār liṣ-Ṣaḥbi wal-Āl*, p. 453.

5 Najd is towards the east, so for the one who is in Madinah, his Najd is the desert of Iraq .

6 *Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 7095.

It was narrated from Sālim ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar that he said:

O people of Iraq, how much you ask about minor sins, and how many major sins you commit! I heard my father, ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar say: “I heard the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ say: ‘Turmoil will come from there,’ and he pointed towards the east, where the horn of the Satan will appear.”¹

According to some reports, the names of some of the tribes who live in that land are mentioned, and the situation of their people is described. It was narrated that Abū Mas‘ūd said:

The Rasūl of Allah ﷺ pointed with his hand towards Yemen and said: “Faith is there, and harshness and hardheartedness are among the uncouth owners of camels, where the horns of the Satan rise, Rabī‘ah and Muḍar.”²

This report definitively indicates that what Rasūl ﷺ meant when he said “fitnah is there” was the eastern land, as the reports clearly state. In some of the reports, the people of that land are described and some tribes are mentioned by name, which clearly demonstrates the falseness of the claims made by the Rāfiḍī Shī‘ah that what he was pointing at was ‘Ā’ishah’s house. This is an invalid opinion and a worthless point of view; no one came up with this understanding or spoke of it except the Rāfiḍī Shī‘ah.³

10. Comparative virtues of ‘Ā’ishah, Khadijah and Fāṭimah

Ibn Taymiyyah said:

The best women of this ummah are Khadijah, ‘Ā’ishah and Fāṭimah رضي الله عنهن, but as to which of these three is better than the others, there is some dispute⁴

1 *Muslim*, Kitāb al-Fitnah min al-Mashriq, vol. 4 Ḥadīth: 2229.

2 *Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 3302; *al-Intisār liṣ-ṣaḥbi wal-Āl*, p. 455.

3 *al-Intisār liṣ-ṣaḥbi wal-Āl*, p. 455.

4 *Majmū’ al-Fatāwa*, vol. 4 p. 294.

Ibn Taymiyyah was asked about which of the two Mothers of the Believers was better, Khadījah or ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها. He replied:

In terms of seniority, influence at the beginning of Islam and support of the religion, Khadījah is superior, and neither ‘Ā’ishah nor any of the other Mothers of the Believers share that virtue with her. As for ‘Ā’ishah’s influence later on, her devotion to Islam and conveying it to the ummah and her attainment of knowledge, neither Khadījah nor any of the others share that virtue with her, which distinguishes her from others.¹

Ibn Ḥajar said:

It was said that there was consensus on the superiority of Fāṭimah, and that the difference of opinion remained with regard to whether ‘Ā’ishah or Khadījah was more virtuous.²

Commenting on the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah about the angel Jibra’īl عليه السلام coming to Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم and telling him convey salām to Khadījah from her Lord, Ibn Ḥajar reported that al-Suhaylī said:

Abū Bakr ibn Dāwūd quoted this story as evidence that Khadījah is superior to ‘Ā’ishah, because Jibra’īl sent greetings to ‘Ā’ishah from himself, but to Khadījah he conveyed greetings from her Lord. Ibn al-‘Arabī claimed that there was no disputing Khadījah was superior to ‘Ā’ishah. He narrated that this argument was an old issue and that it was more likely that Khadījah superior because of this (the greeting being conveyed to her from her Lord) and because of what is mentioned above.³

From studying the texts that were narrated concerning the virtues of each one of them (may Allah be pleased with them), we find that they point to the superiority

1 op. cit., p. vol. 4 p. 394.

2 *Fath. al-Bārī*, vol. 7 p. 109.

3 *Fath. al-Bārī*, vol. 7 p. 139.

of Khadījah and Fāṭimah, then ‘Ā’ishah (may Allah be pleased with them all) because Rasūl ﷺ said:

Khadījah was given precedence over the women of my ummah.¹

and,

The best of the women of paradise are Khadījah, Fāṭimah, Maryam and Āsiya.²

Ibn Ḥajar said:

This is a clear statement that cannot be interpreted in any other way.³

Rasūl ﷺ also said:

The best of the women of this world are Maryam bint ‘Imrān, Khadījah bint Khuwaylid, Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad and Āsiya the wife of Pharaoh.⁴

This states that Khadījah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا is the best of the women of this ummah. Moreover the wording of the reports about the superiority of Fāṭimah, in which Rasūl ﷺ said:

O Fāṭimah, does it not please you to be the leader of the believing women or the leader of the women of this ummah?⁵

or according to another version:

The leader of the women of the people of paradise.⁶

1 *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 7 p. 135; *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id*, vol. 9 p. 223.

2 Ibn Ḥibbān: *al-Iḥsān*, vol. 9 p. 73; al-Albānī: *Saḥīḥ al-Jāmi‘*, vol. 1 p. 371.

3 *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 7 p. 135.

4 *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 2 p. 755, Ḥadīth: 1325. Classed as sound by al-Albānī in *Takhrīj al-Mishkāt*, vol. 3 p. 1745.

5 *Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 6285.

6 *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 7 p. 107.

is a clear statement in which there is no ambiguity, and it cannot be interpreted in any other way. It is the statement that she is the best of the women of this ummah and the leader of the women of the people of paradise. Fāṭimah رضي الله عنها shared with her mother in this superiority, for she and her mother are the best of the women of the people of paradise, and she and her mother are the best of the women of this ummah. This is what the texts say.¹

With regard to what is narrated about the superiority of ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها in the ḥadīth:

The superiority of ‘Ā’ishah over other women is like the superiority of tharīd over all other kinds of food.

This wording does not imply absolute superiority. Ibn Ḥajar² said:

This does not imply that ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها is superior to all others, because the virtue of tharīd, in comparison to other foods, is that it is easy to cook and easy to digest, and it was the best of their food at that time. None of these attributes necessarily implies superiority in every way. It may be inferior to other types of food in other ways.³

So the ḥadīth indicates that ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها is superior to the women of this ummah except Khadījah and Fāṭimah, because of the evidence to that effect, which puts a limit on ‘Ā’ishah’s superiority.⁴

With regard to the ḥadīth of ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ, in which he asked Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم: “Who is the dearest to you?”, and he said: “‘Ā’ishah.”⁵

1 *al-‘Aqīdah fi Ahl al-Bayt*, p. 97.

2 *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 7 p. 107.

3 *op. cit.*, vol. 6 p. 447.

4 *al-‘Aqīdah fi Ahl al-Bayt*, p. 97.

5 *Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 4358.

Ibn Ḥibbān suggested that this was a question that was about his wives only, and he wrote this heading in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*:

Quoting a report and misinterpretation of one who does not have proper understanding of the science of ḥadīth.

Under this heading, he quoted the ḥadīth of ‘Amr رضي الله عنه as follows:

I said: “O Rasūl of Allah, who among the people is dearest to you?” He said: “‘Ā’ishah.” I said: “I do not mean women; rather I mean men.” He said: “Abū Bakr” or “Her father.”

Then Ibn Ḥibbān said:

I am going to quote the report indicating that the question was about his wives and not about women in general, such as Fāṭimah and others.

He narrated, with his chain of narration from Anas رضي الله عنه that the latter said:

The Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم was asked: “Who is the dearest of people to you?” He said: “‘Ā’ishah.” It was said to him: “We are not asking about your family.” He said: “Her father.”¹

Thus it is clear that ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها comes after Khadījah and Fāṭimah رضي الله عنها in virtue, so all the reports that indicate her superiority in general are to be understood in light of the reports about Khadījah and Fāṭimah رضي الله عنها which limit that superiority. No doubt ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها had many virtues, such as her knowledge, which were exclusively hers and which she did not share with Khadījah and Fāṭimah رضي الله عنها, but the fact that a virtue is proven does not necessarily mean that she was superior in every aspect.²

1 *Al-Ihsān fī Tartīb Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, vol. 9 p. 11.

2 *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 7 p. 108; *al-‘Aqīdah fī Ahl al-Bayt*, p. 98.

Whatever the case, the superiority of one of them over another does not undermine the lesser one; rather this is the greatest evidence of the high status of these three women, Fāṭimah, Khadījah and ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, as the difference of opinion is not about the fact that these women are the best of the women of this ummah. What harm does it do to the Mother of the Believers ‘Ā’ishah if she is the third of the women of this ummah in virtue? Is this a call to respect and honour her or to undermine and slander her, as the Rāfiḍī Shī‘ah do?¹

Did ‘Ā’ishah, the Mother of the Believers, regard it as permissible to fight the Muslims at the Battle of the Camel?

We have seen above that she did not set out to do that, and she did not want to fight. Al-Zuḥrī narrated that she said after the Battle of the Camel:

I wanted my status to prevent people from fighting, and I did not think that there would be any fighting among the people. If I had known that, I would never have adopted this stance.²

The view that ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا regarded fighting Muslims as permissible is false and cannot stand up to the sound reports showing that ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا only went out in order to set things straight, as we have seen. In fact, this opinion stems from the reports which were fabricated by the Rāfiḍī Shī‘ah, which distorted the history of early Islam and described what took place between ‘Alī and Ṭalḥah, Zubayr and ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا as civil war.

Some researchers were influenced by these reports to the extent that one of them said that ‘Ā’ishah was taken prisoner, and they present the issue as a civil war that was previously planned for. This is a view which is to be expected from researchers who took their information concerning this matter only from fabricated reports and sources that cannot be trusted, including the books *al-*

1 *al-Intiṣār lī al-Ṣaḥbi wa l-Āl*, p. 461.

2 al-Zuḥri: *al-Maghāzī*, p. 154.

Imāmah wa al-Siyāsah, al-Aghānī Murūj al-Dhahab and Tārīkh al-Ya‘qūbī, and even Tārīkh al-Tamaddun al-Islāmī by Georgy Zaydān.¹

Can this ḥadīth be true: “You will fight ‘Alī and you will be in the wrong”?

It is not to be found in any of the reliable books of knowledge, and it has no known chain of narrators; it is more likely to be found among the fabricated aḥādīth than among the sound ones. In fact, it is a blatant lie because ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها did not fight, and she did not go out to fight; she went out with the aim of setting things straight among the people. She did not fight, and she did not enjoin fighting. This has been stated by more than one of those who have knowledge of reports.²

Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī wanted to send ‘Ā’ishah back home honoured and respected

Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī رضي الله عنه prepared everything that ‘Ā’ishah needed of mounts, provisions and so on, and he sent with her those who had survived of the people who had come out with her, except for those who wanted to stay. He chose forty well-known women of Baṣrah to accompany her, and he said:

Get ready, O Muḥammad (ibn al-Hanafīyyah) to take her there.

On the day of her departure, ‘Alī رضي الله عنه came and stood. The people came, and she came out to the people; they bade farewell to her, and she bade farewell to them. She said:

O my sons, we got angry with one another because some of us thought that action should be taken more quickly. None of you should use recent events as a reason for transgressing others. By Allah, there was nothing between

1 See Muhammad Jamīl: *Dirāsah. wa Tahlīl līl-‘Ahd al-Nabawī al-Aṣīl*; Riyāq Ṭsā: *al-Ḥizbiyyah al-Siyāsiyyah; al-Ḥarīm as-Siyāsi; al-Nabī wa al-Nisā*; Wellhausen: *al-Dawlah al-‘Arabiyyah* - quoted in *Dawr al-Mar’ah al-Siyāsiyyah*, p. 442.

2 *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, vol. 2 p. 185.

me and ‘Alī in the past except what there may be between a woman and her in-laws. For me, despite this misunderstanding, he is one of the best.

‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said:

O people, she has spoken the truth, and by Allah, she has been sincere. There is nothing between me and her except that (meaning that which there may be between a woman and her in-laws). She is the wife of your Rasūl صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in this world and the hereafter.

She departed on a Saturday at the beginning of the month of Rajab in 36 AH. ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ walked with her for many miles, and he sent his sons to walk with her for a day.¹

By this noble treatment on the part of Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, we see that he was following the advice of Rasūl صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ of this ummah when he had said to him:

“There is going to be some issue between you and ‘Ā’ishah.” ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ asked: “Me, O Rasūl of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ?” He said: “Yes.” ‘Alī asked again: “Me?” He again said: “Yes.” ‘Alī then said: “Then I must be the most doomed of all, O Rasūl of Allah.” Rasūl صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: “No, but if that happens, send her back to her safe place.”²

Those people were mistaken who said that ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا went out on a campaign to Baṣrah because she had a grudge against ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ due to his stance towards her when the hypocrites accused her of immorality during the incident of the slander. At that time, Rasūl صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ had consulted him with regard to leaving her, and ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ had said:

O Rasūl of Allah, Allah has not made things restricted for you, and there are many women other than her. If you ask her slave woman, she will tell you the truth.³

1 *Tarīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5 p. 581.

2 *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 6 p. 393. Its chain of narration is reliable.

3 *Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 4786.

‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said these words to show more care to Rasūl صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ because he saw the worries and distress that he was suffering due to what was being said. ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was a man of strong protective jealousy, so he thought that if Rasūl صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ separated from ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, the anxiety that he was feeling because of her would be eased until her innocence was established, at which time he could take her back. This may have been a case of choosing the lesser of two evils so as to ward off the greater.¹

Al-Nawawī said:

‘Alī thought that this was in the Rasūl’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ best interests, because he saw how distressed he was. He tried to offer the best advice, as he wanted to put his mind at rest.²

‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ did not say anything bad about ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا that would give the slightest indication that he doubted her morals. Even though he said to Rasūl صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: “Allah has not made things restricted for you”³, he followed that by advising him: “If you ask her slave woman, she will tell you the truth.”⁴

He recommended that he investigate before separating from her; in other words, he retracted his first advice to separate from her and suggested that instead of that, he could ask the slave woman and find out truth.⁵

The Rasūl of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ asked the slave woman, who was very close to ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, and she confirmed that she did not know anything but good about her.

On the same day, the Rasūl of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ went out to the people to ask for support against ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ubay, saying:

1 *Dawr al-Mar’ah al-Siyāsiyyah*, p. 462.

2 *Sharḥ al-Nawawī ‘alā Ṣaḥīḥ. Muslim*, vol. 5 p. 634.

3 *Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 4786.

4 *Ibid.*

5 *Dawr al-Mar’ah al-Siyāsiyyah*, p. 462.

O Muslims, who will support me against a man who has offended me with regard to my family? By Allah, I know nothing but good about my family.¹

Therefore ‘Alī’s advice was in ‘Ā’ishah’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا best interest, as Rasūl صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ became more convinced of what he already believed about his wife’s innocence.²

‘Alī’s attitude concerning the slander incident was not something that made ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا angry with him or made her carry a grudge that led her to falsely accuse him of murdering ‘Uthmān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and go out inciting huge numbers of Muslims against him, as claimed by many researchers who based their claims on the reports fabricated by Rāfiḍī Shī‘ah.

Their regret for what they had done

Ibn Taymiyyah said:

That was the case for all the Ṣaḥābah who got involved; they regretted the fighting in which they engaged. Ṭalḥah, Zubayr, ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and others all regretted it. On the day of the Camel, none of them intended to fight, but fighting broke out against their wishes.³

- a. It was narrated that when ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ looked and saw that men had drawn their swords and started to fight, he said:

Would that I had died twenty years before this.⁴

- b. Na‘īm ibn Ḥammād narrated, with his chain of narration going back to Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī, that he said to Sulaymān ibn Ṣard:

1 *Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 4786.

2 *Dawr al-Mar’ah as-Siyāsi*, p. 462.

3 *al-Muntaqa min Minhāj al-I’tidāl fī Naqd Kalām Ahl ar-Rafḍ wal-I’tizāl*, p. 222.

4 Na‘īm ibn Ḥammād: *al-Fitan*, vol. 1 p. 80.

I saw ‘Alī, when the fighting grew intense, staying close to me and saying:
“O Ḥasan, would that I had died twenty years before this.”¹

c. It was narrated that Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī said:

Amīr al-Mu‘minīn ‘Alī عليه السلام wanted one thing, but matters spun out of control, and he could not do anything about it.²

d. It was narrated from Sulaymān ibn Ṣard, from al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī, that he heard ‘Alī عليه السلام say, when he saw the swords that the people were wielding:

O Ḥasan, would that I had died twenty or forty years before this.³

e. With regard to ‘Ā’ishah, it was narrated that she used to say, when remembering the Battle of the Camel:

Would that I had stayed away like my co-wives. It would have been dearer to me to give birth to many children from the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم all of them like ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Hishām or ‘Abd Allāh ibn Zubayr.⁴

f. When she recited the verse in which Allah says:

وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ

*And stay in your houses...*⁵

she would weep until her head cover became wet.⁶

1 ibid.

2 op. cit., vol. 1 p. 81.

3 *Aḥdāth wa Aḥādīth Fitnah al-Ḥarj*, p. 217.

4 Na‘īm ibn Ḥammād: *al-Fitan*, vol. 1 p. 81.

5 Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 33.

6 *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 2 p. 177; *Al-Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 8 p. 81.

g. ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها said:

Would that I had twenty children from the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم all of them like ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Hishām, and I had been bereft of them, and that I did not do what I did on the day of the Camel.¹

h. Ibn Taymiyyah said:

‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها did not fight, and she did not go out to fight; she went out with the aim of setting things straight among the Muslims. She thought that her going out was in the Muslims’ best interests, and then later it became clear that not going out would have been better. When she remembered going out, she would weep until her head cover became wet. This is how the majority of the earliest Muslims were; they regretted the fighting in which they had become involved. Ṭalḥah, Zubayr, ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and others regretted it. On the day of the Camel, the people had no intention of fighting, but fighting broke out against their wishes.²

i. Al-Dhahabī said:

No doubt ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها completely regretted going out to Baṣrah and being present on the day of the Camel, and she did not think that the matter would reach the point it did.³

1 Al-Bāqillānī: *Al-Tamhīd*, p. 232. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Hishām al-Makhzūmī was one of the noble men of Banū Makhzūm; he died before Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه.

2 *Al-Muntaqā min Minhāj al-I’tidāl fī Naqd Kalām Ahl al-Rifd*, p. 222,223.

3 *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’* vol. 2 p. 177.

The life and martyrdom of Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām

His full name was Abū ‘Abd Allāh Zubayr ibn ‘Awwām ibn Khuwaylid ibn Asad ibn ‘Abd al-‘Uzza ibn Qusayy ibn Kilāb al-Qurashī al-Asadī.¹

He shared a common ancestor with Rasūl ﷺ Qusayy, and he was the disciple of the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ and the son of his paternal aunt. His mother was Safiyyah bint ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib. He was one of the ten whom Rasūl ﷺ testified would be in paradise and one of the members of the consultative committee.²

He became Muslim when he was a young man, at the age of sixteen,³ and he was tortured because of that. It was narrated that Zubayr’s paternal uncle used to roll him up in a mat and hang it up, and then he would light a fire underneath so that the smoke would reach him. His uncle would tell him to go back to disbelief, but Zubayr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ would say:

I will never go back to disbelief.⁴

He never missed any campaign that was led by the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ.⁵

The first one to unsheathe his sword for the sake of Allah

It was narrated that Sa‘īd ibn al-Musayyab said:

The first one to unsheathe his sword for the sake of Allah was Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām. While Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām was taking a nap, he heard someone shouting that the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ had been killed, so he came out of his house unsheathing and brandishing his sword. He was met head-on

1 *al-Iṣābah*, vol. 1 p. 526-528.

2 *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 3 p. 100; *al-Iṣābah*, vol. 1 p. 526-528.

3 *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 1 p. 41.

4 *Al-Ṭabrānī: al-Kabīr*, vol. 1 p. 122.

5 *Siyar al-Salaf*, vol. 1 p. 226. The report is mursal.

by the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ who said: “What is the matter, O Zubayr?” He said: “I heard that you had been killed.” Rasūl ﷺ said: “What were you going to do?” He said: “By Allah, I was going to take revenge on all the people of Makkah.” Rasūl ﷺ prayed for good for him.

Sa‘īd said:

I am certain that the Rasūl’s prayer for him will not be overlooked by Allah.¹

His migration to Abyssinia

When the persecution of the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ and Ṣaḥābah by Quraysh grew intense, he suggested to them that they should migrate to Abyssinia, where they could live under care of the Negus, the just king. They stayed with him in the best land and under the best care, and they remained there safe and secure until an Abyssinian man came to fight Negus for his kingdom. The Muslims grieved deeply; they were afraid that this new man would prevail and would not recognise the virtue and status of the pure Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ.

The Ṣaḥābah wanted to find out about the conflict that was taking place between the Negus and that man on the other side of the Nile.² Umm Salamah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا said:

The Ṣaḥābah of the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ said: “Who will go out to see the battle and bring back news?” Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām said: “I will.” They said: “You?”, because he was the youngest of the people. They inflated a water skin for him, and he put it under his chest; then he swam across until he reached that point of the Nile where the people had met (in battle). He continued until he reached them. Meanwhile we prayed to Allah to give Negus victory over his enemy and to establish him in his own country. By Allah, we were doing that, waiting for what might happen, when Zubayr

1 *Fadā’il al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 2 p. 914, Ḥadīth: 1260. Its chain of narration is weak reliable because of corroborating evidence.

2 Ibn Hisham: *as-Sīrah*, vol. 1 p. 279; *Aṣḥāb ar-Rasūl*, vol. 1 p. 274.

ﷺ came running, waving his garment and saying: “Be of good cheer. Negus has prevailed, and Allah has destroyed his enemies and established him in his land.”¹

After Zubayr رضي الله عنه returned from Abyssinia to Makkah, he stayed under the care of the beloved Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم learning from him the principles, commands and prohibitions of Islam. When the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم migrated to Madīnah, Zubayr رضي الله عنه was among those who migrated there.

At the Battle of Badr

Zubayr رضي الله عنه was a courageous horseman and fearless hero. He did not stay behind from any military campaign; he was present on every campaign and at every battle. He possessed extraordinary courage, rare heroism, utter sincerity and devotion to making the word of truth reign supreme.²

Zubayr رضي الله عنه sacrificed a great deal for the sake of Allah and dedicated his life and his wealth to Allah, so Allah honoured him and raised his status in this world and in the hereafter. It was narrated that ‘Urwah said:

On the day of Badr, Zubayr رضي الله عنه was wearing a yellow turban, and Jibra’īl came down in the same dress as Zubayr.³

What a great virtue, which cannot be rivalled by all the adornments of this world.

It was narrated that Zubayr رضي الله عنه said:

On the day of Badr, I met ‘Ubaydah ibn Sa’īd ibn al-‘Āṣ, who was so heavily armed that nothing could be seen except his eyes. He was known by the kunyah Abū Dhāt al-Kursh. He said: “I am Abū Dhāt d-Kursh.” I charged at

1 Ibn Hisham: *as-Sīrah an-Nabawīyyah*, vol. 1 p. 279.

2 Riyad ‘Abd Allāh: *Ahl al-Shūrā’ al-Sittah*, p. 67.

3 Al-Ṭabrānī: *al-Kabīr*, no. 230 - its chain of narration is mursal sound; *Sīyar A’lam al-Nubalā’*, vol. 1 p. 46.

him and stabbed him in the eye. I put my foot on him, then I pulled my spear out, and I had to use great force in order to pull it out, because both ends were bent. The Rasūl of Allah ﷺ asked for the spear, and I gave it to him.

When the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ passed away, Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ took the spear back; then Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ asked for it, and he gave it to him. When Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ passed away, ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ asked for it, and he gave it to him. When ‘Uthmān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was killed, it remained with the family of ‘Alī, رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ then ‘Abd Allāh ibn Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ asked for it, and it was with him when he was killed.¹

This report shows us the precision of Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ in hitting the target. He was able to aim his spear at the eye of Abū Dhāt al-Kursh, even though that space was very narrow and his attention divided between attacking and defending himself.

Killing that man was near impossible because he had protected his body with so much armour, but Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ managed to hit him in the eye, and that was the end of him. The wound was very deep, which is indicative of Zubayr’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ physical strength, in addition to his precision and skill in hitting the target.²

On the day of Badr, there were two knights of the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ: Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām on the cavalry of the right flank and al-Miqdād ibn al-Aswad on the cavalry of the left.³

At the battle of Uḥud

Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said:

On the day of Uḥud, Rasūl ﷺ mentioned both of his parents to me. (In other words, he said: “May my father and mother be sacrificed for you”).⁴

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Maghāzī, Ḥadīth: 3998

2 *Al-Tarīkh al-Islāmī*, vol. 4 p. 163.

3 *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 1 p. 46; the report is mursal.

4 *Fadā’il al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 2 p. 918, Ḥadīth: 1267. Its chain of narration is sound.

This indicates that he was skillful in fighting and strong during that battle. He رضي الله عنه displayed great steadfastness, resolve and love of martyrdom for the sake of Allah. He described for us what Abū Dujānah al-Anṣārī did during that battle. When the two armies met and the fighting grew intense, the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم began to encourage his Ṣaḥābah and boost their morale. He picked up a sword and said: “Who will take this from me?” They stretched out their hands, each man among them, including Zubayr, saying, “Me!” He said: ‘Who will take it and give it its due?’ The people withdrew their hands, but Simāk ibn Kharashah Abū Dujānah said: “What is its due, O Rasūl of Allah?” He said: “That you should strike the enemy with it until is bent.” He said: “I will take it and give it its due.” He gave it to him, and he was a courageous man who walked with pride in battle. When the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم saw him walking with pride among the ranks, he said: “This is a way of walking that Allah hates except in this situation.”¹

Zubayr ibn al-ʿAwwām described what Abū Dujānah did on the day of Uḥud, saying:

I felt upset when I asked the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم for the sword and he withheld it from me, giving it to Abū Dujānah and not me. I decided that, by Allah, I would watch what Abū Dujānah did. I followed him, and he took out a red headband of his and wrapped it around his head. The Anṣār said: “Abū Dujānah has taken out the headband of death (meaning that he wants to fight to the death).” He killed every person that he engaged in combat. Among the polytheists, there was a man who would not leave any wounded person without finishing him off. The two of them began to draw close to one another, and I prayed to Allah to bring them together. They met, and each dealt a blow to the other. The polytheist struck Abū Dujānah, who protected himself with his shield; the polytheist’s sword got stuck in the shield, and Abū Dujānah struck him and killed him. Then I saw him holding his sword over the head of Hind bint ʿUtbah, but he moved his sword away from her, and I said: “Allah and His Rasūl know best.”²

1 *Muslim*, Kitāb Fadaʿil al-Ṣaḥābah, Ḥadīth: 2470.

2 *al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah*, vol. 4 p. 18.

Ibn Ishāq said:

Abū Dujānah said: “I saw someone urging the people on, so I charged at him and wielded my sword at him, and he screamed. Then I realised that it was a woman, and I respected the sword of the Rasūl of Allah too much to strike a woman with it.”¹

It was narrated from Hishām, from his father, that ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا said:

O son of my sister, your forefathers - meaning Zubayr and Abū Bakr - were among:

الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْقَرْحُ

*Those who answered (the Call of) Allah and the Rasūl (Muḥammad) after being wounded.*²

When the polytheists left Uḥud, and there befell Rasūl صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and his Ṣaḥābah what befell them, Rasūl صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was worried lest the polytheists come back. He said:

Who will go out and follow the tracks of these people, so that they may know that we still have power?

Abū Bakr, Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا and seventy others volunteered. They went out and followed the tracks of the polytheists, who left when they heard about them. Allah said:

فَأَنْقَلَبُوا بِنِعْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلٍ لَّمْ يَمَسَّسْهُمْ سُوءٌ

*So they returned with grace and bounty from Allah. No harm touched them³ (and they did not meet any enemy).*⁴

1 ibid.

2 Surah, Āl Imrān: 172.

3 Surah, Āl Imrān: 174.

4 Bukhārī, Ḥadīth: 4077.

When Ḥamzah ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭālib رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was martyred at Uḥud, Umm Zubayr Safiyyah bint ‘Abd al-Muṭṭālib came to look at her brother. He had been mutilated by the polytheists; they had cut off his nose, opened his belly and cut off his ears and genitals. The Rasūl of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said to her son Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām:

Go and find her, and send her back, lest she see what has happened to her brother.

Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said to her:

O my mother, the Rasūl of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ is telling you to go back.

She said:

Why? We heard that my brother has been mutilated, but that was for the sake of Allah, so we are content with what has happened, and we will seek reward and be patient, Allah willing.

When Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ came to the Rasūl of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and told him that, he said: “Let her go.” So she went and looked at Ḥamzah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. She prayed for him and said: “Verily to Allah do we belong, and unto Him is our return.” She also prayed for forgiveness for him.¹

According to another report from ‘Urwah, he said:

My father, Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, told me that when the battle of Uḥud took place, a woman came walking. When she was about to reach the place where they were, Rasūl صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ did not want her to see them, so he said: “The woman! The woman!” Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: “I thought she was my mother, Safiyyah, so I went out and rushed towards her. I caught up with her before she reached the slain, but she shoved me in the chest, and she was a strong woman. She said: “Get out of my way, and may you perish!” I said: “The Rasūl of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ is insisting that you (should not see the dead).” She stopped and

1 Ibn Hisham: *al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyah*, vol. 3 p. 108.

took out two pieces of cloth saying: “These are two pieces of cloth that I have brought for my brother Ḥamzah.” Beside him there was a man of the Anṣār who had been killed, and the same had been done to him as had been to Ḥamzah. We did not think it was right to shroud Ḥamzah in two pieces of cloth when the Anṣārī did not have any shroud, so we said: “One cloth for Ḥamzah and one for the Anṣārī.” We measured them, and we found that one piece was larger than the other, so we cast lots between them, and we shrouded each one in the cloth that was picked for him.”¹

During the Battle of the Trench: “Each Rasūl has a disciple, and my disciple is Zubayr.”

The Rasūl of Allah ﷺ said on the day of the Trench: “Who will bring me news of Banū Qurayḍhah?” Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: “I will.” So he went on a horse and brought news of them. Rasūl ﷺ said that a second time and Zubayr said again: “I will.” The same thing happened a third time and Rasūl ﷺ said: “Each Rasūl has a disciple, and my disciple is Zubayr.”²

What is meant by his words “my disciple is Zubayr” is “the closest to me of my Ṣaḥābah and supporters”. The same Arabic word (*hawārī*) is used to refer to the disciples or Ṣaḥābah of ‘Īsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ those who were his inner circle and supporters. The helper or disciple is one who offers support and is a close companion. This ḥadīth refers to this great virtue by which Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was distinguished. Hence when ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ heard a man saying:

I am the son of the disciple.

He said:

If you are one of sons of Zubayr, that is correct; otherwise it is not.³

1 *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 3 p. 34; *al-Mawsū‘ah al-Ḥadithiyyah*. Its chain of narration is reliable.

2 *Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 2414.

3 *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah*, Ḥadīth: 12219. Sound.

In *Umdat al-Qārī fī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* by al-‘Aynī, it says:

If you say: all of the Ṣaḥābah are supporters of the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ and close to him, so why is Zubayr singled out for this title? We would say: “He said this on the day of the Trench, when Rasūl ﷺ asked: ‘Who will bring me news of the people?’ and Zubayr said: ‘I will.’ That happened three times, and undoubtedly on that occasion he offered more support than anyone else.”¹

On the day of the Trench, the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ said to him:

May my father and mother be sacrificed for you.

It was narrated that ‘Abd Allāh ibn Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said:

On the day of the Trench, ‘Umar ibn Abī Salamah and I were put in charge of the women. I looked and saw Zubayr on his horse, going through the area of Banū Qurayḍhah two or three times. When I went back, I said: O my father, I saw you going a few times.” He said: “Did you see me, O my son?” I said: “Yes.” He said: “The Rasūl of Allah ﷺ said: ‘Who will go to Banū Qurayḍhah and bring me news of them?’ so I went out, and when I came back, the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ mentioned me and his parents in the same sentence, saying: ‘May my father and mother be sacrificed for you.’”²

This ḥadīth clearly indicates the virtue of Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, because the words spoken by the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ in, which he expressed his appreciation for his actions and the high esteem in which he held him, are only said to a person whom one respects and for whom one would sacrifice oneself or the dearest of one’s family.³

1 *‘Umdat al-Qārī*, vol. 19 Ḥadīth: 2239.

2 *Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 3720.

3 *Tuḥfat al-Aḥwadhī*, vol. 10 p. 246.

At the Battle of the Trench, Zubayr رضي الله عنه earned an immortal badge of honour which will last until the end of time:

Each Rasūl had a disciple, and my disciple is Zubayr.¹

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم described Zubayr رضي الله عنه as a disciple, which has a profound and far reaching meaning. The one who studies this meaning will understand all the ramifications of this word disciple (hawārī), and its secrets and depths. Those who are in greatest need of paying such attention to these meanings are the scholars, the callers to Islam and the educators. Islamic da‘wah requires the preparation of helper’s and disciples who will present a living example, because a practical example is more powerful and effective in spreading principles and ideas.

It is an embodiment and practical implementation of those ideas that can easily be seen and followed, because true disciples follow the Sunnah of Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم and obey his commands.²

As it says in the ḥadīth:

There is no Rasūl whom Allah sent to any nation before me who did not have from among his nation helper’s and Ṣaḥābah who followed his way and obeyed his commands.³

It is the nature of things that the da‘wah will go through trials and tribulations and be tested by means of both friends and enemies. Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم was keen to guide the Muslims with regard to these variables and developments, so he said:

Then there will come after them generations who say what they do not do and do what they do not believe.⁴

1 *Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 2414.

2 *Saḥīḥ Muslim bī Sharḥ al-Nawawī*, vol. 2 p. 26, 27.

3 *Al-A’dhamī, Dirāsāt Tarbawiyah*, p. 206.

4 *Saḥīḥ. Muslim bī Sharḥ al-Nawawī*, vol. 2 p. 26, 27.

What is the mission of the disciple? Setting a good example of applied faith, sincerity and sacrifice are among the most prominent attributes of the disciples; thus they are a true example of the heirs of the messengers. They strive to spread the truth and goodness, to guide the ummah and to lead it out of its backwardness. They sacrifice everything precious for the sake of Allah, in order to bring back the vitality and radiance of Islam at time when those with little ambition do not care about anything but their personal interests.¹

Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ is a brilliant example of embodiment of these principles. He grew up in the lap of da‘wah, under the care of Rasūl صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and received a proper education that enabled him to carry its burdens from an early age. Zubayr’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ attitude at the Battle of the Trench shows us his character and his upbringing in the qualities of courage, support and love of Rasūl صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

History shows us that he was a man of difficult missions, imbued with qualities of courage and bravery, so he was given the mission of finding out enemy secrets. What happened to Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ indicates that it is prescribed to divide tasks among the people of da‘wah according to their sincerity, spirit of sacrifice, talents and abilities.²

Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ took part in all the campaigns of Rasūl صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and carried out honourable exploits. At the time of the Rightly Guided Khulafā’ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ, he was one of the pillars of the state during the major conquests.

At the Battle of Yarmūk

It was narrated from ‘Urwah that the Ṣaḥābah of the Rasūl of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said to Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ on the day of Yarmūk: “Why do you not charge, and we will charge with you?” He said: “If I charge, you will let me down.” They said: “We will not do that.” So he charged at the enemy, penetrating their ranks passing through them,

1 *Dirāsāt Tarbawīyyah fil-Aḥādīth an-Nabawīyyah*, p. 207.

2 *Dirāsāt Tarbawīyyah*, p. 208.

but there was no one with him. He came back, and they took hold of his reins and struck him twice on his shoulder, and one of them struck a wound that he had received on the day Badr. ‘Urwah said: “I used to put my fingers in those scars when I was small, playing with them.”

‘Urwah also said: “‘Abd Allāh ibn Zubayr رضي الله عنه was with him that day, and he was ten years old. He put him on a horse and entrusted him to a man to look after him.”¹

Al-Dhahabī said in *al-Siyar*, commenting:

This battle was al-Yamāmah, Allah willing, because at that time ‘Abd Allāh was ten years old.²

Ibn Kathīr said that the battle was Yarmūk, but there is no reason why it could not have happened on both occasions.

Ibn Kathīr said:

Among those who were present at Yarmūk was Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām رضي الله عنه, who was the best of the Ṣaḥābah there; he was a brave and courageous knight. A number of heroes rallied around him on that day and said: “Why do you not attack, and we will attack with you?” He said: “You will not be steadfast.” They said: “Yes, we will.” So he attacked, and they attacked, but they stopped when they were met by the Byzantine ranks. He went ahead and penetrated the Byzantine ranks until he came out the other side and returned to his Ṣaḥābah. Then they came to him again, and the same happened as had happened the first time. On that day, he received two wounds between his shoulders, and according to another report, he was injured.³

Ibn Kathīr said on another occasion:

1 *Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 3975.

2 *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 1 p. 63.

3 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 1 p. 63.

He went out with the people to Syria as a fighter of jihad; he was present at Yarmūk, and they were honoured by his presence. He performed brilliant acts of courage on that day, penetrating the Byzantine ranks twice from front to back.¹

The conquest of Egypt

When ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ رضي الله عنه went to conquer Egypt, he did not have sufficient forces, so he wrote to ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه asking for support and reinforcements. ‘Umar رضي الله عنه was worried about the small number of ‘Amr’s forces, so he sent Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām with twelve thousand men. It was also said that ‘Umar sent four thousand led by the great Ṣaḥābah Zubayr, al-Miqdād ibn al-Aswad, ‘Ubādah ibn al-Ṣāmit and Maslamah ibn Makhlad. (Other narrators said that Khārījāh ibn Hudhāfah was the fourth.) He wrote to ‘Amr:

I have sent to you four thousand men, each thousand of whom is led by a man who is equal to a thousand.

Zubayr رضي الله عنه was the leader of those men.²

When Zubayr رضي الله عنه reached ‘Amr, he found him besieging the fortress of Babylon. Zubayr رضي الله عنه quickly mounted his horse and went around the trench surrounding the fortress, then he spread his men out around the trench. The siege lasted for seven months, then Zubayr رضي الله عنه was told that there was a plague inside it. He said:

We have come to stab and plague them.³

Conquest was slow for ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ رضي الله عنه, so Zubayr رضي الله عنه said:

I will offer myself for the sake of Allah hoping that Allah may grant victory thereby to the Muslims.

1 op. cit., vol. 7 p. 260.

2 *Futūn Miṣr wa al-Maghrib*, p. 61; *Qā’dat Faṭḥ al-Shām wa Miṣr*, p. 208-226.

3 *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 1 p. 55.

He set up a ladder against the wall of the fortress, on the side of the market place of al-Ḥamām, and then he climbed up. He told them that when they heard his takbīr, they should all respond. It was not long before Zubayr رضي الله عنه was at the top of the fortress, shouting takbīr wielding his sword. The people began to climb up the ladder until ‘Amr told them not to; for fear that the ladder might break. When the Byzantines saw that the Arabs had captured the fortress, they withdrew. The fortress of Babylon opened its gates to the Muslims thus ending a decisive battle in the conquest of Egypt. The rare courage of Zubayr رضي الله عنه was the direct cause of the Muslims’ victory over Muqawqis.¹

The protective jealousy of Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām

It was narrated that Asmā’ bint Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq رضي الله عنه said:

When I got married to Zubayr رضي الله عنه, he owned nothing in this world apart from a camel for carrying water and a horse. I used to feed his horse, bring water, prepare his saddle and make dough, but I was not good at baking. Some women of the Anṣār who were my neighbours used to bake my bread for me, and they were good women. I used to bring the dates from some land which the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم had given to Zubayr رضي الله عنه, carrying them on my head. The land was two-thirds of a farsakh (approximately three miles) away. One day, I was corning with the dates on my head, and I met the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم with a group of the Anṣār. He called me and made his camel kneel down so that I could ride behind him. But I felt too shy to go with the men, and I remembered Zubayr رضي الله عنه and how jealous he was, for he was the most jealous of men. The Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم realised that I felt too shy, so he went on his way. I came to Zubayr and told him: “I met the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم while I was carrying the dates on my head, and there was a group of his Ṣaḥābah with him. He made his camel kneel down so that I could ride on it, but I felt too shy, because I remembered your jealousy.” He said: “By Allah, your having to carry the dates is harder for me than you riding with him.” Later on, Abū

1 *Qā’dat Fath al-Shām wa Miṣr*, p. 209-227. Muqawqis was the ruler of Egypt at that time. [Editor].

Bakr رضي الله عنه sent a servant who took care of the horse, and it was as if I had been set free from slavery.¹

Zubayr named his sons after martyred Ṣaḥābah

Due to of Zubayr's deep love of martyrdom, he named his sons after martyred Ṣaḥābah. Hishām ibn 'Urwah narrated that his father said:

Zubayr رضي الله عنه said: “Ṭalḥah named his sons after ambiyā' when he learnt that there would be no Rasūl after Muḥammad صلی الله علیه وسلم. But, I named my children after martyrs, in the hope that they will attain martyrdom: 'Abd Allāh after Abd Allāh ibn Jaḥsh, al-Mundhir after al-Mundhir ibn 'Amr, 'Urwah after 'Urwah ibn Mas'ūd, Ḥamzah after Ḥamzah, Ja'far after Ja'far ibn Abī Ṭālib, Muṣ'ab after Muṣ'ab ibn 'Umayr, 'Ubaydah after 'Ubaydah ibn al-Ḥārith, Khālīd after Khālīd ibn Sa'īd and 'Amr after 'Amr ibn Sa'īd ibn al-'Āṣ, who was killed at Yarmūk.²

Zubayr concealing acts of worship

Zubayr ibn al-'Awwām رضي الله عنه said:

If anyone can conceal any of these righteous deeds, let him do so.³

Poetry of Ḥassān ibn Thābit in praise of Zubayr

Zubayr passed by a gathering of the Ṣaḥābah of the Rasūl of Allah صلی الله علیه وسلم where Ḥassān was reciting his poetry to them, but they were not listening attentively to him. Zubayr رضي الله عنه sat down with them, and then he said:

Why do I see you not listening attentively to the poetry of ibn al-Furay'ah?
The Rasūl of Allah صلی الله علیه وسلم used to listen attentively to him, reward him generously and not get distracted from him.

1 *Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 2 p. 691; *Aṣḥāb al-Rasūl*, vol. 1 p. 281.

2 *Tarīkh al-Islām, 'Ahd al-Khulafā' al-Rāshidīn*, p. 505; *al-Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 3 p. 101.

3 Ibn al-Mubāarak: *al-Zuhd*, p. 392.

Then Ḥassān spoke in verse, praising Zubayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ in many lines in which he described his great commitment to Islam, his adherence to the way of the Rasūl of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and his sacrifice and service for Islam.¹

Generosity of Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām

It was narrated that ‘Urwah ibn Zubayr said:

Seven of the Ṣaḥābah appointed Zubayr to be the guardian of their children after they died, including ‘Uthmān, Ibn Mas‘ūd and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān. He would spend on the heirs from his own wealth and protect their wealth.²

This is an excellent example of generosity and sincerity that embodies noble ideals that will have a strong impression on the heart of every man of dignity. A person may show generosity time after time and then tire of it, but for this generous man to be in charge of spending on the heirs of many of the Ṣaḥābah and protecting their wealth is a unique example in real life and an indication of the sublime attitude that the Ṣaḥābah attained, may Allah be pleased with them.³

The time has come to depart ... and the Rasūl’s testimony of entering paradise

Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ left the Battle of the Camel during the first round, for reasons that we have explained above. When he left the battlefield, he was repeating these lines of poetry:

Giving up on things that I fear may have bad consequences, for the sake of Allah, is better in both worldly and religious terms.

It was also said that he spoke the following lines of verse:

1 *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 1 p. 56, 57.

2 *op. cit.*, vol. 1 p. 131.

3 *al-Tarikh al-Islāmī*, vol. 17 p. 131.

I know, and I hope that I will benefit from what I know, that life is very close to death.¹

After he left, he was followed by ‘Amr ibn Jurmūz, Faḍḍālah ibn Hābis and Nāfī’, along with a group of the evildoers of Banū Tamīm. It was said that when they caught up with him, they ganged up on him and killed him; it was also said that the one who caught up with him was ‘Amr ibn Jurmūz. ‘Amr said to him: “I need something from you.” He said: “Come closer.” The freed slave of Zubayr, whose name was ‘Ayṭah said: “He has a weapon!” He said: “Even so.” So he came to him and started talking to him, and it was time for prayer, so Zubayr رضي الله عنه said to him: “Let us pray.” He said: “Let us pray then.” Zubayr رضي الله عنه went forward to lead them both in prayer, and ‘Amr ibn Jurmūz stabbed him and killed him. It was also said that ‘Amr caught up with him while he was taking a nap in a valley that was known as Wādī al-Sibā’, and he attacked and killed him there. This is the most well-known version, and the poetry of his wife ‘Ātikah bint Zayd ibn ‘Amr ibn Nufayl testifies to that. She was the last of his wives; before him, she was married to ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه, who left her a widow when he was killed. Before ‘Umar رضي الله عنه, she was married to ‘Abd Allāh ibn Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, who was

also killed and left her a widow. When Zubayr was killed, she eulogised him in beautiful verse.²

When ‘Amr ibn Jurmūz killed Zubayr رضي الله عنه, he cut off his head and brought it to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, thinking that this would bring him closer to him. He asked for permission to enter, and ‘Alī رضي الله عنه said:

Give the killer of Safiyyah’s son (meaning Zubayr) the tidings of hell.

Then ‘Alī said:

1 *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 1 p. 60.

2 *al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 p. 261.

I heard the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ say: “Each Rasūl had a disciple, and my disciple is Zubayr.”¹

When ‘Alī رضي الله عنه saw the sword of Zubayr رضي الله عنه, he said:

How often this sword defended the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ and brought cheer to him.²

According to another report, Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī رضي الله عنه refused to let ibn Jurmūz enter upon him, and he said:

Give the killer of Safiyyah’s son the tidings of hell.³

It was said that ‘Amr ibn Jurmūz killed himself during ‘Alī’s reign; it was also said that he lived until Muṣ‘ab ibn Zubayr became governor of Iraq. He hid from him, and it was said to Muṣ‘ab:

‘Amr ibn Jurmūz is here and is in hiding. Do you want to capture him?

He said:

Let him show himself, for he is safe. By Allah, I am not going to kill him in retaliation for Zubayr, because he is too insignificant for me to make him equal to Zubayr.⁴

Rasūl ﷺ foretold that Zubayr رضي الله عنه would die as a martyr. It was narrated from Abū Hurayrah that the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ was once atop Mount Uḥud when the mountain shook. The Rasūl of Allah ﷺ said:

Be still, for there is no one on you but a Rasūl, a ṣiddīq and a martyr.

1 *Faḍā’il al-ṣaḥābah*, vol. 2 p. 920.

2 *al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 p. 261.

3 *al-Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 3 p. 105 - its chain of narration is reliable; ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd: *Khilāfat ‘Alī*, p. 164.

4 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 p. 261.

On top of the mountain were Rasūl ﷺ, Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنهم.¹

Al-Nawawī said:

This ḥadīth represents one of the miracles of the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ, for he foretold that these people would be martyrs, and all of them, except Rasūl ﷺ and Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه, died as martyrs. ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنهم were all killed unlawfully and died as martyrs. The deaths of the first three are well known. Zubayr رضي الله عنه was killed in Wādī al-Sibā’, near Baṣrah, as he was leaving the battlefield, not wanting to fight. Ṭalḥah also withdrew from the battle because he did not want to fight, but an arrow struck him and killed him. It is proven that whoever is killed unlawfully is a martyr.²

Al-Sha‘bī said:

I met five hundred or more of the Ṣaḥābah who said: ‘Alī, ‘Uthmān, Ṭalḥah and Zubayr رضي الله عنهم are in paradise.

Al-Dhahabī said:

I say: Because they are among the ten about whom it was testified that they would be in paradise; they were present at Badr, they were among the people who swore allegiance in the Pledge of Riḍwān; and they were among the foremost to embrace Islam,³ of whom Allah said that He is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. All four were killed and were granted martyrdom, so we love them and we hate the four who killed these four.⁴

1 *Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 2417.

2 *Sharḥ. an-Nawawī ‘ala Ṣaḥīḥi Muslim*, vol. 15 p. 271.

3 See at-Tawbah 9: 100.

4 *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 1 p. 62.

Zubayr's eagerness that his debts should be paid off when he died

It was narrated that 'Abd Allāh ibn Zubayr رضي الله عنه said:

On the day of the Camel, Zubayr رضي الله عنه left instructions that I was to pay off his debts. He said: "If you have any difficulty in doing so, then seek help from my Master." By Allah, I did not understand what he meant until I said: "O my father, who is your Master?" He said: "Allah is my Master; I never had any difficulty paying a debt but I would say: 'Master of Zubayr, pay it off on his behalf' and He paid it off." The debt that he owed was that a man would come to him and give him some wealth as a trust, but Zubayr would say: "No; rather it is a loan, for I fear that it may be lost." When he was killed, he did not leave behind any dinars or dirhams, but he had a piece of land. I sold it and paid off his debts. The sons of Zubayr said: "Share out our inheritance." I said: "By Allah, I will not share it out among you until I announce for four years during the ḥajj season: If anyone has a debt owed by Zubayr رضي الله عنه, let him come to us so that we may pay it off."

He made this announcement every year during the ḥajj season, and then when four years had passed, he shared it out among them. Zubayr had four wives, and each wife got 1,200,000. The total sum of his wealth was 50,200,000.¹

The report of Bukhārī is to be understood as referring to the total of his wealth at the time of his death, which is different from the surplus that was left four years later.²

There a great deal of blessing in his estate,³ and Allah blessed his land after he died; his debt was paid off, and his wealth increased a great deal. From this story we learn a number of lessons:

a. Zubayr said to his son:

1 Bukharī, Ḥadīth: 3129.

2 Shadharāt al-Dhahab, vol. 1 p. 209.

3 Ibn Ḥajar: al-Ṣābah, vol. 2 p. 461.

O my son, if you have any difficulty in doing so (paying off the debts), then seek help from my Master.

This is an example of his deeply-rooted certainty and strong faith that resulted from sincere trust in Allah and turning to Him to meet his needs and relieve his distress. The true believer firmly believes that everything is in the hands of Allah. If he finds himself in hardship and distress, the first thing that crosses his mind is Allah and how He dominates and controls everything.

Those created beings that may have some connection to his situation are also in the hands of Allah, their hearts are in His hand, and He directs them as He wills. So the believer turns to Allah before anyone else asks Him to meet his needs and relieve his distress. Then he follows the principle of cause and effect that Allah has made a means of reaching the desired results, while believing that they are no more than means and that the One Who does and decrees things is Allah. He ﷺ is able to cause the means to have no impact, so that they do not lead to the usual results.¹

- b. Was Zubayr رضي الله عنه a wealthy man? From the text above, we see that Zubayr رضي الله عنه was not one of the wealthy who were known for their wealth. Instead, he felt a sense of hardship and was concerned about the trusts and debts that he owed; he was afraid that his land and property would not be sufficient to pay off all that he owed. This text also shows us that ‘Abd Allāh ibn Zubayr رضي الله عنه, like his father, was expecting that the debts would be more than the wealth and land. When his father asked him:

Do you think that what we owe will leave anything of our wealth?

‘Abd Allāh could not answer him. If he was expecting anything other than what his father was expecting, he would have given him an answer to put his mind at rest at this critical moment, to tell him that the matter was

1 *At-Tarikh al-Islami*, vol. 20 p. 309.

different from what he thought and was expecting; however, he went along with his father in his expectations. When Zubayr رضي الله عنه suggested seeking help from his Master, ‘Abd Allāh asked: “Who is your Master?” expecting him to mention some individual whom he could ask for help. No one can claim that ‘Abd Allāh was not aware of his father’s wealth or did not know about his property; because at that time ‘Abd Allāh was thirty-five years old, and a man that old is a great help to his father and knows all about his situation and wealth, especially if he is the oldest son. Zubayr’s رضي الله عنه question to his son: “Do you think that what we owe will leave anything of our wealth?” indicates that ‘Abd Allāh was aware of his father’s situation and finances. Indeed, Zubayr رضي الله عنه stated that the matter of paying off the debts was not easy, as he said:

Allah is my Master; I never had any difficulty paying a debt but I would say:
 “O Master of Zubayr, pay it off on his behalf,’ and He paid it off.¹

Another sign that Zubayr رضي الله عنه was not regarded as one of the rich and wealthy, and that what he expected with regard to the amount of his debts in comparison to his wealth was correct, is the fact that Ḥakīm ibn Ḥizām رضي الله عنه, the paternal cousin of Zubayr رضي الله عنه, met ‘Abd Allāh ibn Zubayr رضي الله عنه and said to him:

I do not think that you will be able to pay off all these debts. If you are unable to pay any of them, come to me for help.²

A fourth point is that ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ja‘far رضي الله عنه, who was owed four hundred thousand by Zubayr رضي الله عنه, came to ‘Abd Allāh ibn Zubayr رضي الله عنه and said: “If you wish, I will leave it for you.” ‘Abd Allāh ibn Zubayr رضي الله عنه said: “No.” ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ja‘far رضي الله عنه said: “Then if you wish, you may leave it and pay later than others.”³

1 *Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 3129.

2 *ibid.*

3 *ibid.*

This is testimony that two of the senior Ṣaḥābah expected that the property of Zubayr رضي الله عنه would not be enough to pay off all the debts that he owed, and that they regarded him as one who needed help. Moreover, those two were close to Zubayr رضي الله عنه and aware of his situation. One of them was Ḥakīm ibn Ḥizām رضي الله عنه, Zubayr's paternal cousin, the other was his maternal cousin, because the mother of Zubayr رضي الله عنه was Safiyyah bint 'Abd al-Muṭṭālib رضي الله عنها, the paternal aunt of Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم and he used to deal with him, giving and taking, borrowing and entrusting. These four points constitute evidence about which there is no doubt that Zubayr رضي الله عنه was not a wealthy man.¹

There were many rumours about the wealth of Zubayr رضي الله عنه and how rich he was, and there was a great deal of talk about his slaves and horses. In some sources, it says that he had a thousand slaves and that the thousand slaves used to pay him land tax every day, but that none of this wealth entered his house because he used to give it all in charity.²

The famous Orientalist Will Durant put the figure at ten thousand, saying:

Zubayr owned ten thousand slaves, and he added one thousand horses.³

Of course, this smart Orientalist omitted the part that says that he gave the land tax of his slaves in charity.⁴

This report cannot stand up to the report of Bukhārī, in which it says:

When Zubayr was killed, he did not leave behind any dinar or dirham, but there was some land which included al-Ghābah eleven houses in Madīnah, two houses in Baṣrah, a house in Kufah and a house in Egypt.⁵

1 'Abdul-'Adhīm ad-Dīb: *az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwām, ath-Tharwah wath-Thawrah*, p. 9.

2 *Siyar as-Salaf as-Ṣāliḥīn*, vol. 1 p. 227. There is some weakness in its chain of narration.

3 *az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwām, ath-Tharwah ath-Thawrah*, p. 11.

4 op. cit., p. 13.

5 *Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 3129.

The report is clear and states that he did not have anything except those properties, in the context of talking about the distress caused by debt and difficulties in seeking to pay it off.

If there were a thousand slaves, they would have been mentioned and their value estimated; was not one slave worth at least two thousand dirhams?¹

In that case, the value of the slaves alone would have covered almost the entire debt, and that is if we assume that there were only one thousand. If we go along with the wild exaggeration of Will Durant, which suggests that there were ten thousand slaves, this would mean rejecting Bukhārī's report completely, because ten thousand slaves and thousand horses, even if their price was low, would have been enough to pay off his debts and drown his heirs in a sea of wealth.

Zubayr رضي الله عنه would not have needed to say to his son: "One of my greatest worries is my debt"; or to ask him: "Do you think that what we owe will leave anything of our wealth?" to instruct him: "If you have any difficulty in doing so (paying off the debts), then seek help from my Master."²

Discussing the biographies of Zubayr, Ṭalḥah, 'Amr ibn al-ʿĀṣ, Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī and the Mother of the Believers 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها is in harmony with the aim of this book, which is to present the life and times of Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه. These individuals are focal points in his life and times, and their biographies have been distorted in history books and literary works that speak of internal conflict and turmoil.

It is essential to highlight their biographies, character and attitudes so that the reader will come away with correct knowledge and will not be influenced by weak reports or false that were fabricated by the Rāfiḍī Shī'ah historians to distort the

1 az-Zubayr ibn al- 'Awwām, *ath- Tharwah wath- Thawrah*, p. 14.

2 Bukhārī, Ḥadīth: 3129.

image of these noble characters. Talking about the biography of Zubayr رضي الله عنه and other senior Ṣaḥābah who contributed to the events that took place during the lifetime of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه is in harmony with the author’s aims and what he wants to convey in his study of the era of the Rightly Guided Khulafā’.

Biography and martyrdom of Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh رضي الله عنه

Ṭalḥah’s full name was Abū Muḥammad Ṭalḥah ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Amr ibn Ka‘b ibn Sa‘d ibn Taym ibn Murrah ibn Ka‘b ibn Lu‘ayy ibn Ghālib al-Qurashī al-Taymī.¹

He shares a common ancestor with Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم in Murrah ibn Ka‘b and with Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq in Taym ibn Murrah; the number of grandfathers they share is the same.²

His mother was al-Ṣa‘bah bint al-Ḥaḍramī, a woman from Yemen; she was the sister of al-‘Ala’ ibn al-Ḥaḍramī.³ She became Muslim and was a Companion of Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم, she also had the honour of migrating.⁴ Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه was one of the ten given the glad tidings of paradise, one of the first eight people to become Muslim, one of the five people who became Muslim at the hands of Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq رضي الله عنه and one of the six members of the consultative committee.⁵

His conversion to Islam, persecution and migration

Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh said:

I was at the market place in Buṣrā when a monk in his cell said: “Ask the people of this gathering whether there is among them any of the people of the sanctuary.” Ṭalḥah said: “Yes, me.” He said: “Has Aḥmad appeared yet?” I said: “Who is Aḥmad?” He said: “The son of ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib. This is the month in which he will appear, and he is the last of the ambiyā’. He will appear in the sanctuary and will migrate to (a place where there are) palm trees, lava fields and wet and salty land. Beware lest others believe in him before you.” I was moved by what he said, so I left quickly and came to

1 *al-Isābah*, vol. 2 p. 220; Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr: *al-Isti‘āb ‘ala Ḥāshiyat al-Iṣābah*.

2 *Faḥ al-Bārī*, vol. 7 p. 82.

3 *al-Iṣābah*, vol. 2 p. 220.

4 *op. cit.*, vol. 4 p. 337; *Faḥ al-Bārī*, vol. 7 p. 82.

5 al-Ḥākim: *al-Mustadrak*, vol. 3 p. 369; *Aqīdat Ahl as-Sunnah fiṣ-Ṣaḥābah* vol. 1 p. 228.

Makkah. I asked: “Is there any news?” They said: “Yes, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Amīn is claiming to be a Rasūl, and ibn Abī Quḥāfah (Abū Bakr) has become his follower.” I went out and entered upon Abū Bakr and said: “Have you become a follower of this man?” He said: “Yes. Go to him, enter upon him and follow him, for he is calling to the truth and to goodness.”

Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه told Abū Bakr what the monk had said Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه took him to the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم. Ṭalḥah became Muslim and told the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم about what the monk had said, and the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم was happy with that.

When Abū Bakr and Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh رضي الله عنهما became Muslim, Nawfal ibn Khuwaylid ibn al-‘Adawiyyah took them and tied them up with one rope, and Banū Taym did not protect them. Nawfal was called ‘the Lion of Quraysh’;

Hence Abū Bakr and Ṭalḥah were called ‘the pair tied together.’¹

Ṭalḥah was persecuted for the sake of Allah and was severely tortured by the polytheists and by his nearest kinsmen, but he persisted, patiently bearing the torture and persecution until Allah granted permission to migrate. When the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم set out to migrate to Madīnah, he was met by Ṭalḥah, who was coming from Syria with a caravan. He gave the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم and Abū Bakr some Syrian garments, and then went on to Makkah where he finished up his trade. After that, he left with the family of Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه and brought them to Madīnah. Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه was one of the earliest of those who migrated.²

When he came to Madīnah, the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم established brotherhood between him and Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī³ (or it was said Ka‘b ibn Mālik al-Anṣārī) when he established bonds of brother hood between the Muhājirīn and Anṣār.⁴

1 *al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 p. 258.

2 *op. cit.*, vol. 7 p. 285; *Firsān min ‘Aṣr an-Nubuwwah*, p. 225.

3 *al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 p. 258.

4 *Firsān min ‘Aṣr an-Nubuwwah*, p. 225; Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr: *al-Isti‘āb*

At the Battle of Badr

The Rasūl of Allah ﷺ was expecting a caravan to come to Quraysh from Syria, so he sent Ṭalḥah with Saʿd ibn Zayd, instructing them to find out where the caravan of Quraysh was and to bring him the news. They set out and reached al-Ḥawra', where they stayed until they saw the caravan pass by and take the coastal route then they went back to Madīnah with this news.

The Rasūl of Allah ﷺ had set out with the Muslims on the campaign of Badr, so they hastened to join the army. They did not get there in time for the battle, but the Rasūl of Allah allocated to them a share of the booty and a reward like that of those who had fought.¹

At the Battle of Uḥud

During this battle, Ṭalḥah performed a deed that made him deserve paradise. It was narrated that Jābir said:

On the day of Uḥud, when the people fled, the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ was on his own in some part of the battlefield with twelve men, including Ṭalḥah, and the polytheists caught up with him. Rasūl ﷺ said: "Who will confront these people?" Ṭalḥah said: "I will." He told him: "Stay where you are." One of the Anṣār said: "I will." and he fought until he was killed. Then the Rasūl turned and saw the polytheists and said: "Who will confront these people?" Ṭalḥah said: "I will." He told him: "Stay where you are." One of the Anṣār said: "I will." and fought until he was killed. It continued like that until only Ṭalḥah was left with the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ. He said: "Who will confront these people?" Ṭalḥah said: "I will." Ṭalḥah fought like the eleven before him, until his fingers were cut off, then he said: "That is enough for me." The Rasūl of Allah ﷺ said: "If you had said: 'In the name of Allah', the angels would have taken you up while the people were looking on." Then Allah drove back the polytheists.²

1 al-Ḥākim: *al-Mustadrak*, vol. 3 p. 369; *al-Isti'āb*, 4188.

2 *as-Silsilah aṭ-Ṣaḥīḥah*, no. 2171; the hadith is reliable when all its chains of narration are taken into account.

According to Aḥmad, Rasūl ﷺ said to him:

If you had said ‘In the name of Allah’, you would have seen a house built for you in paradise while you were still alive in this world.¹

It was narrated that Qays ibn Ḥāzim said:

I saw the paralysed hand of Ṭalḥah, with which he had protected Rasūl ﷺ on the day Uḥud.²

During that battle, he received thirty-nine or thirty-five wounds, and his fingers – the index finger and the one next to it – were paralysed.³

Abū Dawūd al-Ṭayālīsī narrated that ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها said:

When Abū Bakr remembered the day of Uḥud, he would say: ‘That day was all for Ṭalḥah.’⁴

It was narrated that ‘Ā’ishah and Umm Ishāq, the two daughters of Ṭalḥah, said:

Our father received twenty-four wounds on the day of Uḥud, among which a square cut on his head. His sciatic nerve was damaged and his fingers paralysed, the rest of the wounds were on his body. He fell unconscious, and the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ moved him backwards. Every time one of the polytheists drew near, Ṭalḥah fought to defend Rasūl ﷺ until his back was against the mountain.⁵

Rasūl ﷺ said:

Ṭalḥah did a deed that made paradise his due, when he did for the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ what he did.⁶

1 *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah*, Ḥadīth: 1294. Its chain of narration is sound.

2 *Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 4063.

3 *Bukhārī*, vol. 7 p. 361; *Aṣḥāb ar-Rasūl* vol. 1 p. 264.

4 *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 7 p. 361.

5 *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 1 p. 32.

6 *Al-Albānī: Ṣaḥīḥ. al-Jāmi’*, Ḥadīth: 2540.

A martyr walking on the face of the earth

It was narrated from Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه that the Rasūl Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم was once atop the mountain of Uḥud when it began shaking. The Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

Be still, for there is no one on you but a Rasūl, a Ṣiddīq and a martyr.

On it were Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, Ṭalḥah, Zubayr and Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqās رضي الله عنه.¹

After Ṭalḥah learned that he had been named as a martyr, news of glad tidings from the beloved, he continued seeking his martyrdom where it is usually sought. Thus he was present at every battle with Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم except for Badr;² as we have seen, he missed that because he had been sent on a mission by the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم. Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم said concerning him:

Whoever would like to see a martyr walking on the face of the earth, let him look at Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh.³

Among the believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allah

It was narrated from Mūsā and ‘Īsā, the sons of Ṭalḥah, from their father, that a Bedouin came and asked the Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم about who those “who have fulfilled their obligations”⁴ were. They did not usually ask him such questions, out of respect and awe. The Bedouin asked him, and Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم turned away

1 *Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 2417.

2 *Aṣḥāb al-Rasūl*, vol. 1 p. 260

3 Narrated by al-Tirmidhī and al-Ḥākim; classed as sound by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi‘*, 5962

4 The reference here is to the verse in which Allah says: (Among the believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allah [i.e.] they have gone out for *Jihād* (holy fighting), and showed not their backs to the disbelievers]; of them some have fulfilled their obligations [i.e. have been martyred]; and some of them are still waiting, but they have never changed [i.e. they never proved treacherous to their covenant which they concluded with Allah] in the least) (Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 23).

from him; he asked him again, and he turned away from him again. Ṭalḥah said: “Then I came in from the door of the masjid, and I was wearing a green garment. When the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ saw me, he said: ‘Where is the one who was asking about the one who fulfills his obligation?’ The Bedouin said: ‘It was me, O Rasūl of Allah.’ He said: ‘This is one of those who have fulfilled their obligation.’”¹

Ṭalḥah’s defence of his brothers and his thinking positively of them

It was narrated that Mālik ibn Abī ‘Āmir said:

A man came to Ṭalḥah and said: “What do you think about this Yemenī (Abū Hurayrah)? Is he more knowledgeable of the ḥadīth of the Rasūl of Allah than you? We hear things from him that we do not hear from you.” He said: “As to whether he heard things from the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ that we did not hear, there is no doubt about that. I will explain to you: we were people with families, and we only came to the Rasūl of Allah in the morning and in the evening, but Abū Hurayrah was a poor man with no wealth. He was the doorkeeper of the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ so, I do not doubt that he heard what we did not hear. Do you think that anyone who has anything good in him could fabricate things that the Rasūl of Allah ﷺ did not say?”²

Spending for the sake of Allah

It was narrated that Qubayṣah ibn Jābir said:

I accompanied Ṭalḥah, and I have never seen anyone who could give more generously without being asked than him.³

It was narrated from Mūsā from his father Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه, that when he received his share of wealth from Ḥadramawt, seven hundred thousand, he was restless all night and said:

1 Narrated by al-Tirmidhī with a reliable chain of narration, Ḥadīth: 3742.

2 *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 1 p. 37. Its chain of narration is reliable.

3 *Al-Ḥilyah*, vol. 1 p. 88; *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 1 p. 30.

What punishment could a man expect from his Lord when he spent all night with this money in his house?

His wife said:

How about some of your close friends? In the morning, call for some bowls and share it out.

He said to her:

May Allah have mercy on you. You are a guided daughter of a guided one. (She was Umm Kulthūm, the daughter of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq.)

The next morning, he called for some bowls and shared it out among the Muhājirīn and Anṣār, and he sent a bowl of it to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. Then Ṭalḥah’s wife said to him:

O Abū Muḥammad, do we not have a share of this wealth?

He said:

Where have you been all day? You can keep what is left.

She said:

There was a bundle in which there was approximately one thousand dirhams.¹

It was narrated that Ṭalḥah’s wife Su‘da bint ‘Awf al-Murriyyah said:

I entered upon Ṭalḥah one day when he was looking tired I said: “What is the matter with you? Are you upset with your wife (meaning herself)?” He said: “No, by Allah, what a good wife for a Muslim you are. I have money that is making me depressed.” I said: “What is bothering you? Share it among people.” He said: “O slave, call my people for me.”, and he shared

1 adh-Dhahabi: *Siyar A‘lām an-Nubala’*, vol. 1 p. 30, 31.

it out among them. I asked the storekeeper: “How much did he give?” He said: “Four hundred thousand.”¹

It was narrated from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī that Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh sold some land of his for seven hundred thousand; he could not sleep all night because of fear of that wealth, until he distributed it the next morning.²

It was narrated that ‘Alī ibn Zayd said:

A Bedouin came to Ṭalḥah to ask him for something, approaching him on the basis of his ties of kinship Ṭalḥah said: “No one asked me on the basis of his ties of kinship before you. I have some land for which ‘Uthmān offered me three hundred thousand; go and take it, or if you wish, I can sell it to ‘Uthmān and give you the money.” He said: “(I will take) the money.” So he gave it to him. He did not leave anyone among Banu Taym poor; he would give him what he needed to pay off his debts. He used to send ten thousand every year to ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها, the Mother of the believers.³

He was Ṭalḥah the good, who gave in abundance, Ṭalḥah the generous.⁴ The Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم called him ‘the generous’ because of his generous giving and spending on good causes. Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥākim narrated, with his chain of narration going back to Mūsā ibn Ṭalḥah, that on the day of Dhū Qard,⁵ Ṭalḥah slaughtered a camel and dug a well to provide them with food and water, and Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

O Ṭalḥah the generous.⁶

1 *Majma’ az-Zawā’id*, vol. 9 p. 148. Al-Haythami said: It was narrated by al-Ṭabarān, and its men are trustworthy.

2 *Siyar A’lām an-Nubala’*, vol. 1 p. 32.

3 op. cit., vol. 1 p. 31.

4 *Tarīkh al-Islām, ‘Ahd al-Khulafā’ al-Rāshidīn*, p. 527.

5 Dhū Qard: a water source two days distance from Madīnah, between it and Khaybar. *Al-Nihāyah*, vol. 4 p. 37.

6 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 p. 258.

Unique and beautiful sayings of Ṭalḥah

Among his sayings were: “The least shame for a man is his staying at home.¹ It was also narrated that he said: “Clothing shows the blessings of Allah and kind treatment of a servant suppresses enemies.”² Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه had deep insight into people’s natures and qualities. He never consulted a miserly man when he wanted to uphold ties of kinship with people, and he never consulted a coward with regard to matters of war.³

Martyrdom of Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh

On the day of the Battle of the Camel, after ‘Alī رضي الله عنه met and talked to him, Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه withdrew and stood in one of the lines. A stray arrow hit him on the knee; it was also suggested that it hit him on his neck, but the former is better known. The arrow hit the side of his horse as well as his leg, and the horse reared and nearly threw him off. He started calling:

Come to me, slaves of Allah.

A freed slave of his caught up with him and rode behind him; he took him to Baṣrah, and Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه died in a house there. It was also suggested that he died in the battle and that when ‘Alī رضي الله عنه walked among the slain, he saw him and began to wipe the dust from his face,⁴ saying:

It is hard for me, O Abū Muḥammad, to see you lying slain in these valleys.

According to this version, ‘Alī رضي الله عنه also said:

To Allah I complain of my sorrow and sadness.

1 *Al-Mustadrak*, vol. 3 p. 347. The ḥadīth has a sound chain of narration, although they (*Bukhārī* and *Muslim*) did not narrate it. *Mukhtasar Tarīkh Dimashq* vol. 11 p. 203. Meaning that isolating oneself shows a lack of interest (in Muslim affairs).

2 *Firsān min ‘Aṣr al-Nubuwwah*, p. 237.

3 *ibid.*

4 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 p. 258.

He prayed for mercy for him and said:

Would that I had died twenty years before this.¹

Undoubtedly Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh رضي الله عنه one of the people of paradise. Al-Tirmidhī narrated, with his chain of narration going back to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf رضي الله عنه, that he said:

The Rasūl of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said : “Abū Bakr will be in paradise, ‘Umar will be in paradise, ‘Uthmān will be in paradise, ‘Alī will be in paradise, Ṭalḥah and Sa’d will be in paradise, Sa’īd will be in paradise, Abū ‘Ubaydah will be in paradise, Zubayr and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf will be in paradise.

Then he said:

This ḥadīth was narrated from ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ḥumayd from his father from Sa’īd ibn Zayd from Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم.²

This ḥadīth clearly speaks of the virtue of Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه, as Rasūl صلى الله عليه وسلم testified he would be one of the people of paradise. What a sublime testimony this is, for it tells of his being blessed in this world and in the hereafter.³

Allah preserved his body after he died

Allah preserved the body of Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh رضي الله عنه after he died. His grave was opened more than thirty years later so that they could move him to another place, and no part of him had changed except for a few hairs on one side of his beard. It was narrated that al-Muthanna ibn Sa’īd said:

A man came to ‘Ā’ishah bint Ṭalḥah and said: “I saw Ṭalḥah in a dream, and he said: ‘Tell ‘Ā’ishah to move me from this place, for the moisture or water

1 *Tārīkh al-Islām, ‘Ahd al-Khulafā’ al-Rāshidīn*, p. 528.

2 Narrated by Abū Dawūd, Ḥadīth: 4649; Tirmidhī, Ḥadīth: 3757. A reliable hadith.

3 *‘Aqīdah Ahl al-Sunnah*, vol. 1 p. 293.

is bothering me.” So she rode with her entourage, and they erected a tent over his grave and exhumed him. No part of him had changed except for a few hairs on one side of his beard, or on his head. And that was thirty-some years (after his death).¹

May Allah be pleased with Ṭalḥah and all the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم.

Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqās prayed against those who impugned ‘Uthmān ‘Alī, Ṭalḥah and Zubayr

It was narrated from Sa’d ibn al-Musāyib that a man used to impugn Ṭalḥah, Zubayr, ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī رضي الله عنهم. Sa’d told him to stop, saying: “Do not impugn my brothers.” The man refused to stop, so Sa’d stood up and prayed two rak‘ah, then he said:

O Allah, if what he says displeases You, then show me a sign today and make an example of him.

The man went out, and there was a camel driver going through crowds of people. A camel stumbled on a stone and fell on him, and he was crushed to death between the camel’s chest and the ground. Sa’d ibn al- Musayyib said:

I saw the people following Sa’d and saying: “Congratulations to you, O Abū Ishāq, for your prayer was answered.”²



1 *Aṣḥāb ar-Rasūl*, vol. 1 p. 270.

2 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 p. 259.