

صورتان متضاران

4 logical Proofs to the truthfulness of Nabi Muhammad

صلی اللہ علیہ و سلم

Borne out by the
history of Islam as
recorded by the
Ahlus-Sunnah wal
Jama'ah and the
Imamiyyah
(Twelver) Shi'as

Outlining the only
method of ever
achieving unity
between the
Sunnis and Shi'as

Sayyid Moulana Abul
Hasan Ali Nadwi

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Editor's Note

This booklet is an abridged version of the famous masterpiece of Sayyid Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi ﷺ entitled 'Surataan Mutadhaadaan' (Two Conflicting Portraits). The complete title translates as 'Two Conflicting Portraits depicting the results of the efforts of Rasulullah ﷺ in his Da'wah (propagation) and Tarbiyah (spiritual training and reformation) and the life of his Companions according to the Ahlus-Sunnah and the Imamiyyah (Twelver) Shi'as'. This book had originally been written in Urdu. It was later translated into Arabic by Moulana Saeed A'zmi Nadwi who included in it some valuable additions with the permission of the author. This book had also previously been translated into English by Mohiuddin Ahmad.

For this abridged version, this humble editor has attempted to achieve the following:

- a) To condense the original by trimming down the content without leaving out any important aspects of the original.
- b) To simplify the English version by retranslating numerous passages from the Arabic version. For this, I have not adhered literally to the text, but attempted to present the objective of the author. I have occasionally added the translation of a few extra points from a book which the author quotes, to further establish his claim.
- c) To re-arrange certain sections of the book.
- d) To add on some beneficial footnotes. Some footnotes have also been reproduced from the original.

I make dua that Allah accepts this effort, makes it a treasure in the Hereafter for the author, translator and editor and, through this book, guides and unites the Muslim Ummah at large and saves them from veering from the Straight Path.

Imraan Kajee

The logical prerequisites for the final, eternal and universal religion

Any religion which claims; to be universal for mankind at large, the final and eternal religion which will last till the Final Hour (Qiyaamah), the true and perfect religion and the only means of success, which calls man to adhere to a specific set of beliefs, actions and character which it regards as the sole path of virtue, which seeks to unite mankind and society upon its foundations and which presents itself as a revelation from God Almighty (Allah ﷻ); must fulfill four requirements. These four requirements are logical, and are borne out by the history of religions and revolutions across the globe. They are as follows:

- 1) A miraculous transformation must occur in the lives of a large number of the Nabi's followers during the Nabi's very lifetime. This would prove that his religion is from God Almighty.
- 2) There must be a clear distinction between the Nabi and all other rulers or kings. The actual objective of rulers and kings is always to ensure lives of wealth and luxury for themselves and their progenies. The Nabi must be different. Otherwise, such a Nabi will be considered to be just another ruler or king.
- 3) The heavenly Book revealed to the Nabi for the guidance of mankind must remain unaltered, simple to understand and easily available, so that mankind at large may benefit from it.
- 4) The Nabi must be regarded as the only recipient of revelation and the only personality within the religion worthy of unquestioning obedience. This will ensure that the religion is never changed after him. He must also be understood to be the final Messenger, if he claims his religion to be universal and eternal till the day of Qiyaamah.

Islam-the religion brought by Nabi Muhammad ﷺ

It is our belief that the religion of Islam- the religion brought by Nabi Muhammad ﷺ - fulfills these four logical requirements in totality and to perfection. It is therefore the perfect, final and eternal religion which will last till the Final Hour (Qiyaamah) and which is the only means of success and salvation in the Hereafter. Any person or group who denies any of the above has in actual fact denied the validity and truthfulness of Islam.

Now let us discuss each of the above four requirements objectively, by which we intend to prove, in the light of the Qur'an and historical facts, that Islam is indeed this very religion:

Requirement 1:

A Miraculous Transformation and Reformation in the lives of a large number of the Nabi's followers

Based on the fact that this is claimed to be a heavenly religion, the first condition would be that the Nabi who is calling to such a religion should be able to completely transform those coming into contact with him, as if they were reborn with a completely new outlook, new thoughts and new values. This effect must be brought about merely through the means of his da'wah (call) and his suhbah (company), and not through any such means or methods employed by other philosophers, psychologists, politicians, teachers and educators, organizations or governments. Examples of such means and methods include compilations on various sciences and subjects, art, literature, impressive lectures, poetry, philosophical discussions (and today mass media propagation and propaganda) to create a certain mindset and outlook within the public. Likewise, there must be a distinct and noticeable difference between the impact and the change brought about due to the effect of the Nabi's teachings and that of other methodologies. This transformation can only be attributed to the Nur (spiritual illumination) of the Nabi and the blessings of his suhbah (company). This miraculous transformation would

then prove the divine origin of the religion and that God's divine help and assistance is with that religion.

Added to the above, such a Nabi should be able to bring about this marvelous change in the beliefs, actions and character of a large number of his followers during his very lifetime. He should be able to produce a large group of men whose example could not be found in previous generations, each one of whom would be capable of spreading the message of his Nabi and converting entire nations or countries to his faith through his passionate efforts and his unique qualities. Added to that, the Nabi should be able to transform the lives of such a large number of his followers that an ideal society should come into existence within his own life-time. A Nabi who fails to accomplish this can hardly be expected to claim that his successors would change the world or create a sense of Allah-awareness (Taqwa) on a scale wider than the Nabi had himself achieved.

The stunning achievement of Nabi Muhammad ﷺ

The work of the Ambiya (Messengers) of Allah was to guide, educate and train their sincere followers. After surveying the accomplishments of these Ambiya, one comes to the realization that Nabi Muhammad ﷺ surpassed all others in this regard. His achievements, preserved by historians in great detail, show that his success was not only greater than that of earlier Ambiya, but that he had to start his work in more difficult and adverse circumstances. He was sent to such people who were worse than animals, whom he finally raised morally to such a standard which was never achieved by any other Nabi.

Every man guided by Nabi ﷺ was a shining example and role-model, of whom the entire humanity can justly be proud of. We do not find similar men in the annals of history, other than the Ambiya of Allah. Their unflinching Imaan (faith), the depth of their Ilm (knowledge), their connection with Allah, their sincerity, humility and steadfastness, their pure and clean hearts, their simplicity and indifference to the attractions of this world, their

kindness to others and preferring others above themselves, their courage and valour, their devotion to Allah and eagerness to lay down their lives for Him, their prayers at night and their da'wah and jihad by day, etc. were unprecedented in world history. All the above qualities are conspicuously absent in the men trained and guided by great philosophers, thinkers and intellectuals, politicians, teachers and educators. The qualities and life-stories of the companions of Nabi ﷺ were such that if they were not recorded so reliably, their incidents would be regarded as legends. The Sahaabah (Companions) of Rasulullah ﷺ were, in short, a class by themselves, surpassed only by the Ambiya (Messengers) of Allah.

The Testimony of the Qur'an

Let us cast a glance over just a few verses of the Qur'an, and see for ourselves what Allah the All-Knowing has to say about this group of men who were miraculously trained and educated at the hands Nabi Muhammad ﷺ:

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ
لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ (2-الجمعة)

He is the One who sent to the unlettered nation (the Arabs) a Rasul from among them who recites His Aayaat (of the Qur'an) to them, (spiritually) purifies them and teaches them The Book and wisdom (the Sunnah). Without doubt, they were in clear deviation before this. (Surah Jumuah v.2)

Note: We learn from this verse that after the coming of this Messenger to them, they have been purified and educated and are now on the path of guidance.

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ
وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الرَّاشِدُونَ (7-الحجرات)

(Addressing the Sahaabah ﷺ, Allah says) Know well that the Messenger of Allah is amongst you. Many matters are such that if he had to obey you, you would have to undergo difficulties (as your counsel would be based on your personal opinions, whereas his opinions are based on revelation from Allah and sound, perfect judgment, even in worldly matters). However, (since Allah wished to save you from those difficulties) Allah has made (perfect) Imaan beloved to you and has beautified it within your hearts, and

Allah has made kufr, (major) sin and (minor forms of) disobedience detestable to you (due to which you shall seek the happiness of Rasulullah ﷺ and obey his orders, even in mundane worldly matters). Such people are rightly guided. (Surah Hujuraat v.7)

إِذْ جَعَلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْحَمِيَّةَ الْحَمِيَّةَ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَلْزَمَهُمْ كَلِمَةَ التَّقْوَى وَكَانُوا أَحَقَّ بِهَا وَأَهْلَهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا (26-الفتح)

When the disbelievers harbored in their hearts prejudice; the prejudice of the days of ignorance (during the treaty of Hudaibiyah); Allah sent down His tranquility upon his Rasul and upon the believers (Companions ﷺ), and Allah attached them to the kalimah of Taqwa (laa ilaaha illa Allah), as they were the most deserving of it and worthy of it. Allah has perfect knowledge of everything (and thus knew best who were the most worthy recipients of His sakinah and of Imaan). (Surah Fath v.26)

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءَ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ كَرَزِعٍ أُخْرِجَ شَطَآءُ قَارِرَةٍ فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَى عَلَى سُوْقِهِ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لِيَغِيظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا (29-الفتح)

Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. Those who are with him (the Sahaabah) are severe against the disbelievers and compassionate among themselves (to one another). You will see them sometimes bowing (in ruku') and sometimes prostrating (in sajdah), seeking the bounty of Allah and His pleasure. Their characteristic feature (spiritual effulgence and illumination-noor) can be noticed on their faces due to the effects of prostration. This is their description in the Taurah. And their description in the Injeel is like that of a seed which sprouts out its shoots (from the ground) and then strengthens it, after which it becomes firm and stands on its own stem, pleasing the farmer, (Likewise, the Sahaabah were initially weak in the early days of Islam, but Allah gradually nurtured the Sahaabah till they became the strongest force in the world) so that the disbelievers may burn with rage against them (due to their animosity for Islam and the Sahabah). Allah has promised forgiveness and a grand reward for those of them who believed and did good actions. (Surah Fath v.29)

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا وَيَنْصُرُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ (8) وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِثُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ وَمَنْ يُوقِ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ (9) وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ (10-الحشر)

Allah also attests to certain qualities specific to the Sahaabah: **“For the poor Muhaajireen (migrants) who were expelled from their homes and (separated from) their wealth. They seek the bounty of Allah and His pleasure and they assist Allah (His Deen) and His Rasul. They are the ones who are true (in their claims of Imaan). And those (Ansaar) who adopted the place (Madinah) as their home and adopted Imaan before their arrival. They love those who migrated towards them (the Muhaajireen) and they find no want (greed and desire) for what they (the Muhaajireen) are given and they prefer others above themselves (they prefer to give to others), even though they are themselves in dire need (of those things which they give). Those who are saved from the miserliness and greed of the soul are really the successful ones. And those who come after them (ought to) say, “O our Rabb, forgive us and our brothers (the Sahabah) who preceded us in Imaan (belief) and do not place any ill-feelings in our hearts for the believers. O our Rabb, indeed you are the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.” (Surah Hashr v.8-10)**

Historical Evidence

The Testimony of Ali ؑ

We will quote hereunder a few remarks of Sayyiduna Ali ؑ which he had made based on his personal knowledge regarding the Sahaabah of Rasulullah ﷺ who had already passed away. These remarks cannot apply to his confidants like Salman Farsi ؓ and Ammar ibn Yasir ؓ who were alive when he was elected Khalifah, but clearly refer to all the Sahabah of Rasulullah ﷺ who had already passed away. These extracts have been taken from ‘Nahjul-Balaaghah’, a compilation of his sermons, letters and sayings which were compiled by the Shi'i poet Shareef Radi (359 – 404 A.H). Another Shi'i scholar Ibn Abil Hadeed (586 – 655 A.H) has written a detailed

commentary of this work. This book is regarded as a reliable reference according to the Shia. He ﷺ said:

“I have seen the Sahaabah (companions) of Muhammad ﷺ. I do not see anyone similar to them from amongst you (my confidants). They would be seen in the morning disheveled and dusty, as they had spent their nights in sajdah (prostration) and qiyaam (standing before Allah), taking rest sometimes on their foreheads (in sajdah) and sometimes on their cheeks (by placing it on the ground in humility after salaah). It seemed as if they were standing on burning embers due to their (fearful) recollection of the Day of Judgment. Their foreheads resembled the knees of goats due to their lengthy sajdahs. When zikr of Allah would take place, tears would flow from their eyes to the extent that even their chests would become wet and they would sway like a tree sways on a very windy day, either out of fear for His punishment or in anticipation of His reward.” (Pg.143)¹

“Where have those people gone who when invited to Islam accepted it; who read the Qur’an and established its commands; who when encouraged towards fighting (in the path of Allah) loved it as a she-camel loves her young one, unsheathed their swords and willingly spread across the earth, fighting in rows. Some of them died (as martyrs) and some survived. They would not rejoice over the living, nor despair over the dead. Their eyes had sunken in due to excessive crying, their bellies were emaciated due to excessive fasting, their lips had become dry due to excessive duaa, their complexion had turned pale due to staying awake all night long, their faces exuded the humility of the truly humble ones. They were my brothers who have gone (have passed away). I am justified in desiring to meet them once again and to be sad at separation from them.” (Pg.177-178)

The Testimony of European Non-Muslim Orientalists

The Sahaabah

We will now cite a few European non-Muslim orientalists who were inimical to Islam to confirm the above facts regarding the Sahaabah. Caetani writes: These men were true moral heirs of the Prophet ﷺ, the future apostles of Islam, the faithful trustees of all that Muhammad ﷺ revealed unto the men of Allah. Unto these men, through their constant contact with the Prophet ﷺ and their devotion to him,

¹ A very similar narration has been narrated in Hilyatul-Awliyaa of Abu Nuaim (v.1 pg.76), Tarikh Ibn Asaakir (v.42 pg.492) and others.

there had already entered a new mode of thought and feeling, loftier and more civilized than they had known any before; they had really changed for the better from every point of view, and later on as statesmen and generals, in these difficult moments of war and conquests they gave magnificent and undeniable proof that the ideas and doctrines of Muhammad ﷺ had been seed cast on fruitful soil, and had produced a body of men of the highest worth. They were the depositories of the sacred text of the Noble Qur'an, which they alone knew by heart; they were the jealous guardians of the memory of every word and bidding of the Prophet ﷺ, the trustees of moral heritage of Muhammad ﷺ. These men formed the venerable stock of Islam from whom one day was to spring the noble band of the first jurists, theologians and traditions of Muslim society. (Annali dell' Islam by Caetani, vol.2 p.429, cited from Preaching of Islam by T.W Arnold pg. 41-42)

About the first four Khulafa, the foremost Sahaabah of Rasulullah ﷺ, the historian Edward Gibbon writes:

Any historian who balances the four Caliphs with a hand unshaken by superstition will calmly pronounce that their manners were alike, pure and exemplary; that their zeal was fervent, and probably sincere; and that, in the midst of riches and power, their lives were devoted to the practice of moral and religious duties. (The History of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire by Edward Gibbon vol.5 p.384-385)

Abu Bakr and Umar ﷺ

A historian who is regarded as a authority on the history of Arabia has the following to say about the first two Khulafa:

Abu Bakr (632–634), the conqueror and pacifier of Arabia, lived in patriarchal simplicity... In character he was endowed with much strength and forcefulness than current traditions credit to him.

Simple and frugal in manner, his energetic and talented successor, Umar (634–644), who was a towering height, strong physique and bald-headed ... lived throughout his life in a style as unostentatious as that of a Bedouin shaykh ... His irreproachable character became an exemplar for all conscientious successors to follow. He owned, we are told, one shirt and one mantle only, both conspicuous for their patch work, slept in the beds of palm leaves and had no concern other than maintenance of the purity of the faith, the upholding of justice and the ascendancy and the security of Islam and the Arabians. (History of the Arabs by Philip K. Hitti p.175-176)

Another European writer William Muir, who was by no means sympathetic to Islam, has acknowledged the sterling qualities of these Sahaabah of Rasulullah ﷺ:

At his court, Abu Bakr maintained the same simple and frugal life as Muhammad ﷺ. Guards and servitors there were none, nor anything approaching the pomp and circumstance of state. He was diligent in business... Abu Bakr never spared himself, and many incidents are related of the manner in which he descended to the minutest thing. Thus, he would sally forth by night to seek the destitute or oppressed person... In the choice of his agents for high office or command, he was absolutely free from nepotism or partiality, and was wise and discerning in his estimate of character. (Annals of the Early Caliphate of William Muir p. 123)

With regards to Umar ؓ, William Muir says:

Simplicity and duty were his guiding principle, impartiality and devotion characterized the discharge of his office; and responsibility so weighed upon him that at times he would exclaim: "O that my mother had not borne me; would that I had been this stalk of grass, instead!" He was tender-hearted, and numberless acts of kindness are recorded, such as relieving the wants of the widow and fatherless. (Ibid p.283-285)

He portrays the great achievements of Umar ؓ in this manner:

So died Umar, next to the Prophet ﷺ the greatest in the kingdom of Islam; for it was within these ten years, that by his wisdom of Islam, patience, and vigor, domination was achieved through Syria, Egypt, and Persia, which Islam has ever maintained ... Yet throughout his marvelous fortune he never lost equipoise of wise and sober judgment, nor exalted himself above the frugal and familiar style of an Arab chief. "Where is the Khalifah?" would the visitor from distant provinces inquire, as he looked around the court of the great mosque; and all the while the monarch sat in homely guise before him. (Ibid p.283)

Uthman ibn Affan ؓ

William Muir observed that Uthman ؓ had a "kindly nature which might have made him, in less troubling times, a favorite of people." (Annals of the Early Caliphate pg.341)

His state policy has been described thus by Levi Della Vida, who quotes Wellhausen and Caetani: Uthman only followed and developed the policy of Umar. (Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam pg.116)

Testimony of a Shi'i Author

Abu Bakr and Umar ﷺ

We shall not set forth the findings of any Sunni writer here in favor of the first two Khulafa, but depend on a Shi'i writer, Justice Sayyid Amir Ali ², who writes in 'The Spirit of Islam':

An examination of the political condition of the Muslims under the early khulafa brings into view a popular government administered by an elective chief with limited powers. The prerogatives of the head of the State were confined to administrative and executive matters, such as the regulation of the police, control of army, transaction of foreign affairs, disbursement of finances, etc. but could not act in contravention of the recognized law. The law was the same for the poor as for the rich, for the man in power as for the laborer in the field. (The Spirit of Islam pg.278)

Paying tribute, without any reservation, to the simple lifestyle, justice and the great services rendered to Islam by the first three Khulafa- Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman ﷺ - he writes:

The stern devotion of the early Caliphs to the well-being of the people, and the austere simplicity of their lives, were in strict accordance with the example of the Master. They preached and prayed in the mosque like the Prophet ﷺ; received in their homes the poor and the oppressed, and failed not to give hearing to the meanest. Without cortege, without pomp or ceremony, they ruled the hearts of men by the force of the character. (Ibid pg.280)

He describes the circumstances leading to the election of Abu Bakr ﷺ as the first successor of Rasulullah ﷺ has been described as follows:

Abu Bakr, who by virtue of his age and the position he had held at Makkah occupied a high place in the estimation of the Arabs, was hastily elected to the office of Caliph or Vicegerent of the Prophet ﷺ. He was recognized as a man of wisdom and moderation, and his election was accepted with their usual devotion to the faith by Ali

² Justice Sir Sayyid Amir `Ali (1849 – 1928) was a descendent of a Shi'a family which immigrated to India from Khurasan during the reign of Nadir Shah. He first received education of English, Law, and Arabic in the Muhsiniyyah Hoogli College, Calcutta until he qualified in 1873. He retired from Bengal high Court in 1904 and took up residence in England. He was elected as the first Indian member of the Privy Council's Law Committee in 1909 He died in 1928. He was a very fluent and forceful English writer.

and the chief members of Muhammad's ﷺ family. (A Short History of the Saracens pg.21)

The character of Abu Bakr ﷺ has been thus depicted by Amir Ali:

Like his Master, Abu Bakr was extremely simple in his habits; gentle but firm; he devoted all his energies to the administration of the new-born state and to the good of the people. He would sally forth by night to help the distressed and relieve the destitute. (Ibid pg.26-27)

The achievements of Umar ﷺ as summed up by Amir Ali testify that:

The short government was too fully occupied with the labor of pacifying the desert tribes to afford time for any systematic regulations of the provinces. But with the reign of Umar — a truly great man — commenced that sleepless care for the welfare of the subject nations which characterised the early Muslim governments. (The Spirit of Islam pg.278)

He also says:

Umar's accession to the Caliphate was of immense value to Islam. He was a man of strong moral fibre and a keen sense of justice, possessed a great energy and force of character. (A Short History of the Saracens pg.27)

The martyrdom of Umar ﷺ, according to Amir Ali, was one of the greatest disasters suffered by Islam:

The death of Umar was a real calamity to Islam. Stern but just, far-sighted, thoroughly versed in the character of his people; he was perfectly fitted for the leadership of unruly Arabs. He held the helm with a strong hand and severely repressed the natural tendency to demoralisation among nomadic tribes and semi-civilised people when coming in contact with the luxury and vices of the cities... Of people habits, austere and frugal, always accessible to the meanest of his subjects, wandering about at night to inquire into the condition of people without guard or court - such was the greatest and most powerful ruler of the time. (A Short History of the Saracens pg.43-44)

Uthman ibn Affan ﷺ

During the twelve years Uthman ﷺ held the helm, the Islamic empire rapidly expanded. Amir Ali writes:

The incursions of the Turks in Transoxiana lead to the conquest of Balkh. Similarly were Herat, Kabul and Ghazni captured. The rising in Southern Persia lead to the subjugation of Kerman and Sistan. In the settlement of the new acquisitions, the policy

of Umar was followed. No sooner were these countries conquered, then effective measures were set on foot for the development of their material resources. Water-courses were dug, roads made, fruit trees planted, and security given to trade by establishment of a regular police organization. Byzantine inroads from the north led to an advance on the country now called Asia Minor, towards the Black Sea. In Africa, Tripoli and Barca, and in the Mediterranean Cyprus, were conquered. A large fleet sent by the Romans to re-conquer Egypt was destroyed off Alexandria. (A Short History of the Saracens pg. 47)

In short, the limits of the Islamic empire were extended from Sindh, in the east, to Spain in the West. A powerful naval fleet was organized although the Arabs did not earlier possess a single ship.

I wish to add here that the enlargement of Al-Masjidul Haraam in Makkah was undertaken in 26 A.H. during his rule. The Masjid of Rasulullah ﷺ in Madinah was also enlarged and beautified in 29 A.H. He also sent orders to build new masjids in the conquered dominions and enlarge the existing ones.

His greatest achievement was to unite the entire Ummah throughout the world on a standardized text and recital of the Qur'an. It would be interesting to note here that when Ali ؑ found certain citizens in Kufah criticizing Uthman ؓ for standardizing the Qur'anic text and recital, he was filled with anger. He stated, "Silence! Uthman acted as he did with the advice of the leading men amongst us; and if I had been the ruler at the time instead of him, I would myself have done the same." (Annals of the Early Caliphate pg. 308)

The simplicity and abstinence of the first four Khulafa

The sincerity, piety and connection with Allah of the first four Khulafa are clearly demonstrated by their abstinence from the wealth that flowed into Madinah from the newly conquered lands of the Persian and Roman empires. Unlike other conquerors, they did not lead a life of ease and comfort but preferred to pass their days like their Master Rasulullah ﷺ as simple ascetics. It would be correct to say that they enjoyed greater contentment and peace

of mind before they accepted the responsibility of khilaafah compared to the period after assuming this responsibility.

The way these Khulafa passed their days at the time when they controlled the greatest empire of the world has made Edward Gibbon, a non-muslim orientalist, concede:

The courage of Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman had indeed been tried in the persecution and wars of the Prophet ﷺ; and the personal assurance of paradise must have taught them to despise the pleasure and dangers of the present world. But they ascended the throne in a vulnerable and mature age, and esteemed the domestic curse of religion and justice, the most important duties of the sovereign ... The austere and frugal measure of their lives was the effect of virtue or habit, and the pride of their simplicity insulted the vain magnificence of the kings of the earth. (The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire vl.5 pg.399)

Of what we know of human nature and the habits of kings throughout history leads us to the conclusion that the khulafa were absolutely sincere, deeply connected to their Creator and free from all sorts of ulterior motives. Their sole purpose of running the khilaafah was to acquire Allah's pleasure and to spread His Deen.

Had they assumed the khilaafah with ulterior motives, desirous of position and wealth, why would they ever choose to abandon worldly enjoyments and pleasures, and at the same time ruin their Aakhirah and bring upon themselves the anger of Allah? No intelligent man would ever commit open sin (thereby bringing himself into disrepute) and then abandon all the pleasures related to it.

Abu Bakr ﷺ

The reputed historian Ibnul Atheer رحمه الله relates the following incident regarding Abu Bakr ﷺ: Once his wife expressed the desire to eat some sweetmeats. Abu Bakr ﷺ said, "I have no money to arrange for the dish." She offered to save something from the daily household expenses. Abu Bakr ﷺ agreed to this. She saved some money over quite a period of time and finally asked Abu Bakr ﷺ to purchase for her some sweetmeats. Abu

Bakr ؓ took the money, but remarked, “This amount seems to be in excess of our needs.” And he deposited it back in the state-treasury. He also had his allowance cut down to that extent. (Al-Kaamil fit Tarikh v.2 pg.423)

Hasan ؓ, the son of Ali and the grandson of Rasulullah ﷺ, relates that just before his death, Abu Bakr ؓ said to his daughter A’ishah (radhiAllahu anha), “The she-camel we had for milk, the bowl in which we ate our meals and the bedspread we used were given to me (by the state-treasury) since I was serving the Muslims. Send them to Umar after I have passed away.” She sent all these things to Umar ؓ as she had been advised. Umar ؓ remarked, “May Allah have mercy upon you, Abu Bakr. You have set a difficult standard for those who come after you.” (Tarikhul-Khulafa of Suyuti pg.78)

It is also related that Abu Bakr ؓ had received an allowance of eight thousand dirhams (silver coins) for his household needs during his reign as the Khalifah. His conscience troubled him for having taken even that much. Therefore, on his death-bed, he gave the command that certain lands from his private property should be sold, and the eight thousand dirhams should be refunded to the state-treasury. (At-Tabaqaatul Kubra of Ibn Sa’d v.3 pg.192)

Umar ؓ

The pomp and glory displayed by kings and rulers on their royal visits is common knowledge. The man reigning over the most powerful empire in the world at that time had to undertake a journey to Jerusalem to take over the city, as the residents were only willing to surrender it to the Khalifah himself. Umar acceded to their request, and travelling with a single attendant, without escort and without any pomp and ceremony, arrived at Jaabiyah. Professor Shibli Nomani writes:

Our readers will be anxious to know the details of the pomp and splendor which accompanied the march of Umar - the march which was supposed to have over-awed the enemies of Islam by its grandeur and might. But they may very well be disappointed. No entourage accompanied him. Not even an ordinary tent was provided

for his accommodation. His retinue consisted of a weak horse and a few members of the Muhaajireen and Ansaar who accompanied him. Umar stopped for a while at Jaabiyah where he drew up the treaty of Jerusalem. He then proceeded to Jerusalem. The horse which he rode upon was injured, due to which it was limping. A Turkish steed was brought for him. When he mounted it, it began prancing about. He dismounted, disliking its gait and said, "This is a proud gait." He proceeded on foot. As he neared Jerusalem, Abu Ubaydah and other officers came out to welcome him. His qamees (kurta) which was made from simple cheap material had become grimy and had become torn and tattered (due to the lengthy journey), yet he was Ameerul-Mu'mineen. The people thought that if the Christians have to see him in this condition, they would look down upon him. They therefore suggested, "Why don't you wear better clothes and ride a Turkish steed, as that would impress the Romans. He stated, "We were a group of people whom Allah gave honor through Islam. Other than Allah, we do not require anything as a replacement." (Condensed from Al-Farooq v.1 pg.142-145)³

Uthman ibn Affan ﷺ

History bears witness to the fact that simplicity dominated the life of the Uthman ﷺ. He entertained guests with sumptuous meals, but he himself ate only bread with vinegar. (Hilyatul Awliyaa v.1 pg.60) Very often he fasted continuously for days. He mostly attended to his necessities himself. He would fetch water for his wudhu himself even at night, and he never woke up any servant for this. When he was advised to take assistance from his servants, he said, "The night is theirs, so that they may rest in it." (At-Tabaqaat of Ibn Sa'd v.3 pg.60)

Uthman ﷺ had a slave whom he had once pulled by the ear. After he had been elected as the Khalifah, he asked the slave to take revenge and insisted until the slave did so. He even remarked, "Pull hard, and take your revenge in this world so that nothing remains for the hereafter." (Ar-Riyaadhun Nadhirah v.1 pg.216)

³ Hafiz Ibn Kathir has mentioned that Umar entered Jaabiyah on a camel. It had no saddle or stirrups. His saddle was a woollen sheet, which he used to sit upon while riding and use as a bedding when he alighted. His travelling bag was used as a pillow when he rested. (Condensed from Al-Bidaayah wan Nihaayah v.7 pg.59-60)

Abdul Malik ibn Shaddad relates that he saw Uthman ؓ on the mimbar (pulpit) one Friday wearing a coarse woolen sheet, which was valued at the small price of four or five dirhams. (Hilyatul Awliya v.1 pg.60)

Hasan Basri once saw Uthman ؓ taking rest in the masjid during the afternoon. When he stood up, the marks made by the pebbles were visible on his body. (This was after he was appointed as Ameerul-Mu'mineen) (Ibid v.1 pg.60)

Nothing can illustrate his sincerity and his concern for the wellbeing of others more than the events of his martyrdom. While the rebels had besieged him in Madinah, he calmly bade the citizens to go back to their homes since he did not want to fight or allow the blood of any Muslim to be shed for his protection. He was killed while reciting the Qur'an at the hands of the rebels, but did not succumb to their demands of relinquishing his position as the Khalifah, which he considered a trust handed over to him by the Muslims. He stood fast to his post till his last breath, in accordance with the instruction of Rasulallah ﷺ who had predicted this.⁴

Ali ibn Abi Talib ؓ

Nobody has ever disputed the piety of Ali ؓ except a splinter group known as the Khawaarij. We shall here quote the words of Dirar ibn Damurah, a comrade of Ali ؓ who described the character and temperament of Ali ؓ at the request of Mu'awiyah ؓ, who had been for a long while at loggerheads with Ali ؓ. The description of Ali ؓ given by Dirar is really a graphic description of the great companion who was trained and educated at the hands of Rasulallah ﷺ:

“He had an aversion for the world and its adornments. He would feel comfortable at night in the darkness. By Allah, he wept in abundance and he would spend a lot of time in contemplation, turning his palm over and over and addressing (censuring) himself. He liked rough clothing and dry food. By Allah, he conducted himself like one of us. He would answer us when we questioned him, he would speak to us when we visited

⁴ This prediction has been narrated by Tirmizi, Ibn Majah and Ahmad amongst others via an authentic chain of narrators

him and he would come to us if we called him. In spite of our close relationship with him, we, by Allah, could not speak to him out of awe for him and we could not start a conversation out of respect towards him. His smile gave way to teeth which looked like pearls on a string. He would show respect to the people of Deen. He loved the poor. In his presence, the powerful people had no hope of justifying their falsehood, nor did the weak ever lose hope of obtaining justice from him. I bear witness by Allah that I had seen him on one dark night in the late hours standing in salaah. He was standing in his mihraab (place of prayer), holding his beard, shaking like a person who had been bitten by a snake and crying like one afflicted by terrible grief. It is as if I can still hear him humbly saying, “O our Rabb, o our Rabb.” Then he said, “O world! O world! Is it me you want to deceive? Have you adorned yourself for me? Get out! Get out! Go and deceive someone else besides me. I have divorced you thrice. I can never take you back again. Your lifespan is short, your enjoyments are despicable and your danger is great. Alas! I have few provisions, but the journey is long and the road is dangerous.” (Sifatus Safwah pg.122, Hilyatul Awliya v.1 pg.84-85)

Ali ؑ and His Predecessors

Ali ؑ always co-operated with the Khulafa before him. Amir Ali (a Shi'i) has written regarding the election of Abu Bakr ؑ as the first successor of Rasulullah ﷺ:

Abu Bakr, who by virtue of his age and the position he had held at Makkah occupied a high place in the estimation of the Arabs, was hastily elected to the office of Caliph or Vicegerent of the Prophet ﷺ. He was recognized as a man of wisdom and moderation, and his election was accepted with their usual devotion to the faith by Ali and the chief members of Muhammad's ﷺ family. (A Short History of the Saracens pg.21)

William Muir has mentioned the misunderstanding arising between Abu Bakr ؑ and Ali ؑ on the question of inheritance of Rasulullah's ﷺ personal property, but adds that the latter continued to frequent the Khalifah's court like the rest of the chief Sahaabah and even performed the functions of chief judicial officer. He also says that the letters of Abu Bakr ؑ were mostly transcribed by Ali ؑ. (Annals of the Early Caliphate p.65, 416 and 123)

In his introduction to Nahjul-Balaghah, rendered into English by the Islamic Seminary, a World Shia Muslim Organisation, Askari Jafery has mentioned

several instances of Umar ؓ seeking the advice of Ali ؓ and accepting them with gratitude. He writes:

On the occasion of the invasion of Rome (i.e. the Byzantine Empire in Syria and its surrounding areas) when Umar sought his (Ali's ؓ) counsel as to the advisability of heading the army as the commander-in-chief, he advised him to be at the helm (in Madinah) and to send some experienced general as commander ... Similarly at the time of invasion of Persia he counseled the Khalifah Umar ؓ not to leave the capital and to send somebody else. (Peak of Eloquence, p. 57)

Umar ؓ had even left Ali ؓ as his deputy in Madinah while he travelled to Syria in 18 A.H. The sympathetic reflections of Ali ؓ on the death of Abu Bakr ؓ and Umar ؓ have been preserved by historians, which speak volumes of his earnest grief at parting company with these venerable comrades.⁵

Umar ؓ nominated Ali ؓ as one of the members of the Shura who were responsible for electing his successor. Uthman ؓ was chosen and with his usual loyalty and devotion to Islam, Ali ؓ pledged allegiance to Uthman ؓ as soon as he was elected. (Condensed from A Short History of the Saracens, p.46)

When the rebels blockaded Uthman ؓ, which lasted several weeks, and denied him food and water, Ali ؓ pleaded with the rebels to reconsider. Muir reports: "They were treating their Caliph," he (Ali ؓ) told them, "more cruelly than they would treat Greek or Persian captives in the field. Even infidels did not deny water to a thirsty enemy." (Annals of the Early

⁵ Muhammad Baaqir ؓ the grandson of Sayyiduna Husain ؓ narrates that Ali ؓ said the following on seeing the body of Umar ؓ wrapped in his kafan (shrouds): "I would love nothing better than for me to meet Allah with a book of deeds similar to this enshrouded man's book of deeds, compared to the book of deeds of any other person." (This has been narrated by the Shi'i scholar Shaykh Saduq in his book Ma'anil Akhbaar. It has also been narrated by Imam Abu Hanifah in Kitaabul Aathaar and Ibn Abi Shaybah in Al-Musannaf. Haakim in his Mustadrak narrates it with a Muttasil chain from Muhammad Baaqir ؓ who narrates this from Jaabir ibn Abdilllah ؓ who heard Ali ؓ saying the above. A similar narration has also been narrated by Abdullah ibn Abaaas ؓ, the cousin of Rasulullah ﷺ, from Ali ؓ as reported by Bukhari, Muslim and others). See Ar-Riyaadhun Nadhirah for more such quotations.

Caliphate pg.336) But as the insurgents were deaf to his entreaty, Ali ؑ sent water and food to the Khalifah during the siege and later deputed his sons and dependents to defend the Khalifah. (Peak of Eloquence, p.61) When Ali ؑ heard of the assassination of Uthman ؑ, he hastened to the place and asked his son how it happened. Death had not softened the rebels' hearts who pelted the litter of Caliph Uthman ؑ with stones, but the funeral procession was bravely joined by Hasan ؑ along with the kinsmen of the departed Caliph. (Annals of the Early Caliphate pg.336)

The Sahabah and the Ahlul-Bayt ؑ

The Qur'an explicitly establishes the following qualities which were found in the Sahaabah of Rasulullah ﷺ:

أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ

Those who are with him (with Nabi ﷺ i.e. the Sahaabah) are severe against the disbelievers and compassionate among themselves (to one another). (Surah Fath v.29)

Their mutual love and respect and their enthusiasm to sacrifice for the other Sahaabah prove the truth of this verse which was revealed about them.⁶ Whatever reports and incidents have been narrated which contradict this Qur'anic testimony ought to be rejected. Such accusations not only belie historical facts, but are also tantamount to rejection of the Qur'an and raises doubts about the effectiveness of the teachings of Nabi ﷺ. Take a look at the following narrations:

Uqbha ibnul Harith narrates: Abu Bakr ؓ performed the Asr salah. He then came out of the masjid to take a walk. He saw Hasan ؓ playing with other children. He lifted him up upon his shoulder and said: "May my father be sacrificed for him (Hasan ؓ). He resembles Nabi ﷺ and not Ali." Ali ؓ

⁶ Readers are requested to study the contents of the book 'Unity amongst the Khulafa Rashidin ؓ' of Munshi Abdur Rahman Khan which has been translated and published by Madrasah Arabia Islamia and Zamzam Publishers for more details on this subject.

heard the remark and laughed. (Sahihul Bukhari - Kitaabul Manaaqib no.3540)

Husayn ؓ narrates: Umar once requested me to visit him more often. One day, I went to visit him. He was having a private discussion with Mu'awiyah. His son Abdullah ibn Umar was waiting outside at the door, but was not given permission to enter. I came back. When he met after a while, he said, "My dear son, you still haven't come to visit?" I replied that I had come to see him, but he was at that time in a private discussion with Mu'awiyah, and even his son Abdullah had to return without receiving permission. Umar ؓ replied, "You are far more worthy of entering compared to Abdullah ibn Umar. This position we have received was by the favor of Allah, and then through the blessings of your family." Thereafter he patted me on the head. (Kanzul-Ummaal v.7 pg.105, Al-Isaabah v.1 pg.133 with an authentic chain of narrators)

Ja'far Saadiq ؓ narrates from his father Muhammad Baaqir ؓ who narrates from Zaynul Aabidin ibn Husayn ؓ who said: Once Umar ؓ received some sets of costly clothing from Yemen which he distributed among the people. Those who received the clothing were seen wearing them that day. Umar ؓ was sitting between the grave of Rasulullah ﷺ and the mimbar (the pulpit). People approached him to greet him and make dua for him (in appreciation). In the meantime Hasan ؓ and Husayn ؓ happened to come out of their house and they passed through the people, but none of them were wearing any such set of clothing. Umar ؓ looked sad and depressed. He said, "By Allah, my distribution of this clothing has brought me no happiness and joy. When he was asked reason for it, he replied that he had been saddened because of the two children, as there was no set of clothing for their size; all were too big for them. Umar ؓ then wrote to the governor of Yemen, requesting him to send two custom-made sets for Hasan ؓ and Husayn ؓ and to make haste in complying. Umar ؓ was only satisfied when these were received and he had both the children put them on. (Kanzul-Ummaal v.7 pg.106, Tarikh Dimashq v.14 pg.177)

Umar ؓ had a specific system in place for allocating allowances. For this, the first factor to be taken into consideration was the family link of every person to Rasulullah ﷺ. Ja'far Saadiq ؓ narrates, "When Umar expressed the desire to fix the rates of the allowances, after money from the conquests were flowing into Madinah, Abdur Rahman ibn Auf ؓ suggested that Umar ؓ should get precedence. However, Umar ؓ retorted, "Never, by Allah." He decided that the closest in family to Rasulullah ﷺ should be given priority. He commenced with the Banu Hashim, and among them he began with Abbas and Ali ؓ first. His own tribe Banu Adi came sixth in the list. His method of prioritizing was as follows: those who participated in the battle of Badr from the Banu Haashim were granted the highest allowance, then those who participated in the battle of Badr from the Banu Umayyah, then those who participated in the battle of Badr from the next tribe who were closest to Rasulullah ﷺ, and so forth. Hasan ؓ and Husayn ؓ were exceptions for they were allocated the same amount (as those who fought at Badr although they did not fall in that category) due to their closeness to Rasulullah ﷺ. (Kitaabul-Kharaaj of Abu Yusuf pg.24-25)

Ali ؓ was the chief counselor of Umar ؓ. Umar ؓ would always consult him in major decisions. When Umar ؓ undertook the journey to Jerusalem, he asked Ali ؓ to act as his deputy in Madinah. The love between Ali ؓ and Umar ؓ can be gauged from the fact that Ali ؓ gave his daughter Umm Kulthum (radhiAllahu anha) (who was the daughter of Fatimah radhiAllahu anha) in marriage to Umar ؓ, inspite of his old age and despite the fact that

he had other wives in his wedlock.⁷ Ali ؑ also named his three sons after the names of his predecessors; Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman.⁸

The Best Group of this Ummah trained under the Best Teacher

The social life and character of the men of the era of Rasulullah ﷺ, which we find portrayed in the Qur'an, Hadith and reliable reports of history, presents the most shining picture of a group of people who were pious, just and noble. This was the result and effects of the teachings and blessed company of the final Messenger of Allah ﷺ. An example of such a group of people are not to be found even in smaller numbers in any other period or anywhere else in world history.

These were such men of whom the entire humanity can be proud of. A scholar has very correctly assessed this group of people:

The best group of this Ummah were the Sahaabah. There was no group of this Ummah which can be compared to the Sahaabah; in matters such as uniting on guidance and the true Deen and abstaining from dissension and disunity. Whatever short-comings are attributed to them are few and minor, in comparison to other groups and nations. These short-comings are like faint marks on a white cloth. It is the fault of the onlooker if he only notices these stains but does not notice the tidiness of the cloth itself. Others compared to this group would be like a stained cloth with only a few clean white spots. (Minhaajus-Sunnah by Ibn Taimiyah)

⁷ The details of this nikaah have been narrated by Jafar Saadiq ؑ who narrates from Muhammad Baaqir ؑ who narrates from Zaynul Aabideen Ali ibnul Husain ؑ, as is reported in Al-Mustadrak of Haakim v.3 pg. 142 with an authentic chain. This marriage has also been admitted in three of the most famous books of the Shia; Al-Kaafi of Kulaini v.2 pg.311, Al-Istibsaar of Abu Ja'far Tusi v.3 pg.185-186 and Tahzeebul Kalaam of Abu Ja'far Tusi pg.238, all of whom quoted narrations that Umm Kulthum (radhiAllahu anha) had to sit in Iddah after her husband Umar ؓ passed away, and that her Iddah was passed in her father's house.

⁸ This has been reported by prominent Shia scholars. Shia books which mention this historical fact include Kitaabul Irshaad of Shaykh Al-Mufeed pg.167-168, Kashful Ghummah fi Ma'rifatil A'imma v.1 pg.590, Jilaa'ul Uyoon of Mulla Baaqir Majlisi pg464-465. It has also been mentioned in Jamharatul-Ansaab v.1 pg.37-38 of Ibn Hazm Andalus from the Ahlus Sunnah

A Conflicting Picture

Rasulullah ﷺ portrayed as an absolute failure

An entirely different picture of these pious men is presented by a group of people who claim to be Muslims and followers of Rasulullah ﷺ; these are the Imamiyyah or Ithna Ashariyyah Shi'as. Their idea of the earliest Muslim society is that Rasulullah ﷺ had failed totally in teaching and training his companions - a failure unparalleled in history. According to their assumed version of events, such failure was not experienced even by those guides and reformers who were not sent by Allah for this purpose, nor were they blessed with His assistance.

These Shi'a portray the Sahaabah as hypocrites who stooped to lies, treachery, betrayal, rejection of the Qur'an and even forgery for their own ulterior motives.

According to their version, only three persons remained true Muslims after the demise of Rasulullah ﷺ. The rest of them, who had been guided, groomed and trained for twenty-three long years, all became murtad (apostates) and turned their backs on Islam. Were this to be true, then no further proof would be needed to establish the failure of Rasulullah ﷺ in his mission.

The most authentic book of the Shi'a entitled 'Al-Jami'ul Kafi' contains the following alleged statements of Imam Abu Ja'far (also known as Imam Baqir), "All the people became apostates after Rasulullah ﷺ with the exception of three persons." The narrator asked, "Who were those three?" He said, "Miqdad ibnul Aswad, Abu Dhar Ghifari and Salman Farsi; may Allah's Mercy and blessings be upon them." (Furu'ul Kaafi - Kitabur Rawdhah v.3 pg.115) (Some narrations mention Ammar ibn Yasir to be the fourth true Muslim)

Pronouncements of Khomeini

Ayatullah Khomeini, the leader of the Iranian Revolution, writes the following in his ‘Kashful Asrar’: For those persons (the Sahaabah) who had nothing to do with Islam and the Qur’an except to utilize these as the means to gain power and wealth, and who had managed to employ the Qur’an to serve their base desires and evil ambitions, it posed no problem to delete the verses declaring Ali as the vicegerent of Rasulullah ﷺ and establishing the belief of Imaamah, to make interpolations in this Heavenly Scripture and to put the Qur’an out of sight of mankind forever till Qiyaamah. The allegation made by the Muslims against the Jews and the Christians of corrupting the scriptures is proven against these very people (the Sahaabah). (Kashful-Asraar pg.114)

He writes elsewhere in the same book: Suppose that the Imam had been mentioned by name in the Qur’an, than how does it help us to conclude that there would be no dispute among the Muslims. Those who had associated themselves with Rasulullah’s ﷺ faith (Islam) for years and remained attached to it out of greed for power and position and were conspiring since long and enrolling their supporters would have never given up their ulterior objectives in submission and obedience to the Qur’anic injunction. They would have adopted any means to achieve their objectives. Such verses, in all probability, would have sparked off such dispute which would lead to the destruction of the very foundations of Deen. It is very likely that those who were waiting for the opportunity to establish their rule and fulfill their ulterior objectives would form a clique against Islam and openly turn against it, after losing hope that their ulterior motives could now not be fulfilled in the name of Islam. (Kashful-Asraar pg.113-114)⁹

Impressions of Muhsinul-Mulk

I cannot do better than quote the impressions of Muhsinul-Mulk¹⁰, the author of ‘Ayaat-e-Bayyinaat’, a man who had found out these facts after a deep

⁹ Ayatullah Khomeini’s ‘Kashful-Asraar’ contains numerous derogatory remarks about the first three Khulafa and other Sahaabah of Rasulullah ﷺ. One can refer to Kashful-Asraar directly or read Moulana Manzur Nu’māni’s ‘Khomeini, Iranian Revolution and the Shi’ite Faith’ for more information.

¹⁰ Sayyid Mahdi Ali (1253-1325 A.H.) son of Sayyid Damin Ali Husayni, who held the title Nawab Muhsinul-Mulk, was an eminent individual. Being highly educated, he renounced the Shi’a creed and accepted the path of the Ahlus Sunnah. He had an impressive personality and was a prolific writer. ‘Ayaat-e-Bayyinaat’ is one of his famous and unique writings.

study of the subject. Every man blessed with common sense will reach the same conclusion if he thinks over the matter:

The truth is that the belief entertained by the Shi'a about the Sahaabah is actually an accusation on Nabi ﷺ and makes one skeptical of Islam. Whoever holds the view that all those who believed in Rasulallah ﷺ were not true in their claim; they pretended to be Muslims but they were really disbelievers, and that they reneged from Islam as soon as Rasulallah ﷺ passed away; cannot convince any intelligent and well-informed person to acknowledge Rasulallah ﷺ as a true Nabi. The person would surely ask that if Rasulallah ﷺ was truly the messenger of Allah, his teachings would have surely left an impression on at least a few persons who would believe in him sincerely. Out of more than hundred thousand persons who claimed to believe in him, at least a few hundreds would have remained steadfast after him! If the Sahaabah were deficient in their Imaan and Islam, as you wrongly assert, then who are the persons on whom the teachings of Rasulallah ﷺ had left a lasting impression? How many people benefited from his nubuwwah? If, Allah forbid, all except a handful were hypocrites and apostates, then who embraced Islam and who derived any benefit from the teachings of Rasulallah ﷺ and his training? (Ayaat-e-Bayyinaat v.1 pg.6-7)

Amir Ali (a Shi'i) has rightly remarked:

The intense faith and conviction on the part of the immediate followers of Muhammad ﷺ is the noblest testimony to his sincerity and his utter self-absorption in his appointed task. (The Spirit of Islam p. 22)

Observation of Imam Sha'bi ﷺ

Imam Sha'bi (a senior Tabi'ee who passed away in 110 AH) has made a unique remark on the attitude of the Shi'a. He says:

If the Jews had to be asked, "Who were best people of your religion?" they would reply, "The companions of Musa ؑ." If the Christians had to be asked, "Who were best people of your religion?" they would reply, "The disciples of Isa ؑ." But when the Shi'a are asked, "Who are the worst people of your religion?" they reply, "They were the companions (Sahaabah) of Rasulallah ﷺ." The Qur'an commanded them to make istighfaar (seek forgiveness) on behalf of the Sahaabah, but instead they chose to abuse them. (Minhaajus-Sunnah v.1 pg.6)

Requirement 2:

The Clear Distinction between the Nabi and all Rulers or Kings

The second condition mentioned at the beginning was that the Nabi sent by Allah to call towards such a religion should bear no resemblance in his character, procedure, outlook and objectives with political leaders, conquerors, kings and rulers. The methods applied by him to fulfill his objectives should rather be contrary to the ways adopted by all other powerful persons whose ultimate aim is to establish a dynastic rule. The history of the Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Persian, Chinese and similar other dynasties is witness to the fact that the reins of government are passed on to the children and progeny of the founder of an empire. If for any reason that is not possible, the clan, tribe or family of the founder enjoys a position of affluence and privilege which continues for several generations. The actual objective of such founders was always to ensure lives of wealth and luxury for themselves and their progeny.

As against the ways of kings and emperors, a Nabi of Allah never builds an empire which he leaves as a legacy for his children. He does not do anything to ensure a life of ease and prosperity for his progeny, nor does he grant his family any exclusive rights or privileges due to their relationship with him. Rather, his way is entirely different: he requires his family members to lead a life of hardship and to sacrifice all their wealth, time and energies for his mission. Yet, after him, they have to depend on their own efforts and resign themselves to the fact that they will receive no further benefits, especially of wealth and position.

The significance of this requirement as understood by the Christian king Heraclius

The significance of this condition being a sign of a true Nabi was well understood by the Christian Emperor Heraclius who was versed in the previous scriptures and also the history and ways of the Kings of the past.

On receiving the letter addressed to him from Rasulallah ﷺ, Heraclius decided to enquire about his truthfulness. He sent for Abu Sufyan ؓ, the Qurayshi chief who had not as yet embraced Islam, who happened to be there on business. He asked several questions to Abu Sufyan. One of the questions was if there had been any king in the ancestors of Rasulallah ﷺ. On getting a reply in the negative, he explained that the purpose of this question was to ascertain whether Rasulallah ﷺ was trying to recover the lost kingdom of his ancestors or not. Since none of his ancestors were kings, that possibility was ruled out. (Sahihul Bukhari - ch.1 no.7)

The objective of Rasulallah ﷺ

Rasulallah's ﷺ intention was never to seize kingship and rule from the Persian and Roman Emperors and pass it on to the Arabs, let alone the Banu Hashim or the Quraysh. Even the ordinary Sahaabah had no doubt about this aspect of the mission of Rasulallah ﷺ. The answer given by Rib'i ibn Amir ؓ to Rustam, the Persian general, clearly illustrates this point. When he was asked by Rustam why the Arabs invaded Persia, Rib'i ؓ replied: Allah has sent us so that we free the servants of Allah from the slavery of their fellow humans and make them slaves of the One and only Allah. (Al-Bidaayah wan Nihaayah v.7 pg.39)

The attitude of Rasulallah ﷺ towards his Household

Rasulallah's ﷺ attitude towards the members of his family was different and contrary to that usually adopted by worldly leaders and rulers. Those who were nearest to him were made to undergo the greatest sacrifices, but were never given any privileges when it came to receiving wealth and booty. When Utbah ibn Rabi'ah, Shaybah ibn Rabi'ah and Walid ibn Utbah stepped forward in the Battle of Badr as combatants to challenge the Muslims, Rasulallah ﷺ ordered Hamzah, Ali and Ubaydah ؓ to face them. There were numerous others present who were equally eager and competent to face them. The three persons called up by Rasulallah ﷺ not only belonged to Banu Hashim, but were closely related to him and beloved to him. However

he did not summon anybody else to fight the enemy in order to save those who were nearer and dearer to him from the danger.

Ali ؑ expressed these very sentiments in a letter wherein he wrote: **At the time when a brutal, vicious attack was made and others would think of retreating, Rasulallah ﷺ would send his Ahlul-Bayt (close family members) to the front-line. Through them, the other Companions would be shielded from the fierce attacks of the spears and swords. Therefore, Ubaydah ibnul Haarith was killed in the battle of Badr, Hamzah was killed in the battle of Uhud and Ja'far was killed in the battle of Muthah. (Nahjul-Balaaghah v.2 pg.10-11)**

On the contrary, when Rasulallah ﷺ declared zakah as incumbent, he disqualified his own close relatives from the Banu Hashim from deriving any benefit from it. Again, when interest was declared impermissible, he ﷺ began by asking his own uncle Abbas ؑ to forgo the interest due to him on the loans which he had given in the past (which amounted to a huge sum of money). When he prohibited people from taking revenge for murders which occurred in the past, the first murder he forgave was the murder of his own cousin Rabi'ah ibnul Harith ibn Abdil Muttalib. (Sahih Muslim no.3009)

The Last to receive any worldly favor

Unlike the kings, rulers and political leaders, Rasulallah ﷺ always kept his children and relatives in the background and preferred others when giving out gifts and rewards. Ali ؑ relates that Fatimah (radhiAllahu anha) was finding it difficult to grind wheat. When she got news that some slave-girls had been brought to Rasulallah ﷺ, she came to Rasulallah ﷺ to request for one to be given to her. Rasulallah ﷺ, however, was not present in his house. Fatimah (radhiAllahu anha) mentioned the matter to A'ishah (radhiAllahu anha) who later mentioned Fatimah's *difficulty* to Rasulallah ﷺ. Ali ؑ says: "Rasulallah ﷺ visited our house after we had lain down in bed. We were about to get up, but he told us to stay where we were. He then sat down so close to me that I felt the coldness of his feet on my chest. He then said, "Let me tell you of something better than what you have asked for. When you go to bed, recite 'SubhaanAllah' thirty three times, 'Alhamdu lillah' thirty-

three times and ‘Allahu Akbar’ thirty-four times. This is better than what you had asked me for.” (Sahihul Bukhari – Kitaabul Jihaad no.2945)

Rasulullah ﷺ is also reported to have added: “By Allah, I cannot give you anything at a time when the stomachs of the Ashaabus Suffah are suffering the pangs of hunger. I do not have enough to see to their expenses. I will sell these slaves and spend the profits on them.” (Musnad Ahmad - Musnad Ali no.838)

Once Fatimah (radhiAllahu anha) made Hasan ؑ and Husayn ؑ (who were still children) put on silver bracelets. When Rasulullah ﷺ saw them, he was annoyed and did not enter her house. Perceiving the cause of her father’s annoyance, Fatimah (radhiAllahu anha) removed the bracelets. The children went weeping to Rasulullah ﷺ who at once took away two silver bracelets from Hasan ؑ and Husayn ؑ and said, “Thowban! Take these to such and such (destitute) family. These boys are from my Ahlul-Bayt (close family) and I do not like them to enjoy these pleasures in this very life.” (Sunan Abi Daud no.4215, Musnad Ahmad no.22417)

This had always been the temperament of all the Ambiya, which was pronounced by Rasulullah ﷺ when he said: “We (the Ambiya) do not leave behind inheritance. That which we leave is to be treated as Sadaqah.” (Sahihul Bukhari – Kitaabul Faraaidh no.6346-6349)

Always indifferent to the pleasure of the world, Rasulullah ﷺ himself lived a contented and abstinent life, and desired the same for the members of his family. Once he made dua to Allah: “O Allah, make the sustenance of the family of Muhammad only enough to feed them.” (Sahihul Bakhari – Kitaabur Riqaaq no.6095)

How can it be presumed, in these circumstances, that Rasulullah ﷺ would have thought of bequeathing a dynastic rule, dominion and command of the

Khilafah or Imaamah, which would continue to run for the coming generations, to his progeny?!¹¹

True merit in Islam is based on man's actions, piety and efforts - not on ancestry

Instead of confining all virtue to his family, Rasulullah ﷺ impressed upon all the equality of all of mankind, and made the fields of Ilm (knowledge), Amal (practice), Mujaahadah (sacrifice for the sake of Deen) and piety equally accessible to all. The concept of Islam as stated in the Qur'an is: Verily the most honorable amongst you in the sight of Allah is he who has the most Taqwa (and is not based on your race or family). (Surah Hujuraat v.13) The family and descendants of Rasulullah ﷺ were required to strive hard for the sake of Deen, like all other Muslims, and thereby prove themselves in the fields of knowledge and practice, self-sacrifice and service to people. It is however a fact that they achieved this with distinction.

Once Rasulullah ﷺ addressed his nearest family members and called them by name, telling them that they could have anything they desired from his possessions, but he would be of no help to them with regards to the obligations they owed to Allah. He said, "O Banu Abd Manaf, I will be of no help to you with regards to the obligations owed to Allah. O Safiyyah, aunt of Rasulullah, I will be of no help to you with regards to the obligations owed to Allah. O Fatimah bint Muhammad, ask me for whatever you want from my possessions, but I will be of no help to you with regards to the obligations owed to Allah. (Sahihul Bukhari – Kitaabul Wasaaya no.2602, Kitaabut Tafsir no.4493)

Indeed Rasulullah ﷺ clarified the matter by declaring: "Whosoever trails behind in actions cannot get ahead by his lineage." (Sahih Muslim no.7028)

¹¹ According to the Shi'i doctrine, Imaamah and Khilafah was the sole right of Ali ؑ who was divinely appointed as the first successor and was the sinless Imam. The Imam should descend from the (direct family or descendants of Rasulullah ﷺ). Their belief is that the world cannot last without an Imam, and it is a requisite for the validity of Imaan for every person to believe in his leadership in all worldly and Deeni matters.

The Divine Wisdom in the Order of the Khulafa

The sequence of the first four Khulafa was full of divine wisdom. It was not mere coincidence, nor due to any conspiracy, that Abu Bakr, ﷺ who belonged to the Banu Tamim tribe, was elected as the first Khalifah by the Muslims, instead of anyone belonging to the family of Rasulullah ﷺ or even the Banu Hashim. Allah caused this to happen so that there remains no doubt that Islam is not a dynastic rule which centers on a single family. The Khilaafah and leadership depends on one's capability, service rendered to the community and the opinions of the masses. Allah had caused this to happen so that the virtue and leadership of the Ahlul-Bayt in the future with regards to Deen and Ilm would be attributed to their piety, character, love of Deen, courageousness and abstinence from the world, instead of their honorable position being considered as a matter of coincidence or mere family relationship. It was due to their accomplishments that they were always held in esteem by the entire Ummah and Muslims loved and revered them as their leaders and as perfect role-models.

The abstention of the Ahlul-Bayt

Unlike descendants of other religious leaders, the Ahlul-Bayt never tried to take any advantage of the people's love and respect for them because of their relationship to Rasulullah ﷺ. They were distinct from those belonging to the progeny of other religious leaders who would live off the labor of others. Let alone deriving worldly benefit, their self-honor could not tolerate assuming any kind of privileged position based on their lineage.

Historical details concerning these great personalities present numerous examples of their simplicity, abstention and indifference to the world and its attractions. Hereunder, we quote just two such incidents:

Once, Hasan ibn Ali ﷺ went to the market to purchase something. He enquired regarding the price of a certain article. The shop-keeper informed him of the general selling rate. Thereafter, somehow, the shop-keeper came to know that he was the grandson of Rasulullah ﷺ. He reduced the price as a

concession to him out of respect and honour for his position, but Hasan ﷺ left the shop without purchasing the wanted article. He later commented, “I do not like to receive trivial benefits on account of my close relationship with Rasulullah ﷺ. (Al-Murtadha pg.228)

The personal attendant of Ali ibn Husayn ﷺ, who is famous by the title Zaynul Abidin, relates that he never benefited because of his kinship to Rasulullah ﷺ to the extent of even one single dirham. (Al-Bidaayah wan Nihaayah v.9 pg.106) Whenever he ﷺ went on a journey, he would never let people know his name and affiliation. On being asked the reason for this, he replied: “I do not like to receive anything based on my link with Rasulullah ﷺ which I cannot reciprocate in full.” (Wafyaatul-A’yaan v.2 pg.434)

Requirement 3:

The Heavenly Book revealed to the Nabi should be unaltered, simple to understand and easily available

The third condition mentioned at the beginning was that the Heavenly Book revealed to such a Nabi, which is the basis of his religion, the source of his teachings, the explanation of his beliefs and the greatest means of connecting man to his Creator, has to be able to fulfill its objectives till the Final Hour (Qiyaamah). For this, it needs to remain entirely unchanged and unaltered. That would require people in large numbers to recite it, understand it and memorize it. All this must be accomplished, since it is claimed to be the last revelation which is the only source of guidance for the coming generations.

The Testimony of the Qur’an

The Old and the New Testament and other religious scriptures were destroyed either by the invaders and enemies or often through interpolations and alterations by their own hypocritical followers. Some of these writings were even lost forever due to the negligence of insincere people. The reason

for this was that the task of safeguarding these scriptures was entrusted to their followers themselves. Allah states:

بِمَا اسْتُخْفِظُوا مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا عَلَيْهِ شُهَدَاءَ

Because they were given the responsibility of safeguarding the Book of Allah and they were witnesses to it. (Surah Maaidah v 44)

At the time the Qur'an was being revealed to Rasulullah ﷺ by Jibril عليه السلام, Rasulullah ﷺ was very concerned that he would have to memorize and pass on this Qur'an in its exact form, without any change. He ﷺ was then promised by Allah that:

إِنَّا عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ فَإِذَا قَرَأْنَاهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْآنَهُ ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ

It is Our responsibility to gather it (in your heart), and to recite it. So when We recite it (via Jibril), you follow its recitation (recite it once Jibril has completed). Then it is Our responsibility to explain it. (Surah Qiyaamah v.17-19)

The promise to preserve the Qur'an in the memory of Rasulullah ﷺ has been fulfilled. He conveyed it to the people who memorized it in its original unchanged form. Whatever may have happened over the course of Islamic history, but the Qur'an continued to remain unchanged in its original form, since Allah has already taken the responsibility of protecting the Qur'an against every alteration and interpolation till the end of time:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

It is We who have revealed the Reminder and it is We who will most surely safeguard it. (Surah Hijr v.9)

Testimony of non-Muslim Orientalists

It is not necessary to cite here the findings of Muslim scholars about the preservation of the Qur'an, for nobody has ever expressed any doubt about it except the Shi'a. The fact that the Qur'anic text is free of all corruptions,

additions, subtractions and alterations is the belief held by the Ahlus-Sunnah wal Jama'ah.

European scholars of Islam, commonly known as Orientalists (who are generally hostile to Islam), do not believe like the Muslims that the Qur'an was revealed by Allah, but they agree with them that the Qur'an has never been subjected to any alterations. Let us glance at the testimony of a few such Orientalists on this matter:

Sir William Muir, a man not very sympathetic to Islam and its Rasul ﷺ, acknowledges the textual purity of the Qur'an in these words:

Contending and embittered factions, taking their rise in the murder of Uthman himself within a quarter of a century from the death of Mahomet, have ever since rent the Mahometan world. Yet but one Coran has been current amongst them; and the consentaneous use by them all in every age up to the present day of the same Scripture, is an irrefragable proof that we have now before us the very text prepared by command of the unfortunate Caliph. There is probably in the world no other work which has remained twelve centuries with so pure text. (Life of Mahomet, V.1, p.22-23)

E.M. Wherry writes in his commentary on the Qur'an:

The text of the Qur'an is the purest of all works of a like antiquity. (A Comprehensive Commentary of the Qur'an, VI.1 p.249)

Lane-Poole testifies:

It is an immense merit in the Kuran that there is no doubt as to its genuineness... That very word we can now read with full confidence that it has remained unchanged through nearly thirteen hundred years. (Intro. of Selection from the Kuran)

Bosworth Smith has reached the conclusion that:

In the Kuran, we have beyond all reasonable doubt, the exact words of Mohammad, without subtraction and without addition. (Mohammad and Mohammedanism p. 22)

Many more evidences can be produced in support of the preservation of Qur'anic text in its original form, but it is perhaps not necessary to prolong with further quotations.

A Conflicting Picture

The Qur'an portrayed as interpolated and unavailable

Let us now take a look at the Shi'a belief in regard to the Qur'an. They hold that the Qur'anic text has been tampered with; there is almost consensus among their scholars on this point. Nuri Tabresi has written a treatise 'Faslul Khitaab fi Ithbaati Tahreefi Kitaabi Rabbil Arbaab' to prove the belief that the Qur'an has been changed. He explained therein that the fact that the Qur'an is interpolated is proven by tawaatur-ma'nawi (so many different Shi'a narrations that all cannot ever be regarded as being false or a lie). He had also written that Sayyid Ni'matullah Ali Jazaani had written in one of his books that the number of Shi'a narrations proving interpolation in the Qur'an are more than 2000.

Also mentioned in the above book is this historical fact that till the time of Abu Ali Tabresi (the 6th century of Islam), only four scholars of the Shi'a (Sharif Murtadha, Saduq, Abu Ja'far Tusi and Abu Ali Tabresi who might also have expressed this belief out of Taqiyyah) had ever differed with this belief (of the interpolation of the Qur'an). (p. 227) Until the tenth or eleventh century, that is, the time of Baqir Majlisi - who was one of the greatest scholars of the Shi'i creed - or even thereafter, the Shi'a scholars have been advertising the view that the Qur'an has been subjected to alterations, additions and subtractions.

We have already referred to Ayatullah Khomeini's views in regard to the Qur'an wherein he said that:

For those persons (the Sahaabah) who had nothing to do with Islam and the Qur'an except to utilize these as the means to gain power and wealth, and who had managed to employ the Qur'an to serve their base desires and evil ambitions, it posed no problem to delete the verses declaring Ali as the vicegerent of Rasulullah ﷺ and establishing the belief of Imaamah, to make interpolations in this Heavenly Scripture and to put the Qur'an out of sight of mankind forever till Qiyaamah. The allegation made by the Muslims against the Jews and the Christians of corrupting the scriptures is proven against these very people (The Sahaabah). (Kashful-Asraar pg.114)

'Usulul Kafi' is the most authentic book according to the Shi'a. It gives a number of examples to show that several verses were deleted from the

Qur'an while others were inserted in it. (pg. 262, 264-66 and 267) The book makes the allegation that about two-thirds of the Qur'an has been deleted, since it originally contained as many as seventeen thousand verses. (pg.271)

Shi'a scholars believe that the original Qur'an was compiled by Khalifah Ali , who then passed it on to the succeeding imams. It is now in the possession of the 12th hidden imam (Imam Ghaa'ib), who will bring it forward before Qiyaamah. The Qur'an in his possession is entirely different from the existing one. (pg.271) They also believe in the existence of another divinely revealed scripture known as Mushaf Fatimah (Fatimah's Scripture) which was three times more voluminous than the existing Qur'an. (pg.160)¹²

An Eye-opener to Deniers of the Qur'an

How can anyone claiming to be Muslim, but denying the absolute purity and authenticity of the Qur'an, call others towards Islam with confidence or claim that Islam is the only means of salvation in the Hereafter? Those who believe in the interpolation of the Qur'an have painted a most ugly and unattractive picture of Islam and its early followers. Does a non-believer need anything more than such an absurd belief to refute the claim that Islam is the last and eternal faith of mankind?

Requirement 4:

The Nabi must be the only Recipient of Revelation and the Final Messenger

The fourth condition mentioned at the beginning was that the Nabi of such a religion should be the sole leader and guide of his followers. The followers of such a Nabi have to unite on his obedience alone and upon the fact that

¹² For more details, refer to Moulana Manzur Nu'mani's 'Khomeini, Iranian Revolution and the Shi'ite Faith'

their Nabi is the exclusive recipient of Wahy (divine revelation), the last of the Ambiya (Messengers) and the sole leader of all human beings. For such people, it ought to be impossible to regard any other person after him - howsoever near and dear he may be to the Nabi - as worthy of unquestioning obedience, a recipient of Wahy (Divine Revelation) or as sinless. This belief will ensure the unity of his followers and will be a means of protection from dividing into numerous small groups and factions.

The belief of the Ahlus-Sunnah

It is our belief that Rasulullah ﷺ is the exclusive recipient of Wahy (divine revelation) and is the sole authority who can issue laws and commands of Islam. He alone is Khaatamul Ambiyaa (the final Messenger of Allah). It is impossible to find any person after him who is worthy of unquestioning obedience, is a recipient of Wahy (Divine Revelation) or is sinless.

A Conflicting Picture

The Doctrine of Imaamah

Let us now take the belief and doctrines of Imaamah held by the Shi`a as mentioned in 'Usulul Kafi' (pg.103-259) and other sources:

They believe that:

1. An imam is sinless as a Nabi, (Usulul Kaafi pg.121-122)
2. Revelation comes to the imams just as it comes to a Nabi, (ibid pg.85)
3. Obedience to them is fardh just as it was to the Ambiya (ibid pg.109-111)
4. The imams possessed all the knowledge of the past and future and even excelled Musa ﷺ in knowledge, (ibid pg.160)
5. All the scriptures revealed to the preceding messengers were possessed by the imams and they read them in their original languages, (ibid pg.137/147)
6. The imams have the authority to declare anything lawful or unlawful (ibid pg.278)
7. All the deeds of men are presented before the imams (ibid pg.134)

8. Every Friday night, mi'raj is granted to the imams and they are taken to the Arsh (ibid pg.155)
9. The imams know their hour of death, death is in their hands, (ibid pg.158)
10. The imams surpass all the messengers in rank (ibid pg.117)
11. The world cannot exist without an imam (ibid pg.104)
12. This world and the world beyond belong to the imam, due to which he can grant whatever he wishes to grant to anyone (ibid pg.259).¹³

Imaamah as understood by non-muslim writers

The significance of this concept of Imaamah has been construed even by non-Muslim writers as ‘**making the Imams partakers of the divine nature (Godhood).**’ (Thomas Patrick Hughes, Dictionary of Islam p. 574)

Phillip K. Hitti has also correctly described the implications of the belief of Imaamah:

The founder of Islam made a revelation, the Koran, the intermediary between God and man. The Shiah made the intermediary a person, the Imam. To “I believe in Allah, the one God” and “I believe in the revelation of the Koran, which is uncreated from eternity”, the Shi’ites now added a new article of faith: “I believe that the Imam especially chosen by Allah as the bearer of a part of the divine being is the leader to salvation.” (History of the Arabs p. 248)

Iranian Influence

This exaggerated view of Imaamah which finally raised the Imams to a position of divinity reflects the ancient creed of Iran, who believed in the divine origin of their kings. In pre-Islamic Iran, religious and worldly authority and leadership were confined to particular tribes. After

¹³ Ja’far Saadiq ؑ is allegedly purported to have stated, “He (Ali) has been granted that virtue which was granted to Muhammad ﷺ ... In the same manner, that virtue had been granted to the Imams of guidance one after another.” (ibid pg.225)

Baqir Majlisi has written, “Imaamah is a rank higher than Messengership (risaalah).” (Hayaatul Quloob v.3 pg.10)

Zoroastrianism became the state religion, religious leadership was only held by the al-Moghan tribe.

The Iranians believed that the priestly class was the shadow of Allah on earth, created for the service of the gods. Therefore, it was the sole right of this tribe to become the chief-priests at the fire-temples. The ruler of the country should also be from this tribe, for according to the belief of the Iranians, the ruler was the incarnation of God.

The motive behind acceptance of Shi`asm by the Iranians and the peculiar concept of Imaamah held by them has been thus explained by an Egyptian scholar:

A great majority of the Iranians were led to the faith in Shi`asm because they were accustomed to attribute divinity to their monarchs. They believed that the blood running in the veins of their rulers was different from that running in the body of a common man. Therefore, when they embraced Islam, they viewed Nabi ﷺ in the same light as their Kisra (kings) and they viewed the household (Ahlul-Bayt) of Nabi ﷺ in the same light as they viewed the members of their old royal families. When Nabi ﷺ bid farewell to the world, they believed that only his Ahlul Bayt could become his successors. (Duha al-Islam of Dr. Ahmad Amin v.3, pg. 209)

The Imam Ghaa'ib - The 12th Hidden Imam

This exaggerated concept of Imaamah which sometimes makes the Imams a partner in nubuwwah and sometimes a partner in Godhood finally led to belief in the twelfth hidden Imam or Imam Ghaa'ib by the Ithna Ashari sect of the Shi`a. In accordance with their beliefs, the twelfth Imam, Muhammad Mahdi, withdrew to a cave called 'Surra man Ra'a', ten days before the death of his father, the eleventh Imam, Hasan Askari.¹⁴ He took with him the real Qur'an and other divinely revealed books like the Mushaf Fatimah. It is

¹⁴ Amazingly, Hasan Askari ﷺ had no children. Due to this complication, these Shi'as claim that he married a female jinn, from whom Muhammad Mahdi was born. This claim was deemed as necessary to resort to, considering the fact that the belief of the Shi'as is that the world now cannot exist without the existence of an Imam who hails from this specific bloodline.

believed that he is still alive and will reappear again in the last days as the Mahdi to rule over the whole world. (Usulul Kafi p.202, 207)

Ayatullah Khomeini's views about the Imams

Lest somebody may think that these incredulous beliefs were held by the people of the past and that the informed and educated people of the Shi'as, particularly after the Islamic revolution, must have changed their views, we give here an extract from Ayatullah Khomeini's 'Al-Hukumatul Islamiyyah'. He says:

The Imams enjoy an honourable rank (Maqam Mahmood), a high position and such hereditary authority over the happenings of the world that every particle of this universe submits to his authority and power. Among the essential and fundamental beliefs of our religion is that our Imams enjoy such a position which can never be attained by any angel of the highest rank or any Nabi who was sent by Allah. According to the (Shia) narrations we have in front of us, the Great Rasul ﷺ and the Imams existed in the form of lights (anwaar) before the creation of this universe. Allah had caused them to encircle His Arsh (Throne) and granted them such a position and proximity to Him which is known only to Allah. (Al-Hukumatul Islamiyyah pg.52)

Ayatullah Khomeini also believes in the Imam Ghaa'ib like all other Ithna 'Ashari Shi'a scholars. He has stated that although more than a thousand years have passed since the final Imams concealment, the Imam may reappear after thousands of years. (ibid pg. 76-77)

View of Shah Waliullah

Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Dehlawi ﷺ has stated:

The fallacy of the Shi'a religion can be understood from the term 'Imam'. According to them, an Imam is a sinless being who deserves unquestioning obedience and who receives wahy (revelation) from the unseen. This description is actually the definition of a Nabi. Therefore, their religion entails a rejection of khatmun-nubuwwah - the fact that Rasulullah ﷺ was the final Nabi and the seal of Messengers (as they believe that these Imams who appeared after him ﷺ fulfilled the primary requisites of a Nabi. Remember that the meaning of Nubuwwah is when a sinless ideal human being is sent

by Allah with revelation for the guidance of mankind, and who must be obeyed in his capacity of being the messenger of Allah. Nubuwwah does not merely mean being called a Nabi.) (Ad-Durruth Thameen pg.8)¹⁵

The love of Rasulullah ﷺ must supersede the love of all others

Rasulullah ﷺ deserves not only submission to his commands, but much more than that. Every believer has to cultivate such love and affection for him that surpasses the love of one's own life, progeny and property. After the love of Allah, one's love for Rasulullah ﷺ should be more intense than his love for any other human being, be it the greatest saint (friend of Allah) and spiritual guide, the great revivers of Deen or even the family members of Rasulullah ﷺ and the Sahaabah.

The revered personalities who belonged to the family or progeny of Rasulullah ﷺ have always been like lighthouses of guidance in times of darkness. No true Muslim can have the least doubt about it. However, the excessive and extreme adoration of the Shi'a for the Ahlul-Bayt (household of Rasulullah ﷺ) has weakened their love and adoration for Rasulullah ﷺ himself, which ought to have been the dominating love in the heart of every Muslim. The family of Rasulullah ﷺ are honored by us because of their relationship with Rasulullah ﷺ himself. Therefore, he deserves our adoration more than anybody else.

It seems as if a portion of the highest level of love and honor which was the sole right of Rasulullah ﷺ had got wrongly passed on to his family members, due to the belief of Imaamah. This belief of Imaamah which promotes the Imams to the level the Ambiya has become a barrier to creating the overwhelming love of Rasulullah ﷺ in the hearts of its adherents. As a result, it has been noticed that Shi'a writers have failed to produce many good

¹⁵ Shah Waliullah states that he was inspired with the above understanding after witnessing Rasulullah ﷺ in a dream and asking him about the Shia religion. Rasulullah ﷺ indicated that the fallacy of their creed is based on the term 'Imam'.

inspiring biographies on the life of Rasulullah ﷺ and heart-rending poems in his love and praise. When comparing between their poetry composed in the love and praises of Rasulullah ﷺ and their poetry lamenting the martyrdom of Ali ؑ and Husayn ؑ or their poetry in the honour of the Ahlul-Bayt ؑ of Rasulullah ﷺ, this imbalance and discrepancy can clearly be seen. The same can be observed when comparing between the biographies they had compiled on the life of Rasulullah ﷺ and the biographies they had compiled of the Ahlul-Bayt ؑ. When discussing the Ahlul-Bayt, one discerns a natural spontaneous feeling of love and adoration which is therefore heart-rending. However, such a feeling can unfortunately not be sensed in their discussion on Rasulullah ﷺ, which seems like an insipid and lifeless duplication.

We have noticed the effect of this attitude in other spheres also. The Shi'as generally have a greater regard for the shrines than the masjids and more intense longing of paying a visit to Najaf and Karbala and similar other holy places than undertaking a journey to the three sacred masajid (Al-Masjidul Haraam, Al-Masjidun Nabawi and Al-Masjidul Aqsa).

This attitude of the Shi'a brothers might be a reaction to the certain overzealous Sunnis in certain places who sometimes fail to acknowledge the position of the household of Rasulullah ﷺ. But over and above that, in any case, directing all one's attention, love and adoration towards the family of Rasulullah ﷺ is a clear sign that the belief of Imaamah has resulted in turning the Imams into partners or rather rivals to the position of Rasulullah ﷺ.¹⁶

The Ahlul-Bayt in the eyes of the Shia

The beliefs of the Shi'a and their exaggerated ideas present the family of Rasulullah ﷺ as very contradictory individuals. They are sometimes presented as supernatural beings, as partners in qualities which ought to belong solely to Allah, and sometimes as personalities who surpassed all the Messengers of Allah and held all the qualities of Nubuwwah. On the other

¹⁶ For more details, refer to 'Darya-e-Kabul se Darya-e-Yarmuk tak' by the author Moulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

hand, the Shias also present them - including a man like Ali ؑ who was known for his valour and bravery - as men lacking bravery, courage and strength in proclaiming the truth, people living lives of fear who would always consider their personal expediency and convenience even if it meant at the expense of Islam and the truth. For this they resorted to Taqiyyah¹⁷, not as a temporary measure for protection, but rather considering it as an act of worship and a means of gaining closeness to Allah.

They are sometimes stated to have concealed the truth and hid the teachings of Rasulullah ﷺ in such situations when, with a little courage or with no great danger to their own person, they could have won the support of the people. The biographical accounts of the Imams written by the Shi'a present them as strategists, conspirators and leaders of underground movements like the Free Masons and Ikhwanus-Safa.¹⁸

¹⁷ Taqiyyah means to put up a deceptive appearance or lie to hide the truth or mislead a Sunni. Taqiyyah allows a Shia to cheat, deceive, befool, betray or harm a non-Shi'a, particularly a member of the Ahlus Sunnah. Through Taqiyyah, the Shi'a can pretend to be Sunni and can even refute the fundamental beliefs of their religion, just to gain something insignificant from a member of the Ahlus Sunnah, inflict a wound to him or insult him. In short, the purpose of Taqiyyah is to deceive or harm the Ahlus Sunnah in every possible way. For these acts, they will be rewarded by Allah ﷻ according to the teachings of Shi'ism.

According to one narration of theirs, Imam Ja'far Saadiq is allegedly reported to have once said to his disciple, "O Salman, you follow a religion that whoever will conceal it, Allah will bestow honour on him, and whoever will reveal it, he will be disgraced by Allah." The following statement is attributed to Imam Muhammad Baaqir "Among my disciples, he is most dear to me, is most righteous and knows the religion best who conceals our teachings and keeps secrets better than others. (Usulul Kaafi pg.485-486) According to another of their narrations, Taqiyyâ is 9/10ths of faith and one who does not practice on Taqiyyah has no Deen in him. (Usulul Kaafi pg.482) One narration attributed to Imam Ja'far Saadiq is as follows; "If I say that he who gives up Taqiyyah is as big a sinner as he who abandons salaah, I will be speaking the truth. A person who does not observe Taqiyyah has no Imaan. (Man Laa Yahdhuruhul Faqeeh pg.330)

¹⁸ Ikhwanus-Safa was a secret society of philosophers during the Abbasid period who had religious-political association with Ismaili Shi'a views and were opposed to the existing political order, which they evidently aimed to overthrow. Their activities and membership were clouded in secrecy. Baghdad was their centre in the fourth century A.H. They held meetings in privacy and no outsider was allowed to participate in them.

The books of the Shi'as portray these great personalities as selfish men whose only purpose in life was to assume the Khilaafah, whose lives were centered around this matter and whose hearts were consumed in rage, anger, resentment and misery due to the Khilaafah being usurped from them by the oppressors. Such writings make it seem that they had no concern about the effort of their grandfather ﷺ, his Da'wah, his Deen and the Muslim Ummah and society that he had built.

The Ahlul-Bayt in the eyes of the Ahlus-Sunnah¹⁹

The Ahlul-Bayt (family members and household) of Rasulullah ﷺ, and particularly Ali ؑ and his descendants, were great men. History proves their courageousness, bravery, steadfastness and love for unity.²⁰

The descendants of Ali ؑ had inherited the courage and steadfastness of their forefathers who had always been ready to sacrifice their lives in defense of what they considered to be true and right. The uprising of Zayd ibn Ali ؑ

¹⁹ According to the Ahlus-Sunnah wal Jama'ah, the eleven great personalities whom the Shi'as refer to as 'Imams' (excluding the twelfth professed Imam) were all unique individuals, respected Ulama and from amongst the greatest Awliya of their respective eras. They are from amongst the forerunners of the Ahlus-Sunnah wal Jama'ah, their narrations and achievements are quoted frequently in the authentic literature of the Ahlus-Sunnah who love and respect them as the family of Rasulullah ﷺ and as some of the greatest people of this Ummah. However, the Ahlus-Sunnah wal Jama'ah distance themselves from all such unauthentic narrations which portray them as haters of the other Companions of Rasulullah ﷺ, as two-faced individuals who were too cowardly to stand up for the truth and therefore resorted to Taqiyyah, and as conspirators against the Muslim Ummah. The Ahlus-Sunnah regard all such reports as fabrications which were manufactured by certain unscrupulous and untruthful people for political purposes and falsely attributed to these honourable personalities. The above can be ascertained by scrutinizing the lives of the narrators of such reports, the biographies of whom have been preserved by the Ulama of Asmaa'ur Rijaa.

²⁰ What else was it which prompted Sayyiduna Hasan ibn Ali ؑ to hand over the reins of rulership to Mu'awiya ؑ other than the love and concern in his heart for uniting the Ummah?!! He therefore fulfilled the prophecy of Rasulullah ﷺ who said, "Verily, this son of mine is a Sayyid (leader). Hopefully, Allah will unite two great and large factions of the Muslims through him." (Sahih Bukhari)

(the son of Zaynul Abidin ؑ) against Hisham ibn Abdul Malik in 122 AH, as well as the uprising of Muhammad ؑ, the great grandson of Hasan ؑ, whose lofty standard of piety had obtained for him the title of An-Nafsuz Zakiyyah, or 'the Pure Soul', and his brother Ibrahim against the Abbasid Khalifah Mansur in 145 AH which was supported both morally and financially by Imam Malik ؑ and Imam Abu Hanifah ؑ, the founders of the two important and popular mazhabs (of Fiqh) of the Ahlus-Sunnah, speak volumes of the courage and bravery of the progeny of Ali ؑ. (Imam Malik and Imam Abu Hanifah had to undergo severe hardships as a result of this support by incurring the displeasure of Khalifah Mansur.²¹)

However, by and large, the descendants of Ali ؑ had arrived at the conclusion that there was no need to raise a revolt against the well-established Khilaafah, since it maintained law and order and enforced Islam as law of the land. They did not want to fan the fire of disorder and rebellion amongst the Muslims. Instead, they devoted their energies to the spiritual upliftment and religious guidance of the Muslims which in no way was a result of compromise, laxity or cowardice which led them to practice on Taqiyyah. Outside the governmental circles, the Ahlul-Bayt wielded tremendous influence over the people who looked up to them with great respect. They used this influence to save the masses from falling prey to worldly temptations, advising them, imparting to them the knowledge of Deen and spiritually uplifting and purifying them. Included amongst such persons were personalities like Zaynul-Abideen Ali ibn Husain ؑ, Hasan al-Muthanna ibn Hasan ibn Ali ؑ, his son Abdullah ؑ, Muhammad Baaqir ؑ and Ja'far Saadiq ؑ. These people were ideal examples of Islamic piety, whose existence was a means of reforming thousands of individuals.²²

²¹ Sayyid Munazir Ahsan Gilani's 'Imam Abu Hanifah ki Siyasi Zindagi' gives a detailed account of these events.

²² For further details, refer to 'Saviours of Islamic Spirit' (v.1 pg.16-17) by Moulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Two Conflicting Pictures of the Earliest Islamic Era

What was the earliest Islamic Era like? What was the result of the teachings and spiritual purification imparted by the greatest and final Nabi ﷺ? What was the character and morals of the people who were trained under the guidance of Rasulullah ﷺ? Were these men any different compared to rulers, founders of kingdoms and persons aspiring for leadership? Did the family members and descendants of Rasulullah ﷺ try to take advantage of their relationship with him? What was their methodology and attitude with regards to spreading Deen, propagating the truth and practicing on that which they considered correct? How did the members of Rasulullah's ﷺ household conduct themselves towards the other students of Rasulullah ﷺ who were known as the Sahaabah, and specifically towards those who assumed the reins of Khilaafah after Rasulullah ﷺ and were known as the Khulafa Raashideen? What were the life-stories and biographies of the first four Khulafa, according to reliable historical records? What was their conduct with the subjects of their vast empires in that era? What was their standard of living during such times when wealth was pouring into the capital and all the means of luxury and comfort were easily available to them? Is the Final Scripture which is the basis of Islam reliable? Was it really protected against all alterations, changes and interpolations? The answers to these questions portray two conflicting pictures of Islam. One is the picture of Islam presented by the Ahlus-Sunnah wal Jama'ah (the followers of the Qur'an and Sunnah, according to the understanding of the Jama'ah (group) of Sahaabah and their followers) and the other is the picture portrayed by the beliefs of the Ithna Ashari Shias (The Twelvers). These two pictures are totally conflicting and contradictory.

Now anyone endowed with reason and common sense, a just mind and some knowledge of history can easily decide which one of the two versions is correct. Which one of the two descriptions befit a religion revealed to mankind at large, which claims that its teachings are practicable in any age and region and which will bring about miraculous transformation in the lives of mankind if they adhere to it? It is only that religion which announces that

its Rasul ﷺ was the most successful among all the Ambiya of Allah and the era of its Rasul ﷺ was the most blessed period of its history; an era which the entire humanity can be proud of, in which we find such selfless and sincere individuals who all worked towards a common goal and remained unconcerned about their own material progress, thereby producing a society based on divine guidance and Islamic values.

But the picture of Islam that emerges through the beliefs and version of history assumed by the Shi'a induces every intelligent and educated man to ask that if the call to Islam could not make any lasting impact on the companions and followers of its founder, excluding four persons, all of whom became apostates just after his death, how can its claim be accepted that it is the only means of rectifying the evil morals and incorrect beliefs of mankind and the only means of delivering mankind from everlasting doom to everlasting success? Let us suppose that a missionary of Islam is inviting people to accept Islam in any non-muslim country. A man, who has gone through the Shi'a literature, interrupts him to ask: "Keep your religion to yourself. Why don't you study its history? How can you invite others to Islam when the result of its Nabi's efforts was that he had no more than four or five believers in him after making effort for twenty-three long years? The vast majority turned their backs on his faith! How can you have the audacity to invite other non-muslims to your faith, as it is most likely that they will not be able to remain steadfast and firm to this religion after accepting, as happened in the very era of your Nabi?" What answer could be given to the man raising these objections in the light of Shia history? We leave the above question to every reader to answer.

The Significance of Reliable Beliefs in the religion of Islam

It is important for every Muslim to keep the following points in mind:

1) The Islamic criterion by which one can judge whether a certain individual is worthy of praise or criticism and whether he qualifies as an ideal leader is

that his life should conform to the Qur'an, the Sunnah, the practices of our Salaf (pious predecessors) and he should adhere to reliable Islamic beliefs. The criterion employed by certain persons however is to judge individuals solely on the basis of their ruling over a Muslim country, having established a so-called Islamic government or having challenged western powers. This is what certain persons regard as the qualification for an ideal leader. Based on this, they are ready to accept whatever is presented to them in the name of Islam by these so-called leaders. Some such heads of states in certain Muslim countries were admired by their people even though they openly denied the validity of the Hadith and the Sunnah or rather made fun of these, endeavored to make their countries culturally part of the West and are known sympathizers of secularism and capitalism. Other such leaders won public admiration because of their religious appeal or because of their vociferous condemnation of Western non-muslim powers. Examples of such leaders include Kamal Ataturk of Turkey, Gamal Abdun-Nasir of Egypt and Ayatullah Khomeini of Iran. It is therefore necessary to asses each one of them in the light of reliable Islamic beliefs, the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

2) Fundamental Islamic beliefs are today taken lightly by the modern educated class. This is a dangerous development which is a cause of concern for all Muslims. The difference between the movements launched by political leaders and the Da'wah given by the Ambiya of Allah is nothing but the beliefs and ideologies propagated by the latter. The Ambiya were never prepared to compromise their beliefs. Their criterion for accepting or rejecting any proposition was based on how much it was compatible with their beliefs. If the Muslims have been able to preserve their religion unadulterated, in its original form despite their numerous weaknesses, it has been on account of their sensitivity and zeal for maintaining it in its purest form. The Ulama of Islam who are responsible for the protection and interpretation of Islam have refused to be intimidated by the most tyrant and powerful rulers. They have never kept silent whenever they found any Islamic tenet being misconstrued by the kings and emperors; forget accepting it on account of it being expedient for themselves or the Muslim Ummah, or to avoid conflict and disunity. The Muslim Ummah were

sometimes challenged with tyrant rulers, occasionally with ‘the public opinion’, at times fame and popularity, and in many cases tempting offers of worldly gains. The history of Islam offers innumerable shining examples of Ulama and pious individuals who practiced on the Ahaadith: “The greatest Jihad is to express the truth to the face of a tyrant ruler” (Tirmizi, Abu Daud) and “It is not allowed to obey the creation when it entails disobedience to The Creator” (Ahmad, Haakim). This is why the Ulama of Islam, who have to safeguard the Shari`ah and the Sunnah, cannot avoid taking steps apparently unpleasant to certain movements or persons.

3) The teachings and the beliefs of Islam are really like a river which never changes its course, nor does it go dry. Political powers, occasional revolutions, the rise and fall of governments and various movements come and go. If the river is flowing in the right direction, they pose no danger, but if the belief system is distorted, it means that the river has changed its course or its water has been contaminated. Thus, no mission, call or movement to make any country strong and powerful or to reform any society of its ills can ever be acceptable if its beliefs are not sound and authentic. This is essential for the stability of Islam and its followers.

رَبَّنَا لَا تَزُغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً ۚ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ

O our Rabb, do not cause our hearts to stray after You have guided us, and grant us Mercy (steadfastness) from You. Verily You are the Great Giver.