Abu Bakr’s Caliphate

It was a Monday morning, when the people of Medina heard of the Apostle of God's death. They rushed toward the mosque. 'Umar addressed the Muslims assembled at the gate of the mosque and denied the death of the Prophet. He threatened the hypocrites who claimed that the Messenger of God had died with punishment after he returned from his temporary absence. 'Abbas, the Prophet's uncle contradicted 'Umar and urged people to proceed with burying the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A) as if it were as they were saying (that the Prophet was not really dead), it would be easy for God to open his tomb and bring him out.1

Later Abu Bakr arrived, and having looked at the Prophet's body contradicted 'Umar, too and silenced him by reciting this verse, ﴿Muhammad is but an apostle, apostles have passed before him. If he dies or slain, will you turn back on your heels.﴾ (Q: 3/144).

The Prophet's close kin: 'Ali, 'Abbas and his two sons Fadhl and Qutham, and two of his clients: Usama and Shuqran took charge of washing the Prophet's body. Aws b. Khawali, a Medinan veteran of the Battle of Badr adjured 'Ali to let him join. He gave him permission to enter. 'Ali drew the Apostle's body on his heart, and 'Abbas and Fadhl poured the water over him. While 'Ali washed him, having drawn him towards his breast and said, “Dearer than my father and my mother, how sweet you are alive and dead!” After they had washed the Prophet's body, they wrapped him in three garments: two of the Suhar made and a stripped mantle wrapped the one over the other.

There were two gravediggers in Medina, the Emigrant, Abu 'Ubayda, who followed the Meccan practice, and the Helper, Abu Talha b. Zayd b. Sahl, who dug according to the Medinan practice, making a niche (lahd). 'Abbas called two men and sent one of them to Abu 'Ubayda and the other to Abu Talha. Abu 'Ubayda could not be found, but the one sent to Abu Talha found him and thus he dug the grave with the niche according to the Medinan practice.

Then, the people came to visit the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A), praying over him by companies. No one led the funeral prayers. Had Abu Bakr been present in the funeral, he would have wished to lead the funeral prayers as the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) had done for his martyred Companions, but it is doubtful whether Abu Bakr and 'Umar even went to pay their last respects to the Prophet (S.A.W.A). The washing of the body and digging the grave took place on Monday. His close kin decided to bury him in his house. While they were ready to bury him, the bed was inclined at the foot end and was lowered from there into the grave and buried. 'Ali, 'Abbas, Fadhl, Qutham and Shuqran descended into the grave and buried the Messenger of

God (S.A.W.A.).2

The Meccan Emigrants ran off busily engaging in their political machinations. Only the Helpers showed some concern, and Aws b. Khawali was allowed to join the kin. The Meccan Abu 'Ubayda could not be found, because he was occupied with Abu Bakr and 'Umar scheming to seize power.

While people had assembled at the gate of the mosque discussing the Prophet's death, someone came to Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and told them that the Helpers with their noble men had assembled at the Saqifa (Hall) of Banu Sa'ida. 'Umar suggested that they go to 'our brethren' the Helpers. On the way there, they met two 'upright' men3 of them who told them about the plotting of the Helpers and advised them to turn back and settle their own affairs, but 'Umar insisted on proceeding. They took Abu 'Ubayda with them. We are not sure whether these three (or four) Emigrants at the Saqifa assembly act spontaneously or according to a concentrated plan.

The fundamental account about the assembly at the Saqifa, in which the succession of Abu Bakr to the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) was decided, goes back to 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas. He narrated that on the last pilgrimage led by 'Umar that is in Dhu al-Hijja 23 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Awf visited 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas at Mina. Moreover, he reported him that a man approached the caliph and addressed him, “What are you going to do about a man who says, 'By God, if 'Umar to die, I would swear allegiance to So-and-so. By God, the oath of the allegiance for Abu Bakr was merely a precipitate deal (falta) which then was carried out'.”

When they returned to Medina at the end of Dhu al- Hijja on the Friday 'Umar sat on the pulpit and prayed God as was fitting and said, “I am about to say to you something which God has willed that I should say and I do not know whether perhaps it is my last utterance.” He continued, “God sent Muhammad and sent down the scripture to him. Part of what He sent down was the passage of stoning; we read it, and we were taught it, and we heeded it. The Messenger of God (S.A.W.S.)4 stoned (adulterers) and we stoned them after him. I fear that in time to come men will say that they find no mention of stoning in God's book and thereby go astray by neglecting an ordinance, which God has sent down. Then we read in what we read from God's book, 'Do not desire to have ancestors other than your own for it is infidelity to do so.' I have heard that someone said, 'If 'Umar were dead I would hail So-and-so. Do not let a man deceive himself by saying that acceptance to Abu Bakr was a precipitate deal which was carried out. Admittedly, it was that, but God averted the evil of it. He who accepts a man as ruler without consulting the Muslims, such acceptance has no validity for either of them: they are in danger of being killed. What happened was that when

God took away His Apostle (S.A.W.S.) the Helpers opposed us and gathered with their chiefs in the Saqifa of Banu Sa'ida; and 'Ali and al-Zubayr and their companions withdrew from us; while the Emigrants gathered to Abu Bakr."

"I told Abu Bakr that we should go to our brothers the Helpers, so we went off to go to them when two honest fellows met us and told us of the conclusion the people had come to. They asked us where we were going, and when we told them, they said that there was no need for us to approach them and we must make our decision. I said, 'By God, we will go to them', and we found them in the Saqifa of Banu Sa'ida. In the middle of them was a man wrapped up. In answer to my inquiries, they said that he was Sa'd b. 'Ubada and that he was ill. When we sat down their speaker pronounced the shihada, and praised God as was fitting and then continued, 'We are God's Helpers and the squadron of Islam. You, O the Emigrants, are a family of ours, and a company of your people has come to settle'. ('Umar) said, 'and lo, they were trying to cut us off from our origin and wrest authority from us.'[5] When he had finished I wanted to speak, for I had prepared a speech in my mind, which pleased me much. I wanted to produce it before Abu Bakr and I was trying to soften a certain asperity of this; but Abu Bakr said, 'Gently, 'Umar!' I did not like to anger him and so he spoke. He was a man with more knowledge and dignity than I was, and by God, he did not omit a single word, which I had thought of, and he uttered it in his inimitable way better than I could have done. He (Abu Bakr) said, 'All the good that you said about yourselves is deserved, but the Arabs will recognize authority only in this clan of Quraysh, they being the best of Arabs in blood and country. I offer you one of these two men: accept which you please.' Thus saying he took hold of my hand and that of Abu 'Ubayda who was sitting between us. Nothing he said displeased me more than that. By God, I would rather have come forward and have had my head struck off -if that were no sin- than rule over a people of whom Abu Bakr was one. One man of the Helpers said, 'I am the rubbing post and the fruitful propped-up palm. Let us have one ruler and you another, O Quraysh.' Altercation waxed hotter and voices were raised until when a complete breach was to be feared. I said, 'Stretch out your hand, Abu Bakr.' He did so and I paid him homage; the Emigrants followed and then the Helpers. (In doing so) we jumped on Sa'd b. 'Ubada and someone said that we had killed him. I said, 'God kill him'."[6]

'Umar concluded, "By God, we did not find any case stronger than for the oath of allegiance to Abu Bakr. We feared that if we left the people without any pledge of allegiance they might, after our departure, suddenly make a pledge we would then have either to follow them in with which we were not pleased, or to oppose them, and evil would have resulted."[7]

'Umar judged the outcome of the Saqifa assembly to be a precipitate deal (falta) because of

the absence of most of the prominent Emigrants, including the Prophet's own family and clan, whose participation was vital for any legitimate consultation. That the Emigrants at that time joined Abu Bakr was an obscurity on 'Umar's part. Aside from Abu Bakr, 'Umar and his friend Abu 'Ubayda certainly none of the prominent Meccan Companions was present at the Saqifa meeting.

Another reason for 'Umar to criticize the Saqifa, as a falta was its turbulent and undignified end, as he and his followers jumped upon the sick Khazraji leader Sa'd b. 'Ubada in order to teach him a lesson for daring to challenge the sole right of Quraysh to rule! This break-up of the meeting indicates that, the Helpers could not all have been swayed by the wisdom and the eloquence of Abu Bakr's speech and have accepted him as the best choice for the succession. There would have been no sense in beating up the Khazraji chief if every body had come around to swearing allegiance to 'Umar's candidate. Moreover, many of the Helpers failed to pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr at the Saqifa assembly. They shouted, “We will not swear allegiance to any one but 'Ali”8

'Umar's justification of the quick election of Abu Bakr, in what amounted to a falta, because of the danger that the Helpers might otherwise have swore allegiance to someone with whom the Emigrants would not have been pleased, raises another question. The Helpers might have put forward 'Ali that worried the few Emigrants present at the Saqifa and induced them to act without proposing a broad consultation of all the concerned. Both Abu Bakr and 'Umar were present at Ghadir Khumm and heard the Prophet's will and famous sentence concerning 'Ali, and they greeted him with the title of the Commander of the Faithful (Amir al-Mum’nin), nevertheless Abu Bakr in his speech did everything to avoid the case of 'Ali being raised. He based the right of Quraysh to rule, not due their relationship to the Prophet but solely on the claim that all the Arabs would obey them.

Abu Bakr wished to continue the commonwealth founded by the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A) and expand its authority over the Arabs and, as far as possible, beyond Arabs. If it was not to fall apart, the Prophet must have a political successor and he decided to be the man who succeeds the Prophet. He also recognized that he would have to neutralize potentially strong opposition in order to realize his ambition.

Most obviously the Prophet's family (ahl al-bayt), who had been accorded a rank above the rest of the Muslims by the Holy Qur'an, would have to be prevented from putting forward their claim. The initiative of the Helpers gave him the opportunity he was looking for. He provoked the falta by proposing two candidates for election in a maneuver to have proposed himself. He was well aware that neither of the two candidates had a chance of being accepted. When

'Umar offered Abu Bakr the handshake of allegiance, he did not hesitate a moment to accept. He had what he wanted.

In Medina, 'Umar took charge of securing the pledge of allegiance of all residents. He dominated the streets with the help of the Aslam and then the 'Abd al-Ashhal of Aws who, in contrast to the majority of Khazraj, quickly became vigorous champions of the new regime. Then they rushed towards the house of Fatima, who was bereaved of her father's death, and the Companion al-Zubayr with some of the other Emigrants had assembled there. 'Umar came to the house and told, “By God, I will set the house on fire, unless you come out and swear allegiance to Abu Bakr.”9 Then he broke into the house. Fatima came out and told them, “By God, you should go out of my house, or I will unveil my hair and bewail before God.”10

Crucial for Abu Bakr was gaining the allegiance of the Meccan Quraysh. With the loyalty of the Helpers in doubt and many of the Arab tribes deserting, only Mecca, the former enemy city, which had submitted to the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) just two years before, could now save the Islamic commonwealth. The Islamic state was henceforth, to be based on the rule of Quraysh over all Arabs. Their right to rule in the name of Islam derived from the claim that the Arabs would not obey anyone else.

The Meccan had thus little reason to question the continuation of the Islamic government in principle or to long for their former state of independence. Abu Bakr had safeguarded their innate right by thwarting the ambitions of the Helpers. The Helpers with whose backing the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A) had been able to humiliate them, would be put to their proper place and become like the rest of Arabs, subject to Quraysh.

The two most powerful clans of Quraysh, Makhzum and 'Abd Shams were given preference. Among Abu Bakr's commanders in the ridda wars, were 'Ikrima b. Abi Jahl of Makhzum and Yazid b. Abi Sufyan of Umayyad, sons of the two former leaders of Meccan opposition to the Prophet. Yet their dominant position under Abu Bakr is put in proper relief by the complete exclusion of the Helpers from leadership and the greatly reduced role of the early Emigrants.

When Abu Bakr later laid plans for the conquest of Syria, he appointed Khalid b. Sa'id b. al-'As. The reason for this was that he was an Umayyad. When he was dismissed because of 'Umar's strong representations against him, Abu Bakr replaced him by the Umayyad Yazid b. Abi Sufyan. It is evident that the caliph intended to give the 'Abd Shams a stake in the conquest of Syria. With the Muslim armies mostly under the command of the Meccan aristocracy, Medina was virtually at the mercy of the Prophet's recent enemies.

Abu Bakr's resolute rejection of 'Umar's demands for the dismissal, or at least censure, of Khalid b. Walid for his un-Islamic execution of Malik b. Nuwayra,11 may have been motivated

by more than just the recognition of his superior quality as a military leader. Yet Abu Bakr could also be greatly confident that the Meccan leaders would co-operate, realizing that they profit more than any one else from the Quraysh caliphate in the name of Islam.

It was the declared intention of Abu Bakr to follow as caliph the policies and practices of the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A) in every respect, but following the practice and precedents set by the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) in every respect was most difficult to maintain in his treatment to the Prophet's kin, the Banu Hashim.

It was evident that the primary purpose of establishing caliphate rule on a sound basis was inconsistent with maintaining the privileged status of the Prophet's household (ahl al-bayt), of applying the Qur'anic rules of inheritance to them, and to continuing to pay their Qur'anic share of the war booty and the fay'. Abu Bakr's solution was both radical and ingenious. When Fatima came to claim her inheritance from the Prophet (S.A.W.A), and in particular, his land in Fadak and Khaybar, he told her that he had heard the Prophet say, “We [the prophets] do not leave heirs, whatever we leave is alms (sadaqa).

The family of Muhammad can eat from this property.” Abu Bakr's initiative reply implied, not only had the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) disinherited his family, he had also specifically affirmed that after his death his family should, if needed, accept alms, which he had strictly forbidden them during his life because of their status of purity. As recipients of alms like ordinary Muslims, there was also no longer any justification for paying them their Qur'anic share of booty and fay'. While the Prophet's daughter and kin were thus disinherited and demoted from their rank of religious purity, his widows were treated comparatively better. To 'A’isha, as Muhammad's wife and daughter of his successor, belonged the first place. Abu Bakr granted her some lands in the 'Aliya quarters of Medina and in Bahrayn.12 Abu Bakr's policy of isolating the Banu Hashim proved a full success. The Banu Hashim found them in a situation strangely reminiscent of the boycott that the pagan Meccans organized against them.13 Fatima lived a short time after her father: seventy-five or forty days.14 By the time of Fatima's death, Abu Bakr's victory seemed complete. Yet the news of it and of her secret burial at night, in order to prevent the caliph's attendance, must have shocked him.

The election of Abu Bakr, in the Saqifa, had no foundation in the Holy Qur'an and the practice of the Prophet (S.A.W.A.).

1. The Holy Qur'an implicitly refers to 'Ali b. Abi Talib as the wali of the faithful15 and the Messenger of God explicitly had appointed him as his successor in many occasions,16 especially in Ghadir Khumm, about two months before his death,17 therefore Abu Bakr did

everything to avoid the case of 'Ali being raised in the Saqifa.

2. Abu Bakr's argument in the Saqifa about the privilege of Quraysh ”as they being the best of the Arabs in blood and country”18 had no basis in the Holy Qur'an and the customs. During the Prophet's mission, the majority of Quraysh were his harshest enemies and the Holy Qur'an obviously condemned polytheists. The Emigrants, those who left their homes to join the Prophet (S.A.W.A) in Medina in support of the cause of Islam, were greatly praised in the Holy Qur'an, given hope for God's mercy. ﴿Indeed those who have become faithful and those who have migrated and waged jihad in the way of Allah, it is they who expect Allah's mercy, Allah is All-forgiving, All-merciful.﴾ (Q: 2/218).

By the Emigrants, the Holy Qur'an meant not only the Meccan Quraysh Emigrants, but also equally Bedouin tribesmen and others who joined the Prophet from all over Arabia. Nowhere in the Holy Qur'an were the Emigrants given a preferred rank over the Helpers. Moreover, God says, ﴿O humankind! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and make nations and tribes that you identify with one another. Indeed the nobler of you in the sight of Allah, is the most God-fearing of you.﴾ (Q: 49/13).

3. It was not based on seniority. Abu Bakr's father, Abu Qahafa, was older than his son was.

4. It was not based on meritocracy; here we refer only to one tradition out of innumerable traditinons on 'Ali's merits. While Mu'awiya was in pilgrimage, he saw Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas. He took his hand and said, “O Abu Ishaq! These battles prevented us from the pilgrimage, and we were about to forget its practices (sunnas). Now get up and circumambulate so that I can follow you.” As Mu'awiya finished circumambulting, he took Sa'd with him to his council chamber, and seated him on his seat.

Then he began speaking evil of 'Ali and cursing him. Sa'd said to him, “Have you brought me to your house and seated me on your seat to speak evil of 'Ali and curse him? By God, he possessed three virtues that if I had one of them it would be worthier to me than all the properties under the sun”. During the raid on Tabuk, the Prophet told him, “Are you not content, 'Ali, to stand to me as Aaron to Moses, except that there will be any prophets after me?” On Khaybar Day, concerning 'Ali, he told, “If Allah wills, tomorrow I will give the standard to a man who is an assailant not a runaway, he loves Allah and His Apostle; and Allah and His Apostle love him. He will not come back until Allah conquers by his means.” If it were about me, it was better for me than all that is under the sun. If I were the Prophet's son-in-law and I had children like 'Ali's children, it would be worthier to me than all the things under the sun. I will not enter a house with you from now on. Then he shook his mantle and went out.19

5. Before his death, Abu Bakr said, “I wish I had not committed three acts. I wish I had not

broken into Fatima's house even if it had been closed to us for fighting. I wished I had not burned al-Fuj'at or al-Fujah al-Sullami alive. I wish I had killed him or made him free. I wish, on the Saqifa Day, I had submitted caliphate to 'Umar or Abu 'Ubayda, so as one of them had been emir and I had been his vizier." Then he rose up his hands and said, "I wish I had asked the Prophet about the matter of caliphate; to whom did it belong so as the people did not argue about it?"20

6. The Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) had not appointed Abu Bakr his successor. People first thought that the Prophet had appointed him, but 'Umar said before he died, "If I appoint a successor, one who was better than I [Abu Bakr] did so; and if I leave them, one better than I [the Prophet] did so.21 Moreover, in the Saqifa, Abu Bakr himself proposed 'Umar and Abu 'Ubayda as the Prophet's successor.

Thus, what was the reason for Abu Bakr's election?

Abu Bakr was a clever politician, he had decided no doubt well before the Prophet's death to be his successor. It was a close co-operation between Abu Bakr and 'Umar initiated in the lifetime of the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A). Their daughters, 'A'isha and Hafsa were the Prophet's wives and kept their fathers informed about every move and secret thought of their husband, the Prophet. It was 'A'isha and Hafsa, who informed their fathers of the Prophet's serious illness, which kept him away from leading the communal prayer in the mosque.22 Abu Bakr and 'Umar were also aware of Quraysh's enmity towards the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) and 'Ali. The assembly in the Saqifa gave them the opportunity to make their wishes true and seize power. They argued everything in Saqifa, but the God and His Apostle's will about the succession to the Prophet.

The author says,

"It is curious that among one hundred and twenty four thousand [sic] people present at the Ghadir Khumm all had become extinct and deceased during this year; even no one existed to mention the story of Ghadir Khumm to the people assembled in the Saqifa."23

Before answering this question, we would better review these verses from the Holy Qur'an, ﴿He said, "Indeed We tried your people in your absence, and the Samiri24 had led them astray." Thereupon Moses returned to his people, indignant and grieved. He said, "O my people! Did not your Lord give you a true promise? Did the promise [of my absence] seem too long to you? Or did you desire that your Lord's wrath should descend on you, and so you failed your tryst with me."﴾ (Q: 20/85-86).

Then, ﴿He said, "O Aaron! What kept you, when you saw them going astray, from following me? Did you disobey my command?" He said, "O son of my mother! Do not hold my beard! I feared

lest you should say, you have caused a rift among the Children of Israel, and did not heed my word”.﴾ (Q: 20/92- 94).

Therefore, it is not curious. When the Samiri made a golden calf, the Children of Israel turned against God and made for the calf; even no one said, “Our Lord is Allah the All-beneficent.” In the Saqifa the Helpers shouted, “We will not swear allegiance to any one, but 'Ali.”25 Thereupon altercation waxed hotter and voices were raised. They jumped on the Helper's leader, Sa'd b. 'Ubada, and they were about to kill him. They threw the scene into turmoil and no one could express his idea. It was in such a situation that these three Emigrants could forward their plot.

He also says, “If 'Ali had any reason for his caliphate based on the Holy Qur'an or Ghadir tradition or if he thought he was appointed by God or His Apostle, he would not disobey them. He should follow the Prophet who proclaimed his mission by himself, without any fear of the Polytheists. He was as forward-looking as the Messenger of God that he did not find it convenient to draw sword against his enemies. 'Ali always obeys God's orders. 'Ali does not disregard the compulsory duties. 'Ali does not fear the human beings. 'Ali does not …”26

Yes, brother, you are right, but let us first tell a story from Sahihayn: ”A wolf abducted two boys, each the son of a different woman, and only one survived the ordeal. The two women then went to Dawud, each claiming the survivor was her son. Dawud was about to award the child without further ado to the older and more insistent of the woman, when Sulayman proposed that the object of the dispute be bisected and one half be awarded to each of the claimants. The suggestion was accepted by the older woman, but rejected by the younger, who renounced her claim rather than seeing harm come to the child. The veracity of her claim and the falsity of her rival's thus became apparent.”27

'Ali's love for Islam was not less than the mother's love for her child. About his background in Islam, he says, “You know my position of close kinship and special relationship with the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A). When I was, only a child he took me over. He used to press me to his chest, lay me beside him in his bed, touch his body with mine and make me smell his sweet smell. He used to chew a thing and then fed me with it. He found no lie in my speaking, nor weakness in my act.

From the time his weaning, Allah had put a great angle with him to take him along the path of high character and good behavior throughout day and night, while I would follow him like a young camel following in the footprints of its mother. Every day he would show me in the form of a banner some of his high traits and commanded me to follow it. Every year he used to go in seclusion to the hill of Hira' where I saw him but no one else saw him. In those days, Islam did

not exist in any house except that of the Messenger of God and Khadijah while I was the third after those two.

I used to see and watch the effulgence of divine revelation and message, and smelt the scent of prophet-hood. When the revelation descended on the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.), I heard the moan of Satan. I said, “O Messenger of God what is this moan?” He replied, “This is the moan of Satan who has lost all hopes of being worshipped. O 'Ali you see all that I see and you hear all that I hear, except that you are not a prophet.”28

When the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) died, the decisive dangers were threatening Islam. The liars Musaylama al-Hanafi and al-Aswad al-'Ansi claimed to be prophets. The hypocrites inside Medina and the new converted tribes outside Medina were looking for an opportunity to rise up against Islam and annihilate it. 'Ali b. Abi Talib faced with two problems: The problem of losing his legitimate right and the problem of vanishing Islam. He realized that Islam was more important than his right. Therefore, he renounced his claim rather than seeing harm to Islam. He found that endurance thereon was wiser. Therefore, he adopted patience “although there was mote in the eyes and suffocation in the throat”.29

Notes

1. al-San'ani, 5: 433 - 5; Baladhuri, Ansab, 2: 243.

2. Baladhuri, Ansab, 2: 245.

3. They were 'Uwaym b. Sa'ida and Ma'an b. 'Adi who were opponents to Sa'd b. 'Ubada and friends to Abu Bakr. See Ibn Abi al-Hadid (d. 656/1258) Sharh Nahj al-balagha, ed. Muhammad Abu al-Fadhl Ibrahim, reprint Qumm, 1404. 6: 6.

4. (S.A.W.S.) = Sall Allah 'alayhi wa sallam.

5. The Helpers, unlike many of the Arab tribes involved in ridda, were firm in their Muslim faith; no doubt considered their allegiance to the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) as lapsing on his death. Expecting the political community founded by the Prophet to fall apart, they met to restore their control over their own city. This is why they met without consulting the Emigrants. They assumed that the Emigrants, having no longer any good reason to remain in Medina, would return home to Mecca. Those who might wish to remain would presumably accept the rule of the Helpers. The suggestion that the Helpers and the Emigrants should each choose a leader for themselves was evidently meant as a fair compromise proposal rather than a devious plot to split the Muslim community. See Madelung, 31.

6. Ibn Hisham, 4: 306-310; Guillaume, 683-688.

7. Tabari, Ta'rikh, 4: 1823.

8. Ibid, 4: 1818.

9. Tabari, Ta'rikh, 4: 1818.

10. Ya'qubi, 2: 126.

11. Malik b. Nuwayra was the tax collector of his people. Upon the Prophet's death, he did not hand over to Medina the camels, which he had collected as sadaqa, but instead he gave them back to his fellow-tribesmen. When Abu Bakr learned of Malik's deed he was furious, and had Khalid b. Walid promise before God that he would kill Malik if he could lay hand on him. As Khalid was advancing through the Najd, having conquered some rebellious tribes, one of his detachments came upon a group of Yarbu'is among whom, was Malik b. Nuwayra. The Yarbu'is offered no resistance, declared that they were Muslims, and were taken to Khalid's camp at Butah, where they were executed as rebels. Some of the captors, chiefly the Helper Abu Qatada, tried to prevent the execution by arguing that the captives were inviolable, since they had declared themselves Muslims and performed the ritual prayer. Khalid, however, disregarded these arguments, ordered the execution, and married Malik's widow. When 'Umar learned Khalid's conduct, he pressed Abu Bakr in vain to punish him, or at least to dismiss him. Eventually Abu Bakr openly forgave Khalid after having heard his version of the story. (See Ibn Athir, 2: 358-9; Ella Landau-Tasseron, “Malik b. Nuwayra”, in Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd edition.)

12. Ibn Shabba, 1: 187

13. Madelung, 44.

14. On Fatima's funeral, 'Ali addressing the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) said, “O the Apostle of God, peace be upon you from me and from your daughter who has come to you and who has hastened to meet you. Certainly, your daughter would apprise you of joining your umma (community) for oppressing her. You ask her in detail and get the news about the position. This has happened when long time had not elapsed and your remembrance had not disappeared. See Nahj al-balagha, 1:443.

15. See above, 46.

16. See above, 11-12, 26, 30.

17. See above, 34.

18. See above, 63.

19. Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, 7: 341.

20. Tabari, Ta’rikh, 4: 2140 - 41.

21. Ibn Athir 3: 65.

22. See above, 37.

23. Salimi, 44.

24. Cf. The Old Testament, Exodus 32.

25. See above, 64.

26. Salimi, 45.

27. Bukhari (d. 256/870), hadith 3427; Muslim b. Hajjaj (d. 261/875), hadith 1720; cf. The Old Testament, I Kings 3: 16–28.

28. Nahj al-balagha, 1: 416– 417.

.29. Ibid, 1:33