Khulafa-e Rashideen: The Four Pious Khulafah

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THE CONCEPT AND PRACTICE OF JIHAD IN ISLAM

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FOREWORD

It is a distressing fact that most of the Muslims lack proper understanding about the universal relevance of the Qur’anic Message which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) for the guidance of all mankind. There is considerable misapprehension too about Islam and the Message of the Qur’an in the minds of Non-Muslims. The Indian School of Excellence Trust (INDSET) is making an humble endeavour through a series of monographs on Islam and Qur’an to project the image of Islam in its proper perspective and to explain the significance of the Qur’anic Message in a scientific and systematic way.

This Monograph on Khulaf-ar-Rashideen provides a factual, objective and critical analysis of the principles which governed the administration of the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs. It also attempts to explain the policies and strategies adopted by each of the Four Caliphs to meet the political, social, economic and military challenges which confronted them. While Abu Bakr (RA) and ‘Umar (RA) managed to control their circumstances and achieved notable success and remarkable progress in their administration, ‘Umar (RA), particularly, expanded phenomenally the frontiers of the Islamic state and simultaneously brought peace and stability. In contradistinction, ‘Uthman and ‘Ali (RA) were overwhelmed by circumstances and succumbed to forces of treachery, fraud, deception, conspiracy and court intrigues of selfish factional leaders and alien agents, who disguising as Muslims, were bent upon destroying Islam. Both ‘Uthman and ‘Ali (RA) failed to anticipate the tragic
consequences of the evolving political events and were consequently martyred.

This Monograph forcefully highlights the fact that all the four caliphs pioneered and nurtured the first and a truly welfare state ever established on earth. It was a Islamic state in its pristine purity, conception and outlook, where the meek and the mighty, the weak and the strong, the rich and the poor, the slave and the master, the king and the commoner and the ruler and the ruled stood on equal footing, both literally and metaphorically.

We conclude with a prayer to Allah (SWT) to graciously bless our efforts with success (Aameen).

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&  
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CHAPTER - 1
INTRODUCTION

Khulafa-e Rashideen, the Four Rightly Guided Khulafah, viz. Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthmaan and Ali (RA) were among those ten distinguished and pious companions who, by virtue of their righteous deeds and immense sacrifice in the cause of Islam, received the unique tidings, during their life time, of being blessed and assured by Allah (SWT) of heavenly abode after their death. Their period of administration as the Khalifah of the Islamic state, founded by the Prophet (SAWS) followed immediately after his death. They modeled their administration on the lines devised by the Prophet and hence their system of administration represents a model Islamic System of Administration in its pristine purity. Each of these four Khulafah were confronted with distinct and unique challenges to their administration and tried to resolve them in their own way. Their most challenging problem, which they all faced, was the problem of successor to the Prophet, after his death. An acute crisis of

1 RA stands for ‘Raziallahu ‘anhu/anha/anhum’, meaning ‘Pleasure of Allah upon him/her/both/them’. It is customary to say this short supplication whenever name of any Sahabi (Companion) is spoken, heard or written.
2 SWT stands for ‘Sub’hanuhu wo Ta’la’, meaning ‘Pure and Exalted’. It is customary to say this short supplication whenever name of Allah is spoken, heard or written to say this short praise.
3 SAWS stands for ‘Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wo Sallam’, meaning ‘Blessings of Allah and peace be upon him.’ It is customary to say this short supplication whenever name of any Sahaabi (Companion) is spoken, heard or written. Henceforth these will not be repeated in the text in order to make it smooth.
succession had suddenly developed when the Ansaar laid their claim to succeed the Prophet, and momentarily it appeared that Islam would be split into diametrically opposite camps of Ansaar and Muhajireen. The crisis was astutely and deftly handled by Abu Bakr and Umar. They not only averted the crisis but reinforced the unity of Islam and laid down rudiments of democratic principles for the selection/election of Khulafa (Caliphs) of Islam by the Ansaar (Helpers) of Madinah and Muhajireen (Migrants) of Makkah.

In the annals of the political history of the world, Abu Bakr was the first ever democratically elected head of a nascent Islamic state in the Arabian Peninsula, in a political environment dominated by the imperial dynasties of Byzantine (Roman) and Persia (Chosroes/Kisra) in the north west and north east respectively. The existence of an Islamic state with its non-dynastic and semi-democratic system of government stood in sharp contrast to its domineering imperial neighbours. Abu Bakr was first unanimously elected by the Ansaar of Madinah collected in Saqifa of Banu Saidah which was subsequently unanimously endorsed by the Muhajireen and Ansaar of Madinah in the Masjid-un Nabi. He inherited an empty treasury with the menace of apostasy and insurgency against the payment of Zakaat raising their ugly heads. Despite unrelenting pressure by the rebellious tribes and advice by some of the leading companions of the Prophet (Sahaabah), including Umar, to relax on the payment of Zakaat, he refused to concede their demand and crushed the rebellion and forced the tribes to pay the Zakaat
amount. Similarly, he waged a relentless military campaign (Qitaal) against the apostates such as Musailama Kizzab of Banu Haneefah and Aswad Ansi of Yemen. They were killed in pitched battles and apostasy was totally eliminated, once and for all, during Abu Bakr’s lifetime. One of his finest achievements, as a Khalifah, was to arrange the compilation of an authentic text of the entire Qur’an, as arranged by the Prophet, in one volume (Mus’hafl) written on parchment paper. This saved the unity and integrity of the Qur’anic text. Because of this perceptive action there is only one text of the Qur’an unlike the other revealed books, which have many versions and differ widely in their content. By the end of his short tenure (11~13 A.H/632~634 A.D), the Islamic state was firmly established in the entire Arab Peninsula. Before his death Khalifah Abu Bakr nominated Umar as his successor, which was not final until it was accepted and confirmed by the Ansaar and Muhajireen of Madinah.

Khalifah Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab succeeded Abu Bakr on his death in 13 A.H/682 A.D and his Khilafat (reign) lasted until his martyrdom in 24 A.H/644 A.D. He inherited a very stable and peaceful state and could use it as a perfect launching pad for his military campaigns against the Persian and Byzantine (Roman) empires, which threatened the existence of the infant Islamic state. Despite early reverses on both the Persian and the Roman fronts he eventually succeeded in inflicting humiliating defeats with the support of his great warriors such as Sa’ad Bin Waqqas, Nu’maan bin Maq’aan, Khalid bin Waleed, Amr bin Al-Aas and Mu’awia bin Sufiyaan. The
Battles of Qadisiyah (Muharram, 14 A.H/635 A.D) and Nihawand (21 A.H/642 A.D) were the two decisive battles in which the Persian forces were totally routed and their resistance collapsed. The victory of Nihawand was called the “Victory of victories,” because, after this victory the Islamic domain spread all over the empire of Kisra (Chosroes), which simply vanished and was replaced permanently by the flag of Islam. On the Roman front, the decisive battle was fought at Yarmuk in Syria, where the Romans, despite their superiority in numbers and military arsenal, were ignominiously defeated in the Battle of Yarmuk (15 A.H/636 A.D). This led to the collapse of the Roman military action against the spread of Islam and the total surrender of Syria and Jordan to Muslim forces. Besides the conquest of Egypt and the fall of the Port of Alexandria to Islamic forces, another notable event of the period on the western front, was the fall of Jerusalem (Rajab 16 A.H/637 A.D). Khalifah Umar had to travel all the way to Jerusalem in order to accept its surrender from the Christian Patriarch Sophorinous, who refused to surrender it to anyone except the Khalifah.

Khalifah Umar offered the Christians very liberal terms of surrender. Among other things Khalifah Umar pledged “to guarantee to the people of Ila [the old name of Jerusalem] the security of their persons and the safety of their properties and churches including their crosses, whether sound or broken…. “The Churches shall not be taken over nor demolished, and none of their contents shall be removed. Their properties shall be respected. They are not required to change their religion, and none
shall be hurt.” During the course of his visit to Jerusalem he looked for the site of Masjid Al-Aqsa as described by the Prophet. He could identify the site with definiteness during his second visit in 18 A.H/639 A.D. It is at this site that Masjid Al-Aqsa was later constructed and still stands.

_Khalifah_ Umar laid the foundation of a truly Islamic welfare state and an Islamic system of administration, which was just and transparent. He introduced pensions for all those distinguished companions who had fought in battles during the life of the Prophet, fixed appropriate amount of stipends for the widows of the Prophet (Ummahat-ul-Mu'mineen i.e Mothers of the Believers), befitting their position and status. Stipends were also fixed for the old and the newborn irrespective of their religion. The old and the aged non-Muslims were exempted from the payment of _jizyah_ (Poll Tax). In the administration of Justice he totally eliminated all types of discrimination between the rich and the poor, the king and the commoner, between the ruler and the ruled, and between the master and the slave. In the eyes of law all stood on equal footing. He did not hesitate to punish his own son, Abu Shayma, when found guilty of rape and drinking wine. He was a stern administrator but still most compassionate. He kept himself abreast with the problem of the people through his incognito nocturnal visits, and tried to mitigate their sufferings. He fed the hungry and nursed the sick himself. He totally identified himself with the hardships of the people. When Arabia was struck by famine, he did not drink milk and eat butter and meat during the entire period of famine. _Khalifah_ Umar was a
man of impeccable integrity and scrupulously honest. He always rewarded merit and honesty. In this regard he readily volunteered to marry his son, Asim, to a poor but extremely honest daughter of a milkmaid. He kept a tight control on his senior officers, particularly his governors. They were all asked to declare their assets and sources of income at the time of taking over charge. The Governors were paid handsome salaries. If and when they were found to possess excess wealth over their income they were made to surrender the excess amount. The law and order was in perfect condition, maintained by a network of large military garrisons. Some of these cantonments have now developed into major urban centers such as Fustaat (Modern Cairo), Basra, and Mosul etc.

The Khilafat of Umar was indeed the glorious period of the early Khilafat of Islam. It was notable for its remarkable military achievements, enormous territorial expansion and equally distinguished for its political stability. He was at once an intelligent military strategist, a great conqueror, and a just, honest, impartial, firm yet a compassionate administrator. In short he was a great human being. As a true servant of God he worked relentlessly for the majesty of Islam, for the welfare of the people and rose above sectarian and religious prejudices in the discharge of his duties. He never deviated from the principles laid down in the Qur’an, firmly adhered to the Sunnah of the Prophet and examples set by his illustrious predecessor, Abu Bakr.
Khalifah Umar was stabbed by a non-Muslim Persian slave Feyroz, and succumbed to his injuries on 26 Dhil-Hajj, 23 A.H./November 3, 644 A.D. Uthmaan succeeded him as a Khalifah and his Khilafat lasted from 1st Muharram 24 A.H./November, 644 A.D to 18 Dhil Hajj, 35 A.H./June 17, 656 A.D. Khalifah Uthmaan was a most noble and charitable person. The Prophet liked him immensely, and to such an extent that he even gave in marriage another daughter, Umm-e Kulthum, after the death of Ruqayyah, who also was Prophet's daughter. Khalifah Uthmaan never hesitated to spend his money in the cause of Islam or for the benefit of Muslims. He purchased the drinking water well – Beir Roma, at an exorbitant cost, from a Jew to solve the drinking water problem of Muslims in Madinah. He freely equipped, at his personal cost, one third of the total Muslim army which marched for Tabook against the Romans under the command of the Prophet. Hence his election as Khalifah (Amir-ul-Mu'mineen) was widely welcomed.

Khalifah Uthmaan is credited with some notable achievements in the beginning of the tenure of his Khilafat. It was during his Khilafat that the flag of Islam was unfurled in the east up to Khurasaan and Kabul. The whole southern Caspian Sea region including Armenia and Azerbaijan were brought under Muslim control (32 A.H./652 A.D). In the west, the Roman forces were driven out of Carthage, the last strong hold of Byzantine in Africa (26 A.H./697 A.D). The political control of Islam was extended all along North Africa right up to Marrakesh. However, the most significant achievement of Khalifah
Uthmaan was to create a powerful naval force, which defeated the overwhelmingly superior naval fleet of the Romans. By virtue of the superiority of Muslim forces, both on land and on sea, the prestige of Islam enhanced, which thereafter emerged as the dominant religion of a vast contiguous territory from Kabul and Khurasaan in the east to Marrakesh in North Africa in the West. It also emerged as the dominant military power in the Mediterranean, Central and West Asia.

Another important achievement of Khalifah Uthmaan was to arrange for the preparation of multiple copies of the standard Qur’anic text, which was compiled in a Mus’haf during the Khilafat of Abu Bakr. Eight copies of the standard text were made, and a copy each was sent to Kufa, Basra, Damascus, Fustaat (Modern Cairo), Bahrain, Yemen and Makkah. He retained one copy with himself, which was called Mus’haf-e Imaam. It is now preserved in the Topakapi Museum in Turkey. Another landmark achievement was the total reconstruction of the Masjid-un Nabi. It was transformed into a new mosque “The pillars of the trunks of date trees were replaced by pillars of solid hewn stone and sakha wood was used for the roof – The walls too, were built with masonry, richly carved and inlaid with rare and precious stones” – It measured 160 cubits long, 150 cubits broad with six gates after reconstruction.

This extra ordinary territorial expansion of the Islamic domain also adversely affected the reputation of Uthmaan as Khalifah because of some indiscrete decisions.
He was generally charged with nepotism and partiality. As for instance he allowed Abu Sarah, the Governor of Egypt, to retain one fifth of the spoils of war in Africa. Khalifah Uthmaan was forced by the Ansaar and Muhajireen of Madinah to ask Abu Sarah to reimburse the entire share retained by him. Further Abu Sarah, who acted for sometime as the scribe of the Prophet, had cheated him in Makkah and deserted him. He would have been executed on the conquest of Makkah but for the intercession of Khalifah Uthmaan. Similarly, Khalifah Uthmaan allowed Hakam bin Al-Aas to enter Madinah, whose entry was banned by the Prophet. The ban was not lifted by Khalifah Abu Bakr and Khalifah Umar despite repeated pleadings by Khalifah Uthmaan that Hakam was pardoned by the Prophet. Moreover he ill-treated some of the leading Sahaabah such as Abu Dhar Ghiffari, Amr bin Yasir, Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud. He even stopped the pension of Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud, which was sanctioned to him by Khalifah Umar as a hero of the Battle of Badr.

The charge of nepotism was levelled against him, which unfortunately he could not disprove. He allowed Marwaan bin Hakam, an Umayyad, to purchase one-fifth share of the spoils of the African war to the central treasury for just 500,000 Dinar when it was worth millions. Most of the replacements for the posts of Governor were Umayyads, the clan of the Khalifah. For instance Abu Sarah, who replaced Amr bin Al-Aas, as Governor of Egypt, was an Umayyad. Similarly, an Umayyad, Waleed bin Aqba, replaced Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas, as Governor of Kufah. He was incompetent and most of the time he used
to be in a state of intoxication. Once he even led the Salaat (Prayer) in a drunken state. Such indiscrete acts led to a rise of factional leaders in Basra under Ashtar Nakhai, and in Egypt under Al Ghafiqay bin Herb, Muhammad bin Abu Huzayfah and Muhammad bin Abu Bakr. They were disgruntled and commenced plotting to remove him from office. But the chief instigator was a neo-convert Jew, Ibn Sauda (Abdullah Ibn Saba). He spread the mischievous slur that Khalifah Uthmaan was a usurper. The Khilafat should have gone Ali, a member of the Prophet’s family; therefore Khalifah Uthmaan should be forcefully removed. The validity of this nefarious doctrine was accepted by many, particularly in Egypt, and rebellious atmosphere started building up against Khalifah Uthmaan, which he could not foresee. Meanwhile Ibn-Sauda managed to establish links among the three rebellious factions of Basra, Kufah and Egypt. They started coordinating their activities.

A serious omission in Khalifah Uthmaan’s administration was, to discard the consultative machinery, which was refined and effectively used to contain discontentment by the preceding Khalifah. Thus he was directly held responsible for his decisions and many of which were also ill-conceived. Meanwhile the rebels had started gaining strength. He however, tried to make amends and contain the rebels by making a written commitment “to all those Mu’mineen who were aggrieved by the Khalifah that I shall act towards them according to the injunctions of the Qur’an and Traditions of the Prophet. Those who have been terrorized are assured of
peaceful life without fear. Those who have been exiled from Madinah will be recalled and those who have been deprived of their property will receive it back.” Ali stood surety to these commitments and Zubayr bin Al-Awaam, Talha bin Ubaidullah, Sa’ad Maalik bin Abi Waqqaas, and Abdullah bin Umar among others witnessed this document. Momentarily, it appeared that the dark clouds of rebellion would dispel and normalcy would return with the dismissal of Abu Sarah as Governor of Egypt, and appointment of Muhammad bin Abu Bakr in his place. But the mysterious cancellation of Muhammad bin Abu Bakr’s appointment order through a forged letter, under the alleged direction of Marwaan bin Hakam, ruined the atmosphere of peace and normalcy in Madinah. It was further complicated when the Khalifah refused to hand over Marwaan to Ali and other Companions for through questioning on the issue of the letter. This excessive protectiveness by Khalifah Uthmaan of Marwaan bin Hakam led to such an intensification of the siege of his residence, that even the supply of water was stopped. It was at this critical juncture that Khalifah Uthmaan demonstrated his total commitment to the cause of peace in Islam. Being one of the most powerful rulers of the world he could have easily mobilized the force to crush the rebellion. He spurned offers of military help from Mu’awia, the Governor of Syria, and from Ali, Talha and Zubayr and from the Ansaar and Muhajireen in Madinah. This suicidal step was taken to avoid an internecine war, particularly in the precincts of the Rawdha (Mausoleum) of the prophet. He preferred to die a martyr’s death than be the cause of blood bath in which Muslims would be
mercilessly killing fellow Muslims. During the week long intense siege he went on arguing with the besiegers about his past generous deeds in the cause of Islam such as the purchase of drinking water well, Beir Roma, for the people of Madinah, purchase of land and gifting it for the expansion of mosque etc. However, none of these pleadings worked with the besiegers, who were bent upon assassinating him. He could also have saved his life by resigning the Khilafah. Even that he refused to do because that would have implied surrendering to the unjust demand of the rebels and would have set a bad precedent. The assassination of Khalifah Uthmaan was a most despicable act in the annals of the history of Islam. It was committed to eliminate a legitimately elected Khalifah by acts of violence. It is all the more shocking that Muhammad bin Abu Bakr, the son of the first Khalifah, Abu Bak, abetted it and was a party to this heinous crime.

Ali assumed charge of the Khilafat in 36 A.H/656 A.D after the assassination of Khalifah Uthmaan. His Khilafat terminated in 41 A.H/661 A.D, on his martyrdom. His Khilafat was beset with problems right from the day he assumed office. Firstly, there was a forceful demand for Qasaas i.e. to capture and punish the assassins of Khalifah Uthmaan, and secondly most of those who were involved in abetting his assassination were now in the camp of Ali such as Muhammad bin Abu Bakr, Maalik Ashtar and many others. Although he had assumed charge as Khalifah, his position was still unstable. Despite his own unstable position he initiated certain actions, which though correct on principle were taken in haste without visualizing the
consequences. He, at one stroke, dismissed all the governors including Mu’awia and other senior officials appointed by his predecessor. He was advised by his uncle Abbas Ibn Muttalib not to take such a precipitate action, particularly against Mu’awia, when his own position as Khalifah was still shaky. Mu’awia was well entrenched as Governor of Syria from Khalifah Umar’s time. He would revolt against Khalifah Ali’s decision. Khalifah Ali did not take notice of this advice and insisted on dismissing Mu’awia because, as the legitimately elected Khalifah, he had the right to dismiss or retain whomsoever he wanted. As Abbas had stated, Mu’awia refused to carry out the order and instead asked Ali to handover to him the assassins of Khalifah Uthmaan for punishment under the rules for Qasaas. This eventually complicated the matter and led to the war of Siffin between Khalifah Ali and Mu’awia.

The question of Qasaas i.e. punishment to the assassins of Khalifah Uthmaan, was also raised by Talha, Zubayr and Umm-ul-Mu’mineen Ayesha. This situation was fully exploited by the members of the group involved in the assassination of the late Khalifah. They suspected that if Khalifah Ali, Talha and Zubayr were united they would be caught as assassins of Khalifah Uthmaan and punished under the rule of Qasaas. They manipulated it in such a way that despite the reluctance of Khalifah Ali and his senior advisers on one side, and Umm-ul-Mu’mineen Ayesha, Talha and Zubayr on the other, to wage a war they were forced to fight the Battle of Jamal (camel) (36 A.H/656 A.D), in which for the first time Muslims fought
against Muslims and thousands of lives on either side were lost. Khalifah Ali finally emerged victorious. He treated Ayesha with utmost respect, honour and dignity. She regretted most here participation and thereafter never interfered in the affairs of the state.

Khalifah Ali, like Khalifah Uthmaan, had also dispensed with the consultative machinery, which was so meticulously cultivated by Khalifah Abu Bakr and Khalifah Umar, and which hurt his cause immensely. For instance he dismissed Qais, a most competent and loyal governor of Egypt, on a trifle issue on the instigation of Mu'awia’s loyalists, who had infiltrated into Khalifah Ali’s camp. Mu’awia was scared of Qais and was keen to have him removed from Governorship of Egypt. Khalifah Ali, being an honest and straight-forward man, could not see through Mu’awia’s machinations. Similarly, without consulting senior Ansaar and Muhajireen of Madinah he decided to shift the capital from Madinah to Kufah (Jamadi-ul Akhir, 36 A.H/659 A.D). He adamantly carried out this unilateral decision despite repeated requests by some senior Sahaabah to reconsider it. Even his elder son, Hasan, advised him against such a move. Khalifah Ali did not listen. By implementing this decision he deprived Madinah of its primacy as the nerve center of political life in the Islamic realm and simultaneously killed the institution of the electors of Madinah, the Ansaar and Muhajireen, who had elected him as a Khalifah and lent legitimacy to his Khilafat. This was an ill-conceived move and shook the very foundation of his Khilafat.
Mu’awiah adamantly refused to recognize Ali as Khalifah. The latter was thus compelled to wage war against Mu’awiah in order to force him to submit to the orders of the legitimately elected Khalifah. This led to the Battle of Siffin (11 Safar, 37 A.H/29 July, 660 AD). Khalifah Ali had almost won the war but due to trickery, deception and fraudulent behaviour of Amr bin Al-Aas, who had joined the camp of Mu’awia, he had to agree to arbitration. In the arbitration proceedings again Amr bin Al-Aas’s role, as the representative of Mu’awia, was most unprincipled. Consequently the political domain of the Islamic Khilafat was split into two parallel Khilafats – the Arabian Peninsula and Iraq (Arab) and Ajam (Persian sector) were controlled by Ali; and Syria, Palestine, Egypt and North Africa were under the administrative control of Mu’awia.

Khalifah Ali was frustrated in his effort because of the lack of cooperation from the people of Kufah. However, the greatest damage to his Khilafat was caused by the rise of the khaariji (rebels) movement, which raised the right slogan that “no command but that of Allah” but adopted a totally irrational strategy to implement it. They tried to harass Khalifah Ali to the maximum extent and finally conspired to assassinate him, Mu’awiah and Amr bin Al-Aas on the same date during Friday prayers. While Mu’awiah and Amr bin Al-Aas escaped, Khalifah Ali was martyred. Thus his period of Khilafat was a most turbulent period and circumstances shaped in such way that he was never allowed to settle down. His administration in the territory he controlled was truly and genuinely Islamic.
He lived in a modest house in the heart of the town. He was always accessible and implemented the Shar’iyah rules on one and all without discrimination. He lived a simple life, wore coarse clothes and drew that much amount from the Treasury (Bait-ul-Maal) as his emolument that would enable him and his family to live the life of average citizens in his Khilafat.

He was the most erudite among the Khulafa, his diction was incomparable and the flow and fluency of his language was inimitable. The Prophet called him the “Gateway to Knowledge.” He was the founder of Arabic grammar “Nahu”.

We may conclude that though the Four Rightly Guided Khulafa – Khulafa-e Rashien adopted different strategies to meet the exigencies of their varying and unique challenges yet they strictly enforced the Islamic Shar’iyah, strengthened, reinforced and stabilized the concept of an Islamic welfare state, so meticulously initiated and nurtured by Umar the Second Khalifah. Their administration was transparent, firm yet humane and compassionate, and justice was flawlessly impartial. Their primary concern was the welfare of the people whom they served selflessly according to principles laid down in the Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. They never deviated from these principles.
CHAPTER - 2

KHALIFAH ABU BAKR SIDDIQ
THE FIRST KHALIFAH

Abu Bakr, the most trusted and the most devoted companion of Muhammad, belonged to a noble Qurayshite clan of Bani Taim and his lineage joined with that of Muhammad in seventh generation upward. Abu Bakr was born fifty years and six months before the Ht (migration of the Prophet to Medina) or two and a half years after the year of the elephants. He was the son of Uthmaan (Abu Qahafah Al-Taim); his mother Salmaan (Umm-ul Khair) also belonged to Bani Taim clan. His family name (Kuniyat) was Abu Bakr and received the title of Al-Siddeeq, the truthful from Allah when he, without hesitation, accepted the Prophet’s story of the Night Journey (Isra) and Ascent to-Heaven (Me’raaj). His mother had converted to Islam even before migrating to Medina. His father Abu Qahafah accepted Islam after the conquest of Makkah in 8 A.H.

The Prophet and Abu Bakr developed acquaintance at a very early age. During the life of Abu Taalib they travelled together with a trading caravan to

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4. Abraha a Christian Governor of Yemen had invaded Makkah with a huge army including a large contingent of elephants in order to demolish Ka’bah. The year of this invasion is called the year of the elephants and the incident is recalled in Surah Al-Feel (105), which also describes how the invaders were punished and destroyed by Allah.
Syria. This acquaintance eventually blossomed into a close friendship. Abu Bakr had developed highest regard for the impeccable honesty, integrity, truthfulness and trustworthiness of his friend Muhammad. He implicitly believed that Muhammad could never tell a lie and his subsequent acceptance of Islam instantly and without any reservation testifies unambiguously to this fact. He was among the very few literate persons during that period in Makkah and acted as one of the scribes of the Prophet both in Makkah and Madinah.

Commerce and trade was the main profession of Abu Bakr. He dealt mainly in textile goods and in this connection had travelled widely. He visited Syria and Yemen a number of times. He had a flourishing business. He disliked intoxicating drinks for in his view they degraded the dignity of human beings. He was a very just, straightforward person. He was generous and kind-hearted and would be the first to help those in need. He commanded great respect among the Quraysh of Makkah and enjoyed the status of the Ushnaq (those who decide cases on blood money). No blood money as ransom for murder could be accepted without his approval. A person accused for murder could be released if he gave surety on his behalf. Sometimes he even paid the blood money for the accused if he was not in a position to pay it immediately. He was, therefore, a highly respected and influential person in pre-Islamic Makkah. At the time of his acceptance of Islam he had amassed wealth exceeding 40,000 Dirham.
Abu Bakr’s Acceptance of Islam:

The Prophetic mission of Muhammad commenced with the revelation of the first five verses of Surah Al-Alaq (96). This was a traumatic experience for the Prophet but his wife Khadijah was convinced that her noble husband was chosen by Allah to prophetic responsibilities of great magnitude. While the news of his Prophethood spread among the Quraysh in Makkah Abu Bakr was away in Yemen in connection with his business. On his return Abu Jahal, Utbah and Shaybah condescendingly and in utter disbelief informed him that “Abu Taalib’s nephew who is an orphan had declared himself to be a Prophet.” (M H R Sherwani: [1948] The life of Abu Bakr - p: 3). Abu Bakr was greatly excited by the news. He immediately left for the Prophet’s residence, inquired about the Divine call. The moment it was confirmed by the Prophet, he accepted the truth without reservation for he knew that Muhammad would never utter a lie. About Abu Bakr’s conversion to Islam, Prophet Muhammad used to say; “Whenever I offered Islam to any person he showed some hesitation before embracing it, but Abu Bakr is an exception, because he accepted my offer to join it without the slightest hesitation on his part.” (Sayuti in Taarikh-ul Khulafa - English translation by Jarret, pp: 34-35) The first four converts to Islam were Umm-ul Mu’mineen Khadijah, first both among male and female, Abu Bakr, Ali, who was only of 12 years, and Zayd bin Haarith the then adopted son of the Prophet.
After his conversion, Abu Bakr devoted himself to the service of the Prophet of Islam and dedicated his time, energy, wealth and influences to promote the cause. Through his influence and untiring effort he could win over to the fold of Islam such leading leaders of Makkah as Abdur Rahmaan bin Al-Auf, Uthmaan bin Affaan, Zubayr, Talha and Sa’ad bin Abi Waqqas. They were among the Sabiqoon al-Awwalon (the first among the earliest) after the first four converts named earlier.

For nearly three years the propagation and conversion of individuals to Deen-e Islam went on very quietly and secretly but it commenced boldly with the revelation of the following two verses: “And proclaim openly (Allah’s message - Islamic Monotheism) that which you are commanded and turn away from Mushrikeen (polytheists, pagans and disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah).” (Al-Hijr; 15:94) and “warn your tribe of near kindred.” (Ash-Shu’ara; 26: 214) This aroused furious hostility of the pagan Makkans against the Prophet and also against those who had converted to Islam. After this open declaration, Abu Bakr stood firmly and suffered equally with the Prophet while carrying the message. Whenever the Prophet went to the outskirts of Makkah to preach among other tribes, Abu Bakr would invariably accompany him to introduce him to the audience. Abu Bakr was well known among the people because of the prestigious position he occupied among the pagan Makkans. The pagan Makkans were thoroughly shaken by the call of Prophet Muhammad to worship only one Allah, and his outspoken condemnation of their idols
whom they were worshipping for centuries. Their centuries old religion of idol-worship was severely threatened with the emergence of Islam. Once sitting in the precincts of Ka’bah, they were holding consultations to counteract the impending threat of Islam when the Prophet arrived. They literally pounced upon him and started beating him brutally and he fell unconscious. Right at that moment Abu Bakr arrived and rushed to protect the Prophet stating loudly and clearly; “Alas! You are to be pitied! You want to kill a person simply because he says Allah is his Maintainer, and in spite of the fact that he has brought signs to you from God.” (Tabri - in - Sherwani; op. cit. p: 6) The pagans were all the more infuriated, turned on Abu Bakr and beat him brutally. Abu Bakr received serious head injuries. His wounds started bleeding. Meanwhile his relatives arrived and rescued him from the clutches of pagan tyrants (Sherwani; op. cit. p: 7) He was so mercilessly beaten, according to Umm-ul Mu’mineen Ayesha that the hair of the head would just peel off even by a mere touch. All these hardships and ruthless treatment by the pagans of Makkah further steeled Abu Bakr’s determination to stay firm with Islam. His love, affection and devotion to the Prophet enhanced immensely, and thereafter he literally shadowed him wherever he went.

Abu Bakr’s dedication to Islam was so intense that he even built a small mosque in the courtyard of his house. He used to offer his prayer there and read the Qur’an loudly. He would sometime even sob endlessly while reading the Qur’an. This open, deep, emotional and
spiritual attachment to Islam raised the curiosity of many, particularly young boys and girls. This enraged the pagan Makkans, who felt that Islam was corrupting their children by this bold and spirited display of the new faith. Henceforth, they further intensified their hostility towards Abu Bakr.

As stated earlier, he was a very tender hearted and generous person. He never hesitated even for a moment to spend his wealth to promote the cause of Islam, to help the poor and the needy and in obtaining the freedom of the slaves who owed allegiance to Islam. He paid substantial ransom amount to obtain the freedom of 3 slave men and four slave girls, the most prominent of them being Bilaal, who attained the status of a great Sahabi during the life of the Prophet. He was the Muezzin (who calls people to prayer) of the Masjid-un Nabi till the life of the Prophet. Among the other slaves freed by the efforts of Abu Bakr, included Aamir bin Fahira, Bani Momal (among males) and Nazirah, Nahidah bint Nadiah and Jariah (among the females).

Abu Bakr’s increasing loyalty to the Prophet, his devotion and dedication to the cause of Islam and his vigorous effort to convert pagans to Islam, acutely irritated the pagans. They spared no effort to harass him. He was harassed to such an extent that he eventually decided to migrate to Abyssinia where some other Muslims had earlier migrated. Although he very much wished to stay with the Prophet, the cruelties of the enemies of Islam reached beyond tolerance. He took leave
of his family and proceeded on his journey to Abyssinia with the permission of the Prophet. On the way he met Ibn Daghna, the chief of the Qarah tribe, at Bark al Ghamam, who asked Abu Bakr as to where he was going? He told him, “My people have turned me out and I am now migrating to a foreign land where I shall have the freedom of worshipping my Allah.” On hearing this Ibn Daghna emphatically said “No! A person like you, who has always helped the needy, who has sympathized with those in difficulties, who has extended hospitality to guests and who had even shared the hardship of others cannot leave his home, nor can he be sent into an exile. Come along and let us return to Makkah. I take the responsibility of giving you protection, and you shall have full freedom to worship your God in your own town.” (Bukhaari - quoted in Sherwani; op. cit. p: 8)

He came back with Ibn Daghna, who the same evening addressed a meeting of the chiefs of the Quraysh, announcing his protection to Abu Bakr and remarked further: “Do you want to turn out a person who has always come to the help of the needy, and the afflicted, and who has always shared the hardship of those who followed the path of truth? Abu Bakr should neither be exiled nor should he be allowed to leave this place of his own accord.” (Bukhaari - Sherwani, p: 9) They agreed to Ibn Daghna’s protection, subject to the condition, that the prayers will not be performed in public, and that he would recite the Qur’an only in his house. Abu Bakr also consented reluctantly, but found the terms and conditions suffocating. He abided by it for sometime but could not
put up with it for too long. After a while, he resumed offering his prayers in the mosque in his front courtyard, as well as reciting the Qur’an loudly. This naturally infuriated the pagans of Makkah. They complained to Ibn-Daghna: “Abu Bakr has broken the conditions which had been agreed upon. He has begun to offer his prayers and recite the Qur’an in the mosque outside his house. We fear that this might mislead our young men and women. You should therefore check him from doing this. We do not want to violate the agreement we have made with you, but at the same time we cannot permit Abu Bakr to offer his prayer and recite the Qur’an in public.” Ibn Daghna reminded Abu Bakr that “I offered my protection to you conditionally but you have broken that condition hence I cannot protect you.” Abu Bakr replied calmly but firmly: “I do not need your protection. I have it from my God.” (Bukhaari - Vol-I; quoted in Nadwi p: 19) After the withdrawal of Ibn Daghna’s protection, the oppressions and the cruelties of the pagan Quraysh were resumed with greater intensity. Abu Bakr was once again forced to think of migrating but this time to Madinah, where a friendlier environment had emerged and the Muslims were welcomed warm heartedly. He sought the permission of the Prophet who asked him to wait patiently since he might also receive the divine command to migrate. This was a most exciting news for Abu Bakr and, particularly, that he will have the unique distinction to migrate in the hallowed company of the Prophet.
Abu Bakr’s Migration to Madinah with the Prophet:

It was the normal practice of the Prophet to visit Abu Bakr’s residence daily either in the morning or evening but one day he suddenly arrived at an odd hour. He confided in Abu Bakr that he had received the divine command to migrate to Madinah and that the latter would accompany him. On hearing this there was no limit to Abu Bakr’s joy and excitement. He was asked to rush through the preparation in total secrecy. The journey was to commence the same night in total darkness without raising any suspicion.

The preparation for the journey started instantly in right earnest. Abu Bakr had already purchased two camels, one for the Prophet and one for himself. The Prophet’s camel was called Qaswah. Abu Bakr fixed Abdullah bin Arqaat ad-Dali as the guide. Though this man was Kaafir yet most trustworthy for he had the reputation of not betraying the trust. Ayesha and her elder sister Asma started packing the baggage in a leather bag. When Asma did not find any appropriate piece of cloth to tie round the bag she tore her waist band in two and used one of these for tying up the open leather bag. Since then she was known as the lady with two waist bands (Dhat-ut-Taqain). Asma was assigned the responsibility to carry food to the cave, while Abdullah bin Abu Bakr was asked to keep them informed of the important daily events in Makkah. The slave Fuhairah’s job was to take the goats for grazing to the precincts of the cave, milk the goats and provide them with daily supply of milk.
The Prophet and Abu Bakr, in the dark of the night, secretly left for the cave of Thaor. As they reached the cave Abu Bakr first thoroughly cleaned it before the Prophet stepped into the cave. The Prophet was tired and wanted to rest. Abu Bakr stretched out his leg in the cave, and the Prophet fell asleep resting his head on Abu Bakr’s lap. While he was asleep a snake peeped through a hole in the cave. Abu Bakr immediately stuck his toe in the hole to prevent the snake from biting the Prophet. He kept enduring the intense pain of the snakebite, but did not stir, which would have disturbed the Prophet. As the intensity of pain increased, a drop of tear rolled down Abu Bakr’s eyes on Prophet’s cheek, which awoke him. On inquiring Abu Bakr told him about the snakebite. He immediately rubbed his saliva on the spot, and Abu Bakr felt instant relief.

As the pagans discovered that Muhammad and Abu Bakr had escaped, they immediately started an intensive search and, even announced a reward of one hundred camels for anyone who could locate and arrest him. In their search they even reached the edge of the cave of Thaor, which alarmed Abu Bakr and he feared that they might be caught. The Prophet consoled him and asked him not to be scared for Allah was with them. “Do not be afraid God is with us.” (Tanveer Siddiqi: (1985) Ahmad Abdul Qayyum Siddiqi - p: 77, Hyderabad) The search party retreated from the cave and spread out in different directions. The fact of the Prophet consoling Abu Bakr in the cave is stated in verse 40 of Surah At-Tawbah: “...he
had no more than one companion: The two were in the Cave, and he said to his companion, 'Have no fear for Allah is with us...” (At-Tawbah; 9: 40)

It is in this verse that Abu Bakr is addressed as “One of the two” a unique honour and distinction with which no other companion was addressed.

They spent 3 nights in the cave in a state of grave suspense. On the fourth day before the break of dawn they moved out led by the camel of ‘Abd bin Arqaat, the Prophet’s Qaswhah in the middle, followed by Abu Bakr who was accompanied by his slave Amir bin Fuhayrah on his camel. They reached the suburb of Madinah on 12th Rabi-ul-Awwal, 13 years after commencement of the Prophetic mission of Muhammad and stopped at Bani Amr bin Auf. Both the Prophet and Abu Bakr got off the camel, while Abu Bakr was meeting and greeting people, the Prophet, who was very tired, sat down quietly under a tree to rest and recline. Since the people had not seen him earlier they mistook Abu Bakr for the Prophet, but the confusion was soon removed when Abu Bakr spread a sheet over the head of the Prophet to protect him from the scorching rays of the rising sun.

Abu Bakr in Madinah:

The climate of Madinah did not suit the Muhajireen from Makkah and many of them fell sick, Abu Bakr himself fell seriously ill. He developed high temperature and his life was in danger. The Prophet was
immediately informed. He called on him and prayed to Allah for his life and restoration of his normal health and also of all the Muhajireen from Makkah.

“O God! Please infuse in our hearts the love of Madinah as much as we loved Makkah and even more, and please save it from the disease and help to save us from the epidemic of fever.” (Bukhaari, Moinuddin Nadwi - p: 27)

The prayer of the Prophet was answered by Allah. Abu Bakr and other Muhajireen were completely cured of their illness and soon resumed their responsibilities together with the Ansaar to help the Prophet to promote the cause of Islam with complete devotion and dedication.

Before his conversion to Islam, Abu Bakr had a flourishing cloth business and had amassed considerable wealth. After his conversion to Islam he spent considerable amount of money and time to promote the cause of Islam. His business declined since he could not pursue it as vigorously as in the pre-Islamic days. At the time of his migration he had just 5000 Dirham left which he carried with him. The story goes that when his father, Abu Qahafah, who was blind, came to know of his migration went to his house to inquire if he had left any money for their maintenance or taken everything with him. His granddaughter Asma assured him that enough was left for their maintenance. She made him touch a bagful of pebbles as if it was filled with Dirham. (Sherwani pp: 14-15)
Abu Bakr’s life in Madinah can be divided into two different roles. First as the disciplined, obedient, dutiful, devoted follower of the Prophet prepared to spend wealth and sacrifice even his life in the cause of Islam at the Prophet’s command. Second as the first Khalifah of Islam after the death of the Prophet. He excelled in both these roles.

**Abu Bakr in Madinah as the Sahaabi of the Prophet:**

During his stay in Quba, a suburb of Madinah, the Prophet laid the foundation of the first mosque in Islam and asked Abu Bakr also to lay a foundation stone for the mosque. After a four day stay at Quba the Prophet with Abu Bakr seated behind him on the camel, left for Madinah. On his arrival in Madinah the Prophet stayed with Abu Ayyub Ansari. Having now settled down in Madinah, the Prophet first thought of constructing a mosque to facilitate daily five time congregational prayers of the Muslims. He selected a plot of land belonging to two orphans. Abu Bakr had the privilege to pay the price (four sovereigns/ten dinars) for the plot of land. (Sherwani – p11; Abdul Qayyum p: 92-93)

Immediately after the purchase of the plot the Prophet commenced the construction of the Mosque and laid the first foundation stone and then asked Abu Bakr, Umar, Othman, and ‘Ali, in that order, to lay a foundation stone each. Thereafter plots of land were purchased for the construction of houses for migrants from Makkah. One of
the plots near the mosque was allotted to Abu Bakr. (Abdul Qayyum; op. cit. p: 93)

A Series of Battles and Abu Bakr’s Role in them:

The Prophet, the migrants from Makkah and the Ansaar of Madinah had assumed that the pagans of Makkah would not harass them in Madinah. They would be allowed to breathe freely and live in peace and tranquillity. However the infidels of Makkah had other plans, for they feared, that if the Muslims were allowed to stabilize their position in Madinah they will gain strength and will, in future, constitute grave threat to the security of the pagans of Makkah and their idols. Hence the pagans decided to unsettle, destabilize and uproot the Muslims from Madinah itself. In order to achieve their nefarious objective they engaged the Muslims in a number of bloody battles such as the Battle of Badr, Battle of Uhad, and the Battle of the Trench etc.

Battle of Badr 2 A.H:

The Battle of Badr was the first battle and one of the most decisive, which the Muslims fought against the infidels. The Quraysh with a 1000 strong force including 200 strong cavalry horses out-numbered the Muslims, for the Muslims could muster a strength of only 313 comprising 236 Ansaar and 77 Mu’hajireen. The Quraysh were far better equipped with arrows and spears. This was a battle of un-equals. Before the commencement of the Battle Abu Bakr was charged with the responsibility of
guarding the Prophet in a small pavilion raised for him. However when the Battle started the Prophet himself led the charge, gave the command of the right flank to Abu Bakr and the left flank to Ali. Abu Bakr fought fiercely and forced the enemy to retreat. During the course of the Battle he sighted his son, Abdur Rahmaan who had not yet converted to Islam and rebuked him. “O wretched fellow! What about my claims?” “Nothing remains” answered the son, “except the arrow, the charger, and the sword that corrects the errors of the old age.” In the Battle of Badr the Muslims, routed the Pagans completely. Later when Abdur Rahmaan had accepted Islam, and had settled down in Madinah, told his father that in the Badr encounter he had once got the opportunity to strike him down but did not. To this his father answered that had he got a similar opportunity he would not have spared him. After their disastrous defeat the enemies fled away leaving lots of spoils of wars and seventy pagan Quraysh were also taken as prisoners of war. Once the war was over the question of treatment towards these seventy prisoners became crucially important. The Prophet raised the issue before his companions in the Mosque. While Umar proposed a death penalty for all prisoners, Abu Bakr opined that they might be let off after collecting a ransom amount of money from each. The Prophet finally agreed to the proposal of Abu Bakr.

The Battle of Badr was followed by the Battle of Uhad in the 3 H in the month of Shawwal. The pagans mobilised fully their resources for the finAl-Aassault to annihilate Islam and eliminate Muslims from Madinah.
As the battle started the Muslim forces despite being outnumbered, turned the tables against the enemies and almost routed them, forcing them to flee. The Muslims assumed that they had won a decisive victory and started collecting the spoils of war. Even most of the 50 archers who were posted to defend the rear of the mountain near the Prophet’s pavilion rushed to collect the booty. Khalid bin Waleed, who had not yet converted to Islam, used this opportunity to attack ferociously from the rear and his forces even attacked the Prophet who was severely injured and fell to the ground. There was a dramatic setback in the war situation, a victory turned into a disastrous defeat.

Abu Bakr had implicit faith in the judgment of the Prophet. This was abundantly demonstrated when the terms of the treaty of Hudaibiyah (6 A.H) were being negotiated by the Prophet with the pagans of Makkah. Under the terms of this treaty the Muslims could perform the circumambulation of the Ka’bah only next year. There were other terms of the treaty, which the Muslims did not like and particularly Umar. He first expressed his objection to Abu Bakr: “Why this truce agreement with them in such an undignified way?” He replied that the Prophet was acting under divine instruction: “Muhammad is the Rasool of Allah! He is acting under divine instruction.” (Zarqani, vol.2 – Nadwi, p: 36)

Abu Bakr invariably accompanied the Prophet in all his warring expeditions and fought valiantly. He was present in the Battle of Hunain, in the siege of Taif in which his son Abdullah was seriously injured and later
succumbed to his injuries during the first year of the Khilafat of Abu Bakr. He was also asked by the Prophet to lead the first attack against the Jewish fort of Khyber but failed to conquer it. Later he commanded military expeditions to subdue the tribes of Bani Kalab and Bani Fazara and returned victorious. He accompanied the Prophet in the conquest of Makkah and there brought his father, Abu Qahafah, who was then in his nineties, to the Prophet for conversion to Islam.

On return to Madinah after the conquest of Makkah, the news reached about the impending invasion of the Arab Peninsula by the Emperor of Byzantine. The Prophet immediately called for full mobilization of forces and resources. The Sahaabah donated generously but no one, not even Umar, could match the magnanimity of Abu Bakr. Umar brought half of the wealth he possessed, but Abu Bakr excelled him and all others by donating all that he possessed. When asked what he had left behind for the family, he answered “Allah and his Prophet.” He marched with the Prophet to Tabook on an expedition to fight with the Romans (Byzantine). Meanwhile the Byzantine forces had retreated. The Prophet returned to Madinah with enhanced prestige of Islam and its political power. Because of the rapidly rising political power of Islam, the tribes of Thai who controlled Taif decided to convert to Islam. A delegation of five chieftains was dispatched to meet the Prophet in order to negotiate their conversion. Al- Maghirah ibn Shu’ban met this delegation first in the suburbs of Madinah but allowed Abu Bakr, at his request, to break the news first to the Prophet of the
arrival of this delegation from Taif. The Prophet asked Abu Bakr to lead the first Hajj pilgrimage after the conquest of Makkah in the 9 A.H. Abu Bakr led 300 Muslims to perform the pilgrimage the Islamic way. The non-Islamic rituals of the pilgrimage to Makkah were still prevalent and could not be prevented since the revelation in Surah At-Tawbah prohibiting the non-Islamic rituals was revealed after the departure of Abu Bakr for the pilgrimage. It was therefore too late to implement this Qur’anic injunction in this pilgrimage. Nonetheless their prohibition was proclaimed and thereafter banned forever. Abu Bakr delivered the sermon in the plains of Arafat from Jabal-ur-Rahmah (Mount of Mercy).

Abu Bakr Asked to Lead the Prayer during Prophet’s Illness:

On his return to Madinah after Hajjat-ul-Wida (the Farewell Pilgrimage), the Prophet delivered a detailed speech during the course of which he stated “God has given his slave a choice to choose between this world and the world of eternity but he has preferred the world of eternity.” In the same speech he also said that “if I were able to choose a friend on earth I would choose Abu Bakr but comradeship and brotherhood in faith remain until God unites us in His presence.” On hearing this Abu Bakr started crying since he felt that the apostle had predicted his imminent death. The Prophet consoled him and ordered that the doors of all the houses opening towards the mosque be closed except that of Abu Bakr “for I know no one who is a better friend to me than he.” (Ibn Is’haq:
Thereafter Prophet fell ill. When his illness became serious he ordered Abu Bakr to lead the prayer. Ibn Is’haq narrates a tradition from Ayesha: “When the Prophet became seriously ill he ordered the people to tell Abu Bakr to lead the prayer. I told him that Abu Bakr was a delicate man with a weak voice who wept much when he read the Qur’an. He repeated his order nevertheless, and I repeated my objection. He said you are like Joseph’s companions; tell him to lead the prayers.” (Ibn Is’haq; op. cit. pp: 18-181)

During his illness the Prophet once felt slightly better and came out of the house during prayer time when Abu Bakr was leading the prayer. The entry of the Prophet into the Mosque distracted the attention of people offering prayer. Abu Bakr immediately sensed that only Prophet’s arrival could have wavered the attention of the people during prayer so he quietly vacated his place for the Prophet to take over the Imamat (leadership) of the prayer, but the apostle pushed him back saying “lead the men in prayer”, and he sat at his side praying in the sitting position on the right side of Abu Bakr. (Ibn Is’haq; op. cit. pp: 181-182) It was indeed a rare honour for Abu Bakr. This was the last appearance of the Prophet in the Mosque before his death.

**Death of the Prophet and Election of Abu Bakr as the First Khalifah of Islam:**

The illness of the Prophet greatly aggravated, from which he never recovered, and finally breathed his last on Monday, 12 Rabi-ul-Awwal, 11 A.H./June 8, 632 A.D. The people of Madinah were stunned to hear the news of his
death. Umar, in his state of utter shock refused to accept this stark reality. He tried to convince people that the Prophet was in a state of coma, has been briefly summoned by God and would soon return back to life. Meanwhile Abu Bakr arrived and without paying any attention to Umar’s speech went straight to the room where the body was kept, lifted the striped sheet from his face, kissed his forehead and returned to the Mosque and asked Umar to be quiet which he refused. Then Abu Bakr beckoned people that he wanted to address. He commanded such respect that people gathered around him and Umar was left alone. Abu Bakr delivered a brief speech and reminded the gathering of Verse144 of Surah Al-e Imran: “O men, of you who have been worshipping Muhammad, then know that Muhammad is dead. But if you have been worshipping God, then know that God is living and never dies.” (Al-e Imraan; 3:144) Umar literally sank when he heard this verse. He and many like him felt as if they heard this verse for the first time. Thus the fact of the Prophet’s death dawned on all through the wisdom and sagacity of Abu Bakr. But before they could finalise the burial the news reached that the Ansaar had collected in the courtyard of Banu Sa’idah and were contemplating to elect Sa’ad ibn Ubadah as the Khalifah of the Prophet. In order to avert the impending crisis and the vertical split of Islamic community Umar, Abu Bakr and Abu Ubaidah Al-Jarrar rushed to participate in the meeting at Saqifa Banu Sa’idah.

Before the arrival of Abu Bakr, Umar and Abu Ubaidah at Saqifa Banu Sa’idah, Sa’ad ibn Ubadah had
delivered a speech in which he stressed that the Ansaar have precedence over the Muhajireen they should therefore insist that the Khalifah should be from among them. Most of the Ansaar who had collected at Banu Sa’idah had veered around to this point of view. On the arrival of Abu Bakr and Umar one of the Ansaar got up and addressed the gathering after praising God and thanking Him. “We are all Ansaar – i.e. the helpers of God and the army of Islam. You, the Muhajireen, are only a brigade in the army. Nonetheless, a group of you have gone to the extreme of seeking to deprive us of our natural leadership and to deny us our rights.” (Haykal: The life of Muhammad pp. 508-509) The tone of the speech made Umar mad and he was about to flare up when Abu Bakr controlled him, and said that harshness will worsen the situation. Abu Bakr got up to address the gathering: “O men, we the Muhajireen, were the first men to convert to Islam. We enjoy the noblest lineage and descent. We are the most reputable and the best esteemed as well as the most numerous of any group in Arabia. Furthermore we are the closest blood relatives of the Prophet. The Qur’an itself has given us preference, for it is God, may He be praised and blessed – Who said, “First and foremost were al-Muhajireen, then al-Ansaar, and then those who have followed these two groups in virtue and righteousness.” (At-Tawbah: 9:100)

We were the first to migrate for the sake of God, and you are literally Al-Ansaar, i.e. the helpers. However you are our brethren in religion, our partners in the fortunes of war, and our helpers against the enemy. All
After the speech of Abu Bakr, an Ansar suggested that “we shall have a prince each from Ansar and Quraysh.” Abu Bakr did not agree and suggested that they pick one of the two Umar and Ubaidah as their Khalifah. But the Ansar continued to press their claim. Abu Ubaidah intervened to say “O Ansar! You had precedence at the time of helping and assisting, therefore you should avoid being first to make changes and alterations.” (Sherwani p. 47) Immediately after, two leading Ansar, Zayd-bin Thabit and Bashir bin Sa’ad addressed the gathering supporting the Quraysh stand. Zayd said: “In fact the holy Prophet was among the emigrants; hence it is necessary that the Imam is also (selected) from among them; and we become his helpers just as we were helpers of the Prophet.” (Sherwani p: 47) Endorsing his viewpoint Bashir bin Sa’ad added: “O Ansar! If we have secured a position of superiority in the holy wars against the polytheists and gained precedence in matters of religion it was with the objective of pleasing our Allah and obeying our Prophet, and thus we were labouring for our own selves. It is not proper for us to make these a source of encroachment on the rights of others, nor should we demand worldly honour in return for them. Allah will reward us (for our services). We must realise that the Holy Prophet came from the...
Quraysh, and his tribe has the strongest claims and is most worthy of his successorship. I say it on oath that Allah will never see me quarrelling with them on this issue. Fear Allah and have no dispute with them.” (Sherwani, p: 48)

Abu Bakr as Khalifah (13 Rabi-ul-Awwal, 11 A.H to 22 Jamadi-ul-Akhir, 13 A.H/ 8 June, 632 A.D to 12 September, 634 A.D):

This strong support from the Ansaar to elect a Khalifah from among the Quraysh was promptly seized by Umar to announce that Abu Bakr be elected the Khalifah, since no one can have precedence over him as he was the closest to the Prophet, the second of the two in the cave, who was asked by the Prophet to lead the Salaat during his illness. Umar therefore asked Abu Bakr to stretch out his hand and offered his Bay’at, followed by Ubaidah, Zayd bin Thabit, Bashir bin Sa’ad and the rest of Ansaar. Sa’ad bin Ubadah was left high and dry. After this Bay’at in Banu Sa’idah, the next day i.e. 13 Rabi-ul-Awwal, 11 A.H there was a public Bay’at in the Mosque. Abu Bakr was appointed Khalifah and was cordially welcomed by one and all. Before the public Bay’at in the Mosque Umar came to the pulpit and said: “I expected that the holy Prophet would outlive us all but if he has died, Allah has given you a light (Qur’an) for your guidance, and it was the light on which Allah had guided the Prophet. Then you have Abu Bakr, the Companion of the Prophet and the second of the two (in the cave), who is undoubtedly the worthiest among the Muslims to conduct your affairs.
Now come forward and offer your Bay’at. Umar invited Abu Bakr, who came forward but stood at the pulpit a step below where the Prophet used to stand, and received general Bay’at. (Sherwani - p: 49) Having assumed the Khilafat, Abu Bakr delivered his first speech, which will go down in the annals of history as a masterpiece of oratory, full of words of wisdom, sound judgement, and profound expression of humility. After praising God and thanking Him he said: “O people! Now I am chief over you (Amir), although not the best amongst you, if I do well, support me; if I do wrong, then set me right. Follow the true where there is faithfulness; eschew the false wherein is treachery. The weaker among you shall be the stronger with me, until that I shall have redressed his wrong; and the stronger shall be the weaker, until if the Lord will, I shall have taken from Him that which He hath wrested. Leave not off to fight in the ways of the Lord; whoever leaves off, him verily shall the Lord abase. Obey me when I obey the Lord and his Prophet; when I disobey, then obey me not. Now arise to prayer, and the Lord be with you.” (Muir, w: 1889 Annals of Early Caliphate, pp: 5-6, Ibn Is’haq; op. cit. p: 487)

While everyone offered their Bay’at at the hands of Abu Bakr, Ali refrained from doing so. There may be many reasons but two of them seemed quite obvious. He thought that being the closest relation to the Prophet, his claim to Khilafat should have been seriously considered. Secondly, Fatima, the Prophet’s daughter and wife of Ali was annoyed with Abu Bakr because she was not allowed to inherit the garden of Fidak, which the Prophet had
received in his capacity as Prophet. She felt that injustice was done to her, as she was denied her legitimate inheritance. It was in deference to her annoyance with the First Khalifah that Ali deferred his Bay’at. Although she had subsequently reconciled herself to the decision, and there was no ill will between the two, which is evident from the fact that Abu Bakr was called in when he came to see her during her illness. Perhaps annoyance of Fatima was the main reason for the delay in Ali’s Bay’at. He offered it immediately after her death. Ali was very apologetic, but generous in his tribute to Abu Bakr who was equally magnanimous in his treatment towards Ali, and they were again great friends. (Sherwani; op. cit. pp: 48–49)

**Abu Bakr Solves the Issue of the Burial of the Prophet’s Body:**

Because of the succession crisis, which had suddenly cropped up immediately after the Prophet’s death, his burial was postponed as Abu Bakr, Umar and other leading members of the Quraysh and Ansaar got deeply involved in resolving the crisis. Once the succession issue was resolved their attention got focussed as to where the Prophet ought to be buried. Different ideas were floated; some suggested that he should be buried in the midst of his people. Others suggested that the body should be taken to Jerusalem where most of the Prophets were buried. Eventually it was agreed that he should be buried in Madinah, but where? At this point Abu Bakr stated that he had heard the Prophet stating that
the Prophets were buried on the spot where they die. Thus he was buried in the Hujrah (room) of Ayeshah.

Abu Bakr had a flourishing textile business which was adequate to meet his expenses and that of his family members. The Sahaabah forced him to give it up after taking over the Khilafat. The Sahaabah agreed that his expenses including that of his family members will be covered by the state treasury. The subsistence allowance he received as Khalifah was just adequate to meet the average expenses for himself and for the family.

On assuming charge of the Khilafat he was besought with problems, which if not handled tactfully and firmly, could shake the very foundation of both the Islamic faith and the infant Islamic state. There were threatening military postures from the Romans, insurgency against the payment of Zakaat, and apostasy by some prominent tribal chiefs such as Tuliahan bin Khuwaylid, supported by tribes of Banu Ghafan, Aswad Yansi in Yemen and Musaylimah bin Habib in Yamama. But the Khalifah gave priority to the campaign against Romans because it was already decided by the Prophet and, but for his death, the forces would have left under the command of Osama bin Zayd. This was a punitive military expedition to avenge the reverses suffered in the earlier Mauta expedition during the lifetime of the Prophet in the 8 A.H.

Because of the threatening clouds of insurgency, challenging the authority of Islam, many Sahaabah
including Umar suggested that the military expedition to the Roman territory under Osama be temporarily postponed. They were also not happy that a young and inexperienced person was asked to command the force, when many senior, experienced experts in the art of warfare were accompanying the force under Osama’s command. Umar was asked to represent the views of the Sahaabah. The Khalifah was angry at this representation because acceding to their suggestion would tantamount to disobeying the Prophet. He, therefore, very frankly told Umar that he could not change his decision: “I swear by Allah, who has in his hands my life that I would have dispatched Osama’s army as ordered by the holy Prophet even if I were convinced that I would be carried away by the beasts. I would have issued orders for its dispatch even if I were left alone in the inhabited place.” (Tabri vol-III, p. 212, Sherwani; op. cit. p: 52) As regards Osama’s removal from command, he sharply retorted, "May you die! The Holy Prophet has assigned the command to Osama, and you advise me to remove him from that position?" (Sherwani p: 53) Thus the Khalifah stood firm by his decision to send the military expedition to Mauta under the command of Osama. In his view he was simply implementing the decision taken earlier by the Prophet, which could not be carried out because of his death. But this decision had a tremendous psychological impact not only on the people of Madinah but throughout the Arab Peninsula. It made them understand that despite internal crisis the Islamic state was strong enough to challenge the mighty Romans. It made the dissidents realise that they cannot challenge the might of the Islamic forces. Before
Osama commenced his march with his forces the Khalifah gave the entire army the following instructions regarding their conduct during the course of the war. “O People! Stand, I give you ten orders, which you have to bear in mind. Do not commit misappropriation or fraud, nor be guilty of disobedience (to the Commander) and mutilation (of limbs of any person). Do not kill old men, women or children. Injure not the date palm nor burn it with fire; and cut not down the fruit bearing trees. Slaughter not sheep or cows or camels except for purposes of food. You will pass by persons who spend their lives in retirement in the Monasteries, leave them in their state of retirement. You will also come across people who will bring various kinds of food to you in vessels, when you eat one of these things, one after the other, should recite the name of Allah. Now march forward in the name of Allah. May He protect you from the attack (of the enemy) and pestilence!” (Tabri Vol-III p.213, Sherwani; op. cit. p: 56)

Osama accomplished his mission. He subdued Bani Quza and the semi-Christian tribes of the high lands of south Syria and fully avenged the disaster that had befallen his father who was slain by these semi-Christians under the Romans. Osama’s expedition lasted 2 to 3 months, and he returned with large spoils of war (July-August- 632 A.D). (Muir; op. cit. p: 10)

Refusal to Pay Zakaat by Some Powerful Tribes of Arabia:

The Khilafat of Abu Bakr was marked by a series of crisis, which threatened to tear apart the fundamentals of
Islam and endangered the very existence of the Islamic State. Zakaat (poor due) is one of the five pillars of Islam. Its payment was made obligatory in the 9 A.H. Meanwhile apostasy and rebellion against the Islamic rule was spreading like wild fire and the situation had deteriorated to such an extent that except for the tribes of Banu Thaqif and Quraysh nearly all had either totally or partially, turned rebellious and claimed exemption from the payment of Zakaat. These powerful adversarial tribes had encircled Madinah with evil intentions. However they first sent a delegation to Madinah which included leaders from Bani Asad, Fegara and Ghaftan, Tha’labah, the Murrah and the Abs. The two leading personalities of this delegation were Ainiyah bin Hassan and Aqri bin Habis. Before calling on the Khalifah these tribal leaders met some leading Companions of the Prophet including Umar and Alito explain their viewpoint, Abbas alone refused to entertain the delegation. After canvassing with the Companions they called on the Khalifah, and represented that they might be exempted from the payment of Zakaat. He asked them to wait so that he may dispassionately examine the issue, and also that he would like to consult other leading companions of the Prophet before giving his final decision. He consulted the Companions who advised him to adopt a compromising attitude, and grant them temporary exemption, as the exigencies of the situation demanded it. The Khalifah was very angry at this soft attitude of the Companions and he burst out addressing Umar “You were so harsh in the days of ignorance, but now after Islam you have turned so soft. Divine revelations, have ceased, and our Faith has
reached perfection. Now, should it be allowed to be mutilated during my life? I swear by Allah that if even so much as a piece of spring is withheld (from Zakaat) I shall order war against them.” He called in the members of the delegation and outrightly turned down their demand. They were clearly told that if they refused to pay Zakaat he would wage war against them. He was determined to implement the command of God regarding the payment of Zakaat and no one could change his mind. This was a most crucial decision to protect and defend the fundamentals of Islam, and hence he rejected all compromises; proved absolutely right. If he had compromised on basic tenets of Islam there would have been no end to it. It would have eventually led to a complete dilution of Islamic values. It was just like the Prophet, who did not agree to the existence of the idols of Lut in Taif even for a day after the tribes had converted to Islam. After the rejection of their demands the tribal leaders returned to their respective tribes and the Khalifah made all the preparation to defeat their aggression. He posted Talha, Ali, Zubair and Abdullah bin Mas'ud at strategic points, called the citizens of Medina and warned them to be vigilant to repel the invaders with full strength. He asked the people coming to the Masjid-un Nabi for Salaat to come fully armed. (Riz-un-Nudrat Vol.I, p: 98; Sherwani p: 62)

The envoys, on their return, made all the preparations for war, and within three days invaded Medina. The Khalifah and his Companions were alert. He himself led the Islamic forces against the invading
dissidents, forced them to retreat to Dhi Hassi where the enemy had thrown on the ground a number of leather bags filled with air, which, scared the camels, and they ran back helter-skelter. The retreat of the Islamic forces encouraged the rebellious tribes to regroup and attack again. Meanwhile Osama had returned victorious from the Roman front. The Khalifah leaving him in-charge of Medina personally led the Muslim forces via Dhul Qassah to Abraq where he engaged the rebel’s tribes in a decisive battle; inflicted upon them a crushing defeat and forced them to agree to pay Zakaat regularly as enjoined in the Qur’an. After this victory, the battle field of Abraq was converted into a pasture land.

**Annihilation of Apostasy:**

Having now forced the insurgents to agree to pay Zakaat regularly, he turned his attention to annihilate apostasy. The chiefs among the apostates being M. Tulaiha bin Khuwaylid Al-Aasadi of Banu Asad, a very powerful and influential tribe; Aswad Ansi (Abhala bin Ka’b bin Aufal Ansi) of Yemen; Haroon bin Habib (Musaylimah Kizzaab) of Banu Haneef, and a woman false prophetess, Sajah bint Haritha Tamimi. Of these Aswad Ansi of Yemen, and Musaylimah Kizzaab of Banu Haneefa had turned apostate during the life of the Prophet.

The army of Islam was now better equipped because the Zakaat amount had started coming in and filled the treasury. The prestige and reputation of the
Islamic state had considerably enhanced with the victorious return of Osama and his army from the Syrian expedition. As regards the expedition against the apostates the Islamic army was divided into 11 sections each under one Ameer, and they were assigned their responsibilities. Khalid was to lead charge against Tulaiha, Ikrimah against Musaylimah, and the sons of Zubair were assigned the task of suppressing Aswad Ansi.

In this campaign against the apostates the strategy adopted was that before the start of attack the tribes will be asked to renounce their apostasy and return to the fold of Islam. This worked very well in the campaign against Bani Tay. Tulaiha bin Khuwaylid Asadi had exhibited signs of apostasy during the time of the Prophet, who had ordered a military campaign against him. He was defeated and arrested but somehow he escaped death, as the sword that struck him did not deal a fatal blow. This was attributed to divine qualities in Tulaiha. A couple of other incidents in which his predictions proved correct confirmed the belief of his tribesmen in Tulaiha’s divine character. He was further encouraged in his pseudo prophetic claims when Ainiyah bin Hassan Infirari together with Banu Fazara and Banu Ghatfan joined him, which greatly strengthened his military strength and capacity to fight. Khalid bin al Waleed was made in-charge of military expedition against Tulaiha. He had with him Adi bin Hatim, a respected leader of Bani Tay. Adi bin Hatim was sent in advance to meet the people of his tribe and to persuade them to return to the fold of Islam. There were initial difficulties but eventually Adi
succeeded to bring them back peacefully to Islam. As Khalid advanced to attack the tribe of Bani Jadilah, again Adi asked the commander to let him first try to bring them back peacefully, and he did succeed in his efforts. Due to Adi’s efforts Khalid’s forces were reinforced with 1000 horsemen from Bani Tay. Before attacking Tulaiha, Khalid, as directed by the Khalifah, sent him a message to return to Islam. On receiving an arrogant response he attacked Tulaiha’s forces, which was being commanded by Ainiyah bin Hassan the leader of Banu Fazara. They were crushed by the Muslims and Ainiyah bin Hasan and his companion Aqra bin Habith were arrested, sent to Madinah where they reconverted to Islam and were pardoned. Meanwhile Tulaiha who was camped in Bazakha had kept a steed ready to flee. As soon as he heard of the defeat he took his wife Nawar and fled straight to the Syrian frontier and took refuge with Bani Kalab. The Khalifah pardoned Bani Asad when they reconverted to Islam. Later Tulaiha also returned, repented, reconverted to Islam and was pardoned by the Khalifah: “Let him alone. What have I to do with him? The Lord hath now verily guided him into the right path.” (Muir; op. cit. p: 26)

Campaign against Musaylimah Kizzaab (The Liar):

Of all the apostates the campaign against Musaylimah Kizzaab proved most difficult. He had declared his Prophethood during the life of the Prophet. It was therefore crucially important to crush and exterminate him in the best interest of Islam and the
Islamic State. Abu Bakr was determined to achieve this objective. He had initially asked Ikrímah bin Abi Jahal and Suharbíl bin Hasna to march against Musaylimah. They attacked his forces but were defeated and had to retreat. They were then directed to proceed to some other minor fronts and the Khalifah asked Khalíd, who had just crushed the forces of Tulaiha, to proceed to punish Musaylimah. This pseudo prophet had legalized adultery, abolished the payment of Zakaat and that Sa’idah (prostration) was discontinued in Salaat. He had also married Sajah, who had also declared herself a prophetess, which considerably enhanced the strength of Musaylimah Kizzaab’s army.

Khalíd on being directed to lead the campaign against Musaylimah marched to Yamama. His forces were also reinforced promptly by the Khalifah who dispatched under the command of Thabit bin Qays the Ansaar leader and the emigrant chief Zayd bin Al-Khattab (brother of Umar) large contingent of forces. Khalíd with this reinforcement marched to Yamama. Musaylimah with his 40,000 strong force encamped at Aqraba where the two combatant forces faced each other. In the fight that ensued the Islamic forces had to retreat hastily. Khalíd was also forced to retreat. Subsequently, Bara bin Malík succeeded in regrouping the Muslim forces and enthused them to make another determined bid. Khalíd seeing the enthusiasm of his forces furiously attacked the enemy who could not bear the onslaught, Musaylimah retreated with his forces into the fortress and shut himself in. Bara bin M’Alik, daringly climbed the fortress wall, jumped in,
and opened the gate. The Muslim forces rushed in, launched a fierce attack and eventually Musaylimah was killed by the spear of the same Wahshi (Abyssinian) who had killed Hamzah, the prophet’s uncle. According to a contemporary historian more than 10,000 infidels supporting Musaylimah Kizzaab were killed in this fight against the forces of Islam. Nearly 600 Muslims including Ansaar and Muhajireen were also martyred. The disgraceful death of Musaylimah and the crushing defeat of his forces signalled the total extermination of apostasy from Arabia. The Khalifah was informed by Khalid of the glorious victory of Islam over apostasy and sent a delegation of Banu Hanifa, the tribe of Musaylimah Kizzaab to apologize to the Khalifah and seek his pardon for their heresy. However some mopping up operations against apostasy were later carried on in Bahrain, Oman, Yemen, Najran and they were all defeated in minor battles with the Muslims. Thus by Muharram, 12 A.H/633 A.D apostasy was totally eliminated from Arabia and the supremacy of Islam was completely restored in the entire Arabian Peninsula up to the borders of Byzantine and Persian Empires in the northwest and northeast respectively. Consequently peace and stability of the infant Islamic state was fully ensured and the inflow of Zakaat amount ensured its economic stability as well.

In this rebellion against Islam the story of Fujaa a treacherous free booter needs special mention. Fujaa, a reputed leader of Bani Sulaim, approached Abu Bakr for arms and other materials of war to fight the insurgents against Islam in his neighbourhood. Thus equipped, he
acted treacherously and started plundering the Muslims ruthlessly along with the apostates. The Khalifah ordered another loyal local chief to fight against Fujaa. Fujaa finally surrendered to the Muslim forces. He was taken to the Khalifah. Khalifah Abu Bakr always maintained a cool and calm demeanour and seldom lost his temper but he was most upset with the treacherous behaviour of Fujaa. That he not only scolded him harshly but sentenced him also to death by burning. He commanded ‘go forth with this traitor to the burial ground and there burn him by fire.’ Fujaa was taken to graveyard of Jannat-ul-Baqi. A heap of wood was set on fire and Fujaa was thrown into it to die by burning as ordered by the Khalifah. Subsequently the Khalifah regretted his decision to condemn Fujaa to death by burning: “It is one of the three things which I wish I had not done.” [Muir, William (1968): Annals of the Early Caliphate, Oriental Press, Amsterdam. (Reprint of the London Edition – 1883, p: 29)]

Collection and Compilation of the Qur’an:

In the Battle of Yamama nearly 39 Huffaz, who had committed the entire Qur’anic text by memory were also martyred. It raised the important issue of the survival of the Qur’an as an authentic text as revealed to Prophet Muhammad by Archangel Jibrael (Gabriel) and dictated by the Prophet to his scribes. The Prophet had also fixed the sequence in which the Qur’anic chapters were arranged. Umar raised this issue with Khalifah Abu Bakr

5 Persons who have memorised the entire Qur’an verbatim.
and prevailed upon him to agree to compile all the Surahs in a Mus'haf, bound together. In the absence of Abdullah bin Mas'ud who had learnt most of the Qur'an directly from the Prophet, Zayd bin Thabit, who was also the secretary to the Prophet, and a leading scribe was assigned the task of compilation of an authentic text of the Qur'an. He did a meticulous job and eventually compiled a complete text of the Qur'an in 12 A.H/633 A.D within two years of the Prophet’s death. It immediately received the status of an authentic referral text (Mus'haf) written on a parchment paper. It was kept in the safe custody of the Khalifah himself. For a detailed discussion on this subject see INDSET Monograph No.7: Compilation of Al-Qur'an: The Verbatim Record of the words of Allah.

Battles against the Persians and Romans:

With the annihilation of apostasy, and successful termination of internal dissidence and insurgency, peace and stability was fully established in the Arab Peninsula but the external threat from the Persian and Byzantium empires still loomed large. The Persians particularly were very keen to control the whole of Arabia. They had even attempted it earlier. Long before the advent of Islam they had even extended their territorial control up to Hejaz and Madinah. In view of this historical background of continual threat from Persia, Abu Bakr first directed his attention to counteract the Persians. Khalid was summoned to Madinah and asked to proceed with a 10,000 strong army to the port of Ubullah, which was located near modern Basra. Earlier an 8,000 strong army
under Muthanna and three other commanders had already been dispatched to the Persian front. The Persians, in the Ubullah region, were commanded by a leading Persian noble, Hurmuz. He received a message from Khalid to either accept Islam or pay jiziyah. Hurmuz informed the Persian Emperor of the situation and with his permission mobilized a large army and marched to challenge the Islamic forces whose strength had reached 18,000 because Muthanna with his 8000 strong force had by now joined Khalid. Khalid with the combined forces had moved to Hafir and by the time Hurmuz reached there he had moved his forces to Kawazim. Hurmuz immediately left for Kawazim where Khalid had camped. Hurmuz’ forces also camped there and he chained his elephants to prevent them from retreating. Hence the battle of Hafir is also known as the battle of chains (Dhat-us-Salasil) 12 A.H./633 A.D. In this battle the Persians were routed, Hurmuz was killed. The Muslims collected huge spoils of war including the crown of Hurmuz (worth 100,000 Dirham), a camel load (7½ mounds) of chains, and an elephant. The crown was rewarded to Khalid who had killed Hurmuz. The people of Madinah were wonder-struck when the elephant was paraded in Medina and exclaimed: “Is it a creature of God that we see with our eyes?” (Sherwani p: 82) After the Battle of Hafir, Khalid fought and emerged victorious in a series of battles with the Persians, each severe than the other, such as the battles of Madhats, Hairah (a key town in a fertile region of Iraq, Anbar or Dhat-ul-Ayron) where Muslim archers had damaged eyes of 1000 enemy soldiers), Dhumat-ul-Jundal, and the battle of Firad. These great victories had
a great psychological impact on the vanquished Persians. The agreements which Khalid signed with the defeated Persian forces brought in, besides large spoils of war, large amounts in *jizya* tax as well. This considerably augmented the income of the state and enabled the *Khalifah* to look after the welfare of the people and adequately equip the army for war both against the Persians and Romans.

The first phase of war against Kisra, the emperor of Persia, was concluded with the conquest of the entire province of Hayra of the Persian Empire. Meanwhile threatening clouds of war appeared from the Romans in Syria, and *Khalifah* Abu Bakr had to direct his attention to meet the challenges from the stronger, larger and well-oiled war machinery of the Romans (Byzantium). Earlier, the Romans had betrayed their aggressive intentions by joining forces with the Persians in the Battle of Hirad, bordering the Persian and Roman territory, but Khalid bin Al-Waleed was more than a match, inflicted a crushing defeat on the combined Persian and Roman forces. With this ignominious defeat Heracles, the Byzantium Emperor made a determined bid to administer a crushing blow on Islamic forces. Realising the grave threats from the Byzantium Emperor Heracles, Abu Bakr convened a meeting of the Companions to deliberate about the situation and to decide on a line of action. After due deliberations and in-depth analysis of the scenario on the Syrian (Roman) front it was agreed that four different fronts will be opened against the forces of Byzantium. Meanwhile Muslim forces, which had been sent on
punitive action against Yemen and south-eastern Arabia, had returned victorious to Medina. This reinforcement strengthened the Islamic forces against the Romans and facilitated the opening of four different fronts to contain and confront the Romans. Abu Ubaidah commanded the Hims front, Yazid bin Abu Sufiyan Damascus, Shrajeel bin Hasna the Jordan, and Amr bin al-As was given charge of the Palestine front. The Byzantium Emperor Heracles immediately started a counter move. His brother Theodoric was sent with a 90,000 strong army against Amr bin Al-Aas, George the son of Theodoric was posted with about the same number of soldiers against Yazid bin Sufiyän, Darackis against Shrajeel bin Hasna and Caycar ibn Nestus with equally large contingent of army against Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah. (Muir; op. cit. pp: 97-98) Considering the disproportionately large size of the Roman forces the Muslim commanders realised that they might not be able to face the attack of the Romans on four different fronts. They therefore decided on the advice of Amr bin al-As and with the consent of the Khalifah to combine their forces and assemble at Yermuk. Meanwhile Khalid was also asked to move his forces from the Iraq front where he gave charge to Muthanna. Khalid eventually reached Yermuk with 9000 soldiers. With this reinforcement the strength of the Muslim forces was raised to 46,000. During his march to Yermuk, Khalid captured Basra, Fahal and fought a fierce battle in Ajnadin which was captured in Jamadi-ul-Awwal 13 A.H/634 A.D. While he laid the siege of Damascus he got the news of the death of Abu Bakr and that Umar had succeeded him as Khalifah. Thus the battle of Ajnadin was the last
major battle fought and won during the Khilafat of Abu Bakr.

**Death of Abu Bakr and Nomination of Umar as Successor (Jamadi-ul-Aakhir 13 A.H/August, 634 A.D):**

Abu Bakr had a bath with cold water on 7 Jamadi-ul-Aakhir 13 A.H a cold month. Thereafter he developed high fever that persisted till his death. It was during this illness that he got the news of the victory of Ajnadin and expressed his satisfaction and happiness. His daughter *Umm-ul-Mu'mineen* Ayesha was with him throughout his illness. He was living in his Madinah residence very close to the Masjid-un Nabi. He would ask Umar to lead the prayer whenever he was not able to do so. With the persistence of his illness, as the high temperature continued, he started seriously thinking about his successor. During the course of his illness when his condition started deteriorating, many companions called on him, and advised him to be treated by a physician, which he refused as he had foreseen his impending death. In response to the suggestion of the people to consult a physician he replied “Now it is all over, and the physician has seen me.” When asked as to what did the physician says he answered, “I do what I propose to do.” (Waqidi, Vol. III, p: 141 in Sherwani; p: 103) The obvious implication was Allah and hence the people kept quiet.

The question of succession was foremost in his mind. He started consulting some leading Companions
such as Abdur Rahmaan bin Auf, Uthmaan, Ali, Sa’eed bin Zayd, and a few others regarding the suitability of Umar as his successor. He found that in general they had good impression about him. He decided to nominate him, and thereafter seek the consent of the people in general. There was some minor opposition as well. Some of the companions felt that Umar by nature was violent and short-tempered. He quietened them by saying that outwardly he may sound violent but inwardly cool and level headed and “when he will feel the responsibilities of the Emirate he will become a soft man.” However one of the Sahaabah asked him to reconsider his decision, for he will be answerable to God for this decision. The Khalifah softly replied “I will humbly submit to my God that I selected the best person among your slaves.” (Nadwi; op. cit. p: 67) After having convinced the Sahaabah that Umar was the right choice, he called Uthmaan Ghani to write his nomination of Umar as his successor to the Khilafat. He had just started dictating that he became unconscious for some time. Meantime, Uthmaan completed the sentence during his state of unconsciousness. When he regained his consciousness he asked Uthmaan as to what he had written. He read out the full text. He was very pleased, and said that he had written exactly what he wanted him to write. Thereafter, he went up to the balcony of his room supported by his wife Asma, daughter of Anis. He addressed the people who had assembled in front of the house. He announced his nomination of Umar as his successor, and strongly recommended it for their acceptance. They all answered with one voice “We have heard you and we will obey you.” (Tabri IV, p: 51 in
During the course of his brief address from the balcony he told the gathering “Look I have not selected my brother or my relative to the high post but have nominated the one who is the best among you.” (Tabaqat-e Ibn Sa’ad, vol.3, p: 42 - in Nadwi; op. cit. p: 68) The full text of his last testament nominating Umar as his successor is as follows: “In the name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful. This is the last testament of the life of Abu Bakr bin Abu Qahafah, dictated at the time of his departure from this world, and the first moment of his entry into the next world, where infidels become faithful, the disbelievers become true believers and the liars become truthful. I appoint Umar bin Al-Khattab as my successor. Hear him and obey him. (Remember that) I have tried my level best to discharge my duties towards Allah, His Prophet, His faith, and towards you and myself. If he does justice, then it would be what I expect of him and what I know of him; if he were changed then everybody would get the fruits of his deeds. My intention is good, but I do not know anything of the unknown. But those who will be guilty of tyranny will soon know how they are changed. Peace be on you and the mercy and blessings of Allah!” (Waqidi vol. III p.142, in Sherwani; op. cit. p: 105)

After resolving the issue of the Khilafat he turned his attention to his personal affairs. He inquired about the amount he had drawn from Bait-ul-Maal for his maintenance. He was informed that a sum of 6,000 Dirham, which amount, he instructed should be reimbursed to Bait-ul-Maal. He instructed his daughter
Ayesah that the slave girl and the two camels given to him by the State should be returned to his successor. He further urged Ayesah that the property he had bequeathed to her, she should share with her brothers and sisters to which she readily agreed. Finally, he told her to wash the clothes he was wearing and use them for his coffin. Since the Prophet’s body was wrapped in three pieces of cloth, the third piece of cloth for him should be bought from the market. He died the same day the Prophet had expired i.e., on Monday, 22 Jamadi-ul-Aakhir, 13 A.H/August, 634 A.D between *Maghrib* and *Isha* prayers at the age of 63. His funeral prayer was led by Umar. He was buried on the right hand side of the grave of the Prophet. His body was lowered in the grave by Abdur Rahmaan bin Auf, Uthmaan, Talha and Umar. The friend was finally laid to rest beside the friend.

He had many wives but those from whom he had children (names of children in bracket) were Qutailah (Abdullah and Asma); Umm-e Rummaan (Ayeshah and Abdur Rahmaan); Asma (Muhammad bin Abu Bakr); Habibah bint Kharjah [his youngest daughter Umm-e Kulthum, who was brought up by Ayesah).

**System of Administration:**

The *Khilafat* of Abu Bakr lasted for just over two years and it was too short a period to bring about any fundamental changes in the system of administration laid down by the Prophet. He divided the Islamic State into 8 provinces and each province was headed by a governor.
The governors appointed by the Prophet were allowed to continue in their respective provinces. He created the post of Chief Qazi which was assigned to Umar. The law and order situation was so exceptionally good that not a single case, for almost a year, was referred to Umar for adjudication. Uthmaan and Zayd bin Thabit functioned as his secretaries. He established the Bait-ul-Maal (Treasury) but there was hardly any money for whatever income received was either distributed among the people or spent on preparations for war against internal insurgency and external dangers from Persians and Romans (Byzantium).

**Conclusion:**

He was a man of sterling qualities of head and heart. His integrity and honesty were well established even before he had embraced Islam. He was the custodian of the ransom money in pre-Islamic Makkah. He was a cool headed and balanced mind, always tendered sane and sound advice. He would always come forward to help the poor and the needy. He therefore exercised considerable influence on both the commoners and the nobility of Pre-Islamic Makkah. It was because of these human qualities of his character that Ibn Daghna brought him back when he was migrating to Abyssinia, due to the cruelty and oppression inflicted upon him by the infidels of Makkah after his acceptance of Islam.

After his conversion to Islam he stood second to none, excepting the Prophet, in his devotion and dedication to Islam. His belief in the truthfulness of the
message of Islam was implicit and total and his loyalty to Prophet was exceptional. He always shadowed him wherever he went in order to protect him from the tortures of the pagans of Makkah and in turn was himself sometimes brutally tortured. When he was called to accept Islam, he did so instantly and without any reservation. He testified unhesitatingly to the veracity of the Prophet’s night journey to Masjid-ul-Aqsa from Masjid-ul-Haraam and back and was titled by Allah as As-Siddiq (one who is truthful).

He was a prosperous businessman when he converted to Islam, on the call of the Prophet. He spent unhesitatingly, his wealth in the cause of Islam and particularly in paying the ransom money to purchase freedom of Muslim slaves – men and women, and to save them from the torture and tyranny of their pagan masters. Besides, he also liberally helped the poor and the needy among the pagans. Bilaal, the Muezzin of the Masjid-un Nabi was the most illustrious of the slaves whose freedom he had purchased. His overwhelming generosity continued even in Madinah and the Prophet never hesitated to use his money in the cause of Islam. It was Abu Bakr, who paid for the land of the orphans where the Masjid-un Nabi stands today. He excelled all his fellow companions in Taqwa (virtuous deeds). In 9 A.H, when the Prophet invited donations to mobilize resources for the Tabook expedition against the Romans, Umar was determined to exceed the contribution of Abu Bakr. He donated half of his total wealth but Abu Bakr contributed his total wealth and informed the Prophet that he had left
his family to the care of Allah and his Prophet. Umar then generously conceded that he would never be able to match the generosity of Abu Bakr. It is even approvingly referred to in the Qur’an by Allah in Surah Al-Layl: “Those who spend their wealth for increase in self-purification, and have in their minds no favour from anyone for which a reward is expected in return, but only the desire to seek for the Countenance of their Lord Most High.” (Al-Layl; 92:18-20)

Even in service to the common folks Abu Bakr surpassed his fellow companions. This is acknowledged by Ali himself: “I swear in the name of Him, Who has my life in His hands, that never did we hasten towards doing a good thing when we were not surpassed by Abu Bakr.” (Tabrani in Sherwani; op. cit. p: 144-145) It is reported that in the vicinity of Madinah there lived a blind old woman. Umar used to visit her daily to help her in her daily chores. He however discovered that she was being helped by someone else preceding him. Once he came quite early and found Abu Bakr helping her even before him. Having observed this he remarked: “By God! It is you who have taken precedence in service in this place.” (Kanz-ul-A’amaal, Vol.6, p: 312 in Nadwi, op. cit. p: 127) He would never miss attending a funeral, and calling on a sick person to enquire about his health. In the locality where he used to live before his election as Khalifah, he used to milk the sheep for one slave girl in his neighbourhood. She was very sad and said, “Who will milk our sheep now?” Abu Bakr promptly answered: “By God, I will do it. I hope the emirate will not stop me to serve the
Of all the Companions Abu Bakr was closest to the Prophet. They had developed immense liking for each other even before the commencement of the Prophetic mission of Muhammad. Since the commencement of his Prophetic mission, the Prophet would be regularly consulting him on all important issues regarding the propagation of his mission, and the affairs of the state in Madinah. The pinnacle of this close bond between the two was reached when by divine command Abu Bakr was privileged to accompany the Prophet to migrate to Madinah and was therefore designated in the Qur’an as “the second of the two.”

This process of confidential consultation continued more intensely in Madinah, where besides the missionary activities the affairs of the infant Islamic state were also involved. Once Abu Bakr had invited some of the companions to dinner but suddenly he was summoned by the Prophet for consultation. He was considerably delayed. The dinner started very late. He profusely apologized to his guests, who appreciated his situation, for a summon from the Prophet had precedence over every other activity. The Prophet also reposed total confidence in him. He was the only person authorized during the life of the Prophet to issue a Fatwa or edict on religious affairs. People were advised by the Prophet to consult Abu Bakr in his absence. He was the only companion whom the Prophet asked to lead the prayer.
during his illness. His constant companionship with the Prophet had left a deep mark on his personality, which he displayed prominently after Prophet’s death. The Prophet himself had stated, “I have two vaizeirs in heavens – Gabriel and Michael – two on earth Abu Bakr and Umar,” and further that, “They are my hearing and my sight.” (Sherwani; op. cit. p: 137)

Abu Bakr had a gifted ability to interpret dreams correctly. We have earlier observed that the Prophet called off the siege of Taif when he dreamt that a cup of milk had slipped out of his hand. Abu Bakr interpreted that Taif will not fall in that siege, the Prophet agreed and the siege was called off. Once Ayesha dreamt that three moons had descended in his room. When Prophet expired and was buried in her room he told her that this was the first moon, his own burial in the same room next to the Prophet represented the second moon, and finally the burial of Umar next to Abu Bakr was the third moon.

He saved Islam from vertical split between the Ansaar and Quraysh, after the death of the Prophet by his timely intervention, extem pore forceful and rational speech at Saqifa Banu Sa’idah. It not only saved the situation but instilled new vigour and unity in the ranks and file of Ansaar and Muhajireen. He was not only the most non-controversial of the companions but also the most respected and the most acceptable of all the Companions when he was elected as the Kh’Alifah after the death of the Prophet.
His inaugural Khutbah, next only to the sermons of the Prophet, stands unparalleled in significance defining the functions of the ruler and the ruled. He asserted the equality of mankind and in one stroke demolished the infallibility and supremacy of the ruler, stressed his accountability and that he could stay in power so long as he served the interest of the people, obeyed the commands of Allah and followed the Sunnah of the Prophet. One of the important functions of the ruler according to Abu Bakr was to protect the meek from the mighty and to ensure the rights of the weak were not usurped by the strong. This inaugural address according to M Mohammed Ali contains, “volumes of wisdom and may serve as a beacon to the Muslim world….” (Muir; op. cit. p: 23, Sherwani; op. cit. p: 50)

One of his unique and great achievements, indeed, was the compilation in a Mus'haf of an authentic text of the Qur'an, as revealed to the Prophet. The full text was written on a parchment paper and Surahs (chapters) arranged in the same order as directed by the Prophet.

He, however, demonstrated his true strength of character, his firm adherence to the fundamentals of Islam, and his steely resolve to implement the basic tenets of Islam in its totality even under most trying circumstances. On his assumption of the office of the Khilafat he found the infant Islamic State threatened by insurgency, and revolt by forces loyal to false prophets. A powerful group of tribes demanded exemption from payment of Zakaat, which they felt was burdensome.
Despite the advice of many companions, including Umar, to adopt a compromising attitude in the matter of Zakaat, he refused to relent, since he equated Zakaat with Salaat, and would not tolerate the flouting of the Qur’anic injunctions, which he rigorously implemented. The dissident tribes were forced to agree to pay Zakaat. Similarly he crushed decisively the menace of pseudo-prophets such as Tulaiha, Musaylimah Kizzaab, etc. The killing of Musaylimah sounded the death knell of apostasy and thereafter, peace and tranquillity, law and order, returned to Arabia. Thus, at the time of his death, Abu Bakr bequeathed a legacy of peaceful and stable Arabian Peninsula with the supremacy of Islamic rule fully and firmly established. This stable Arabia fully committed to Islamic values provided the launching pad for Umar to enhance the prestige of Islam and expand the frontiers of the Islamic domain.

It would be only appropriate that this biographical sketch of Abu Bakr Siddiq be concluded by the forceful oration delivered by Ali on his death: “Mercy of God on you, O Abu Bakr. You were an affectionate companion and friend of the Prophet of Allah, a source of Joy to him and one who knew his secrets and enjoyed the privilege of being consulted by him. You were the first person to embrace Islam; you had the purest faith and your belief in Islam was unshakable.

“For the Prophet of Allah you were like his very sight and hearing. You corroborated the truth of his message at a time when everybody belied him; and so you
were called As-Siddiq (The True) by Allah in his revelation. He says, ‘the one who came with the truth and the one who corroborated the truth: the one who came with the truth was Muhammad and the one who corroborated the truth was Abu Bakr...In the days of hardship you were his best companion; you were the second of the two and his companion in the cave...you were the only companion of the prophet in his Hijrat (Migration to Medinah), and you were his Khalifah among his followers and in the religion of Allah. You discharged the functions of the Khilafat in a most excellent manner at a moment when people had taken apostasy and exhibited such firmness in enforcing the commands of Allah as had never been exhibited by the Khilafat of any other Prophet. You rose to the occasion when your colleagues showed lassitude, and you became bold when they exhibited meekness and you were strong when they were weak. You had the lowest voice but the highest distinction. Your conversation was most exemplary and your reasoning most just; your silence was longest (in duration) and your speech most eloquent. Bravest among men and well informed about matters, your action was dignified. ...For infidels you were (a source of) terrible punishment and burning fire, and for the believers kindness, affection and protection...Your argument was never weak and your judgement never faulty. You were never guilty of cowardice and your heart was never crooked and misdirected. You were like a rock which stands firm in the face of hard blows and dashing winds... The weak and the humble were strong with you as you secured their right; and the strong were weak and humble with you as
you made them surrender the rights of others… Your
dignity lay in righteousness, truth and benevolence; Your
word was imperative and definitive, Your command mild
and cautious and your judgement wise and firm.” (Riadh-
CHAPTER - 3

UMAR IBN AL-KHATTAB:  
THE SECOND KHALIFAH

Early Life and Genealogy:

Umar ibn Khattab, the second Khalifah of Islamic state, despite his unexcelled achievements as a ruler and conqueror, was simplicity and humility personified. Even the ambassadors of the Roman Empire were amazed and overwhelmed when they asked for the palace of the Khalifah, were guided to the Mosque of the Prophet, where the most powerful ruler of the time was sitting along with his people on the floor to receive and welcome the Roman ambassadors. That was Umar, the son of Abdul Khattab, who belonged to noble Adi clan of Quraysh. He was born in 581 A.D. His lineage joins with that of the Prophet in the eighth generation. The Quraysh of Arabia descended from Fihr, the son of Maalik. Ten individuals in the Quraysh tribe gained prominence because of their power and wealth, and became extremely influential. They were the forefathers of ten famous Quraysh tribes, who were also the keepers of the Ka’bah, which position lent them ecclesiastical superiority as well.

Umar’s ancestor Adi was the head of the diplomatic department representing and protecting the interests of the Quraysh in his capacity as their
ambassador. Adi also held the position of Arbitrator in the contests of the Munafirah i.e. deciding the order of precedence in the tribal heraldry. Both these offices had become hereditary among the descendants of Adi. Naufayl, Umar’s grandfather, performed both the duties with great distinction. Umar’s mother, Khantamah, was also of noble lineage. She was the daughter of Hisham bin al Moghirah who was called Sahib-ul-A’inmahar, Marshall of the Quraysh. Khalid bin al Waleed, the famous Muslim General, was the grand son of Hisham bin al Moghirah.

According to an unauthenticated account by Amr bin al-Aas, Umar was born forty years before the migration of the Prophet. He was thus 13 years younger to Muhammad. As a young lad Umar was assigned by his father the task of taking his camel herd for grazing in the pasturelands, around the desert of Dajnan, not very far from Makkah. During this period his father Al-Khattab was extremely harsh on him and would not let him rest even for a moment, even if Umar was terribly tired. Once after he had assumed the Khilafat he passed through the desert of Dajnan, was immensely moved and loudly uttered “Gracious Heavens! There was a time when I used to roam about this desert with a camel herd, wearing a felt jacket, and whenever I sat down tired, my father would beat me. Now there is a time when I acknowledge none save Allah as my superior.” (Quoted from Tabaqaat of Ibn Sa’ad in Shibli: Umar the Great, p: 34)
Being of noble descent from the side of both the parents Umar (RA) also took up those noble, manly and scholarly pursuits, which were in vogue among the nobles of Quraysh. He was a skilled wrestler, was known for his horsemanship, earned his fame as an expert genealogist, which he inherited from his father Abdul Khattab. He was an equally talented poet. He was a skillful negotiator, well versed in the art of diplomacy and was therefore, assigned the role of ambassador by the Quraysh. He must have been a fine orator, for no one without oratorical skill could have distinguished himself as an ambassador. He was a regular participant in the annual Ukaaz fair, in the vicinity of Arafat Hills, where only the skilled and distinguished persons in various skills could participate. Umar was indeed one of them and excelled over most of the other participants. Another notable achievement of Umar was his fluency in both reading and writing. During this period there were only 17 persons among all the clans of the Quraysh tribe who could read and write, and Umar was one of them.

Subsequently Umar took to trade as his profession in which he was a great success. This profession gave him the opportunity to visit distant places in Syria, Persia etc., where he met distinguished people, and exchanged views with them. This substantially broadened his outlook and vision, and sharpened his negotiating skill with poise and dignity.

Umar’s Conversion to Islam:
Before his dramatic conversion to Islam he was firmly committed to idolatry. He behaved rudely and arrogantly with all those who favoured Islam. He was particularly severe on his slave girl Labinah who had converted to Islam. He would beat her mercilessly until he was himself tired of beating her, and will resume beating the moment he felt refreshed. This cruel treatment however could not shake Labinah’s faith in Islam. This unshaken resolve in the faith of Islam was a notable characteristic of all the early converts to Islam. Umar was so agitated by the spread of Islam that he wanted to root it out, once and for all, by killing the Prophet himself. One day he left his house determined to kill the Prophet. He met on the way Na‘im bin Abdullah, who incidentally had also converted to Islam. Na‘im enquired of Umar as to why he looked so agitated? Umar replied that he was going to kill Muhammad to root out Islam forever from Arabia. Na‘im then asked him, “to deal with your sister Fatimah and her husband Sa‘eed ibn Zayd who both have converted to Islam.” Umar’s face flushed red with rage. He immediately dashed to his sister’s house. This is what happened in Umar’s own words: “When I reached her (sister’s) house, I knocked at the door. I heard someone ask ‘Who is it?’ and I replied it is ibn Khattab.” My sister ventured to open the door.” “I told her, ‘O enemy of yourself, I heard you have abandoned our religion’ and then I struck her on the face. She cried and said ‘Do whatever you wish, ibn Khattab, for I have embraced Islam whether you like it or not.’ I then entered and sat on a couch. I looked around and saw in a corner a piece of
material with writing on it. I told my sister, ‘Give this to me. What is this writing?’ She replied, ‘I will not give it to you.... you are polluted, and only those who are pure can touch it. Moreover, I am afraid that you might not treat it with the respect it deserves.’ I went out, took a full bath, returned to my sister’s house and asked her to show me the written piece. After I assured her that I would treat it with respect, she gave it to me. I began to read and was thoroughly stirred by the words: In the name of Allah the Compassionate the Merciful, - I began to shiver, and the document fell from my hands. When I recovered, I picked it up and read further until I completed the ayah (Surah Talha – Chapter 20) [ending with the words] ‘if you are believers.’ I said: ‘I bear witness that there is nothing deserving of worship other than Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.’”

Umar’s brother-in-law Khabbab, who was also in the house, and had hid himself on Umar’s arrival, came out when Umar declared his acceptance of Islam. He and Sa’eed were overwhelmed with joy. They proceeded with Umar to Hamzah’s house where Prophet was meeting with some of his companions. Umar knocked at the door the Prophet asked Bilaal ibn Rabah to open the door and said, “If he is coming with good intention, he is welcome, otherwise we shall deal with him (in a befitting way).” The door was opened and he was face to face with the Prophet and then Umar declared, “I bear witness that there is nothing worthy of worship other than Allah, and that Muhammad is His Messenger.” Once Umar uttered
these words, all those present shouted “Allahu Akbar.”
(Umar al-Farooq by M.A. Ra'uf, pp: 5 to 9)

Umar’s conversion took place in the 6th year of Revelation when he was 27 years of age, and marked a turning point in the progress of Islam in Makkah. The first thing that Umar suggested that if our cause was right then we should declare our adherence openly and he informed the Prophet that he was determined to do so. Soon after the following verse was revealed: “So proclaim that which you are commanded (to preach) and disregard the idolaters.” (Al-Hijr; 15:94) The Prophet, thereafter, consented despite his reservations. With considerable difficulty and despite staunch opposition of the pagan leaders of Makkah, the Muslims could offer their prayers (Salaat) in the precincts of Ka’bah under the leadership of the Prophet. On the authority Abdullah bin Mas’ud, Ibn Hisham describes this historic event in the following words: “When Umar embraced Islam, he fought with the Quraysh until he had the better of the struggle so far that he entered the Ka’bah where he said his prayers and we along with him.” (Shibli; vol.1, p: 43) He displayed the same courage when he decided to migrate to Madinah. While others had quietly and stealthily slipped out of Makkah but Umar was made of a different mettle. Having decided to migrate, he openly declared and went fearlessly to the club of the elites in Ka’bah and announced, “I am now leaving. I am now going in that direction” pointing to the direction of Madinah and added: “If anyone desires to make his wife a widow and his children orphans, let him dare to follow me.” (Ra’uf:
Umar al-Farooq, p: 23) Nobody dared to pursue him. He did not leave alone but nearly 20 others migrated with him, including brother Zayd and his son Sa'eed. (Shibli; op. cit. p: 45)

When Umar arrived in Madinah he, together with most other migrants, stayed in Quba (also called Awali). After the migration of Umar, most of the other Muslims quietly slipped out of Makkah. Finally the Prophet also received the divine permission to move to Madinah. He also therefore arrived in Madinah accompanied by Abu Bakr. Under the system of brotherhood between the Muhajireen and the Ansaar, established by the Prophet, the chief of Bani Salim Utbah bin Maalik became the brother in faith of Umar and took good care of him.

On his arrival, the Prophet concentrated his attention in building the Masjid-un Nabi and in giving proper shape to the basic religious activities of Muslims such as Salat and Zakaat. According to Shibli: “Hence fasting, Zakaat, Jumu’a (Friday) prayers, E’id prayers, Sadqat-ul-Fitr had not yet been enforced. The utmost brevity was observed in prayer, which, except in the case of the evening prayers, consisted of only two Rak’ats at all times. Even the method of the call to prayers had not been defined.” (Shibli; Vol. I, op. cit. p: 47) It was in the method of call to prayers that Umar played a key role. Different suggestions were offered by the Sahaabah. Some suggested that the people may be called to prayers by lighting a fire; others suggested the use of musical instrument (bell) as
was done by the Jews and Christians. Umar disagreed and said: “Why not appoint a man for this purpose. The Prophet promptly agreed and thus commenced the system of Azan (call to prayers) with BilaAl-Aas the first Muezzin of Islam. Umar also suggested the addition of “As-Salatu Khair-un Min-an Naam” i.e. “Salat is better than sleep” in the call (Azan) for the Morning Prayer (Fajr). The suggestion was appreciated by the Prophet and included.

**Umar’s Role in Madinah till the Death of the Prophet:**

In Madinah, Umar’s role was that of an ardent follower of the Prophet carrying out his instructions without the slightest hesitation and participating in every activity with full vigour and enthusiasm, courage and determination, exhibiting exemplary skill and bravery. He however, maintained his independent viewpoint, which sometimes did not even agree with that of the Prophet. But he never hesitated to express it. The Prophet also encouraged him and in fact liked his frankness. Umar (RA) was the right hand man of the Prophet in all his battles and encounters with the pagans of Makkah.

**Battle of Badr (2 A.H/24 A.D):**

The Battle of Badr was the first crucial battle, which the Prophet fought against the Quraysh of Makkah. In this Battle the Muslims were outnumbered 313 Muslims against 1000 fully armed and equipped Quraysh. However the Quraysh were decisively beaten. Umar
fought courageously and did not hesitate to kill his own maternal uncle, who was fighting against the Muslim forces. Because of Umar’s presence among the Muslims, the members of his clan Banu Adi did not join the Quraysh in this fight against the Muslims. At the end of the Battle 70 Quraysh were taken as prisoners. As regards the treatment of these prisoners, who were distinguished men of various Qurayshite clans such as ‘Abbaas (Prophet’s uncle) ‘Aqee (Ali’s brother) Abul Aas (Prophet’s son-in-law) and Waleed bin al-Waleed became a contentious issue among the Sahaabah. Abu Bakr pleaded for a generous treatment because these prisoners were their own kinsmen. Umar opposed the idea and suggested that they ought to be treated harshly “and each one of us should directly kill one of our own kinsmen.” After hearing both, Abu Bakr and Umar, the Prophet remarked, “Abu Bakr you resemble Ibrahim (Abraham)” when he said (to Allah), “and the one of my offspring’s who disobeys me, you are forgiving mercifully.” As for you Umar, “you are like Nuh (Noah)” when he prayed, “My Lord do not leave one of the disbelievers in the earth.” The Prophet agreed with the views of Abu Bakr, which was also approved by the other Sahaabah, and the matter was decided accordingly. This decision was not appreciated by Allah (SWT), Who supported the view point of Umar (as revealed in Surah Anfaal, verses 67 to 69).
Battle of Uhud (Shawwal 3 A.H/625 A.D):

There are no heroic feats associated with Umar in the Battle of Uhud. He fought gallantly in the first phase along with Ali and Talha to force the Quraysh to retreat. However, he was totally upset when the Quraysh, under Khalid bin Waleed, attacked the Prophet’s camp from the rear in which the Prophet was badly injured, lost a tooth and fell into the ditch. With this reverse the rumour of his death was spread which totally demoralised the Muslim warriors including Umar. Meanwhile some of the Sahaabah dashed to the Prophet’s camp. He had by then regained his consciousness and was up on his feet. That the Prophet had survived, reinvigorated the Muslims; nearly 30 of them instantly ringed round him in a protective cordon. The Quraysh again came back to attack the Muslim warriors who had collected around the Prophet. Abu Sufiyaan the chief of the Quraysh called out by name the Prophet, Abu Bakr and Umar but when he got no response he pronounced them all dead. Then Umar thundered aloud that they were all alive. Thereafter Abu Sufiyaan, Khalid bin Waleed and other Quraysh quietly withdrew. Another landmark event in the life of Umar, during the 3 A.H, was the marriage of his widowed daughter Hafsah with the Prophet in the month of Shawwal.

Treaty of Hudaibiyah (6 A.H/628 A.D):
Umar played a significant role in the expulsion of the Jewish tribe of Banu Nadhir from Madinah who despite their treaty of friendship with the Muslims were behaving treacherously and even attempted to kill the Prophet. The Banu Nadhir were forced to move to Khaibar. Some of their influential leaders such as Salam bin Abul Haqiq, Kinanah bin Rabi and Huayyb bin Akhtab started plotting to take revenge in collaboration with the Quraysh of Makkah, which eventually led to the Battle of Khandaq (Trench) in Shawwal 5 A.H/627 AD. The Quraysh marched to Madinah with a 10,000 strong well-equipped force. But all their efforts to cross the Khandaq were forcefully repulsed by Umar, Ali, Zubayr and other Sahaabah (companions). Eventually the Quraysh went back to Makkah after an unsuccessful siege of Madinah for nearly a month.

One of the most crucial events in the history of Islam was the Treaty of Hudaibiyah (6 A.H/628 AD.), where most of the Sahaabah openly disagreed with the Prophet, when he consented to sign this treaty on the terms of Quraysh of Makkah. Hudaibiyah is located on the route to Makkah. The Prophet suddenly decided to leave for Makkah to perform the pilgrimage with a large number of Ansaar and Muhajireen. Initially they were unarmed, but halfway through, on Umar’s insistence, the Prophet agreed to get arms from Madinah. The arms arrived, and the journey continued till they were only two stages away when the Prophet was informed that the Quraysh were determined not to let them in. Uthmaan
was dispatched as an ambassador to persuade the Quraysh to allow them to perform the pilgrimage, and convince them that the Prophet had no intention to wage a war. Meanwhile, ambassadors from Quraysh, together with Uthmaan, arrived to negotiate a treaty of peace with the Prophet. After protracted negotiation a treaty was signed called the Treaty of Hudaibiyah which, though agreed to the Muslims performing the pilgrimage next year, was apparently most unfavourable to the Muslims. Umar was most upset about it, vehemently argued against it, even with the Prophet. One of the clauses of the Treaty stipulated that during the ten year period of truce “any one of the Quraysh who seceded from his people and went to the Prophet, was to be handed back to Quraysh, but if any one of the Muslims fell into the hands of Quraysh they were at liberty to keep him.” (Shibli; op. cit. p: 68, Vol.1) The Quraysh also did not agree to the Prophet signing as Muhammad Rasulallah, instead he signed as Muhammad son of Abdullah. Umar felt extremely humiliated and asked the Prophet:

“O Prophet of Allah! Are you not the Messenger of Allah?” “Certainly I am” replied the Prophet. Then Umar asked, “Are not our enemies idol worshippers and polytheists?” “Undoubtedly they are,” rejoined the Prophet. Then Umar said, “Why then should we disgrace our religion?” The Prophet replied: “I am the Messenger of God and I do not act in contravention of His commandments.” (Shibli, Vol.1, p: 68) This decision of the Prophet was proclaimed in the Qur’an as a manifest victory. (Al-Fath; 48:1) Umar later regretted most and was
extremely repentant at his indiscreet argument with the apostle. He observed penance “by keeping fasts, saying prayers, giving alms and liberating slaves.” (Shibli; op. cit. p: 68, Vol.1) After the Treaty of Hudaibiyah, the verses prohibiting the marriage of Muslims with idolatrous women were revealed, Umar, immediately, divorced his two wives Qaribah and Umm Kulthum bint Jarul who were still idol worshippers and married Jamilah, daughter of Thabit Abil-Aflah. Umar’s son Asim was born of Jamilah.

Umar participated in all the battles or expeditions led by the Prophet against the Jews, Pagans of Makkah and Christians. The Battle of Khyber in the 7 A.H/629 A.D. proved decisive in eliminating the menace of Jews who were continuously intriguing against the Muslims and mobilising forces to fight against the Muslims. After their defeat in the Battle of Khyber, the Jews were expelled from Arabia. A large amount of landed property came as booty into the hands of the Muslims – Umar received a piece of land called Thammagh and he created an endowment out of it for the poor and the needy. It was the first endowment ever created in the history of Islam. The next notable event in which Umar prominently participated was the victory of Makkah in 8 A.H/630 AD. Umar was given the prominent role of taking Bay’at from the people of Makkah, sitting a step below the Prophet on Koh (Hill) Safa. He also took Bay’at from all those women who were not related to the Prophet. Umar also played a heroic role in the Battle of Hunain (8 A.H/630 A.D) in which the Muslims, after some minor reverses,
overwhelmed the forces of Hawazin. After the Battle of Hunain the religious and political supremacy of Islam was fully and firmly established in the Arabian Peninsula. On his return to Madinah, the Prophet led an expedition to Tabuk against the Romans.

Umar, along with Ali and Abu Bakr was in the vanguard of the 10,000 strong Islamic forces, which marched to Tabuk on the Syrian border to face the Romans. Meanwhile the Romans had withdrawn. The Prophet returned with his forces after a halt of 3 to 4 days in Tabuk. On return he got deeply involved in organizing the administration of the infant Islamic state. Having put things in order, the Prophet left for his last Hajj Pilgrimage to Makkah in the 10 A.H. Umar accompanied the Prophet in this pilgrimage. The Prophet fell sick on 2nd Rabi-ul-Awwal, 11 A.H and expired after an intermittent illness of 10 days on 12th Rabi-ul-Awwal. His death created the crisis of succession, which Umar together with Abu Bakr resolved with consummate skill.

**Khilafat of Umar ibn Al-Khattab (23 Jamadi-us-Saani, 13 H to 26 Dhil-Hajj, 25 A.H/16 August, 634 AD to November 3, 644 AD):**

Abu Bakr had complete confidence in Umar’s honesty and integrity. He trusted Umar totally, admired his courage of conviction, his commitment to promote the cause of Islam. He was also confident of Umar’s administrative ability and skill, and his sense of justice and impartiality. Hence just before his death after
consulting leading Quraysh and Ansar, Abu Bakr nominated Umar to succeed him. Umar was installed as Khalifah on 23 Jamadi-us-Saani 13 A.H (16 August, 634 A.D) after the death of Abu Bakr.

On assuming charge of the Khalifat Umar addressed briefly the Muslims who had assembled in the Mosque in which he assured the audience that “In the performance of my duties I will seek guidance from the Holy Book and will follow the examples set by the Holy Prophet and Abu Bakr. In this task I seek your assistance. If I follow the right path follow me. If I deviate from the right path correct me so that we are not led astray.” (Umar as a Khalifah: online – website www.witnesspioneer.org 2004; p: 2 of 8) Khalifah Umar delivered a very comprehensive address at the first Friday prayer after taking over charge wherein he candidly defined the policies of his administration as well as stressing his accountability to the Ummah in the discharge of his duties. He also attempted to remove the apprehension of some companions towards him because of his stern attitude and harsh behaviour during the Khalifat of Abu Bakr. He said: “Brethren, it has come to my notice that the people are afraid of me. They say ‘when the Holy Prophet was alive, Umar was harsh to us. During the Khalifat of Abu Bakr, Umar was hard and stern. Now that he has become the Khalifah himself, God knows how hard he will be.’ Whoever has said this is not wrong in his assessment.

“The truth of the matter is that I was the slave and servant of the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet was most
kind hearted, liberal and generous. In contrast I was hard and harsh so that I was like a naked sword. It was for the Holy Prophet to use the sword or sheathe it at his option. On occasions he sheathed the sword, and sometimes he used it. My purpose was to point to the Holy Prophet the other side of the picture. The decision rested with him. Sometimes he ignored my point of view. There were occasions when he agreed with me. Till the death of the Holy Prophet that remained the equation between him and me. Thank God, the Holy Prophet was pleased with me. Though the Holy Prophet sometimes accepted my advice, and sometimes turned it down, yet he approved of my conduct.”

“During the Khilafat of Abu Bakr my role remained the same. Abu Bakr was most soft-hearted and tender. It was my business to bring the other side of the picture to his notice. He always took my point of view into consideration, but the ultimate decision lay with him. Sometimes he agreed with me, and I acted as his agent to enforce a decision, which appeared to be harsh. Sometimes he did not agree with me, and I had to remain quiet. I am happy that throughout the period of his office, Abu Bakr approved of my conduct, and ultimately nominated me as his successor, although I did not covet the office.”

“Now that the entire responsibility has come to vest in me, know you brethren that you will feel a change in me. I will no longer be hard and stern in all matters. For those who practice tyranny and deprive others of their
rights, I will be harsh and stern but for those who follow the law, and are devoted to religion, I will be most soft and tender. I will not tolerate any person make any excess. He who commits any tyranny, him I will sternly call to book. I will be harsh and stern against the aggressor, but I will be a pillar of strength for the weak and the meek. They will find in me their best friend."

“Friends you have some rights on me, and I tell you of these rights, so that you may be in a position to call me to account. These rights are: firstly, that I should not exact any tax or other levy from you not authorized by law; secondly, that whatever taxes are lawfully realized from you are spent in your best interests; thirdly, it is incumbent on me that I should protect the frontiers of your land; fourthly, it is my duty to promote your prosperity and look after your interests; and fifthly it is my obligation to do justice.”

“O servants of God, continue to fear God. Suppress your selfish motives and work for the solidarity of the Muslims as a whole. In running the State, you are my partners. Help me with your sound advice. If I follow the right path laid down by God and His Prophet follow me. If I deviate, correct me. Strengthen me with your advice and suggestions. Let us pray for the glory of Islam.”

In one stroke, Umar, like Abu Bakr, demolished the concept of infallibility of the ruler. The accountability of the ruler was firmly established and his authority could always be challenged if he was not following the
principles enunciated in the Qur'an and the examples set by the Prophet and his Khalifah Abu Bakr. The system of government established by the Prophet and scrupulously strengthened by the first two Khalifah contrasted sharply with the Byzantine imperialism. The ideological foundation of the administration of the Khilafat was divinely humane and totally dedicated to serve the people. It was far ahead of its time and compares favourably with the modern democratic forms of government.

**Adoption of the Title Amir-ul-Mu'mineen:**

Another problem that worried Umar was as to how he should be addressed. He was initially addressed as ‘Khalifah’ which literally means ‘representative’. The question then arose as to whose representative. He could not be “Khalifah-ur-Rasul’ or ‘Khalifah of the Prophet’ because that title was adopted by Abu Bakr since he succeeded the Prophet as the “Head of the state”. It will be cumbersome title if he was addressed as ‘Khalifah of Khalifah-ul-Rasul.’ He was therefore looking for a simpler title. This problem was solved by two visitors from Kufa, Labid bin Rabiah and 'Adi bin Hatim, who arrived in the Masjid-un Nabi to call on the Khalifah. They met Amr bin Al Aas and asked him to announce their arrival to Amir-ul-Mu'mineen’ and that they wanted to see him. The title sounded simple yet appropriate and elegant to Amr bin Al-Aas. He asked them as to why they addressed the Khalifah “Amir-ul-Mu'mineen.” Their answer was simple...
and logical: “We all Muslims are Mu’mins and Umar is our commander. He is thus Amir-ul-Mu’mineen.”

Amr bin Al-Aas said: “Wonderful You have hit upon a beautiful term. God bless you.”’ Amr bin Al’Aas hastened to Umar and there said, “Amir-ul-Mu’mineen, two persons have come from Kufa, and they seek permission to see you.” Umar became curious at being addressed “Amir-ul-Mu’mineen”. He asked Amr bin al-Aas as to how he had coined the term Amir-ul-Mu’mineen. Amr bin Al-Aas said that the visitors from Kufa had used that term, and as he found it elegant and appropriate, he used it. Umar said; “We were in search of some suitable term to signify the office I hold, and here is a term which is attractive.” He asked Amr bin Al-Aas as to what he thought of the title. Amr bin al-Aas said: “I am attracted by the term. It is God sent. We all are Muslims and you are our Amir. The term is very attractive and significant.”

After Umar had seen the visitors from Kufa, he convened a meeting of his consultative assembly, and there the question was discussed whether he should adopt the title of Amir-ul-Mu’mineen for the office that he held. The Assembly approved the title. Henceforward Umar came to be addressed in his official capacity as Amir-ul-Mu’mineen. (www.witness-pioneer.org - op. cit. pp: 5 & 6).

Territorial Expansion during Umar’s Khilafat:
Umar inherited a politically stable state. The apostasy was completely crushed and all traces of internal insurgency were put down firmly by his predecessor. He, therefore, concentrated on meeting the external threats to the security, existence and stability of the Islamic state founded by the Prophet. There was constant threat from the Romans and the Persians. The Prophet himself had led an expedition to Tabuk against the Romans. During the Khilafat of Abu Bakr, military action had already been initiated against both the Romans and the Persians. On assuming charge of the Khilafat in 13 A.H Umar concentrated first on military action against the Persians in Iraq.

It may be observed that long before the advent of Islam, a large number of Arab tribes had migrated to Syria and Iraq, and substantial member of them had converted to Christianity. Having decided to take up the Sassanid Rulers of Persia first, Umar exhorted the people to go on jihad against the fire worshippers of Persia. Finally an army was raised under the command of Abu Ubaidah Thaqafi, who was the chief of the clan of Thaqif. During the course of his march to Hairah in Iraq he was joined by Muthanna, and the two forces reached Hairah. Having come to know of the superiority in numerical strength and equipment of enemy forces they marched back to Khafan. Meanwhile the Persian forces under the command of Jaban and Mardan Shah had reached Namraq and encamped there. A pitched battle was bitterly fought at Namraq in which the Persians were routed. Mardan Shah
was arrested and killed but Jaban, though captured, cleverly managed to escape by paying ransom of two young slaves to his captor, who did not recognize him. After this victory Abu Ubaidah marched with his forces on to Kaskar where Narsi was encamped. This led to another fierce encounter in which again the Persian forces were mauled and defeated. Next they moved to Marwah on the eastern bank of the Euphrates where Bahman with his forces, including a large contingent of elephants, was encamped on the western bank of the Euphrates. While the forces were stationed in their respective locations, Bahman sent words to Abu Ubaidah to either let him cross over to the East Bank of the river or alternately the Muslim forces cross over to the other side of the riverbank. Abu Ubaidah, against the advice of senior generals, decided to move to the west bank of the Euphrates. The battle that followed (13 A.H) was disastrous for the Muslims. Abu Ubaidah and many others were killed. Towards the end of the battle, the Muslims were completely overwhelmed, and of its army strength of 9000 only 3000 could survive, who escaped to the eastern bank with Muthanna.

Umar was deeply disappointed at this disastrous defeat of the Islamic forces by the Persians, but this made him all the more determined to eliminate forever the Persian menace. He immediately started mobilising forces under various tribal chiefs from all over Arabia. Even the Christians from occupied portion of Iraq agreed to join the Arabs, because it turned essentially to be a fight of the Arabs against Persian imperialism. Thus a vast army, consisting of all the major tribes of Arabia and Christians,
was assembled and placed under the overall command of Muthanna. The Muslim forces marched towards Kufa and encamped at Buwaib on the western bank of the Euphrates. With the bridge under their control, they awaited the enemy. Muthanna was also warned by Umar not to cross the bridge until the victory was ensured. Meanwhile the Persian forces, under the command of Mehran, encamped on the other side of the river. (Ramadhan 14 A.H) The next morning, Mehran with his vast force of cavalry, crossed over to the western bank and was face to face with the Muslims in the battle order. As the two forces faced each other, Muthanna exhorted his soldiers as follows: “Your valour this day will be a proverb in the mouths of all. Be still as death and if ye speak aught one with the other, speak it in a whisper. None shall give way amongst us this day. I desire no glory for myself but the glory of you all.” And they heartily reciprocated his sentiments for he was loved by his men.” (Muir – op. cit. p: 125) A fierce battle followed. The Muslims initially suffered some reverses but Muthanna was soon able to regroup his forces, attacked the Persians furiously and tore apart their rank. In this battle Mahraan was killed by a warrior of the Taghlab tribe. Immediately after, the Persians took to flight and a large number of prisoners and spoils of war came into the hands of the Muslims. This victory deflated the pride of the Persians and enhanced the morale and confidence of the Muslims. They realised that they could not only face the Persians, but could even inflict a crushing defeat on them. After the victory of Buwaib the Muslims practically overran the whole of Iraq.
The victory of Buwaib encouraged Khalifah Umar to launch a final Al-Aassault to exterminate the Persian Empire and eliminate this menace to ensure the survival of Islam. He ordered the mobilization of still a larger force. The mobilization was soon completed, with an array of tribal dignitaries leading their respective tribes. This vast army included those 70 also, who had fought in the Battle of Badr, and 300 who had taken part in Bay’at ar-Ridhwaan. The Muslim army with strength of 20,000 marched towards Qadisiyah in Persia under the overall command of Sa’ad bin Abi Waqqas, who was also the uncle of the Prophet from his mother’s side. Though Sa’ad was given the command, the entire war planning was done by the Khalifah himself. He instructed Sa’ad bin Abi Waqqas that while positioning for battle the mountains of Arabia ought to be on his back and the plains of Iraq in front. He did accordingly while encamping in Qadisiyah, a small town 13 miles south of Kufa. Before the commencement of the battle, Muslim ambassadors from Qadisiyah went to Median, the capital of Persia, located about 30 or 40 miles north. No’maan bin Maqraan was the head of the Arab emissaries who called on Yezdgird, the king of Persia; offered the king two alternatives either fight to finish or Jizyah to be paid by the non-Muslims. Yezdgird rejected the idea of Jizyah and thus a fight had become inevitable. Before the return of the Arab emissaries, the Persian king asked his menials to place a basket of dust on the head of the noblest member of the delegation who happened to be Asim, the son of Khalifah Umar. The Arab delegation returned
happily, for the gift of dust symbolised the fall of the Persian territory into the hands of the Muslims. After this incident, hostilities did not commence for several months, as the rival parties were scouting the strengths, weaknesses and movements of each other.

Yezdgird had appointed Rustam as the commander of the Persian forces against the Muslims. Meanwhile an interesting incident took place, which subsequently proved extremely helpful to the Muslims in facing the Persians. After the defeat in the Battle of Buwaib, the Persians were not keen on encounter with the Muslims. Hence Rustam, in order to avoid bloodshed, started peace negotiation with the Muslims. He invited a delegation of Muslims to meet him in his camp. Rabi bin Amir alone was sent to meet Rustam. Rustam received him attired in his resplendent dress. He asked Rabi bin Amir the purpose of their military expedition. Rabi asked him to convert to Islam, which he refused, or pay jizyah tax, which made Rustam furious. He dismissed Rabi bin Amir and told him that he would destroy the whole of Arabia. Thus the battle lines were drawn in Qadisiyah in the month of Muharram 14 A.H (635 A.D).

Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqaas arranged his forces according to the plan drawn up by the Khalifah, who also advised him not to penetrate deep into Persia until a decisive victory was accomplished. The battle of Qadisiyah lasted for 3 days. On the first day called Yaum armath, the elephants of the Rustam’s forces wrought havoc among the Muslims who were in total disarray and
suffered severe losses. But they never lost heart and regrouped themselves to put up a determined fight. On the second day of the battle, called *Yaum aghwath*, the Muslims first started burying their dead and the wounded soldiers were being put under the care of the accompanying women. Meanwhile reinforcement arrived from Syria under Qaqa. Encouraged by this reinforcement the Muslims launched a furious attack on the Persians. First they attacked the elephants on their tender spots, cut them of their leash and forced them to turn their anger on the Persians. Further the Muslims dressed their camels and horses in such scary fashion that the Persian horses shied away from fighting. In the fierce fighting on the second day the Muslims had an upper hand in which Abu Mahjan, (whom Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqaas had imprisoned, because of his poem praising love with women and wine), played a stellar role. On Abu Mahjan’s request Salma, the wife of Sa’ad bin Abi Waqqaas, temporarily released him. He fought on Sa’ads horse Balqa and tore apart ranks after ranks of the Persians.

The third day of the battle, called *Yaum ‘amas*, was a decisive day. The Muslims fought heroically and put their heart and soul into it. Qaqa also arranged the arrival of his forces at such regular intervals that it seemed that the reinforcement was endless and continuous. The battles continued the whole night, and by the morning the Muslims started gaining upper hand. The retreat of the Persian forces scared Rustam, who attempted to escape but was pursued, caught and killed by Hilaal ibn Alafah. Hilaal sat on Rustam’s seat and loudly proclaimed his
death. Rustam’s death led to the flight of the Persian soldiers en masse but most of them were captured. Almost every Muslim soldier was leading one or more captives. The Muslims scored a decisive victory on this final day which is called as *yaom al-harir*. Abi Waqqas, the commander of the Muslim forces promptly rushed a messenger to the Khalifah conveying the glorious victory of Muslims over the Persians.

After the battle of Qadisiyah the Persian capital Median was captured and Yezdgird, the last Persian king, was forced to flee to Hilwaan, leaving behind amazing treasures. Sa'ad entered the splendid palace of Kisra, converted it into a prayer hall, and Friday prayers were regularly held in that hall. However what is most amazing is that Sa'ad, who was closely related to the Prophet and was also a distinguished Sahaabi (Companion), did not destroy any of the statues inside the palace. They all remained intact.

The spoils of war when brought together were enormous and not a single piece of booty, big or small, valuable or otherwise, was embezzled or stolen. It contained, besides vast amount of gold and silver, priceless swords of the monarch of China, Emperor of Rome, gem bedecked crown and regal robes of Anusheronwan. There was a horse of solid gold, silver saddle and string with priceless rubies and the rider glittered with precious stones from top to toe. But the most exquisite and magnificent of all was a carpet called ‘spring’. It was richly decorated with pure gold and
silver threads and precious stones in exquisite, sparkling and delicate floral designs. One fifth of the magnificent treasures were dispatched to the Khalifah in Madinah including the carpet ‘Spring’, priceless swords, Annusherwan’s regal dresses etc. The carpet on the insistence of Ali met its autumn, was cut into pieces and distributed among the residents of Madinah. Ali sold his share of this 60 cubit X 60 cubit, carpet for 20,000 Dirham. (Shibli; op. cit. pp: 163-164, Vol.1).

The Muslims, after the capture of Median, pursued Yezdgird, the king of Persia, who was stationed in Jalulah, which was attacked and captured. Meanwhile, Yezdgird fled to Rayy and from there to Isphahaan. The Persian king decided to give a final and decisive battle at Nihawand, in order to save the eastern part of the Persian Empire called Iraq-'Ajam, the western part being known as Iraq-Arab. Yezdgird mobilised a massive force of 150,000 from all the provinces of Iraq-Ajam. Khalifah Umar was informed of this serious development. In consultation with the companions in Madinah the Khalifah ordered the Governors of Syria, Yemen and Basra to dispatch one third of the forces under their command to Kufa and appointed No’maan bin Maqraan as the Commander in Chief. An Islamic army of 30,000 assembled under the command of No’maan, marched from Kufa to Isphahaan and encamped there, nearly nine miles east of Nihawand. Some very distinguished companions also participated in this campaign such as Hudhaifah bin Al-Yaman, Abdullah bin Umar, and others. Before the commencement of the battle, the Persian Commander again invited Arabs to
send an ambassador to negotiate terms of peace. Moghirah was sent again as ambassador but the mission was abortive and the battle lines were drawn. Mardan Shah, who was in overall command of the Persian forces, launched a massive attack, which caused large casualties among the Muslims, but when the Muslims launched their counter offensive it proved irresistible, and eventually the Muslims emerged victorious. Mardan Shah was killed and with his death Persian resistance collapsed. Unfortunately the Muslim Commander No’maan bin Maqrân, accidentally fell from his horse and also died later. However, he was able to send the message of victory (21 A.H/642 A.D) to the Khalifah. This victory of Nihawand has been called the “Victory of Victories.” After the victory of Nihawand the Muslims marched through the rest of Iraq-Ajam meeting only minor pockets of resistance on the way which were easily crushed. Isphahaan was conquered in 21 A.H and Azerbaijan, Tabaristaan and Armenia in 22 A.H, Shiraz the main city of Fars, Kirmaan, Sistaan, Makraan and Khurasaan in 23 A.H. With the conquest of Khurasaan, the last nail was put in the empire of Kisra and it just vanished.

After the battle of Nihawand, again an enormous booty came into the hands of the Muslims. A large collection of precious stones of the rarest quality stored by the Sassanid rulers was also part of the booty. One fifth of the booty and these rare gems were sent to Umar by Hudhaifah. The Khalifah sent back the gems, ordered them to be sold and distributed among the troops. These jewels were sold for 50 million Dirhams, which were
distributed among the troops. (Shibli; op. cit. p: 248, Vol.1) In addition, every soldier was allotted a house vacated by the Persians.

**Campaign against the Romans and the Conquest of Syria, Jerusalem and Egypt:**

During the *Khilafat* of Abu Bakr armies were dispatched to different parts of Syria, which was a part of Roman Empire. Abu Ubaidah marched his army to conquer Hims, Zayd bin Sufiyan was dispatched to subdue Damascus, Shurahabil moved with his forces towards Ardaan and Amr bin Al-Aas aimed to conquer Palestine. (Shibli; op. cit. p: 170) Romans were well prepared to meet the challenge of the advancing Muslims. Besides meeting stiff resistance the Muslims suffered considerable loss of life since they were divided into small bodies, whereas the Romans had assembled large forces on all the fronts where they encountered the Muslims. In order to meet the exigencies of the situation and to avoid further reverses and loss of life, the Muslim generals decided to collect and consolidate their forces at one place, which were spread out in different directions in Syria. Their total strength was 24,000. They further asked the *Khalifah* to send reinforcement. Khalid bin Waleed who was fighting at the Iraq front was asked to proceed to Syria. Khalid after overcoming minor resistance reached Ajnadin where he was joined by Abu Ubaidah and other Muslim Generals who were operating in Syria. The Muslim forces fought a major battle with the Romans on 28th Jamadi-ul-Awwal, 13 A.H/634 A.D and achieved a
resounding victory. The victorious Muslim forces under the command of Khalid moved towards Damascus and laid siege to that city. The forces of the various Muslim Generals were strategically posted at different Gates of the Damascus Wall. Khalid placed himself with his forces at the main Gate of the city and also posted at Dhulkila, one march away to the west of the city, with substantially large force to prevent Roman reinforcement to help the beleaguered city. Since a son was born to the Governor of the city, the city dwellers were awake till late in the night in merry making – dancing, wining and dining. Most of them were drunk before they went to bed late in the night. Khalid used this opportunity to swim across the moat with some of his soldiers, climbed over the ramparts with them, entered the fort, killed the guards at the Main Gate and flung it open, overwhelmed the defenders of Damascus, who themselves then opened all the other gates and negotiated the terms of surrender. It was agreed that there would be no plundering in the city, and that the citizens of Damascus would not be enslaved. The surrender of Damascus took place in the month of Rajab 14 A.H/635 A.D. This was the precursor of the conquest of the rest of Syria. After this battle both the Romans and the Muslims prepared for a decisive encounter. Romans marched to Baisan (30 miles south of Tibriyah) and the Muslims camped on the opposite side across the river at Fihl. Before the commencement of the battle the Roman’s asked for an ambassador to be deputed to negotiate terms of peace. Mu’adh bin Jabal was sent as an ambassador to the Roman camp. As Mu’adh entered into the Roman camp he observed a cloth of gold laid out for him in the
audience hall of the Roman Commander. He refused to sit on the gold cloth which he said “was made from money extorted from poor.” Instead he sat on the ground and waited for a while to know as to why they asked for an Arab Ambassador to be deputed. After a while the Roman commander asked the motive behind the Arab attack when the Arabs knew that the Romans were the mightiest power on earth. Mu‘adh replied: “we request you to embrace Islam. If you do not feel inclined to profess Islam then pay the jizyah. If you do not accept either alternative then sword is the only arbitrator.” The Roman Commander out-rightly rejected the demand, boasted about the superiority of his forces which would crush the Arabs. Mu‘adh responded with pride “Our God says how often a small body of forces has defeated larger one.” After Mu‘adh’s speech the Romans offered to cede the district of Balaq and a part of the Jordanian territory adjoining the Arab territory. Mu‘adh did not accept the terms and returned to his camp. The Romans made further effort to avoid war by sending an ambassador direct to Abu Ubaidah the commander of the Muslim forces. The ambassador offered two gold pieces to each of the Muslim soldiers and desired Abu Ubaidah to vacate the Roman territory along with his soldiers, which Abu Ubaidah refused. The Roman ambassador was irritated and went back angry. The ground was thus cleared for war.

The glittering splendor of the Romans and the Persians contrasted sharply with the simplicity, austerity and openness of the Muslims. This marked contrast in
Their approach to life reflected also the contrast in their attitude to life. After the departure of the Roman emissary Abu Ubaidah ordered general preparations for war. The Muslim forces were now confronted with the well equipped and well oiled war machinery of the Romans, who were 50,000 strong. A fierce battle continued the whole day. Khalid crippled the rightwing of the Roman cavalry and Abu Ubaidah penetrated deep into the middle of the well-armed Romans and forced them to retreat. The Romans could not check the advancing Muslims. They were totally demoralised and retreated in haste. Thus the Muslims achieved a spectacular victory against the Romans in the Battle of Fihl. The fall of Fihl (14 A.H/635 A.D) added another glorious chapter to the history of Islam. However, the victorious Muslims treated very generously the vanquished Jordanians. The Khalifah ordered “the subjects be treated as tributary and that the arable land should be left as usual in the possession of the original owners.” (Shibli; op. cit. p: 182, Vol.1) The entire territory of Jordan was now controlled by the Muslims and the terms of the treaty stipulated that “the lives, goods and cattle, lands, houses, churches and temples of the conquered people would be protected.” (Shibli; op. cit. p: 182, Vol.1). However a few sites were acquired for the construction of mosques.

Following the fall of Fihl, three important towns in Syria remained to be conquered, namely Hims (Emesa), Jerusalem and Antioch where Emperor Heraclius had his Court. Abu Ubaidah, with Khalid, Shurahabil, other commanders and soldiers marched in the direction of
Hims. They faced minor skirmishes and encounters in their march against the Romans, which they overcame easily. The only major loss was the loss of Shurahabil who fought bravely in the suburbs of Hims (Emesa) but was subsequently trapped in the church of St. Marshall in the outskirts, was surrounded alone by a huge antagonistic mob and stoned to death. However, the Muslim forces continued their advance, and despite stiff resistance from the Romans, had succeeded in reducing Hims (Emesa) in 14 A.H/635 A.D. After the fall of Hims (Emesa), the famous centre of sun worship, Khalifah Umar asked Abu Ubaidah to stop further military expeditions and consolidate the position in territories already conquered. Thus Khalid was posted in Damascus, Amr bin Al-Aas in Jordan, and Abu Ubaidah himself stayed in Hims (Emesa).

**Preparations for the Battle of Yarmuk (15 A.H/ 636 A.D):**

While the Muslims were consolidating their position in the territories conquered from Romans, they generously treated their subjects in Emesa, Damascus and Jordan. The people of the conquered territory were happy with the Muslim rule and never wanted the Romans to return. Meanwhile King Heraclius was making all the preparations for a decisive assault on the Muslims, in order to drive them out from the conquered Roman territories. Abu Ubaidah was informed by his Jews and the Christian spies of this projected massive assault by the Romans. In view of the massive Roman presence Abu
Ubaidah called all his generals including Khalid, Amr bin Al-Aas, Shurahabil bin Hasnah, Zayd bin Abu Sufiyaan (Mu‘awiyah’s brother). The Muslims badly needed reinforcement but there was hardly anytime as the Romans had already amassed more than 100,000 well-equipped soldiers from all parts of the Roman Empire. In view of the precarious situation the Muslims decided to vacate Hims (Emesa). Having decided on this course of action Abu Ubaidah ordered his treasury officer to reimburse the jizyah amount collected from the Christians as “our own position however is so precarious at present that we cannot undertake to guard them – the jizyah which is nothing but the price of protection be reimbursed to them.” (Shibli; op. cit. p:1 89, Vol.1) This gesture touched the people of Hims to the core. They cried and earnestly prayed for the return of the Muslims, for they detested their coreligionists, the oppressive Roman rulers. The Muslims reimbursed the jizyah money in all those settlements in Syria where they were not in a position to protect the non-Muslim population.

Abu Ubaidah informed Khalifah Umar of the reasons for withdrawal from Hims (Emesa) and also that it was the united decision of all the commanders in the battlefield. They all decided to retreat to Damascus. On reaching there, Abu Ubaidah held a council of war. Meanwhile Amr bin al-As reported from Jordan of the revolt of the local Christian population as they heard of the advance of the Roman forces. Abu Ubaidah asked Amr to stand firm and stay on in Jordan. Later it was decided to march from Damascus, cross over to Jordan,
and encamp at Yarmuk where Amr bin Al-Aas also joined him with his forces. The reinforcements sent by the Khalifah under the command of Amir had not yet reached them. Another messenger was immediately rushed to the Khalifah for reinforcement.

On the other side the Romans with over 2,00,000 forces, extremely well trained and well equipped infantry and cavalry, were marching menacingly towards the Arabs and encamped in Dar-ul-Jabal (the mountain hermitage) opposite Yarmuk. Bahan was the commander of the Roman forces. He decided to tempt the Muslims with offer of wealth to avoid war. He sent one of his emissaries to Abu Ubaida to depute a respectable person to negotiate the terms of peace. The Roman emissary, when he arrived at the Muslim camp, observed the Muslims offering Salaat. After the prayer concluded he asked Abu Ubaidah as to what the Muslims thought of Christ. When told that Muslims respected him as the Prophet of Allah and that he was born of Virgin Mary, he was impressed and volunteered to convert to Islam. The emissary was persuaded to go back, and return with the Arab emissary the next day if he still wanted to convert to Islam. The next day Khalid arrived in the Roman camp and was received with great deference. Bahan told Khalid “if you march off from this place in peace we shall make your commander in chief a present of ten thousand dinars, the other officers a thousand each and the soldiery one hundred a piece.” (Shibli; op. cit. p: 197, Vol.1.) Khalid rejected it outright and invited the Romans to accept Islam or alternately agree to pay jizyah otherwise the matter will
be decided in the battlefield. This infuriated Bahan and other Roman officers and consequently the battle lines were drawn. The 35,000 strong Muslim army, under the command of Khalid and Abu Ubaidah, prepared to face the onslaught of over 200,000 strong army of the mighty Roman Empire. The battle of Yarmuk is characterised by the fact that even the women folk fought in this battle. The Muslim army included 1000 companions of the Prophet of whom 100 had participated in the Battle of Badr.

The Battle of Yarmuk (15 A.H/636 AD) commenced with the Romans advancing to attack. The Muslims initially suffered some reverses, but they regrouped themselves fast, and counter attacked so fiercely that the Romans could not bear the onslaught. They started retreating hastily and more than 100,000 (one version states 10,000) were killed, but Muslims lost only 3000 soldiers including Ikrimah, Dhirar bin Azdar, Hisham bin Al-Asi, Ayaan, Sa’eed and others. When the news of the disastrous defeat of Romans reached the Emperor Heraclius who was stationed in the capital Antioch, he hastily packed and decided to quit Syria for the Muslims and moved with his entourage to Constantinople. Thus the entire territory of Syria and Jordan finally came under the political and administrative control of the Muslims and most of the Arabs residing there converted to Islam.

Fall of Jerusalem (Rajab 16 A.H/ 637 AD):
After the spectacular victory of Muslims in Yarmuk all the towns of Syria including Hims (Emesa) and Qinisirin in the remotest district of Syria also came under control. Meanwhile Amr bin Al-Aas after conquering most of Palestine laid siege of Jerusalem. The Christians resisted it for sometime but later agreed to surrender provided the Khalifah himself came over to sign the terms of surrender. Khalifah Umar after consulting his advisers in Madinah agreed to undertake the journey. He was received by his Generals in Jabiah on the route to Jerusalem. From Jabiah, Umar moved to Jerusalem to sign the Treaty with the Christians. While he was negotiating the terms of the treaty inside the Church of Sepulcher it was time for prayer. The Patriarch Sophorinous, who surrendered the city to Umar, asked him to pray inside the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, which he refused saying that in future someone may convert it into a mosque because their Khalifah had prayed in it (Ra’uf: Umar Al-Farooq, p: 78). The final text of the surrender of Jerusalem was signed by Khalifah Umar and witnessed by Khalid bin Waleed, Abdur Rahmaan bin Awf, Amr bin Al-Aas and Mu’awiyah bin Abu Sufiyaan. It reads as follows: “In the name of Allah, the Merciful, and the Compassionate.” This is what the servant of Allah, Umar ibn Khattab, Commander of the Faithful, has pledged: to guarantee to the people of Ilia [the old name of Jerusalem] the security of their persons and the safety of their properties and churches, including their crosses, whether sound or broken. [The same guarantees apply to] all of their divisions and groups. Their churches shall not be taken over nor demolished, and none of their contents shall be
removed. Their properties shall be respected. They are not required to change their religion, and none shall be hurt. *No Jew should be permitted to stay.* [This particular clause was inserted on the insistence of the Christian bishops.] The residents, however, must pay the poll tax (in return for their protection), as do the inhabitants of al-Median. They are required to expel the Byzantines and the thieves. If a resident leaves the city, he should be left alone and not be harmed so that he may reach his destination safely. Whosoever prefers to remain there, (he or) they may do so unmolested, but only after they pay the poll tax. Anyone who wish to leave with their property to join the Byzantines and join their churches or synagogues may do so peacefully and safely so that they may reach their destinations safely. (Ra’uf: Umar Al-Farooq, p: 79)

While in Jerusalem, Umar also was keen to locate the actual site of the Mosque of Aqsa, and asked for the place where to say the prayer. Ka’bah, the Bishop of Jerusalem, pointed to a stone which the ancient Prophet left as a relic and is called the *Sakharah.* The Bishop also pointed towards *Sakharah* as the direction of the *Qiblah.* Umar could not identify the site of the Mosque during this trip. After signing the treaty with the Patriarch of Jerusalem the *Khalifah* returned to Madinah.

Emperor Heraclius, instigated by the Christians of Jazirah, made one more attempt to recapture Hims (Emesa), but this was frustrated by the Muslim forces and rebellions in Emesa and Jazirah were crushed. Thereafter the Christians never raised their heads, and the Muslim
rule was finally and firmly established in Jazirah, Syria, Jordan and Palestine by 17 A.H/638 A.D.

Umar revisited Jerusalem in 18 A.H/639 A.D and looked again for the site of Masjid-ul Aqsa a description of which he had directly heard from the Prophet, who had visited Aqsa during Isra – Umar and his companions went around many sites but none of them fitted into the description given by the Prophet. Eventually, he could pinpoint the location of Masjid-ul Aqsa, which was covered by a mound of dust. Umar and his companions cleared the dust and found a rock there. It was the same rock Sakharah from where the Prophet had ascended the heaven. Umar decided to offer prayer there. Bilaal, who was the Muezzin of the Masjid-un Nabi during his life, was also with Khalifah Umar on this visit to Jerusalem. He had given up calling to prayer after the death of the Prophet. Umar requested Bilaal to give the Azan at the site of Masjid-ul Aqsa, to which he agreed with utmost reluctance but once he started Azan in his stentorian accent, he moved the Khalifah and other companions of the Prophet to tears. They were all reminded of their days with the Prophet. Perhaps this was the last time Bilaal had given the call to prayer before his death. Umar returned to Madinah after offering Salaat at the site of Al Aqsa. He also ordered a mosque to be constructed there. Fifty years later Abdul Maalik bin Marwaan built a Mosque which started in 69 A.H and was completed in 72 A.H. This Mosque of Bait-al-Maqdas is now called the Mosque of Umar. (Hughes T.P:1886. pp: 227 and 229) The Sakharah itself is now covered with a dome and is now
called the Dome of the Rock. (For details see Monograph No. 12)

**The Year of Famine: Am Al-Ramadah (17-18 A.H/638-639 A.D):**

Umar had to face the calamity of famine in and around Madinah in the 17 A.H. This was called the year Am Al-Ramada – the year of the dust and heat. Excellent arrangements were made by Umar to minimize the severity of the famine and save the people from suffering. The provincial Governors from Syria, Iraq and Egypt kept a sustained supply of food. Food grains from Egypt were received from sea as well. The Khalifah distributed food grains and other necessities family wise. Meals were cooked at the state level and all persons from the interior of the desert, who took refuge in Madinah, were fed daily at state expense. According to one account, as many as 40,000 persons were fed every day. Even Istimqa prayer was offered in a large open ground led by the Khalifah. There were heavy rains 3-4 days after the prayer which relieved the situation. Umar, thereafter, led thanks giving prayer. Umar for the entire period of the famine did not drink milk, eat meat and fat. He said; “I do not deserve to rule this nation if I do not share the suffering and deprivation of the people.” (Ra'uf; op. cit. p: 116)

**Plague at Amwas (18 A.H/639 A.D):**
The following year a plague epidemic of serious intensity broke out in Iraq, Syria and Egypt and killed thousands of people. When the Khalifah heard of this epidemic, decided to visit the area in order to assess the severity of the situation but he was stopped halfway. He discussed the situation with Muhajireen and thought it prudent to return to Madinah. Abu Ubaidah taunted Umar “Fliest thou O! Omar, - away from God’s will.” Umar replied; “Yes I fly from God’s will, but toward God’s will.” Abu Ubaidah, Mu’adh bin Jabal, and 25,000 other lives were lost. The epidemic of plague applied brake on further territorial expansion, as Umar got deeply involved in making proper administrative and financial arrangements for the afflicted families. After the plague had subsided the Muslims started mopping up operations of the rest of the fortresses in Syria, which had not yet capitulated. Qaisariah, the most important of these, surrendered to Mu’awiyah in 19 A.H/640 A.D.

Conquest of Egypt and the Port Town of Alexandria (20-21 A.H /641-642 A.D):

Amr bin Al-As was very keen to drive out the Romans even from Egypt. Umar was reluctant to allow him to launch a military expedition against Egypt. He, however, agreed after much persuasion, and provided Amr with a force of 4,000. Amr marched into Egypt and asked for more reinforcement. Umar dispatched another 10,000 men including such distinguished and gallant officers as Zubayr bin al-Awwaam, Ubaidah bin Al-
Saamit, Miqdad bin Umar and Maslamah bin Mukhallad. On their arrival Amr bin Al-Aas handed over the command of the army to Zubayr because of his high rank. Zubayr arranged the forces in order and marched up to the plain of Fustaat near which, along the bank of the river Nile was a fortress, where the deputies of the Roman used to dwell. He besieged the fort and for seven long months the siege continued. Eventually Zubayr with some companions was able to scale the wall of the fort, and also succeeded in opening the Main Gate. The Muslims rushed into it. Maquqas, the ruler of Egypt, and a tributary of Roman Emperor, capitulated and sought for peace. The terms of peace were agreed and Egypt came under the control of Muslims. It may be mentioned here that the first encounter on the invasion of Egypt took place at Balis, where the Coptic soldiers were defeated after a hard fought battle. Among the large number of prisoners of war was also Armanusa, the daughter of Maquqas the Governor of Egypt under Romans. She was sent to her father with honour and dignity escorted by an Arab officer, Qays bin Abi As-Shami, for her safety. (Shibli; op. cit. p: 192, Vol.11) Earlier in Syria the daughter of the Roman Emperor Heraclius was taken as captive. She was returned to her father with full honour and dignity worthy of a princess.

Amr bin Al-Aas with the permission of the Khalifah decided to march on to Alexandria to meet the advancing Roman forces. As his tent was going to be dismantled, he noticed that a pigeon had built its nest inside the tent. He, then, ordered not to disturb the tent so that the pigeon
is not inconvenienced – Amr laid the foundation of a city near that tent – a tent in Arabic is called Fustaat. This city also came to be known as Fustaat. As the Arab forces were advancing towards Alexandria they met some resistance from the Romans and Copts which they soon overpowered. The Muslims continued their march and finally captured Alexandria in 20–21 A.H/641-642 A.D with the help of the Copts and despite the stiff resistance of the Romans. Thus all traces of Roman supremacy disappeared from Africa and Asia, except Anatolia.

Civil, Military and Revenue Administration:

The political territory under Khalifah Umar had grown enormous in size, compared to what he inherited from his predecessor, Khalifah Abu Bakr. The total political domain of the Islamic state covered 2,250 million sq. miles, and the revenue exceeded 103 million Dirham annually, which was not exceeded even during the period of Khalifah Maamun Rashid. It implied an enormous task to keep law and order in such a large territory in order to ensure that the people enjoyed full security and peace to carry out their trade, business, professions and domestic life without any worry. Umar proved equal to the task and laid the foundation of a just, honest, benevolent, compassionate yet firm administration which earned the confidence and admiration of all the subjects of the state.

Form of Government under Umar:
The process of consultation (Shura) in order to arrive at consensus, before deciding issues and acting upon them, is strongly recommended in the Qur’an. It was scrupulously followed by the Prophet and Abu Bakr, the first Khalifah. However, the final decision always rested with the Prophet or the Khalifah. Although they normally followed the majority decision, on certain issues they disregarded them also. As for instance, the Prophet signed the Treaty of Hudaibiyah, despite the opposition of a majority of Sahaabah because he was divinely ordained to do so. Similarly, Khalifah Abu Bakr disregarded the majority opinion to exempt certain tribes from the payment of Zakaat. Umar continued this process of consultation in a modified and improved form. In fact he was of the view that a government without consultation was unlawful. He used two tiers of consultative process to decide issues. He constituted a small consultative committee consisting of selected Ansaar (both Aus and Khazraj) and Muhajireen to decide issues of minor importance such as appointment of junior administrative officers below the rank of Governors, junior army officers etc. He had a General Assembly consisting of the entire congregation in the mosque, where major policy decisions and appointment of Governors and Army commanders etc. were decided. Umar would place his nominations for posts of Governors or positions of senior commanders, and sought the approval of the congregation which they normally did. On certain issues when the consensus used to be against his views, which he sincerely felt were right, he would repeatedly raise the issue before the congregation and would eventually succeed in convincing
and obtaining their approval. One such critically important issue was the distribution of agricultural land after the conquest of Iraq (Arab and Ajam). A majority felt that the vanquished people be deprived of the land, which may be distributed amongst the soldiers. He was totally opposed to the idea and wanted the lands to stay with their original owners. His views were eventually accepted by the General Assembly and no landowner in Iraq, Arab and Ajam, was dispossessed of his land. This was against the prevailing practice among the Romans and Persians and laid down a new principle in international law. Thus, in a way Umar sowed the seed of a rudimentary system of democracy in running the affairs of the state, which was alien to both the Romans and the Persians, and posed serious challenge to their entrenched imperial power and authority.

Administrative Organization:

The Political territory had to be reorganized because of its enormous expansion. It was divided into eight provinces and each province was under the administrative control of a governor who was directly appointed by the Khalifah and was directly answerable to him. These eight provinces were Makkah, Madinah, Syria, Jazirah, Basra, Kufa, Egypt and Palestine. In addition Fars, Khuzestan and Kirmaan in Iraq (Ajam) had also the status of provinces. Mostly distinguished companions of the Prophet were appointed to the posts of Governors. Ammar bin Yasir was appointed Governor of Kufa, Musa bin Ashri of Basra, Mu’awiyah of Syria, Amr
bin Al-Aas of Egypt. He kept tight control on their functions and would not tolerate any laxity.

**Other Provincial Officers:**

In addition to the post of Governor, the Khalifah created other posts at the Provincial level such as *Kaatib* (chief Secretary), *Kaatib-ud-Diwaan* (chief Secretary of the Army); *Sahib-ul-Khiraaj* (collector of Revenue); *Sahib-ul-Ahdath* (Chief of the Police); *Sahib-ul-Bait-ul-Maal* (Treasury officer); and Chief Qaazi (Chief Judge). These officers at the Provincial level were directly appointed by the Khalifah, though they worked under the administrative control of the Governor. Yet they enjoyed a fair amount of autonomy, because of their direct appointment by the Khalifah. Excepting for the post of Governor, the other provincial posts were replicated at the District level. Each province was divided into numerous districts for administrative convenience.

All the officers appointed from the provincial to the district level were issued appointment orders with their duties fully defined. They were asked to lead a simple, humble and honest life performing their duties conscientiously. The most important of these instructions was that all the officers including the Governor, will always keep their doors open, make themselves accessible to the people, listen to their grievances, redress them promptly, if found correct. Moreover, every officer, on appointment, would have to submit an inventory of all his wealth and property, which would be kept on record and
checked occasionally. The Governor of Basra had constructed a porter’s room in front of his house, which was burnt under the order of the Khalifah because it obstructed the accessibility of the people to the Governor’s House. (Shibli; op. cit. p: 40, vol. II)

Abu Ubaidah, a prominent Sahaabi, suggested in one of the Consultative Committee meetings that the officers should be paid sufficiently high salaries so that they should be above temptation. The Governors salary was fixed at 1000 dinars a month, which would allow a comfortable living. Similarly, salaries of other officers were also fixed and they were paid monthly salaries regularly.

**Organization of the Revenue Department:**

The revenues of the state had enhanced enormously. As pointed earlier the revenue of 128 million Dirham annually had not been exceeded even during the Khilafat of Maamun Rashid. The main sources of revenue were the Khiraaj and Ushr (land taxes) Zakaat, Ushr (import duty of 10% on goods by traders from outside because the same amount of duty was imposed on Muslim traders in foreign lands), Jizyah and 1/5 of the spoils of war. Separate registers were maintained for each source of revenue, and annual accounts were regularly furnished by the Provincial Governors to the Central Government in Madinah.
The Khalifah familiarised himself with the revenue administration of the preceding governments in the territories acquired from the Persians and Romans. He did not change the system. The accounts were maintained in the languages they were maintained in the previous regimes i.e. Pahlavi in Iraq (Arab and Ajam), Latin in Syria, and Coptic in Egypt. Thus the Arab officers, appointed to the revenue posts, had to learn the language of the region they were posted to. They were also assisted by the native land revenue officers. The records of taxes were being properly maintained. He even appointed a Roman Christian “for putting taxation records in order” in Madinah. (Shibli; op. cit. Vol.2, p: 317)

Umar ordered a comprehensive survey of the land in Iraq (Arab–Ajam). The total land area of Iraq (Arab) measured 30,000 Sq. miles. The cultivated land alone measured 36 million Jaribs. Land taxes varied with the quality of land. All those lands which belonged to the rulers of the previous regime namely the temple lands, estates of those who had died heirless or fled the country and lands set apart for the expenses of the building and maintenance were declared as government lands and income from these was set apart for public utility works. (Shibli; op. cit. p: 48, vol.11) The rest of the land was left in the hands of the original landowners. In Persia the great landlords, who were called Marazabans and Dahqans, were left untouched. The land tax never exceeded one half of the produce. Similar practice was adopted in Syria and Egypt. It is interesting to observe that the Arab,
officers posted in these newly conquered lands, were not allowed to purchase lands there.

**Introduction of Coins:**

Although historians credit Abdul Maalik bin Marwaan with the introduction of coins under Muslim rule, Maqrizi calls it an achievement of Khalifah Umar. Together with the reorganization of Treasury (Bait-ul-Maal) and system of accounting, Umar also introduced coins in the territories under his control. The coins of dirham, introduced by Umar, resembled like the coins of Annusherwan with the difference that it was a single value coin of 6 Dangs, bearing the words of al-hamdulillah or Muhammad Rasul Allah or La Ilaha Illallah Wahdahu. 10 Dirham weighed six Mithqaal. (Shibli; op. cit. pp: 162-163)

**Introduction of Pension Payment:**

With the substantial increase in revenue, stability of finances, and availability of surplus income, Umar initiated a system of payment of pension for certain section of the population: Widows of the Prophet were paid, 10,000 Dirham per month. A system of hierarchy was drawn which formed the basis for the disbursement of pensions. The pensioners were categorized as follows:

1. Abbas uncle of the Prophet: 7,000 Dirham per month.
2. Those who fought in the Battle of Badr 5,000 Dirham per month.
3. Muhajireen of Abyssinia and participants in the Battle of Uhud: 4,000 Dirham per month.
4. Those who made the Hijrat before the conquest of Makkah: 3,000 Dirham per month.
5. Those who had embraced Islam at the conquest of Makkah: 2,000 Dirham per month.
6. Those who had fought in the Battle of Qadisiyah and Yarmuk: 2,000 Dirham per month.
7. For the Yemenite: 400 Dirham per month.
8. For those who fought battles after Qadisiyah: 300 Dirham per month.
9. The rest without distinction: 200 Dirham per month.

The wives and children of Ansar and Muhajireen received some monthly allowance for their maintenance. Pensions were also sanctioned to the slaves who received the same amount as their masters. These pensions were in addition to the income they earned from their respective trades and professions.

Organization of the Army and Establishment of Military Cantonments:

The expanded domain of Islam required efficient arrangement of both civil and military administration to properly administer the welfare activities for the comfort and convenience of the people and to maintain law and order. The presence of military was essential to prevent the incursion of foreign invaders and to provide maximum security to the people living within the Islamic territory.
The army was divided into two categories: (1) The Regular Standing Army, and (2) The Reservists. The Standing Army included all those who were on active service. They were paid regular salaries, about 2,500 Dirham per month, plus their rations or they had their meals in a common army mess. One of the major reforms undertaken by Umar was to separate the army registration from those of the civil administrators. A separate register for the army was being maintained as was done by the Romans. The Army Register contained a comprehensive list of both on active service and reservists. The reservists however were not paid any salary.

The country was divided into eight major military Commands called Jund like the Provinces for civil Administration: The following were the major military Commands (Jund): Madinah, Kufa, Basra, Mosal, Fustaat (which is modern Cairo) in Egypt, Damascus, Urdun (Jordan) and Palestine (Jerusalem). No major military Commands were established in the Persian sector of Iraq. Of these principal cantonments Kufa, Basra, Mosal, Fustaat (Cairo) eventually developed into major urban centres. In all these centres barracks were built for the soldiers and large storage godowns for food grains. Close to the barracks large stables were constructed for horses, and attached to the stables were extensive pasturelands for the horses. In addition to these major cantonments, a large number of minor cantonments were also built across the coast of Syria to guard the coastal areas against the invasion of Romans, who had a powerful navy. In the
Persian area, in the province of Khuzestan, there were twelve principal cantonments including Hurmuzaan, Rayy and Azerbaijaan. Again with all these minor cantonments were barracks for soldiers, large stables and pasturelands for horses. Kufa in Iraq (Arab) turned out to be a major military centre in Iraq where 100,000 soldiers were kept in readiness to meet emergency situation. Basra or Bisra in Persian was at the junction of many roads eventually developed into a major port trading centre where Indian ships will unload their goods for trade and commerce with the Arab and Roman countries.

The Khalifah demonstrated broad outlook by recruiting soldiers from all communities such as Arabs, Persians, Indians and Jews even Magians. On account of this strong military presence in the Islamic domain there was political stability, economic prosperity and free movement of people and goods for trade and business. The major military settlements, established by Umar, were organized on tribal lines. Each tribe was settled in one sector to lead a life according to its own distinct tribal mores and customs. The sectors were close enough to promote inter-tribal interaction.

Justice under Umar:

Umar was a very conscientious person and extraordinarily honest. He derived his basic principle of Justice from the Qur’an and Sunnah, and if he did not find any guidance from them then Ijma’ (consensus) and Qias or Judgment by analogy. Umar reminded the
persons whom he appointed as Qaazis (Judges) of these sources of law. He used to clearly instruct the judges (Qaazis) that no discrimination should be made between the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the subject and the ruler. In the court of law they stand on equal footing, and no one should be accorded precedence over the other, on the basis of status and position one enjoys. He was very keen to maintain the independence of Judiciary therefore, appointed distinguished persons who could not be influenced and paid them handsome salaries so that they should be free from all temptations. Zayd bin Thabit was appointed the Qaazi of Madinah, Ka’b bin Sural-Azdi, Qaazi of Basra, Ibaada bin Salamat of Palestine, Abdullah b. Mas’ud was the Qaazi of Kufa, and was succeeded by Qaazi Shuraih whom Ali called Aqd-ul Arab or the most judicious of all the judges in Arabia.

The judges, though under the administrative control of the Provincial Governors, were directly appointed by the Khalifah; hence the Governors would dare not interfere in their affairs. Once Mu’awiyah had difference of opinion with Qaazi Ibaada bin Salamat of Palestine, the Khalifah took away his authority to interfere in judicial matters. Similarly he stressed that equality must be maintained between the complainant and the defendant. Once Ubaiy bin Ka’b lodged a complaint against the Khalifah himself (Umar) in the court of Zayd bin Thabit. The Qaazi showed Umar greater respect compared to Ubaiy bin Ka’b. Umar plainly told him that this was unfair. In the court Umar denied the plaint, which Ka’b had lodged. The plaintiff had no proof. He, therefore, desired that the defendant should deny on oath. The Qaazi requested Ka’b to exempt
Amir-ul-Mu'mineen from denying on oath Umar was disturbed at this discriminatory attitude and addressed the Qaazi: “if Umar and another man is not equal in your eyes, you are not fit for the post of a judge.” (Shibli; op. cit. p: 73, Vol. II) Non-Muslims were allowed to apply their own customary personal laws excepting when they were involved in criminal activities against Muslims.

Umar was very firm in implementing Shari'ah Law and punishing criminals. With the increase in the territory of the Islamic state, and close contact with the Persian and Roman cultures in the east and the west, moral laxity became evident and particularly the tendency to drink wine. He, therefore, increased the punishment for drinking wine from 40 stripes, as laid down by the First Khalifah, to 80 stripes. In implementing this punishment he did not spare his own son Abu Shaymah, who succumbed to the injuries caused by 80 stripes. This instilled a deep sense of awe and fear among all his contemporaries including his Governors. Similarly Muhammad, the son of Amr bin al-Aas, the Governor of Egypt had whipped a commoner for no fault. The commoner managed to reach the Khalifah to lodge a complaint. Immediately the Governor and his son were summoned to Madinah and the commoner was asked to whip publicly the son of the Governor.

Umar used to keep a tight control over his governors. He would meet all of them annually, at the time of the Hajj, to discuss the general law and order situation and other military and civil administration
problems of the respective provinces. Each Governor, at the time of his appointment was expected to declare his total asset. If on investigation anyone was found to possess more than his earned income, the excess was immediately confiscated as he did with Khalid bin Waleed and Amr bin Al-Aas. Despite being strict in implementing punishment, he was equally considerate in times of distress. He suspended the punishment of hand cutting for theft in the year of Aam al-Ramada (of the famine).

**Organization of Religious Education and Appointment of Jury - Consultants:**

Umar’s initiative in the compilation of the Holy Qur’an is a well-known fact. It was on his insistence that Abu Bakr (RA) ordered its compilation by Zayd bin Thabit. He, therefore, laid great emphasis on teaching and learning of the Holy Qur’an. He encouraged people to learn the Qur’an by heart. Schools were opened in all the provinces and districts for the teaching of the Qur’an, and paid teachers were appointed throughout the Islamic realm. Only those who were proficient in Arabic were appointed teachers of the Qur’an, for they alone could teach the Qur’an correctly. (Shibli; op. cit. p: 145, Vol. II)

The institution of Jury-consultants or Muftis was an innovation of Umar. He established the department of Ifta where experts, well versed in Islamic Shari’yah law, were appointed as Muftis. They alone could guide people on religious matter. During his period of Khilafat the following persons Ali, Uthmaan, Mu’adh bin Jabal, Abdur
Rahmaan bin Auf, Ubaiy bin Ka’b, Zayd bin Thabit, Abu Hurairah were appointed Muftis. The Mufti of Kufa was Sulaymaan ibn Rabiah Al-Bahiliyyah, Abu Darda was of Syria (Damascus) later succeeded by Mu’awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyaan, Ubayd ibn Al-Saamit was of Palestine and Abu Musa Al-Ashri was of Al-Basra. On any difficult interpretation of religion he would always consult these Jurists before taking a final decision. (Ra’uf; op. cit. p: 118)

Two very difficult cases of great religious significance came to him for decision. One was represented by Fatima bint Qays that the Prophet had ruled that her former husband should take care of her maintenance and housing even after irrevocable divorce. She was given three divorces in one sitting. She claimed the right to maintenance and housing till the stipulated period of three divorces was completed. She further stated that the Prophet had allowed this in one of his decisions. Umar refused to accept her statement and denied her maintenance. This was contrary to Qur’anic injunction and Prophet could not have given such a ruling. (Shibli; op. cit. p: 250, Vol.11) The other was the garden of Fadak which came to the Prophet as his share after the fall of Khyber. Ali called on Umar and argued his case to inherit the garden of Fadak. Umar politely refused it, because he had heard the Prophet saying that Prophets do not leave any inheritance. Whatever they got in the spoils of war became state property after their death. However he asked Ali if the Prophet had personally gifted it to Fatimah, which he denied and could not produce any credible evidence, Umar decided against his
representation. Ali, however, inherited it when he became the Khalifah after the death of Uthmaan.

Public Work:

Although Umar did not create a Department of Public works but he spent a lot on the construction of roads, bridges and rest houses for the movement of goods, people, and troops. All the revenue that was derived from the lands owned by state were utilized for Public works. A number of canals were constructed between the Euphrates and the Tigris to facilitate trade but the most notable achievement in this respect was a canal linking the River Nile with the Red Sea. This was called the Amir-ul-Mu'mineen canal and proved very useful to transport food grains from Egypt to Arabia when the latter was struck by a severe famine in 18 A.H. Amr bin Al-Aas had also conceived an imaginative plan to join the Mediterranean Sea with the Red Sea, but Umar did not approve of it. He thought that this might be exploited by the powerful navy of the Romans to harass the Islamic state.

Humanistic and Compassionate Administration:

Umar was a firm administrator who would not suffer corruption, but was equally concerned about the welfare of the people and shared their sufferings. When there was famine in Arabia in the 18 A.H he did not drink milk for nine months because it was not available in the market for common consumption. He was ever accessible to the people to listen to their grievances. He even
removed Governors when the people were dissatisfied with them. If a major complaint was lodged by the people against any official, he would immediately appoint an enquiry commission. Once, a Syrian Dhimmi complained that the Muslim army, marching through his land, destroyed his standing crop. He immediately received a compensation of 10,000 Dirham.

**Umar Keen to Raise the Status of Slaves:**

Umar was very kind and considerate towards slaves. He never wanted them to be ill treated. It has been observed earlier that the slaves received the same amount of pension as their masters. Similarly a protection offered by a slave to any non-Muslim would be honoured, and would have the same sanctity as given by any other Muslim. He further ordered that masters should generally take their meals together with their slaves. Umar ordered against the splitting of the family of the slaves among different masters i.e. the son with one master and father with another: “He laid the rule that no slave will be separated from his kindred.” (Shibli; op. cit. p: 193, vol. II) He also encouraged the emancipation of slaves. It is enjoined in the Qur’an: “If you see good in them (slaves), make agreement with them” for their emancipation. The slave of Anas wanted to enter into such an agreement with his master. Anas refused and the slave complained to the Khalifah who forced him to execute the agreement. Similarly the slave girls who bore child to their masters i.e. Umm-ul-Walad, were forthwith declared free. They could stay with their masters as wives or he could divorce them.
so that they might live as free women. They could marry other persons. Some of these emancipated slaves gained positions of eminence, and Umar encouraged such talents. As for instance Ikrimah, a liberated slave, was regarded as Imam of Hadith. Nafi, the teacher of Imam Maalik, was a slave.

**Expulsion of Jews and Christians from Arabia:**

After the conquest of the forts of Khyber, the last and the foremost Jewish enclave, the Prophet expelled the Jews from the forts, their property was confiscated but they were allowed to cultivate the lands on 50 percent sharing basis. During the Khilafat of Umar his son Abdullah was deputed to collect revenue. During sleep, in the night, the Jews over turned his bed which caused serious injury to his arm. The mischief of the Jews was thoroughly investigated; on being found guilty they were expelled and settled in Syria. The Christians of Najraan (near Yemen) had also entered into a pact with the Holy Prophet under which “they were allowed to live in peace unless they indulged in any hostile activities against Islam. When Umar took over the Khilafat it was brought to his notice that the Christians had violated the terms of the treaty. They were indulging in usury, and were acting against the interest of Islam. The chiefs of the Christians of Najraan were summoned by the Khalifah, were told of their violation of the terms of the treaty. In response they desired “to be expelled”! Their expulsion orders to Iraq were issued by the Khalifah. The Christians were permitted to carry their moveable property. Their immovable
property was acquired by the state, on payment. They were treated as refugees in Iraq, and all facilities were provided for their resettlement. They were even exempted from the payment of Jizyah tax for the first two years in Iraq. Thus with the expulsion of Jews and Christians, Arabia became the sole preserve of the Muslims. (W.P.online.org, Nov. 2004, p: 7 of 8)

Although Umar had expelled Christians and Jews from Arabia on political grounds, because of their intrigues against the Islamic state and other destructive activities, yet he was not prejudiced against them. He was totally free from religious prejudices. He “made his ablutions with water from Christian Woman’s pitcher.” (Shibli; op. cit. p: 316, vol.2) During his time there was no restriction on the entry of non-Muslims in Madinah and Makkah. From Qaazi Abu Yusuf’s Kiaab-ul-Khiaraaj, Shibli quotes “But in days of Umar, non-Muslims visited the holy city without let or hindrance and stayed there as long as they pleased.” (Shibli; op. cit. p: 317, Vol.2)

Umar’s Concern for the Poor and the Needy:

Umar was deeply concerned about the poor and the needy, both among the Muslims and non-Muslims (Dhimmis). Once he observed an old blind Jew begging in the street of Madinah. Umar asked him the reason for begging. He replied that being an old man, cannot earn enough even for his living, and over above he has to pay the Jizyah tax. Umar brought him to his residence, served him some food and also gave him some money before he
departed. He immediately issued an order exempting the old *Dhimmis* from the payment of *jizyah* tax. (Umar-al Farooq; op. cit. p: 92) Similarly when Umar was returning after his visit from Syria he noticed on the way that hot oil was being poured on a number of men standing in the sun. On enquiry, he was told that they were being punished for not paying *jizyah*. When questioned, the *Dhimmis* answered that they could not pay it because of poverty. He immediately ordered their release and severely reprimanded the Muslim officers quoting a Hadith of the Prophet: “Do not torture people, for those who torture their fellows will be tortured by Allah on the Day of Judgment.” (Shibli; op. cit. p: 169, vol. II) The Khalifah was very keen that the *Dhimmis* should not be harassed, they should be treated kindly and regularly issued instructions in this regard. Even in his bequest to his successor he stated: “And my bequest to my successor is in respect of those who are in the protection of Allah and his Apostle (namely the *Dhimmis*) that the covenants with them should be observed faithfully, that they should be defended against invaders, and no burden exceeding their strength should be laid upon them.” (Shibli; op. cit. p: 170, vol. II) Khalifah Abu Bakr had ruled that old men whether Muslims or *Dhimmis* will receive maintenance allowance from the state. This was scrupulously followed by Khalifah Umar, and commanded to all his officers from Governors downwards to implement the same. Khalid bin Waleed included this clause in his treaty after the victory of Hera. (Shibli; op. cit. p: 173, vol. II) The Khalifah was equally concerned about the welfare of slaves. We have observed
earlier that the slaves were granted the same amount of pension as their masters.

In order to find out the condition of the poor and of their assessment to his rule he once stopped at an isolated camp occupied by an old woman. He enquired about her condition, and if she had any news about the Khalifah. Yes she answered “he has started from Syria but curse him, I have not received a penny from him so far.” Umar protested how the Khalifah could know about things so far away. She bluntly replied: “then why did he become the Khalifah, if he cannot keep himself acquainted with the conditions of his subjects.” Umar was deeply moved and redressed her grievances. Umar bargained with her to seek her pardon. She initially thought it was a joke but when she found that he was serious the woman agreed to pardon him against a payment of 25 Dirhams so that he is saved from hell-fire. Meanwhile Ali and Abdullah ibn Mas’ud sighted the Khalifah sitting with the old woman, came near him and addressed him Amir-ul Mu’mineen, the old woman was shocked and upset that she had insulted the Khalifah. He comforted and assured her that she had not done anything wrong and eventually entered into a written contract with her with Ali and Abdullah ibn Mas’ud as witnesses. (Umar al-Farooq; op. cit. pp: 87-88) In order to find the conditions of the people in Madinah and its suburbs, the Khalifah would go around during the night incognito. He stopped at a place three miles from Madinah, where he found a woman cooking and a couple of children crying. On inquiry, he discovered that the children were hungry because there
was no food in the house. She was keeping the pot boiling as if she was cooking something for their consolation. The Khalifah immediately turned back, and returned with a pack of flour, meat, ghee and dates. The woman cooked the food and fed her children who were overwhelmed with happiness. She thanked him and said: “May god bless you. In fact you are better fitted than Umar to be the Khalifah.” (Shibli; op. cit. p: 227-229, vol. II) One night, the Khalifah and Abdur Rahmaan bin Auf were keeping vigil on the goods which had arrived with a caravan. In the neighbourhood he found a child crying in the arm of a woman. He asked her to quieten the baby. After a while he noticed that the baby was still crying. He told the woman that she was a very hard hearted woman. Then the woman replied that she was trying to wean away the child from breast feeding, because Umar had ordered that only weaned away children were eligible for stipend. Umar deeply regretted his wrong and cruel decision, and ordered the next morning that a child will be eligible to receive stipend right after birth. Again in one of his rounds, during the night, Umar found a man sitting outside his house. Umar joined him and started talking to him, when he suddenly heard a woman crying in pain. On enquiry he discovered that the man’s wife was having birth pangs. He immediately rushed back to his house, and came back with his wife for her to act as a midwife for the delivery of the child. After the child was born, Umar’s wife, addressing him Amir-ul-Mu’mineen, asked him “to congratulate his friend on the birth of a son.” The man was taken aback in awe and respect. Umar congratulated
him and asked the man to see him next morning so that he may fix a stipend for the child.

Umar showed equal concern about the welfare of the families of his soldiers, who were on duty away from Madinah. He would occasionally visit them and even do some grocery and shopping for them. Again, in one of his nocturnal trips, he passed by a house where a woman was loudly singing a love song bemoaning the absence of her husband. The next morning the Khalifah went to his daughter Hafsah, one of the widows of the Prophet, and enquired of her the tolerance limit of a wife to remain separated from her husband. She suggested it should not exceed four months. An order was promptly issued that soldiers should be sent home every four month, and should be rotated accordingly.

*Khalifah’s son Asim Marries a Poor but Honest Milkmaid:*

One night, as usual, Khalifah Umar was taking a round of Madinah incognito, in order to find out the condition of the people. During the course of his tour he passed by a colony of the poor and overheard the conversation between a mother and her daughter. They were in milk selling business. The mother was advising the daughter to mix water in the milk in order to increase their income. The following is the full story of this eventful incident:
The girl said, “You adulterated milk, when you were not a Muslim. Now that we are Muslims, we cannot adulterate milk.” The mother said that Islam did not stand in the way of adulteration of milk. The daughter said, “Have you forgotten the Khalifah’s order? He wants that the milk should not be adulterated.” The mother said, “But the Khalifah has forgotten us. We are so poor, what else should we do but adulterate milk in order to win bread?” The daughter said, “Such bread would not be lawful, and as a Muslim I would not do anything which is against the orders of the Khalifah, and whereby other Muslims are deceived.”

The mother said, “But there is neither the Khalifah nor any of his officers here to see what we do. Daughter, you are still a child. Go to bed now and tomorrow I will myself mix the milk with water for you.” The girl said, “Khalifah may or may not be here, but his order must be obeyed. My conscience is my Khalifah. You may escape the notice of the Khalifah and his officers, but how can we escape the notice of Allah (SWT) and our own conscience.” Thereupon the mother remained quiet.

The next day, Khalifah Umar sent a man to purchase milk from the girl. The milk was unadulterated. The girl kept her resolve. Umar was impressed by the integrity and honesty of the girl. He said, “Such a girl would become a great mother. Her integrity is to be measured in the scale of national values. I shall offer her the highest award in my gift, and which shall also be in the highest interest of the nation.”
The Khalifah summoned the daughter and the mother to his court. The girl faced the Khalifah boldly and with great equanimity. She was beautiful, and there was an impressive dignity about her. Turning to the girl the Khalifah said, “Islam needs daughters like you and as a Khalifah of Islam it devolves on me to reward you by owning you as a daughter.” The Khalifah called his sons, and addressing them said, “Here is a gem of a girl who would make a great mother. I desire that one of you should take this girl as wife. I know of no better bride than this girl of sterling character. In matters of wedlock, it should be the character and not the stature in life that should count.”

Asim, the third son, was yet unmarried, offered to marry the girl. Thereupon, with the consent of the milkmaid and her mother, Asim was married to the girl, and milkmaid became the daughter-in-law of the Khalifah.

From this union was born a daughter Umm-e Asim, who became in due course the mother of Umar bin Abdul Aziz. Umar bin Abdul Aziz was elected as Khalifah and served for a short period during 117 A.H~120 A.H. As a Khalifah he set up standards for austerity and simplicity following in the footsteps of Khalifah Umar. (www.geocities.com)
Some Innovative and Perceptive Actions of Umar:

Following into the footsteps of the Prophet, Umar was strongly opposed to superstition. He had felled that tree in Hudaibiyah under which the Prophet had taken ‘Bay’at-e Ridhwaan because people had started treating the tree as sacred as ‘Hajr-e Aswad,’ the black stone fixed in a corner of the Ka’bah. Once Umar remarked that had he not personally seen the Prophet kissing it he would have certainly prohibited it. During his own regime as a Khalifah, a delicate situation developed in Egypt, where an ancient tradition was to throw alive a beautiful virgin girl into the River Nile just before the commencement of its annual flooding season to propitiate the river to flooding. As the date of this annual cruel ritual approached the Governor Amr bin Al-Aas of Egypt sought the advice of the Khalifah regarding the course of action to stop this ritual. In response the Khalifah wrote the following note addressed to the river and asked the Governor to throw it into the river: “In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate. From the slave of Allah, the commander of the Faithful, to Nile of Egypt. Listen to me. If you are running (and flowing) on your own, stop doing so. But if it is Allah, Who is the One, the Almighty, Who causes you to move (and flow) we pray to Allah to move you (and let you flood).” (Ra’uf; op. cit.) Amr bin Al-Aas threw that note into the river, just a day before the festival; it flooded over-night and rose sixteen cubits. Thereafter this cruel custom was abolished.
Umar was not favourably disposed towards women but was never disrespectful to them. In fact he respected them and gave them full freedom of speech. Once he met Khawlkh bint Thalaba wife of Aws ibn Al-Saamit, on whose protest to the Prophet against the Izaar system of divorce Surah Mujadalah was revealed to the Prophet condemning the system unequivocally. Umar greeted her politely, and then she delivered a long lecture and cautioned him: “Be conscious of Allah, O Umar when it comes to the people’s affairs.” Umar listened to her patiently. Al Jarud Al-Abdi, who was accompanying Umar, was irritated and remarked that the woman wasted quite a bit of your time. Umar identified the lady who was talking to him, and told Jarud that she was “the woman whose complaint Allah listened through the seventh heavens.” (Umar al-Farooq op. cit. p: 84) Again Umar was openly interrupted by a woman, while he was delivering a sermon in the mosque condemning growing tendency among parents asking for higher dowry of girls of marriageable age. One woman immediately said loudly: “How dare you say this! Are you forgetting Allah’s words: “And if you wish to exchange one wife for another and you have given unto one of them (a sum of the weight of) ton, take nothing from it.” (An-Nisa: 4:20) Umar admitted that the woman was right. (Umar al-Farooq; op. cit. p: 119)

Umar Initiates the Islamic (Hijri) Calendar:

Prior to Islam the Arabs had already introduced a 12 month lunar calendar, divided into weeks of 7 days and
a month of 29 or 30 days, but there was no single system as to how to start counting the beginning of the year. The Prophet had earlier laid down the principle that the month of fasting should start with the sighting of the new moon and until the reappearance of the new moon. Thus the principle of sighting made the counting of the days of the month quite precise. The need for a calendar arose when Abu Musa Al-Ashri, Governor of Basra, received a letter from the Khalifah dated Shabaan. He queried the Khalifah if it refers to current or preceding Shabaan. This caused the urgency to make the calendar precise by fixing the exact point from which the calendar should commence. He invited senior companions of the Prophet for consultation and decision. As regards the point of commencement Ali suggested the event of the Migration of the Prophet from Makkah to Madinah was the most notable event in the history of Islam and should be adopted as the commencement point of the Islamic calendar. This was unanimously accepted by all. Since the Arab year starts from Muharram, this month was thus also adopted as the first month of the Hijri Calendar i.e. 2 months and 12 days before the Prophet’s arrival in Madinah. This made the Islamic calendar precise and also a reminder of that landmark event which significantly changed the history of the world. (Umar al-Farooq; op. cit. pp: 97-99)

Umar was also responsible for making the Tarwiah prayer, a regular congregational prayer, which added greatly to the glory and majesty of the month of Ramadhan. After the death of Umar, when Ali observed
illumination in the Mosque and recitation of the Qur’an in the Tarwiah prayer he remarked; “May Allah make the grave of Umar shine with light, for he had made the Mosque shine with the recitation of the Qur’an.” (Umar al Farooq; op. cit. pp: 103-104)

Umar also strictly forbade the practice of temporary marriages (Mut’a) in foreign lands.

Expanding the Area of Circumambulation around Ka’bah:

He was also the first to expand the open space around Ka’bah because of the enormous increase in the number of pilgrims arriving daily to circumambulate around Ka’bah. The houses built too close to Ka’bah were torn down to create more space and house owners were handsomely compensated. He told the house owners “You built your houses too close to it, for it was not the Ka’bah that moved close to your houses.” He also shifted ‘Maqam-e Ibrahim’ far away so as not to obstruct circumambulation. This was done in the 17 A.H. (Umar al Farooq; op. cit. pp: 116-117)

Opposed Frequent Quotations of the Ahaadith (Traditions) of the Prophet:

Umar would not accept any Hadith quoted even by the closest companion of the Prophet unless it was fully corroborated. Once Abu Musa Al-Ashri called on Umar
and addressed him thrice; “As-Salam Alaikum Abu Musa is here.” When he received no response after the third call he left. He was later summoned back by the Khalifah and was asked as to why did he leave? He replied; “I have heard the Prophet say ask permission three times, if you do not receive permission go away.” Umar asked Abu Musa to get it corroborated by another Sahaabi who had heard it from the Prophet. Abu Musa brought over Abu Sa’eed to corroborate it. Ubaï ibn Ka’b, who was present, resented this attitude of the Khalifah and frankly told him “Umar do you want to persecute the companions of the Apostle of Allah.” Qarza bin Ka’b stated that when they were being dispatched to Iraq the Khalifah came out to see them off and addressed as follows: “You are going to a place where people are humming like bees with the study of the Qur’an. Do not mix up Hadith with the Qur’an and I am with you. Quote sparingly from the Prophet.” There are numerous traditions narrated by Abu Hurairah. During the Khilafat of Umar he narrated them sparingly. Abu Salma asked him the reason. Abu Hurairah replied that “Umar would have flogged him.” Sahaabah of the eminence of Abdullah bin Mas’ud, Abu Darda and Abu Mas’ud Ansaari were jailed for quoting Ahaadith frequently. (Shibli; op. cit. p: 251 to 254, Vol-11)

**Frugal Habits and Simple Living:**

Umar earned his living through trade. He had to give it up when he became Khalifah. Umar was a man of frugal habits and lived a simple life. On the recommendation of Ali (RA) he was sanctioned from the
state Treasury by the General Assembly a modest maintenance allowance, just sufficient to meet the basic needs of food and clothes for himself and his family. Subsequently Ali, Uthmaan, Zubayr and Talha thought that the maintenance allowance was too meager and ought to be enhanced. They dared not speak directly with him but asked his daughter Hafsah to broach the matter with him. He was angry with Hafsah when she talked about it and asked her:

“Hafsah, go and tell the people who have deputed you that the Holy Prophet has set a standard by his personal example. I must follow him. My case and that of the Holy Prophet and Abu Bakr is like the case of three men travelling on the same road. The first man started with a provision and reached the goal. The second followed the first and joined him. Now the third is on his way. If he follows their way he will also join them, otherwise he can never reach them.”

When Hafsah told of Umar’s reaction to the proposal to the companions who had deputed her they said: “May God bless Umar. He excels all of us in the matter of virtue.”

His personal allowance later got automatically enhanced, when from the 15 A.H onward he, along with other companions of his category, started receiving a stipend for life of 5,000 Dirhams per month.
His food consisted mostly of bread and olive oil. At the time of the great famine (Al-Ramada) he ate only barley and did not eat fat or drink milk because it was not available to the common man. Occasionally meat, olive oil, milk, vegetable and vinegar were consumed during normal times. The guests and deputations were also entertained with the same menu.

He wore coarse, inexpensive dresses, and scrupulously avoided luxurious dresses as worn by the Roman Governors and his own Governors. He advised his officers to avoid ostentatious living and lead a simple life.

'Umar’s Family:

Umar (RA) had many wives. Umar’s first wife was Zaynab sister of Uthmaan bin Mazun. She had embraced Islam. Ummeul Mu’mineen Hafsah and Abdullah were born of her. He also married Jamilah, daughter of a high placed Ansaari, Asim bin Thabit bin Al-Falah. She was divorced for some reason. Other wives were Atiqah bint Zayd, who was the widow of Abdullah bin Abukir (married in 12 A.H). Umar was very fond of the Prophet’s family, that he was keen to be closely related to them. Eventually, he proposed his marriage to Kulthum, the daughter of Ali and Fatimah, to which Ali consented. Umme Kulthum was married to him in 17 A.H, was paid alimony of 40,000 Dinars. He was immensely delighted to cement this close bond with the Prophet’s family.
His male children were Abdullah, Ubaydullah, Asim, Abu Shaymah, Abdur Rahmaan, Zayd and Majeer. Of these Abdullah, Ubaydullah and Asim were very learned and distinguished persons. (Nadwi; op. cit. pp: 57-58) Abdullah was recognized as the pillar of the science of Fiqh and has been frequently quoted in Sahi Bukhaari and Muslim, the two most authentic works on the Ahaadith (Traditions) of the Prophet.

Assassination and Death of Umar (26 Dhil-Hajj, 23 A.H) and Election of Uthmaan as Successor:

Umar enjoyed sound health at the age of 63. In the 23 A.H he performed the annual Hajj Pilgrimage. The widows of the Prophet also accompanied him this time. On his return he was discharging his duties as Khalifah with his usual vigour and energy. The city of Madinah was totally free from non-Muslims excepting for one Feyroz, a Parsi, who was nicknamed Abu Lu-Luah. He was specially permitted by Umar to live in Madinah on the strong recommendation of al Mughairah ibn Shaibah. Feyroz was a skilled carpenter, painter and iron smith and was working in Madinah for Mughairah bin Shubah. He once complained to the Khalifah that his master was levying on him a tax of two Dirham per diem, which was rather heavy for him. He therefore requested the Khalifah to prevail upon his master to reduce it. Umar asked him about his profession and when he came to know that he was a skilled carpenter and iron smith he opined that the tax was reasonable and would not recommend reduction. Feyroz was annoyed. Shortly before the assassination
attempt by Feyroz, Ka’b who was originally a Jew, converted to Islam, and who had a profound knowledge of Torah warned Umar that he had only three days left according to Torah. Umar was surprised that even he was mentioned in the Torah. Ka’b later again warned him that he had only two days of his life left; he should nominate his successor. It is said that exactly on the third day of the prediction of Ka’b Feyroz stabbed him which proved fatal. (23 Dhil-Hajj, 23 A.H) On that fateful day the Iqamah for the Morning Prayer was set in order. Feyroz armed with double edged sharp poisoned knife joined the first row as if he had come to offer Salaat. After the Iqamah, Umar came out to lead the prayer. He had just started the prayer when Feyroz mercilessly stabbed him six times, one of which was below the pelvis, which eventually proved fatal. Feyroz attempted to escape, in the process he injured a number of other persons, but was eventually overpowered by Abdur Rahmaan ibn Auf who threw carpet on him. Meanwhile the Khalifah unable to lead the prayer asked Abdur Rahmaan to lead the prayer while he was lying bleeding on the floor. Abdur Rahmaan finished the Salaat quickly by reciting short Surahs and thereafter the bleeding Khalifah was shifted to his residence for treatment. After he was brought home, he enquired as to who was his assassin. He was informed that it was Feyroz. He thanked Allah that he was not assassinated by a Muslim.

His treatment started after he reached home. He was administered milk and date juice but nothing would stay. It would gush out of the pelvis wound. The
physicians and the people then realised that he would not survive, and Umar also became conscious of this fact. He then started thinking of the place of his burial and of his successor. As regards the burial place, he sent his son Abdullah to seek Ayesha’s (RA) permission, that he be buried in the same room where the Prophet and Abu Bakr were buried. Ayesha had kept that place for her own burial, but when the request came from Umar she agreed to Umar being buried there. To be doubly sure that it was a willing consent and not forced on her because of his status as a Khalifah, he asked Abdullah to seek her permission again after his death. When she was approached again she readily consented to him being buried there.

When the reality of his imminent death dawned upon all, the question of his succession became crucially important. He thought that the position should go to one of the six surviving men of the ten who were pronounced pious men in the Qur’an (Ashra-e Mubasharah) and by the Prophet. They were Ali ibn Abu Taalib, Uthmaan bin Affaan, Al Zubayr ibn Al Awaam, Sa’ad ibn Abi Waqqas, Talha bin Ubayd Allah and Abdul-Rahmaan ibn Auf. He did not include his brother-in-law Sa’eed ibn Zayd although he was also one of them. He first offered the position to Abdul-Rahmaan ibn Auf who refused the offer. Then he appointed an electoral panel of these six distinguished and pious surviving Companions of the Prophet and asked them to sit together, deliberate and choose one among them. Talha was absent because he was living in Basra. Message was sent to him to come
promptly. Umar asked the other members to wait for three days for Talha before starting their deliberations. In case of a tie his son Abdullah may be consulted. Before these six men were closeted together to deliberate on the issue he called them in and addressed as follows:

“By Allah, Ali, if you are entrusted with the people’s affairs, do not let the Hashim clan take the advantage of the citizens; and you, Uthmaan, if you are selected you should not let the family of Bani Umayyad abuse the people. And you Sa’ad, if you are entrusted with the people’s affairs do not let your relatives take advantage of the people. Now go and discuss your affairs, and let Shu’ayb lead the congregational prayers in the Masjid-un Nabi. He also suggested that whoever of the six gets the highest votes will be elected as Khalifah. In case of a tie his son Abdullah may be consulted.” (‘Umar al Farooq; op. cit. p: 125)

After they departed he addressed the people who had gathered around him and made his parting bequest:

“To him who shall succeed, give it as my dying bequest that he be kind to the men of this city, which gave a home to us and to the faith; that he may make much of their virtues and lightly of their faults. And bid him to treat well the Arab tribes, for verily they are the back bone of Islam. And the Jews and the Christians let him faithfully fulfill the covenant of the Prophet with them. O Lord, I have finished my course. And now to him that commeth after me I leave the Kingdom and the Khilafat firmly established and at

He had in his custody the text of the Qur’an compiled during the Khilafat of Abu Bakr. He handed this copy to his daughter Hafsah, a widow of the Prophet, for safe custody. It stayed with her till her death.

*Khalifah* Umar died on Monday 26 Dhil-Hajj 23 A.H (4 November, 644 A.D), three days after the stabbing incident. He was 63 at the time of his death, the same age as that of the Prophet and Abu Bakr, at the time of their death. His Khilafat lasted for ten years and six months. He had thirteen children, 9 sons and four daughters. All his debts which amounted to 86,000 Dirham were paid off by the sale of his property. (Shibli; op. cit. p: 287, vol.1)

The funeral prayer was led by Shu’ayb and his body was laid into the grave by his son Abdullah, Ali, Uthmaan, Talha, Sa’ad bin Waqqaas and Abdur Rahmaan ibn Auf.
Conclusion:

The Khilafat (Khilafat) of Umar was indeed the glorious period of the early Khilafat of Islam. It was notable for its remarkable military achievements, enormous territorial expansion, and was equally distinguished for its political stability. He was at once an intelligent military strategist, a great conqueror, a just, honest, transparent, impartial, firm yet a compassionate administrator. In short he was a great human being. As a true servant of Allah he worked relentlessly for the majesty of Islam, for the welfare of the people and rose above sectarian and religious prejudices in the discharge of his duties. He was a great interpreter of the Qur’an, a great jurist. He never deviated from the principles laid down in the Qur’an, firmly adhered to the Sunnah of the Prophet and examples set by his illustrious predecessor, Abu Bakr. He does indeed enjoy an outstanding place in the annals of world history which is adequately substantiated by the glorious tributes paid to him by his contemporaries, the companions of the Prophet, and modern historians.

Abu Bakr considered him the worthiest among the companions to succeed him as Khalifah. Ibn Mas’ud considered him the wisest man in the then living world: “If the wisdom of Umar were placed in the scale of a balance, and the wisdom of living things upon the earth in the other scale, the wisdom of Umar would outweigh them, and verily the people used to think that Umar carried nine-tenth of the wisdom of the world.”
Abdullah bin Abbaas considered him “the gem of a man” and Ali (RA) fondly remembered him in the following words: “During his Khilafat he administered the affairs of the State strictly on the lines laid down by the Holy Prophet and his successor Abu Bakr. He followed them in the same way as a child follows its mother. Verily he was a pillar of strength for the weak, the poor, and the aggrieved. He was for the Muslims a source of honour, prosperity and victory. Nothing stood in his way in promoting the cause of Truth. He was so scrupulous in speaking the truth that we come to believe that the angel spoke through his tongue.”

According to Abu Hudhaifah, an eminent companion, Umar epitomized the wisdom of all mankind and remarked further with an ominous prediction: “in the time of Umar Islam attained the climax of glory. After his death Islam will have to face difficulties.” He proved to be absolutely correct.

Besides his contemporaries, Umar received glowing tributes from modern historians who have closely and critically examined and analyzed his achievements. Washington Irving, in his book “Lives of Successors of Muhammad,” comments; “The whole history of Umar shows him to have been a man of great powers of mind, inflexible integrity and rigid justice. He was more than anyone else the founder of the Islamic empire; confirming and carrying out the inspirations of the Prophet; aiding Abu Bakr with his counsels during his brief Khilafat; and
establishing wise regulations for the strict administration of the law throughout the rapidly-extending bounds of the Muslim conquests. The rigid hand, which he kept upon his most popular generals in the midst of their armies, and in the most distant scenes of their triumphs, gives signal evidence of his extra-ordinary capacity to rule. In the simplicity of his habits, and his contempt for all pomp and luxury, he emulated the example of the Prophet and Abu Bakr.”

The most telling tribute is paid in the The Encyclopaedia Britannica, which highlights that “The saying with which he began his reign will never grow antiquated: ‘By God, he that is weakest among you shall be in my eye the strongest, until I have vindicated for him his rights, he that is strongest I will treat as the weakest, until he complies with the law.’ It would be impossible to give a better general definition of the function of the State.”

We may conclude with a most apt quotation from Shah Waliullah who sums up the accomplishments of Umar the Great and of his multifaceted talents in the following concise yet the most comprehensive terms: “Imagine the heart of Umar as a house with many gates. At each gate is seated a noted genius. At one gate stands Alexander the Great with all his genius for conquering countries, commanding armies and vanquishing foes. At another gate sits a Nushirwan with all his gentleness, magnanimity, justice, and love of his subjects. And yet at another gate sits a spiritual leader like Syed Abdul Qadir
Gilani or Khawajah Bahauddin. At another gate sits Hadith specialists like Abu Hurayrah and Ibn Umar, and yet at another gate sit thinkers of the caliber of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi and Sheikh Fariduddin Attar. And people are standing around this house and every needy one represents his need to the Imam of his branch of knowledge (Umar) and goes away satisfied.” (Shibli; op. cit. pp: 349-350, Vol.2)
CHAPTER - 4

UTHMAAN BIN AFFAAN:
THE THIRD KHALIFAH

Uthmaan was his name and Abu Abdullah his Kuniyat. He was the son of Affaan and Arwah bint Karez was his mother. In his genealogy, he unites with the Prophet in the fifth generation. He was also the second cousin of the Prophet, because his grandmother Baidha Umm-e Hakeem was the real sister of the Prophet’s father Abdullah ibn Abdul Muttalib. Uthmaan bin Affaan belonged to Banu Umayyad tribe, which in status, prestige and position stood on par with Banu Hashim, the Prophet’s tribe. Banu Umayyad had the distinction of being the custodian of the Quraysh flag with falcon as its symbol. There is little information about his childhood and youth. He was born 6 years prior to the year of the elephant. In his early childhood he had learnt the skill of reading and writing, a rare achievement in Arab society. Trade and commerce was his main profession, in which he achieved great success and amassed considerable fortune, because of his honest and truthful business dealings. Abu Bakr was one of his trusted friends. They also used to meet frequently.

Uthmaan’s Conversion to Islam:

Abu Bakr, who enjoyed a most respectable status in the Arab society, started quietly proselytizing after his
conversion to Islam. He conveyed quietly to his close circle of friends the message of Islam and that Muhammad was the Prophet of Allah. Once he was discussing the message of Islam with Uthmaan, that the Prophet arrived and personally invited him to embrace Islam: “Uthmaan accept the paradise of God. I have been sent to you and for the guidance of the nations of the world.” (S. Moinuddin Nadwi [1997] Uthmaan Ghani, Idara-e-Diniyat, New Delhi, p: 9) This direct call from the Prophet had such a magical effect on Uthmaan’s heart and mind that he immediately offered his hand to the Prophet and recited the Shahadah. In Uthmaan’s own words; “I do not know what the magic in these was clear and simple sentences that it impressed me so deeply that I recited Kalima Shahadah instantly.” (Nadwi; op. ct. p: 9) When Uthmaan joined Islam there were only 35 or 36 Muslims in Makkah. He boldly accepted Islam despite the fact that his Banu Umayyah tribe was archrival of Banu Hashim. Abu Sufiyaan, the chief of the Umayyad, was hostile to Islam and had harassed the Prophet endlessly in Makkah before his migration. Later Abu Sufiyaan led a number of battles against the Muslims in Madinah such as the Battles of Badr, Uhad, and Trenches. He also formed a grand alliance with the Jews living in and around Madinah, and Munafiqueen or hypocrites among Muslims, in order to crush the infant Islamic state of Madinah. After Uthmaan’s conversion to Islam the pagans of Makkah and his own relations were also constantly persecuting him. His own uncle, Hakam bin Al-Aas, used to tie him with a rope and beat him mercilessly. His mother was so mad at him that she refused to cook food for him, serve water to
drink and sew his clothes. Despite all this persecutions he stayed firm with Islam. (Ahmad Bin Yahiya bin Jabir al Baladhuri: Ansab Al-Ashraf [original in Arabic] Urdu Translation by Maulvi Habeebullah and Dr.Yousufuddin [1992], p: 13) Being one of the few educated persons in Makkah his conversion to Islam was a great asset. The Prophet used his services along with Abu Bakr for scribing the Qur’anic verses revealed to the Prophet. By virtue of his righteous deeds and his unflinching faith in Islam and the Prophet, Uthmaan won over the Prophet’s confidence to such an extent that the Prophet agreed to marry his daughter Ruqayyah to him, and later, after her death, married another daughter, Kulthum, to him by virtue of which he received the honorific epithet of “Zun-Nurain.”

Migration to Abyssinia:

Despite his noble status in his tribe, Uthmaan was subjected to extreme torture and persecution by the pagans of Makkah. His own relations were not willing to offer him protection. The torture became unbearable because of its extremity. He eventually decided to migrate to Abyssinia with his wife Ruqayyah and son Abdullah, with the permission of the Prophet, along with other Muslims, who were migrating to Abyssinia. Uthmaan and Ruqayyah thus became the first Muslim family to migrate out of Makkah to an alien country. Uthmaan with his wife Ruqayyah, son Abdullah and a number of other Muslims stayed in Abyssinia for 4 to 5 years and returned to Makkah when a false rumour was spread of serious setbacks to Islam in Makkah. They returned to Makkah
and found the rumours baseless, instead noticed that Islam was not only surviving but gaining strength. Some of the migrants, who had returned, after reviewing the situation, went back to Abyssinia but Uthmaan stayed on. He suffered still more persecution and greater harassment. Meanwhile some conducive and favourable climate for Islam developed in Madinah. With the permission of the Prophet a large number of Muslims in Makkah commenced migrating to Madinah in order to escape harassment and torture, and to live in peace there. Uthmaan and Ruqayyah were among those who had moved to Madinah. When the Prophet also migrated to Madinah he initiated a system of brotherhood, and fraternity, as explained earlier, between the residents of Madinah (Ansaar) and migrants from Makkah (Muhajireen). Uthmaan and Ruqayyah with their son Abdullah were staying as the guest of Aus bin Thaabit Ansaari. After the arrival of the Prophet the link between the two families were further strengthened, as the Prophet linked them mutually in bonds of brotherhood. A deep feeling of mutual respect and love for each other developed between their families. The younger brother of Aus bin Thaabit, Hassan became a great friend and admirer of Uthmaan. He later turned out to be a distinguished poet of Islam and had written a number of moving elegies on Uthmaan’s assassination. In Madinah also Uthmaan resumed his trading operations, which started flourishing. He became soon one of the most prosperous businessmen in Madinah. He was most generous in his support to the Muslim community and the cause of Islam.
Uthmaan always excelled in pious deeds. The migrants during their early stay in Madinah experienced extreme difficulty in the supply of potable water. There was only one well called Bayr-e-Roma, located to the north west of Madinah. It had plenty of light, sweet and clean water. It was the property of a Jew named Tamm’a, who would sell water at exorbitant price. The Prophet was deeply concerned about the drinking water problem of the people of Madinah. He once raised the issue in a meeting in the mosque, and asked if anyone could buy it for the community. Uthmaan offered to buy it from the Jew. He promptly started negotiation with the Jew who refused to sell Bayr Roma. However, after much persuasion, he reluctantly allowed the Muslims to draw water from the well on alternate days at a price of 1200 Dirham. The Muslims, on their turn, would draw water to such an extent that there would be hardly any water left for the Jew to sell on his turn. He, therefore, decided to sell the well itself for an additional 20,000 Dirham, which Uthmaan readily paid and dedicated the well for the use of the Muslims of Madinah. This was a great relief to the local Muslim community.

**Uthmaan and Battles during the Lifetime of the Prophet:**

In Madinah, during the lifetime of the Prophet, all the companions including Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthmaan, Ali and others carried out advisory and supportive role. They would carry out the instructions of the Prophet without
the slightest hesitation. They donated generously from their wealth to support the cause of Islam. They participated in all the battles that were forced on the Prophet by either the Pagans of Makkah or the Jews in and around Madinah. Uthmaan could not participate in the Battle of Badr (2 A.H) because his wife Ruqayyah, daughter of the Prophet, fell seriously ill. The Prophet asked him to stay back and look after his wife. She died on the day the Muslims scored a decisive victory over the pagans in the Battle of Badr. The announcement of victory at Badr, unfortunately, coincided with the funeral of his wife. Uthmaan took to his heart the death of Ruqayyah and was so grief stricken that he remained aloof from public life for quite some time. The Prophet was so fond of him because of his demeanor, his commitment to the cause of Islam and his piety that he later married another daughter, Umm-e Kulthum, to also him. Uthmaan was immensely pleased, could overcome his grief and resumed normal life. Since the Prophet had himself asked Uthmaan to stay back, and take care of his ailing wife, Uthmaan was declared a Mujahid, like others, who had fought in the Battle of Badr, and received his share of the spoils of war. Uthmaan participated in the rest of the battles after the Battle of Badr.

The Battle of Uhad (Shawwal, 3 A.H) was a great setback to Muslims and the miss-information of the death of the Prophet upset most of the senior Muslim leaders including Uthmaan. He was, like others, most confused and thought that the cause of Islam was totally lost. However the scenario was totally transformed when the
news spread that the Prophet was alive. This revitalised the Muslims, though they had suffered a heavy loss, fought back heroically drove away the pagans who failed to achieve their objective of striking a deadly blow to the forces of Islam. In the Battle of Dhat-ur-Raqaa led by the Prophet, Uthmaan officiated for him in Madinah during his absence. Uthmaan bravely defended Madinah in the Battle of the Trench (Khandaq) (5 A.H) along with other Muslim soldiers and did not allow the enemy (the pagan Makkans) to cross the Trench.

In 6th H, the Prophet decided to perform the Umrah (the little pilgrimage) and moved in the direction of Ka’bah, along with the leading companions including Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthmaan, Abdur Rahmaan bin Auf, Ali etc. The pagans were seriously opposed to the performance of Umrah and the march to Ka’bah was halted at Hudaibiyah, about six miles north of Ka’bah. The pagans asked that a Muslim be deputed as ambassador to discuss the matter with them. Since the Prophet had come with the intention of performing only Umrah he was keen to avoid bloodshed, and decided to depute an ambassador to negotiate with the pagans. Initially the Prophet suggested the name of Umar, who declined, because he did not belong to a major tribe and did not have much of a support in Makkah. Umar instead suggested the name of Uthmaan, who belonged to Umayyad clan, one of the most powerful tribes of Makkah. The Prophet agreed and Uthmaan was sent as ambassador to negotiate with the pagans. Uthmaan’s return from Makkah was considerably delayed and the rumour was spread that he was
imprisoned and martyred. The Prophet was deeply disturbed. He immediately took an oath of allegiance under a tree from all the Muslims, Ansaar and Muhajireen, present in Hudaibiyah numbering 1,400 that they would fight to finish. Since Uthmaan was not present the Prophet put his own left hand on his right in place of Uthmaan, and took an oath of allegiance for him. This was called Bay'at-e-Ridhwaan. Later someone sarcastically remarked to Abdullah bin Umar that Uthmaan did not take the oath of allegiance at Bay'at-e-Ridhwaan, Abdullah sharply retorted; “yes, but his hand was replaced by such a hand that no hand parallel to it exists in this world.” (Nadwi; op. cit. p: 19) Moreover, this oath was taken to avenge his alleged martyrdom; hence he just could not be present. Contrary to the rumour Uthmaan was very well received by the pagans. They listened attentively to the message that he carried from the Prophet, and even asked him to circumambulate the Ka’bah if he so wished. He refused it saying that he would do so only after the Prophet is allowed to circumambulate. Uthmaan returned together with ambassadors from Quraysh to negotiate with the Prophet only after the completion of Bay’at-e-Ridhwaan.

Uthmaan participated fully in the Battle of Khaibar against the Jews (7 A.H) and in the conquest of Makkah (8 A.H). For the Tabook expedition (9 A.H), which was being prepared to fight the forces of the Emperor of Byzantium, Uthmaan took the responsibility to finance to equip comprehensively, one third of the total army consisting of 30,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry. In
addition he donated 1000 camels, 70 horses and 1000 dinars in hard cash towards war efforts. This was greatly appreciated by the Prophet who remarked that after this magnificent donation; “Uthmaan will never face deficit in any of his trade deal.” (Nadwi; op. ct. p: 20) Uthmaan also accompanied the Prophet in his last Hajj pilgrimage (Hajjaat-ul Wida) in the 10 A.H.

Uthmaan’s love for the Prophet and his family was unmistakable. He once dropped at the Prophets residence to meet him. He met his wife Ayesha who told him that the Prophet had gone out to bring food for the family, because for about a week no food was available to be cooked in the house. He was shocked and complained as to why he was not informed. He hastily returned to his house and immediately sent plenty of food and a goat to each of the Prophet’s wives. When the Prophet returned he saw the goat in the house and asked Ayesha as to how did she receive the goat. She answered that Uthmaan sent the goat and also plenty of eatable items, and in the same quantity to each of his wives. The Prophet raised his hands and prayed to Allah to bless Uthmaan. Similarly Uthmaan was deeply concerned to mitigate the hardship that the Prophet and the Muslim forces had to suffer in their military expedition to Tabook. Whenever Uthmaan witnessed this terrible situation he immediately purchased food and drinks for them, and earned the blessings of the Prophet. (Al-Baladhuri: Ansab-ul Ashraf [original in Arabic] – op. cit. pp: 14-15)
Election of Uthmaan as the Successor:

After serving as Khalifah for over 10 years and 6 months Umar died on 26 Dhil Hajj, 23 A.H/3 November, 644 A.D. Since he was assassinated he never had an opportunity to deliberate over his successor. He, however, suggested a panel of six names from whom the Khalifah should be selected. These were the six surviving members of Ashra-e Mubassharah, (the ten blessed Companions), about whom the Prophet had predicted heavenly abode after their death. Umar did not include his cousin Zayd who was also among those original ten companions and his son Abdullah. These six were (1) Ali, (2) Uthmaan, (3) Zubayr, (4) Talha, (5) Sa’ad bin Abi Waqqas and (6) Abdur Rahmaan bin Auf. He instructed these six Companions to be closeted together and choose one of them as the Khalifah. Abdullah was asked to be an observer of their deliberations.

Having nominated this panel of six names from whom the Khalifah was to be chosen he called the panelists and spoke to some of them. Addressing Uthmaan Umar said; “You may be nominated Khalifah being the son-in-law of the Prophet, because of your age and nobility. If it so happens then fear Allah in any decision that you take as Khalifah, and avoid favoritism and nepotism and do not show excessive favours to the members of your tribe Bani Umayyad.” (Baladhuri; op. cit. pp: 27-31) While the panelists were going to the house of Miqdad bin Aswad for deliberations, Amru bin Al-Aas forcibly tried to enter the room. He was stopped and immediately summoned by
Umar and was bluntly told, “no one who had drawn his sword against the Prophet can be considered for the post.” Umar also had summoned earlier some leading members of Ansar and Muhajireen and informed them that he had short-listed his choice for the post of Khalifah to six persons among the earliest Muhajireen, and with whom the Prophet was always happy. You ought to persuade these panelists to make their choice early. He then asked Abu Talha Ansaari to post 60 of his trusted men around the consultative chamber to guard the panelists, who were deliberating on the issue of succession. The panelists were asked to decide within three days of the death of Umar. It should not be delayed beyond that period. The third day was approaching fast and there was yet no consensus. Meanwhile Zubayr opted out of this race and voted for Ali, Sa’ad bin Abi Waqqas also opted out and authorised Abdur Rahmaan bin Auf to vote for him also. Talha withdrew in favour of Uthmaan. Then Abdur Rahmaan bin Auf withdrew his claim and that of Sa’ad as well. Thus Ali and Uthmaan were the only two candidates left in the field. Since these two were the only two claimants for the post of Khilafat Abdur Rahmaan bin Auf asked Ali: “who do you think was the fittest candidate after you?” ‘Uthmaan’ was the reply. Abdur Rahmaan put the same to Uthmaan, Ali’ was the answer.” (Afzal Ahmad 2004 Hadhrat Uthmaan bin Affaan – the Third Khalifah of Islam – www.islamonline.com) Then he suggested that for the sake of unanimity one of the two should withdraw. They did not agree. Abdur Rahmaan then asked them to accept his arbitration and firmly commit themselves to accept his decision without reservation. They both agreed. Ali,
before committing, asked Abdur Rahmaan bin Auf to promise; “that thou will not regard kith nor kin but the right alone and the people’s will.” Abdur Rahmaan promised. Then Ali agreed to accept his decision. Thereafter Abdur Rahmaan bin Auf consulted extensively with the leading members of Ansaar, Muhajireen and general public and checked about their views regarding Ali and Uthmaan, and their preference between the two. He discovered that both were equally acceptable to them, it was rather hard for them to choose between the two. He, therefore, decided to convene a general meeting of all the Muslims in the Mosque of the Prophet and asked Ali and Uthmaan to be present. Before taking them to the Mosque from the meeting of the Males-e Shura (panelist), Abdur Rahmaan took again a firm commitment from both Ali and Uthmaan that they would abide by his decision even if it goes against them. Then he asked the other members of the Shura to say an oath that they would also abide by his decision and would not oppose it. He then asked Ali to declare on oath: “If he is nominated Khalifah he will not give undue preference to the people of Banu Abdul Muttalib and will firmly adhere to the Sunnah of the Prophet and that he will follow in the footsteps of Abu Bakr and Umar.” Instead of making an unreserved commitment on the lines suggested by Abdur Rahmaan bin Auf, Ali stated that he would try his utmost to follow the Sunnah of the Prophet but would do Ijtihaad (innovations-changes) in the policies of Umar and Abu Bakr, whenever necessary. On the other hand, Uthmaan committed without any reservation and declared on oath on the lines suggested by Abdur Rahmaan bin Auf.
Abdur Rahmaan bin Auf then led the members of the Shura with Ali and Uthmaan to the Mosque, which was packed to capacity so much so that Uthmaan could not find a place in front and sat in the back rows. They were again asked to repeat their oath in Public. Ali again expressed his reservation, whereas Uthmaan unreservedly took his oath on the lines suggested by Abdur Rahmaan bin Auf. Immediately after, the Arbitrator raised the hand of Uthmaan and declared him Khalifah stating: “O Allah please listen and be a witness that I have handed over Khilafat to Uthmaan.” He first offered his allegiance to Uthmaan followed by Talha and then the entire congregation followed. Ali initially hesitated to offer allegiance, but eventually took the oath of allegiance after being pressurized by the other panelists or electors. (A.H. Nadwi [1991] Al-Murtaza; op. cit. pp: 192-194) On Uthmaan’s election Abdullah bin Mas’ud declared that the best among us has been elected Khalifah. People offered their allegiance on the last day of Dhil Hajj, 23 A.H, and Uthmaan assumed charge at the age of 70 on the first day of Muharram, 24 A.H (November, 644 A.D).6

**Uthmaan as a Khalifah: (24 A.H~36th A.H/ 644~656 AD):**

As we have observed earlier, even prior to taking over the Khilafat, Uthmaan was well known for his noble

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6. For details refer:
   Baladhuri op.cited.pp.27 to 37
deeds, his generosity and munificence in the cause of Islam. Hence his first act as a Khalifah was to raise the stipends of heads of each household by over 100 Dirham. He could implement this because he had inherited from Umar a very stable and prosperous state. This act was greeted warmly by the people.

Expansion of Political Territory under Uthmaan:
Military Expeditions in Persia:

Umar had already expanded considerably the political territory of Islam from Khurasaan in the north and east to Egypt in the west. Uthmaan during his regime strengthened the political control where it was weak, and crushed rebellions wherever they were simmering. The rebellious tendencies were noticeably marked in the Persian region (Iraq Ajam). It was necessary to crush these rebellions otherwise the consequences would have been disastrous. Hence two military expeditions were launched from two different directions. One under the command of Sa’eed bin Al-Aas, and the other under the new Governor of Basra Abdullah bin Amir in the 30 A.H./650 A.D. The army under the command of Sa’eed bin Al-Aas conquered Jaraan, Khurasaan and Tabaristaan before Abdullah bin Amir could reach there. Abdullah bin Amir continued his military advances and captured Herat, Kabul and Sajistaan. Nishapur also fell, after some resistance, and agreed to pay annually a levy of 400,000 Dirham. Armenia and Azerbaijan, which were conquered during Umar’s Khilafat, rebelled against the Muslim rule and went out of control. They were re-conquered by Salmaan
bin Rabiah and Habeeb bin Muslim. During their expedition along the Caspian coast the Islamic forces met with strong resistance and suffered severe reverses. A whole army was lost in the deep snow on the heights of Kerman, only two soldiers survived to tell the tragic story. There were severe reverses in Turkestan also, but the situation was brought under control by heavy reinforcement, from Basra and Syria and Turkestan was eventually conquered. Meanwhile in the year 32 A.H/652 A.D, the 8th year of Uthmaan’s Khilafat, Yezdgird, the fugitive ruler of Persia died, and with that even the sporadic Persian resistance collapsed. The Muslim rule was thus firmly established up to the eastern most parts of the former Persian Empire.

**Administrative Changes and their Repercussions:**

Some important administrative changes were also made by the Khalifah, which had its own far reaching political repercussions. Abu Musa Ashri who was the Governor of Basra, since the time of Umar, was dismissed in 29 A.H on the complaint of a faction of the people of Basra, and replaced by Abdullah bin Amir a member of Umayyad tribe. The Governor of Kufah, Sa’ad bin Abi Waqqas was also dismissed because of his luxurious living. Sa’ad had obtained large sums in advance from Ibn Mas’ud, a distinguished Sahabi, who was the Chief Treasury Officer. Sa’ad refused to repay the advances taken. Instead he asked for fresh advances which Ibn Mas’ud refused. The Governor was mad at Ibn Mas’ud and scolded him harshly. Uthmaan was much displeased
with the Governor when the news reached him. Sa’ad bin Abi Waqqaas, was immediately recalled although he had hardly completed a year as Governor of Kufah. (Muir; op. cit. p: 303) Waleed bin Aqba was appointed the Governor of Kufah in place of Sa’ad. Waleed bin Aqba’s appointment as Governor of Kufah was deeply resented, because he had replaced an eminent companion of the Prophet, who was compassionate, accessible and competent administrator. Waleed bin Aqba’s reputation was just the opposite, but his main qualification was that he belonged to Uthmaan’s family of Bani Muqeet. The choice of Waleed bin Aqba was indiscreet also because he was the son of Aqba, who was taken prisoner in the Battle of Badr, and exclaimed bitterly before he was put to death, “who will care for my children,” and the Prophet answered; “Hell-fire.” This event flashed back to the memory of Sahaabah on the appointment of Aqba’s son as governor. (Muir; op. cit. p: 304) Over and above all he was alcoholic. When Waleed bin Aqba bin Abu Moeet was appointed Governor of Basra Abdullah bin Mas’ud was still the Chief Treasurer of the Province. Waleed bin Aqba asked for loan, which was advanced. He had drawn a number of advances with the promise to reimburse the amount to the Treasury. After he had drawn considerable amount Abdullah bin Mas’ud insisted on their reimbursement and refused to advance any further amount. Waleed bin Aqba complained to Khalifah Uthmaan, who ordered that the amounts be advanced. Abdullah bin Mas’ud refused to carry out this order and resigned. Further, Waleed bin Aqba while leading a campaign in Azerbaijan was found in a drunken state.
People were quite cross with him, and wanted him to be punished according to *Shar’iyah*. Somehow they were prevailed upon not to punish him while he was campaigning against the enemies. Waleed bin Aqba was caught red handed in a drunken state, when he could not lead the prayer twice during the day. Some leaders then forcibly entered his residence and found him totally intoxicated. They removed his ring from his hand and went straight to Madinah to complain against him. He was summoned to Madinah, and when the guilt was established, Uthmaan had no alternative but order his cousin, Waleed bin Aqba, to be whipped publicly as per *Shar’iyah*. He was whipped with a twin headed whip 40 times by Ali. He was also deposed from Governorship. Said bin Aas, another kinsman of Uthmaan, replaced Waleed as Governor of Kufah (30 A.H/ 651 A.D).

Meanwhile the military campaigns continued. Abdullah bin Amir the Governor of Basra won a series of victories in Persia and by 32 A.H (653 A.D) he had subdued Talqan, Faryab and Juzjan. Thus the entire south Caspian Sea area including Armenia, Tibili and up to Oxus was now fully under the Muslim control. After completing his conquest in the Persian region by 32 A.H Abdullah bin Amir appointed Qays bin Hatheem as acting commander and proceeded to Madinah with the spoils of war to call on the *Khalifah*. 
Expansion of Muslim Empire in the West Syria, Egypt and beyond in Africa:

Mu‘awiah as the Governor of Syria was managing the affairs of the province of Syria competently. It was, therefore, calm on this front but suddenly in the 25 A.H/645 A.D he was surprised by the approach of Roman army from Asia Minor. He asked for prompt reinforcement from the Khalifah, which was immediately dispatched from Iraq (Arab). With this reinforcement he repulsed the Byzantine attack and also took control of the whole of Asia Minor, and advanced as Far East as the western coast of the Caspian Sea, where the Persian and Syrian forces of Islam met in Tbilis. Encouraged by this success, Mu‘awiah advanced to the coastal areas of the Black Sea and established firm control along the coastline, from the Asia Minor in the north to the entire coast of the Levant. In order to control the newly acquired coastline and also to meet the Roman challenge in the Mediterranean Sea, the strengthening of the navy along with the Army had become imperative. The navy was, therefore, considerably strengthened to meet the Roman naval challenge.

Egypt: Battle for Control of Alexandria:

In the early part of the Khilafat of Uthmaan the Byzantine forces fiercely attacked Alexandria and even captured it for a while. Subsequently they were driven out by Amr bin Al-Aas and Alexandria was brought back under the control of the Khilafat. Thereafter the Romans
never ventured to attack Alexandria again, and were no longer a threat in Egypt.

Uthmaan brought about some dramatic administrative changes in Egypt. He asked Amr bin al-Aas to enhance tax collection from Egypt, which was considered rather low. Amr bin al-Aas regretted his inability saying that further enhancement of revenue was not possible as “the she camel cannot be milked beyond its capacity.” Uthmaan was obviously displeased with this answer and removed Amr bin Al-Aas from governorship of Egypt. Abdullah bin Abi Sarah, an Umayyad, replaced him as Governor. Amr bin Al-Aas was a competent administrator and an astute army commander. He had kept the Egyptians under firm control. As soon as the Egyptians heard of his dismissal, a rebellion started brewing. The Khalifah was greatly disturbed on receiving this news. He consulted senior companions like Ali, Talha, Abdur Rahmaan bin Auf and others. On their advice he promptly reinstated Amr bin Al-Aas as Governor; he tackled the rebellion firmly and the rebels soon surrendered. The rift between Amr bin Al-Aas and Uthmaan however continued. Eventually Amr bin Al-Aas was dismissed and replaced by Abu Sarah, a foster brother of Uthmaan. Prior to his dismissal Amr bin Al-Aas was appointed as the Chief Tax Collector of Egypt and Abu Sarah as Governor and Commander-in-chief. This dual control system did not work. Amr bin Al-Aas and Abu Sarah were at loggerheads with each other and never worked in tandem. They constantly complained against each other. Their complaints were investigated
and led to the termination of the services of Amr bin Al-\-Aas who returned to Madinah. Abu Sarah was now the sole Governor and administrative head of the Province of Egypt and commander in chief of the forces there (26 A.H/647 A.D).

Abu Sarah, a foster brother of Uthmaan, was not a person with clean reputation. Earlier in Makkah he was asked by the Prophet to record his early revelations. He betrayed his trust and hence on the conquest of Makkah he was not granted amnesty. He was saved because of the intercession of Uthmaan and his pleadings with the Prophet to spare his life. Hence the supercession of Amr bin Al-\-Aas by the renegade Abu Sarah was considered as defying the order of the Prophet. Despite the fact that Abu Sarah was a great fighter and an able army commander, he was not liked by most of the eminent companions of the Prophet. Such acts of indiscretion on the part of Khalifah Uthmaan gave rise to a very strong anti Uthmaan faction in Madinah itself and a seething discontent against his rule. This faction was further strengthened by the dismissal of Amr bin Al-\-Aas.

The existence of powerful Roman army bases in Carthage and Tripoli in Africa to the west of Egypt was a grave threat to the Muslim rule in Egypt. Hence their extermination had become a geopolitical necessity. Abu Sarah, now in full control of the affairs of Egypt, sought the permission of the Khalifah to attack Tripoli and beyond. The Byzantine Governor of Carthage Gregory asked for reinforcement from the Emperor of Byzantine,
which was immediately dispatched. Gregory with a force of 120,000 men advanced to meet the Islamic forces under the command of Abu Sarah. Meanwhile Abu Sarah also asked for reinforcement from the Khalifah. The Khalifah sent a large contingent including Abdullah bin Zubayr, Abdullah bin Umar, Abdur Rahmaan bin Abu Bakr and other veterans and Companions of the Prophet. In a pitched battle, the Muslims vanquished the Byzantine forces and the Governor was killed. Tripoli and Carthage were captured and truce agreement was signed – 26 A.H/647 A.D. The vanquished Byzantinian had to pay a colossal amount of two and a half million dinars as spoils of war. The Khalifah had promised Abu Sarah that on victory he would be allowed to retain one fifth of the booty. This again was resented by the elite in Madinah, and Uthmaan was forced to write to Abu Sarah: “I, of course, promised this much of share but as the Muslims generally did not like my idea, hence, you should refund this wealth.” (Tabri. p. 2815 as quoted in Nadwi; op. cit. p: 28) Uthmaan further incurred the displeasure of the people of Madinah when he allowed Marwaan, his son-in-law and an Umayyad, to purchase the entire spoils of war received from the African war at an extremely low price of 5,000,000 Dinars. Such decisions were adding fuel to fire in building up resentment, dissent, and dissatisfaction with the administration of Uthmaan.

After the conquest of Carthage and Tripoli the Muslim forces under the command of Abdullah bin Zubayr advanced further and conquered Algeria and Morocco. They further tried to invade Spain but with little
success. Thereafter the expedition to Spain was abandoned. Abu Sarah returned to Egypt and Abdullah bin Nafe bin Abd Qays was appointed Governor of Tripoli, Algeria and Morocco in Africa.

**The Rise of Muslim Naval Force:**

_Khalifah_ Umar, the predecessor of Uthmaan, was not in favour of developing a naval force. He did not allow Amr bin al-As to dig a canal linking the Red Sea with the Mediterranean Sea because he apprehended that the Romans with their powerful navy would harass the Muslims. Mu’awiah also sought his permission to develop a navy, which was also refused by Umar. (Muir; op. cit. p: 300) Mu’awiah again requested when Uthmaan assumed the Khilafat. The Khalifah agreed on the condition that only those men who volunteer to join navy will be drafted. On receipt of this conditional permission, Mu’awiah equipped a fleet to invade Cyprus. One Abul Qays was appointed the Naval Commander, and Abu Sarah also joined in this naval expedition with a large number of ships. Cyprus was easily taken over without much resistance (27 A.H/649 A.D). The Byzantine Emperor Constantine was considerably upset on this naval setback. He was keen to avenge the defeat, otherwise he felt that the Arabs will finally control the sea route as well which will adversely affect their trade and commerce.

Emperor Constantine thus started preparations for a major naval offensive against the Arabs. Three years after the fall of Cyprus he equipped a fleet of 500 to 600
ships, challenged the Arabs at sea. Abu Sarah was asked by Uthmaan to meet the challenge and confront the Byzantines, which he did with great skill and commendable courage. He collected all the available ships from the ports of Africa and Egypt. They were however much less in number, and not as well equipped as the Roman ships. He however had valiant Arab sailors and soldiers with him, who were prepared to sacrifice their lives and receive martyrdom for the glory of Islam, and in the cause of Allah. The rival fleets confronted each other near the port of Alexandria. As the winds lullled during night Abu Sarah tied together all the Arab ships in a line like a defensive wall. The Byzantine ships also, because of the calm winds, lay in anchor. In the morning a fierce encounter started followed by a hand-to-hand fight with dagger and sword. Lives were lost in thousands on both the sides, “but the Greeks unable to withstand the wild onset of the Saracens, broke and dispersed.” (Muir; op. cit. p: 302) Emperor Constantine, who was himself in command of the Roman Navy retired to Syracuse, dethroned and killed (31 A.H/652 A.D). This naval victory against the Byzantine was indeed remarkable, but the animosity against Abu Sarah was so intense that even this splendid achievement was completely ignored because of his inglorious past of cheating the Prophet. The continued support of the Khalifah for Abu Sarah incensed the people against the former himself. This faction of discontented people was led by Muhammad, son of Abu Bakr, and Muhammad, son of Abu Huzayfah. They expressed their resentment against the appointment of Abu Sarah as Admiral of the fleet against the Romans. They seriously
resented that “Uthmaan has changed the ordinances of his predecessors, and made captain of the fleet a man whom the Prophet had proscribed and desired to have put to death; and such like men also hath he put in chief command at Kufah and Bussorah, and elsewhere.” (Muir; op. cit. p: 302) It is an undeniable fact that there was phenomenal expansion in the political territory of Islam under the Khilafat of Uthmaan from Balkh, Badakshaan and Kabul in the east to Armenia and Anatolia near the Black Sea in the north to Libya, Algeria and Morocco in the west. Along with the political expansion there was political stability as well, rebellions were firmly dealt with and Islam had emerged as the religion of the people under the political control of Muslims. Members of other religions such as Jews and Christians also existed and were living peacefully with full freedom to pursue their religious practices and vocations. These splendid victories during the Khilafat of Uthmaan could not lift the gloom on his regime cast by his indiscreet domestic policies, faulty administrative decisions, and intrigues of the wily Jew Ibn Saba, which will be discussed later.

Some Significant Non-Military Achievements of Khalifah Uthmaan:

Compilation of Qur’an According to a Standard Style of Recitation for the Entire Muslim Ummah: The Qur’an was compiled in Mus’haf during the Khilafat of Abu Bakr on the insistence of Umar. However with the tremendous political expansion of Islam, the recitation style of the Qur’an widely varied, and the
pronunciations of words widely differed from region to region. This would have severely damaged the unity of the Qur’an. This was brought to the notice of Khalifah Uthmaan, who immediately ordered that a single standard text of the Qur’an be prepared, which will be acceptable to both Quraysh and Ansaaar, and where they differed the Quraysh style will be accepted because it was revealed in their accent. This was widely appreciated and admired. Zayd bin Thaabit, Abdullah bin Zubayr and Sa’eed bin al-As were asked to prepare copies of the originally compiled Mus’haf. Ali defended this action very staunchly saying, “People do not be unfair to Uthmaan, you complain that he made textual changes in the Qur’an. By God the action he took for its compilation on a single accent was in the knowledge of the Companions of the Prophet and they fully supported his action. If I had been in his place I would have also acted exactly the same way.” (Al Badayah wan-Nahayah vol.7, p: 218 quoted in Syed Abul Hasan Nadwi (1991): Al-Murtaza, p: 204) After the compilation of standard text of the Qur’an, the texts of the Qur’an preserved by individuals, including Ali, were recalled and burnt. Eight copies of the standard texts were made and a copy each was sent to the following centres: Kufah, Basra, Syria, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain and Makkah. He retained one copy for himself, which was called Mus’haf-e-Imam. The original compilation prepared during the period of Abu Bakr, from which the standard text was copied, was returned to the custody
of Hafsah, the daughter of Umar, and one of the widows of the Prophet.

**Reconstruction and Expansion of the Masjid-un Nabi:** During the life of the Prophet some minor expansion of the mosque had been carried out on a piece of land purchased by Uthmaan and gifted to the Prophet for this purpose. The mosque wall was built of raw or half-baked bricks, the pillars were of the trunks of the date trees and the roof was covered by the leaves of the date tree. No changes were made by Abu Bakr. Khalifah Umar extended it slightly but did not bring about any structural changes. During the Khilafat of Uthmaan the number of people joining the congregation in the mosque had increased enormously and hence the urgency to expand it substantially. He first made an attempt in 24 A.H but owners of houses, adjacent to the Mosque, were reluctant to move away from the Prophet’s Rawdhah despite the offer of handsome compensation. However the expansion of the mosque had become a pressing need to accommodate the ever increasing congregation. He continued his effort to persuade people to part with their land but the resistance continued. Eventually in consultation with the Companions of the Prophet and other elites of the Quraysh and Ansaaar he made a stirring speech in the mosque in 29 A.H (650 A.D), which moved the people immensely and the owners of the land agreed to sell and vacate the land adjoining the Mosque. At the stone laying ceremony of the expansion of the mosque all the elites of Madinah
Khulafa-e Rashien: The Four Pious Khalifahs

were present and the governors from the provinces were also summoned. After its expansion by Uthmaan, the Masjid-un Nabi was 160 cubits long and 150 cubits broad and had six gates of entrance as during the time of Umar.” The pillars of the trunks of date trees were replaced by pillars of solid hewn stone, and sakha wood was used for the roof. (Nadwi; op. cit. Al-Murtaza, p: 204) “The walls too, were built with masonry, richly carved and inlaid with rare and precious stone.” (Muir; op. cit. p: 312) The mosque was not only expanded, it was beautified and turned to be a most impressive structure in Madinah. This was appreciated by the people in general and was greatly acclaimed. The expansion of the mosque was completed in 32 A.H (653 A.D).

Earlier Uthmaan had also expanded the circumambulation area around Ka’bah, as was done earlier by his predecessor. He literally forced people to cede land and completed the expansion, in 26 A.H (647 AD), which had become essential because of the rapidly rising number of pilgrims. (Muir; op. cit. pp: 312)

Administrative and Religious Reforms: The administrative system developed by Khalifah Umar was further strengthened and fully implemented by Khalifah Uthmaan. The only reform he introduced was to create a separate Military Department, responsible for the recruitment of soldiers and for dealing with the military requirements of the various governors and commanders involved in various military expeditions.
This greatly helped the expeditious dispatch of reinforcement to Mu‘awiah and Abu Sarah in their campaigns against the forces of Byzantine in Anatolia and Africa respectively.

The expansion of the political territories under Islam necessitated the maintenance of large army, both cavalry and infantry. In order to maintain the cavalry which consisted of horses and camels, extensive pasture lands, with water facilities, were developed in the territories under Muslim control. Some of these pasture lands were developed few miles away from Madinah. The size of these pasture lands can be imagined by the fact that one grazing ground, Baraka, four miles away from Madinah, had “consisted of forty thousand camels and horses combined.” (Nadwi; op. cit. p: 94) Such grazing grounds were spread all over the Islamic domain in the vicinity of provincial capitals and major cantonments.

The Department of Navy was also created during the Khilafat of Uthmaan to maintain a large fleet of navy to protect the coastal settlements stretching from Syria, Egypt to the entire length of North African coast. Details about the organisation of the naval department are missing. We do however know that Abdullah bin Qays Harathi was the first admiral of the Islamic navy. It was under his command that Cyprus was invaded and conquered.
Islamic Jurisprudence and Laws of Inheritance:

*Khalifah* Uthmaan was an undisputed authority on the interpretation and significance of the Qur’anic verses. He had also occasionally served as the scribe of the Prophet for the revelations. He was however extraordinarily circumspect in quoting the Traditions (*Ahaadith*) of the Prophet for the Prophet had once said that “anyone who attributes to me which I have not said, his place, sure, is in hell.” (Musnad ibn Hanbal, vol.1, p: 65 quoted in Nadwi, op. cit. p: 103) It would be interesting to cite some of *Khalifah* Uthmaan’s interpretations and decisions on Jurisprudence and inheritance in accordance with the Qur’anic verses and Traditions of the Prophet.

1. Once Umar spread a sheet of his cloth over the shoulders of a person when suddenly a pigeon sat on it. Umar flew it away so that it may not spoil the cloth by secreting its beet. The pigeon flew away and sat at a place where it was stung by a snake. Uthmaan declared Umar guilty of causing the pigeon’s death, for had he not pulled the sheet of cloth, the pigeon would not have moved away. A penalty was imposed on Umar. (Musnad Shafa’ee p: 79, quoted in Nadwi: op: cit: p: 104)

2. Case of the murder of Prince Hormuzan, a Muslim: Ubaidullah bin Umar suspected that Prince Hormuzan was party to the conspiracy to assassinate *Khalifah* Umar and killed the Prince, who was a Muslim, in a fit of rage. The punishment of killing an innocent Muslim was
death, or blood money to be paid to close relations on demand. In the absence of relations, the head of the state automatically becomes the heir. On this ground Uthmaan paid the blood money and Ubaidullah’s (son of Khalifah Umar) life was spared. The money was deposited in the Treasury.

3. It was customary that some people gave live camels instead of hard cash in lieu of blood money. Uthmaan ruled that the sale price of camels could also be given instead of live camels. (Kitab-ul-Khiraaj-p: 92 quoted in Nadwi; op. cit. p: 105)

4. Khalifah Uthmaan ruled that people should not perform Hajj with double intention i.e. Hajj and Umrah which was being done for fear of pagans. Since that situation has ceased to exist therefore, Hajj with double intention should not be performed – Ali did not agree.

5. While staying at Mina during Hajj, Khalifah Uthmaan offered full prayers not half, as prescribed in Salaat-ul Qasr during the course of a Journey. Many did not agree such as Ali and Abdullah ibn Mas’ud. When Khalifah Uthmaan came to know of it he issued a proclamation “anyone, who wants to offer half prayer (a privilege accorded by God to his people when they were travelling) can do so. I do not force my will on other person.” (Nadwi; op. cit. pp: 107-108)
Creation of New Provinces and Public Welfare Works:

With the expansion of political territory in Africa, Armenia and Sajistaan, new provinces of Tripoli, Cyprus, Armenia and Tabaristaan were created. The roads in the entire Muslim domain were upgraded and rest houses were constructed at fixed intervals to facilitate movement of goods, army and travellers. As for instance, on the road from Najd to Madinah, he constructed large inns and wells at distances of 24 miles. One of the wells is famous by name of Bayr-ul-Sayeb. (Fatooh ul Baldan Baladhuri, vol.2, p: 217 quoted in Nadwi; op. cit. p: 91)

System of Administration:

He introduced the establishment of the Council of Governors at the provinces to advise the Governors on the management of the affairs of the Province. However in Madinah he dispensed with the system of Shoora so scrupulously followed by his predecessors, Khalifah Abu Bakr and Umar. They used to consult the members of the Shoora on all major appointments and major military actions they intended to initiate. As a consequence his son-in-law Marwaan bin Hakam literally usurped all powers. He mismanaged the affairs and mishandled the situation. His actions created enormous difficulties for Khalifah Uthmaan and eventually led to his martyrdom.
Complaints, Conspiracy and Martyrdom:

Before a detailed analysis of the situation which led to the martyrdom of Khalifah Uthmaan, it would be interesting to point out that the Prophet used a silver ring, to seal the letters he sent to the Emperors of Byzantine, Persia and others. It was used as the seal of the Khalifah by Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthmaan also used it until the seventh year of his Khilafat, when accidentally it dropped in the well of Aaris at a distance of 2 miles from Madinah. “Every effort was made, but in vain, to recover the priceless relic.” (Muir; op. cit. p: 314) The loss of this relic of the Prophet weighed heavily on Uthmaan’s mind.

Khalifah Uthmaan’s regime was marked for the rapid expansion of Islamic empire. There was all round prosperity, abundance of wealth and affluence which considerably corrupted the new generation of young Muslims, who had not thoroughly imbibed the true spirit of Islam. They were ambitious and wanted to live luxuriously with pomp and glory. This could not be enjoyed by all hence the rise of a large disgruntled section of population, who aspired for the same privileges and position, which a selected section of Quraysh and Ansaar were privileged to enjoy. This gross unequal distribution of wealth and privileges was presumably the biggest source to foment discontent, dissatisfaction and resentment, which got deeply entrenched and incited rebellious tendencies. This is highlighted in a conversation, which Mu’awiah had with a distinguished Sahaabi Abu Dhar Ghiffari. Abu Dhar pointed out that the
rich had no right to amass wealth. Whatever was over and above their immediate needs, Abu Dhar said, should be given away to the poor. Mu’awiah differed with him. He held that after a man had paid the poor rate of two and half percent (Zakaat) he was free to own wealth. Abu Dhar’s views appealed to the poor but they put Mu’awiah in embarrassing position. Thus Mu’awiah requested the Khalifah to call Abu Dhar back to Madinah which Uthmaan did. (Afzal Ahmed; op. cit.)

The local Arabs, who constituted a large part of the armed forces of the Muslims in Iraq (Arab) and Syria, were deeply disappointed that their contribution to the Muslim conquests and expansion of the political territory was not being adequately appreciated and rewarded. In fact the Quraysh looked down upon them and demeaned them. This arrogance of the Quraysh was against the fundamentals of Islam and was a direct insult to the self respect of the local Arabs particularly in Iraq. It largely accounts for the rise of a young group of people conspiring to rebel against the provincial authority, because they claimed that “in the conquests of all the countries we have also militarily participated, hence we should also be treated equally, so far as salaries, allowances and higher posts are concerned.” (Nadwi; op. cit. p: 36) The arrogance of Quraysh became too overbearing and intolerable when Sa’ad, the Governor of Kufah proudly called the valley of Chaldea (Sawad) as the “Garden of Quraysh.” This greatly offended the local Arab population who vehemently protested that “without our strong arm and our good lances, they could have
never won the Garden.” (Muir; op. cit. p: 317) Out of this disaffection a powerful local leader, Ashtar Nakhai emerged in Kufah. He was able to form a core group of leaders, including Zayd bin Sohan, Jondob, Orwa and Thaabit bin Qays, willing to rebel against the establishment. (Muir; op. cit. p: 318)

This seething discontent was further fuelled by an arch intriguer, a Jew, Abdullah ibn Saba (popularly called Ibn Sauda). He arrived in Madinah from Yemen in south Arabia. He pretended to embrace Islam but his main intention was to add fuel to the fire of simmering rebellion. Ibn Saba studied the situation closely in Madinah and observed that a small faction of Banu Hashim still felt that Ali not Uthmaan of Banu Umayyad should have been the Khalifah. He exploited this suppressed discontent among Banu Hashim to the hilt. In order to blow up this feeling of discontent he made “love of the Holy Prophet and of his relatives” as his starting point to campaign against the Khalifah. However he did not achieve any success in Madinah and quietly moved to Basra and started his malicious propaganda secretly. He found the ground fertile in Basra and Kufah where feelings of discontentment and dissent were running high against the Khalifah and his governors. A powerful group led by Ashtar Nakhai had already emerged and allowed Ibn Saba to establish his anti-Uthmaan network. Because of his intriguing nature and seditious activities Ibn Saba was successively expelled from Basra, Kufah and Syria but not before he had incited the rebellious activities to the maximum extent, and organised a core group of rebels in
each of the aforesaid provinces. He ultimately found his refuge in Egypt, where he started propagating an obnoxious doctrine, not supported by the Qur’an and Traditions of the Prophet, that “Mahomet was expected to come again. Meanwhile, Ali was his legate. Uthmaan was a usurper and his governors are a set of tyrants.” This seditious teaching of Ibn Saba (Ibn Sauda) emotionally stirred a faction in Egypt, who believed in what he said. Some others joined them because of their personal grouse and ambitions. They declared impiety could not be eliminated, and justice could not be restored so long as Uthmaan stayed at the helm of affairs of the Khilafat. Therefore, he must be either forced to resign or assassinated. Some of the contemporary historians strongly felt that the rebellion was deliberately incited by the Jews and Christians as a concerted plan of action to destabilise the rapidly expanding Islamic Empire. Even Kalb, who was also a Jew and had converted to Islam, quietly incited people in Madinah and Syria. It was he who once uttered, within the hearing of Mu’awia, that “it will be the gray mule that wins,” meaning Mu’awia. This sowed the seed of rebellion in Mu’awia’s mind against Khalifah Ali and ignited the ambition of Khilafat in his mind. (Nadwi; op. cit. p: 223 and Muir; op. cit. p: 327). Like the Christians and Jews, the Magi (Majoosi) or fire worshippers were also among the instigators of rebellion. They wanted the existing provincial governors to be replaced by weak administrative heads from whom they would be able to extract liberal terms for their living conditions.
During the Khilafat of Umar the Quraysh and Ansaar elites were not allowed to build a second house in the provincial capitals. This was reversed by Uthmaan. He allowed them to build magnificent dwellings and live luxuriously, an extravagant display of pomp and wealth. Consequently it raised a burning feeling of acute discontent. This was what the Prophet had suspected most. In one of his Traditions he stated that “I am not afraid of your poverty but I am afraid of your richness.” (Nadwi; op. cit. p: 35) Those distinguished Companions, who had lived frugally, cared least about acquiring wealth, were self-sacrificing and totally committed to pursuing Islamic values, were slowly fading away and were replaced by those who loved to live luxuriously. Muir quoting Mas’udi the famous astronomer and historian writes, “Zubayr had 1000 slaves, male and female, and 1000 horses. At all the great cities he had palaces, and the one in Bussorah was still to be seen in the fourth century H. His landed estate in Iraq was rated at 1000 golden pieces a day. Abd al Rahmaan had 1000 camels, 10,000 sheep and 100 horses. Zayd left gold and silver in great ingots, and had land valued at 10,000 dinars. The coreishite nobles built themselves grand palaces in Mecca and Madinah, and in their environs such as Jorf and Ackick. Othman himself had a splendid palace at Madinah, with marble pillars, walls of costly stucco, grand gates and gardens.” (Muir; op. cit. p: 309) This contrasted sharply with the lives lived by Abu Bakr and Umar, the first and second Khalifah, and companions like Abu Dhar Ghiffari who was so disgusted with the affluence and luxurious living in Madinah that he
preferred to live frugally the life of a recluse outside the city.

Affluence and luxury breed immorality which was further stimulated by the contact of the Muslim elites with the Greek and Persian elites where drinking wine was a sign of culture and playing with women was a mere past time. Immorality breeds disloyalty and leads to bad governance. These immoral values were menacingly raising their ugly heads and severely destabilizing the polity of the Islamic realm. Khalifah Uthmaan did not perceive and could not anticipate these threatening developments, which could explode like a volcano and, which did indeed subsequently erupt and shattered the fabric of both Islam and the Islamic state. He could not visualize such malignant developments. Thus, totally oblivious of them, he continued to appoint men of his Umayyad clan, irrespective of their age and experience, in important administrative and sensitive positions hoping that they would be able to stem the surging tide of revolt. This totally misfired, for he was charged with nepotism, which further fanned the rebellious tendencies, and ultimately led to a revolt against his authority and tragic assassination, which will be discussed in the following paras. Let us however first look into the validity or otherwise of the charges levelled against him.

**Charges Levelled Against Uthmaan:**

There were numerous accusations against Khalifah Uthmaan, the principal among them being: (1) that only
the Quraysh are appointed to positions of power, and the claims of local Arabs in Iraq were being completely overlooked; (2) was accused of nepotism, because he favoured mostly the Umayyad members of his clan, among the Quraysh, irrespective of their competence; (3) misuse of the state money; (4) stopped the allowance of some of the great Companions and exiled some of them: and (5) that surreptitiously he went back on his own commitment and hence betrayed the trust of the people of the state. Let us critically and rationally examine the nature of these accusations and their sustainability.

It is indeed true that most of the senior administrative officers of the state treasury and governors were Quraysh because they had established their integrity, their administrative skills and competence, as well as their military leadership such as Amir bin Al-Aas, Abu Musa Ashri, Sa’ad bin Abi Waqqas. Abu Musa Ashri was appointed Governor of Basra by Khalifah Umar and continued in his position for nearly six years during the Khilafat of Uthmaan, but discontent was smouldering as he could not win the trust and affection of the people of his province. Consequently a powerful group emerged opposing his further continuation as governor of the Province. Even a delegation was sent to the Khalifah to demand his dismissal from the post of Governor. Further Abu Musa Ashri did not himself follow what he preached. Once in an inspiring speech in the Mosque of Basra he extolled the glory and honour of fighting in an infantry. The next morning he violated his preaching and emerged from his palace in full pomp and glory riding a Turkish
horse with a large retinue of mules carrying his baggage. This revealed a marked contradiction between his precepts and practice. Abu Musa Ashri, by virtue of such acts, had lost the trust of the people and of the Khalifah and had to be replaced. But the man who took charge from him as governor of Basra was Abdullah bin Aamir, an Umayyad.

Sa’ad bin Abi Waqqaas, the governor of Kufah, had drawn a large sum as loan from the state Treasury but failed to repay when Abdullah bin Mas’ud the Chief of the Provincial Treasury asked him to reimburse. Instead he was mad at Abdullah bin Mas’ud. This was reported to the Khalifah who treated his non-payment as misappropriation and removed him from Governorship. But again he was replaced by Waleed bin Aqba, an Umayyad. (Tabri p: 2811, quoted in Nadwi; op. cit. p: 48) The choice of Waleed bin Aqba was rather unfortunate. He had a bad reputation because of his intemperance. People complained against his intemperance but Khalifah Uthmaan repeatedly rejected it for want of conclusive evidence. The enemies of Aqba continued to look for some concrete proof. They eventually succeeded in removing “from his hand the signet-ring of office while he was asleep, being fully intoxicated and carried it off in triumph to Madinah. Still worse it was established that Waleed, on one occasion, conducted the Morning Prayer in such a state of inebriation that having come to the end of proper service, he went on without stopping to commence another one.” (Muir; op. cit. p: 304) Once Waleed
bin Aqba’s guilt was established he was not only dismissed but publicly whipped also.

The dismissal of Amr bin Al-Aas in 26 A.H/647 A.D was the first act of Uthmaan as Khalifah, which sowed the seed of discontent and resentment against Uthmaan. Here too, Amr bin Al-Aas was relieved from his charge by Abdullah bin Abi Sarah, who was an Umayyad like the Khalifah himself. One Principal charge against Amr bin Al-Aas was that he failed to increase revenue from Egypt as demanded by the Khalifah. Amr refused on the ground that he could not “milk the camel beyond its capacity.” This frank reply annoyed the Khalifah and Amr bin Al-Aas was dismissed. The news of his dismissal pleased the insurgents in northern Egypt and Alexandria and they revolted. In consultation with Ali and other eminent companions in Madinah, Amr bin Al-Aas was reinstated who with cleverness and military force crushed the revolt and severely punished the insurgents. Thereafter the Khalifah ordered that Abi Sarah would be in-charge of civil administration and Amr bin Al-Aas will command the army. This dualistic control did not work well. Amr bin Al-Aas again strongly objected: “to be over the army and not over the revenue, was but holding the cow’s horns, while another milked her.” (Muir; op. cit. p: 299) He was immediately recalled to Madinah and Abi Sarah was given complete charge of both civil and military administration. Abi Sarah was not a man with clean reputation. He had cheated the Prophet in Makkah where he acted as his scribe but deserted him and joined the enemies of Islam. He had thus earned Prophet’s
displeasure to such an extent that he would have been executed on the conquest of Makkah but for the intercession of Uthmaan.

The dismissal of Amr bin Al-Aas, and the Khalifah's maltreatment of some distinguished companions of the Prophet such as Abu Dhar Ghiffari, Amr bin Yasir, Jandab bin Jawad, Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud and Ibada bin Thaabit were deeply resented in Madinah, and a simmering dissatisfaction against his decisions was slowly but surely building up in Madinah itself. His dismissal of Abdullah bin Mas'ud on the complaint of Aqba and a few others was not justified. Further, he stopped Abdullah bin Mastoid's legitimate pension, a Mujahid of the Battle of Badr, which was blatantly unfair. Although he later apologised for this unjust act and reimbursed Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud's pension, after his death, to his heirs. This was rather a delayed action and was no atonement for his unjust and biased decision.

The decision of Khalifah Uthmaan to allow Hakam bin Al-Aas to enter Madinah, who was exiled to Taif by the Prophet, was most controversial and amounted to gross disobedience of the order of the Prophet. The Khalifah claimed that Hakam was pardoned by the Prophet, which could not be made public because of Prophet's death. Uthmaan’s predecessors, Abu Bakr and Umar, refused to lift the ban despite Uthmaan’s repeated representations. On taking over the Khilafat, Uthmaan lifted the ban and allowed Hakam’s entry into Madinah without consulting anyone of the companions including
Talha, Ali and Abdur Rahmaan bin Auf. This had a most damaging impact on the administration. It was treated as a gross act of favouritism towards a man of his clan in total violation of even the orders of the Prophet. While taking such a crucial and sensitive decision he should have consulted the congregation in the Mosque, or even the people of the Badr and should have acted on their advice. He paid heavily for ignoring the principles of Shura so scrupulously followed by the Prophet and Uthmaan’s two predecessors.

The accusation that he summarily dismissed Abdullah bin Arqam from the post of chief Treasury Officer in Madinah was simply baseless. In this regard he explained his position in the Mosque: “Gentlemen: Abdullah bin Arqam had been distributing the allowances to you since the time of Hadhrat Abu Bakr and Hadhrat Umar. Now he has become old and weak, hence this duty has been assigned to Zayd Bin Thaabit.” (Nadwi; op. cit. pp: 49-50) Again it is not correct to accuse Khalifah Uthmaan of ill treating and slighting Abu Dhar Ghiffari whom the Prophet (SAWS) had awarded the title of Masih-ul-Islam. Abu Dhar Ghiffari was most critical of the extravagant and luxurious style of life of the Muslim officers from the highest to the lowest. He was particularly critical of Mu’awiah and his officers who were living like Roman dignitaries. While arguing with Mu’awiah Abu Dhar Ghiffari maintained that the rich had no right to amass wealth. Whatever was over and above their immediate needs should be distributed among the poor. Mu’awiah argued that after a man had paid his (Zakaat) poor due, he
had every right to retain his wealth. Abu Dhar was not satisfied, but his views were popular with the masses as the difference in wealth between the rich and the poor had sharply widened. (Fazal Ahmad; op. cit. pp: 18-19, Islam online) Mu’awiah felt very uncomfortable with the radical views of Ghiffari and his outspokenness, requested Uthmaan to recall him. Abu Dhar Ghif fari was asked by Uthmaan to return to Madinah and stay with him. He returned to Madinah but here too he found people living luxuriously, which he disliked totally. He felt that it was no longer the Madinah of the Prophet, or even Abu Bakr and Umar. He, therefore, decided to leave Madinah and settled down in a small secluded village, Rabza, in the suburbs of Madinah. (Nadwi; op. cit. p: 35)

The accusation of extravagant expenditure from the state funds and misappropriation of state’s money was baseless, trumped up and was a canard to defame Khalifah Uthmaan. It is inconceivable to think of Uthmaan (RA) misappropriating state funds when it was he bought Bayr Roma for the benefit of the Muslim community, from his own wealth, who equipped comprehensively one third of the army for Tabook expedition at his own expense, who paid from his own pocket cost of additional land for the expansion of the Mosque during Prophet’s time and who did not draw a single dirham for his personal expenses from the state exchequer as Khalifah. He built his house with his own resources. Of course he spent considerable amount from the surplus of state funds to expand and embellish the Masjid-un Nabi. No one could challenge the legitimacy of this expenditure.
The accusation of soft corner for the Umayyad clan was indeed a fact and he did admit it: “Since I had the power to benefit any one, why should not I benefit my own clan, as helping the relatives first is also an act of mercy.” (Nadwi; op. cit. p: 51) Here Khalifah Uthmaan failed to distinguish between the interest of the state and the interest of the clan. He could of course benefit his clan out of his personal wealth, but to use the state funds and appoint them to positions of importance irrespective of their competence, was certainly unethical and unjust. He was invariably guided, in the affairs of the state, by his clansmen and ignored completely the views of others including leading companions. By doing so he subordinated the larger interest of the state to the narrow interest of the Umayyad clan. This charge unfortunately got stuck and proved his undoing, despite the fact that some of those appointed as governors proved highly competent. As for instance Abdullah bin Aamir the governor of Basra, though relatively young, carried victoriously the flag of Islam to Nishapur, Herat, Sajistaan and Kabul in the east. Sa’eed bin Al-Aas, as governor of Kufah conquered Armenia and Tabaristan. Abdullah bin Abu Sarah captured Tripoli, Algeria and Morocco in North Africa west of Egypt but his greatest military achievement was the remarkable naval victory against the formidable navy of the Byzantine Empire. However, these victories failed to divert the attention of the conspirators from plotting against Khalifah Uthmaan and his protégés namely the Governors appointed by him. Khalifah Uthmaan was extraordinarily lenient and generous
towards his appointees and they consciously exploited his generosity, oblivious of the adverse consequences on the Khalifah himself. As for instance the Khalifah promised one fifth of the spoils of war to Abu Sarah if he conquered Tripoli and allowed Marwaan bin Hakam, who was also his son-in-law, to purchase the one-fifth share of the spoils of war to the Central government in Madinah for 500,000 dinars. In the words of Ibn Khuldun: “Ibn Zubayr sent, with the news of victory, the one fifth of the riches to the capital. Marwaan purchased it for an amount of five hundred thousand dinars. Some people say that these riches were awarded to him free, are absolutely wrong. Rather the first one fifth share of the first conquest was given to Ibn-e-Abi Sarah.” (Ibn Khuldun vol. 2, p: 129, quoted in Nadwi; op. cit. p: 55) The people raised serious objection to this bounty to Ibn Sarah and he was asked to reimburse to the state Treasury in Madinah. Addressing the people in the Mosque Khalifah Uthmaan said: “If you people agree to it the said wealth will stay with him. If you do not agree he will have to return.” People replied ‘we don’t agree.’ He said “ok everything will be back and sent a memorandum to Abdullah bin Abi Sarah to return everything.” (Tabri; p: 2815, quoted in Nadwi; op. cit. p: 56) However such indiscreet decisions, smelling of partiality and nepotism, towards his fellow tribesmen on the part of Khalifah Uthmaan gave enough ammunition in the hands of his enemies to destabilise his administration.
Intensification of Conspiracy, Steps Taken to Forestall Them:

The intrigues and conspiracies were intensifying by the end of the 10th year of Uthmaan’s Khilafat, and clouds of revolt were gathering fast and thickening. Alarmed by the emerging crisis Khalifah Uthmaan tried his best to stem the tide. He first convened a meeting of all his governors Ameer Mu’awiah of Syria, Abdullah bin Sarah of Egypt, Sa’eed bin Al-Aas of Kufah, and Ibn Amir of Basra. He also invited Amr bin Al-Aas, the former governor of Egypt, to attend this meeting. No concerted action plan could be worked out but the governors were asked to maintain law and order in their respective provinces. The symptoms of revolt which had gathered, strengthened further as was evident from the fact that when Said bin Al-Aas returned to Kufah he was not allowed by the ringleaders of the revolt to resume charge of his post, and the Khalifah was forced to replace him by Musa Al-Ashri as desired by the rebels. Meanwhile the elite of Madinah, including Talha and Ali, called on the Khalifah and asked him to take prompt and stern measures to prevent the gathering storm of revolt. On their advice the Khalifah dispatched a fact finding mission consisting of Muhammad bin Maslamah to Kufah, Osama bin Zayd to Basra, Ammar bin Yasser to Egypt and Abdullah bin Umar to Syria. Excepting Ammar bin Yasser who was won over by the rebellious factions in Egypt, the other three members of the Commission returned to report that they did not discover any unusual and alarming signs. On return of the Enquiry Commission the Khalifah issued
an edict, which was widely circulated among all the provinces of the Islamic realm: “At the coming pilgrimage the various governors would, according to custom, present themselves at the court; whoever then has cause for complaint against them, or any other ground of dissatisfaction, should come forward on that occasion and substantiate, when wrong would be redressed; or else it behooved on them to withdraw the baseless calumnies which were troubling men’s minds.” (Muir; op. cit. p: 325)

The general public, after the proclamation was read out in the Mosque, then realised the dangerous situation in which the Khalifah was placed and sympathised with him.

It has been observed earlier that Ashtar Nakhai had mobilised a large number of people in Kufah to rebel against the governor and the Khalifah. The rebels were further incited by the neo-convert Jew, Ibn Sauda (Abdullah bin Saba), to revolt against the establishment. He, however, found his great following in Egypt where he was joined by a leading Egyptian Al-Ghafiqay bin Herb bin Al-Akbay, Muhammad bin Abi Huzaifah and Muhammad bin Abi Bakr. They started vigorously propagating against the governor of Egypt Abdullah bin Abi Sarah. They established contact with the Basra and the Kufah factions of insurgents. The insurgent groups of Egypt, Basra and Kufah developed a strong network, and a well coordinated strategy to storm the house of the Khalifah, fixed upon a date to reach their respective destinations from Basra, Kufah and Fustaat (Cairo) in the suburbs of Madinah. Ibn Sarah got a hint and immediately informed and cautioned the Khalifah.
Earlier in response to the Khalifah’s proclamation the Governors arrived at the court of the Khalifah (34 A.H/655 A.D.) but the complainants were not there. After offering various suggestions to the Khalifah to meet the emerging crisis the governors returned to their respective provinces. However before departing Mu’awiah offered two suggestions (i) that Uthmaan should retire with him to Syria where people will be most willing to rally round him, whom the Khalifah refused: “Even to save my life I will not quit the land where the Prophet sojourned, or the city where his sacred person rested.” Alternately Mu’awiah suggested he would post a strong army to guard his house and for his personal protection. Even this Khalifah Uthmaan firmly rejected: “I never will put force on those who dwell around the Prophet’s home, by quartering bands of armed men upon them.” On the Khalifah’s rejection of his two propositions, Mu’awiah left saying: “I see naught but destruction awaiting thee.” (Muir; op. cit. p: 327) Mu’awiah thereafter departed. On his way back he happened to meet some leading members of the Quraysh including Ali and Zubayr. He warned them of the impending danger and feared that anarchy of the days of ignorance was overtaking Islam. He appealed to Ali and Zubayr and to the Quraysh, that “I commit to you this helpless aged man help him, and it will be better for you. Fare ye well!” (Muir; op. cit. p: 328)

The insurgents were united on the removal of Uthmaan either through abdication or assassination, but were divided on his successor. The Kufah faction favoured
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Zubayr, Basra was for Talha, and Egypt was for Ali. The insurgents from Egypt, Kufah and Basra moved towards Madinah on the pretext of Umrah (little pilgrimage). They synchronized their movement but encamped separately in the vicinity of Madinah. The Kufah group pitched at Al Awas, the Basra Party at Dhu Khashab, and the Egyptians at Dhu Marwah. Meanwhile Khalifah Uthmaan was already forewarned of their evil intentions. The Khalifah promptly addressed the people of Madinah and informed them of their real intentions: “It is against myself, soon they will look back with a longing eye to this my Khilafat, and wish that each day of the same had been a year in length, because of the tumult and bloodshed, anarchy and ungodliness that will flood the land.” (Muir; op. cit. p: 330)

The citizen’s of Madinah were incensed against the insurgents and gathered their arms to fight the rebels. The move of the insurgents was spoiled by the people of Madinah. The insurgents stayed for a few days and sent message to Umm-ul Mu’mineen Ayesha for permission to pay homage to the Prophet’s Rawdhah, which was denied. Then they called separately on Ali, Zubayr and Talha. “Ali stormed at the messengers sent to him as soon as they appeared and called them rebels accursed of the Prophet.” (Muir; op. cit. p: 330) They were snubbed equally by Talha and Zubayr. The Khalifah also promised to Ali that he would redress the grievances of the people and gave it in writing: “From Uthmaan, Ameer-ul Mu’mineen, to all those Mu’mineen who were aggrieved by the Khalifah that I shall act towards them according to the injunctions of the Qur’an and the Traditions of the Prophet. Those who have been deprived of their right will
get it back, those who have been terrorised are assured of peaceful life without fear, those who have been exiled from Madinah will be recalled and those who have been deprived of their property will receive it back.” Ali stood surety that these commitments will be fulfilled and the following witnessed this historic document: Zubayr bin al Awaam, Talha bin Ubaidullah, Sa’ad Maalik bin Abi Waqqas, Abdullah bin Umar, Zayd bin Thaabit, Sahel bin Hunayf, Abu Ayyub Khalid bin Zayd, dated Dhi-Qa’dah 35 A.H. After signing this document Uthmaan, on the advice of Ali, addressed the people and declared that “I seek the pardon of Allah for all my wrong actions and the Prophet also asked people to seek the forgiveness for any misdeed committed. I do seek His forgiveness. In case, I commit any wrong deed in future your leaders should caution me and put me on the right track. I swear by Allah that if a slave advises me to follow the path of righteousness I shall follow him.” People were delighted at the change of events for the better. (Baladhuri; op. cit. pp: 112-113) The Khalifah had also agreed to the demand of rebels from Egypt to replace Abi Sarah by Mohammad bin Abi Bakr as the Governor of Egypt. A copy of the order to this effect was handed over to Muhammad bin Abu Bakr.

It may be noted here that all the leading Quraysh, living in Madinah, offered their total support and expressed their willingness even to fight for him. Jabir bin Abdullah said, “Ali sent a letter to Uthmaan saying, I have 500 men, so give me the permission to defend you from these people, otherwise things would happen that they would kill you.” Uthmaan answered, ”May Allah reward
you for your good intentions, but I do not want blood to be shed.” Ali thereafter sent his son Hasan to Uthmaan who told the Khalifah: “O Commander of the Faithful! I am under your command, so order me as you wish.” Uthmaan answered, “My dear brother’s son! Go back, and stay in your home.” Authentic narrations highlight the fact that Talha and Zubayr also tried to defend Uthmaan, Abi Habeebah said, “Zubayr sent me to Uthmaan to deliver a message while he was surrounded. I entered upon Uthmaan in a clear day and he was sitting on chair. Hasan bin Ali, Abu Hurayrah, Abdullah bin Umar, and Abdullah bin Zubayr were all present too. I said, “Zubayr bin Al-Awaam had sent me to you. He sends you his greetings and says, ‘I am under my allegiance to you. I did not change my allegiance nor did I break it. If you wish, I will join you and be one of your men, and if you wish, I will stay too. The tribe of Omro bin Owf had promised me to be under my command, and they would carry out what I order them.’ When Uthmaan heard the message, he said, ‘Allahu Akbar! Thanks are due to Allah for He Who had saved my brother. Send him my greetings and tell him, ‘If you joined me, then you will be one of my men, but I like you to stay where you are at now...’ When Abu Hurayrah heard the message, he said, ‘Do you want me to tell you what my ears heard from the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him?’ They answered, ‘Yes!’ Abu Hurayrah said, ‘I bear witness that the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him said, ‘When I am gone, afflictions and troubles will occur.’ So we asked, ‘How could we save ourselves from that O Messenger of Allah?’ He answered, ‘Adhere to the faithful man and his
party,’ and he pointed towards Uthmaan bin Affaan.’ The people who were present at Uthmaan’s house stood up and said, ‘Now we see clearly. Give us the permission to wage Jihad!’ Uthmaan answered, ‘I order whoever gave allegiance to me not to fight.” (Virtues of the Companions: Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, vol.1, p: 511)

It is thus quite clear that the companions tried to defend him and stood by Uthmaan’s side. However, Uthmaan feared affliction, so he prevented the Companions from defending him, and he knew that he would be killed unjustly as the Prophet, peace be upon him, informed him. Abdullah Ibn Zubayr also pleaded with Uthmaan: “Come out and fight them! Allah had given victory to people with less than your men and I swear by Allah that it is lawful to fight them.” But Uthmaan refused. (Musnad Abi Shaibah, vol.8, Book of Affliction) It is stated in Tabaqaat Ibn Sa’ad: “And the son of Umar wore his shield twice that day and held his sword. However Uthmaan ordered him to leave the house for fear of being killed.” (vol.3, p: 70)

Marwaan’s Malicious Role in Maligning Khalifah Uthmaan and Turning People Against:

The people were delighted to hear that the crisis was over and in jubilation had collected in front of Uthmaan’s house. Marwaan, a son-in-law of the Khalifah and his confidant, came out of the house, rudely snubbed the crowd and asked them to disperse. Ali was informed of this rude behaviour of Marwaan bin Hakam. He
immediately called on the Khalifah and warned him frankly that Marwaan might land him into serious trouble, in which case he will not be able to help the Khalifah. Uthmaan’s wife Nailah also advised the Khalifah to keep Marwaan at a distance and do not be guided by his advice.

The Khalifah’s official signet ring used to be in the custody of Harman bin Aban. When Harman was posted to Basra the official seal was kept in the custody of Marwaan. Meanwhile the insurgents from Egypt were on their way back with the document, signed by Khalifah Uthmaan, including the appointment order of Muhammad bin Abu Bakr as Governor of Egypt. The Khalifah had also asked some Muhajireen and Ansar to accompany the insurgents and supervise the implementation of his order. While they were at a distance of three days journey from Madinah on their way to Fustaat, they observed an Abyssinian slave was rushing on a camel towards Fustaat. He was stopped and questioned. He answered that he was asked to communicate a message to the Governor of Egypt, Abu Sarah. On being questioned further he revealed that he was the slave of Amr-ul Mu’mineen, but later corrected that he was the slave of Marwaan. He was thoroughly searched and a document was discovered, concealed inside a bucket of leather normally used to carry water. They opened it, which read as follows: “When Muhammad bin Abu Bakr and others reach you then somehow surreptitiously kill them, and the other order being carried by Muhammad bin Abu Bakr be treated as
cancelled, and you continue to serve as governor.”
(Baladhuri; op. cit. pp: 116-117) This was downright treachery and complete breach of trust. Muhammad bin Abu Bakr immediately returned to Madinah and assembled all the leading Sahaabah, including Ali, Zubayr and Talha, and showed them the letter cancelling his appointment as Governor of Egypt, and that he and others be killed. This was indeed shocking to Ali and the leading Companions, who had witnessed the earlier document wherein the Khalifah had definitely committed himself to act according to the injunctions of the Qur’an and Sunnah of Rasool-ul Allah. Ali together with some of the leading Sahaabah called on the Khalifah, and bluntly asked him a few questions “Is this your slave? Uthmaan said yes! Is this your camel? He accepted. Did you write this letter? He said no and further he had not ordered it to be written, and that he had no knowledge about it, and swore in the name of Allah.” Ali then asked him about the veracity of the seal which he admitted was the seal of the Khalifah and again he stated that by God “I have not the slightest inkling as to how this letter was written.” The Sahaabah believed Uthmaan for he would not take a false oath in the name of Allah. Ali and Sahaabah wanted Marwaan bin Hakam to be handed over to them for questioning and verification. They all suspected him for committing this fraud and wanted to question and cross-examine him. The Khalifah refused to hand over Marwaan, although he was present in the house because the mob would kill him without trial. Ali and the Companions dissatisfied with Uthmaan’s refusal to hand over Marwaan indignantly left the Khalifah’s residence, which the insurgents promptly
besieged. The insurgents firmly believed that Marwaan was the author of that letter, which turned the people against Khalifah Uthmaan and therefore, their principal demand was that Marwaan be handed over to them, which the Khalifah consistently refused. However, what was most mystifying to Ali and to other Sahaabah that the insurgents from Kufah and Basra also arrived on the same date and time as Muhammad bin Abu Bakr, who was on his way to Egypt located in a diametrically opposite direction. Ali did ask the rebels from Kufah and Basra “and what has brought you back? They answered, “we had to help our Egyptian brothers.” Ali then remarked that “your roads are so apart: how did you come to know of this letter when your roads so apart and you had gone miles away” in opposite direction. All these developments were most mystifying and clearly indicated a deep-rooted conspiracy. But Ali’s hands were weakened because of Uthmaan’s refusal to hand over Marwaan. The Khalifah’s consistent refusal to seek assistance in order to avoid bloodshed, and helplessness of Ali and other Companions because of Uthmaan’s unreasonable attitude to protect Marwaan, the insurgents were emboldened and laid siege to the house. The siege had become so intense that even supply of water was completely stopped. It was with great difficulty that the Khalifah could send message to Ali to arrange for supply of water, which he promptly did. After considerable struggle with the besiegers that water could be carried into the house. Similarly, Umm-ul Mu’mineen Umm-e Habeeba, who was also the first cousin of Khalifah Uthmaan, took some supply of water. She was initially
prevented but eventually was allowed to go with water into the house. (Baladhuri; op. cit. pp: 131-132)

During this intense period of siege Uthmaan refused to accept any armed support, which would have led to serious bloodshed. Instead of suppressing the revolt with the help of Sahaabah and his well trained and well equipped soldiers. He preferred to appeal to their good sense to lift the siege by reminding them generous deeds he had rendered to Islam, such as purchasing a drinking water well ‘Bayr Roma’ for the community, purchasing land at his own cost for the extension of the Mosque during the life of Muhammad (SAWS) and many others. He came to the rooftop a number of times to narrate his deeds and appealed to the insurgents to lift the siege. All this appeal fell on deaf ears for the insurgents were determined to assassinate him.

As the siege intensified the situation was getting very grim and the martyrdom of the Khalifah looked imminent. Realising the gravity of the situation Ali sent his two sons Hasan and Husain to guard the entrance and not to allow anyone to get into the house. They were later joined by the sons of Talha, Zubayr and other Companions of the Prophet. Muhammad bin Abu Bakr, who was the principal instigator, was getting desperate since the resistance of the sons of Sahaabah was so strong that he failed to force entry into the house. He started attacking them with arrows as a result of which Hasan, Husain and others were injured and bleeding. Meanwhile Muhammad bin Abu Bakr also got the news that
Mu’awiah had sent a contingent of army to protect the Khalifah. Muhammad bin Abu Bakr was already scared that in case Banu Hashim sighted the bleeding faces of sons of Ali, they will turn the people against them and if in the meanwhile the forces sent by Mu’awiah arrived their entire plan would be frustrated. Muhammad bin Abu Bakr got all the more desperate, and took two of the rebels with him and jumped into the house of the Khalifah from the wall of the house of an Ansaar.

The Khalifah, being under total siege, was not in a position to lead the Hajj Pilgrimage as he had done in the last 10 years, he, therefore, asked Abdullah bin Abbas to lead the Hajj in Dhil-Hajj 35 A.H. Umm-ul Mu’mineen Ayesha joined the pilgrimage and attempted to dissuade her brother Muhammad bin Abu Bakr from insurgency, asked him to join her in the pilgrimage. He excused himself and stayed back to execute his nefarious plan.

As Mohammad bin Abu Bakr entered the house he rushed towards the Khalifah, who was fasting and reading the Qur’an. The ruffians, who had come with Mohammad, were reluctant to assassinate him as he was reading Qur’an. Muhammad then himself advanced and held the Khalifah by his beard and used foul language, but when the Khalifah said that his father would not have liked that behaviour he was cut to quick and stepped back. Then Kinanah bin Basher hit the Khalifah hard on his forehead with an iron rod and he fell sideward. Thereafter Sauda bin Harman Almardi slew him with a sword, and the first drop of blood of his martyrdom fell on the copy of the
Qur’an (*Mus'haf Imam*)[^7], which he was reading and the verse was “and Allah will suffice thee for defence against them. He is the Hearer and the Knower.” (Al-Baqrarah; 2:137) He was still breathing faintly when Amru bin Alhamaq sat on his chest and stabbed him nine times. This merciless killing of Khalifah Uthmaan did not harm him personally because he became a martyr, which was predicted by the Prophet himself. It was nonetheless a deadly blow to the institution over which he presided i.e. Khilafat-e Islamiah. His martyrdom established the tragic fact that Khalifah, who is the vicegerent of the Prophet, could also be removed by the force of arms. It certainly had its ugly repercussions in the future as well. It is ironic that the two most responsible for this heinous crime and despicable legacy were Marwaan, Uthmaan’s son-in-law and Muhammad bin Abu Bakr, the son of that great and venerable first Khalifah of Islam Abu Bakr, who was a close friend of Uthmaan and who laid the foundation of the institution of Khilafat in Islam. Muhammad bin Abu Bakr became too ambitious and Marwaan was a deceptive and treacherous fellow. It was his forged letter on behalf of the Khalifah that put the smoldering fire of revolt into a flaming inferno.

The matter was amicably resolved by Ali and other elite of Quraysh and *Ansaar* and the insurgents were returning to their respective destinations in Fustaat, Basra and Kufah. To a large extent Khalifah Uthmaan became an innocent victim of his leniency as he was keen to avoid

[^7]: This copy of the Qur’an is kept in the Topakapi Museum of Istanbul.
bloodshed among Muslims and that too near the Rawdah of the Prophet. When Mu‘awiah offered to dispatch a contingent of armed forces to protect him, he firmly asked him not to do so. When Ali, Talha and Zubayr sought his permission to mobilise people to fight the insurgents he again asked them not to do so. There were nearly 600-700 people from Ansar and Sahaabah around his residence for his defence; he also ordered them to go to their homes. It was despite his order not to send anyone to protect him that Ali, Talha, Zubayr and other Sahaabah sent their sons for his defense. He literally left himself defenseless for he feared that if he ordered people to fight for him there would be literally a blood bath right next to Prophet’s Rawdah. He was equally firm, till the last moment, not to abdicate the Khilafah given to him by Allah and cannot be given up on demand of a group of misguided insurgents.

(A.H. Nadwi; op. cit. pp: 220-222)

**Dream of Khalifah Uthmaan before his Martyrdom:**

Before his assassination Uthmaan said: “I saw the Prophet in my dream. He asked me if the people had besieged me. I replied yes! He further asked me, did they keep you thirsty? I replied yes! Then he gave me a bucketful of water. I drank to my satisfaction. Then he asked if you so wish you can break your fast with us, or if you like your insurgents can be defeated. I replied that I would prefer to share Iftaar (breaking fast) with you. The Prophet then said that on Friday you will be with us.”

(Baladhuri; op. cit. p: 140)
Khalifah Uthmaan was martyred on Friday 18 Dhil-Hajj 35 A.H/ June 17, 656 A.D. Because of the fear of the insurgents the slain body of the martyred Khalifah could not be laid to rest for two days. On the third day, only four persons lifted his body including the wife of Jubair bin Mutam. He was buried in the dress he was slain. The insurgents also opposed to his body being buried in Jannat-ul Baqi but they had to yield because of the determined intervention of Umm-ul Mu’mineen Umm-e Habeeba. He was buried in the garden of flowers (Hash Kawakab) in Baqi. Jubair bin Mutam led the funeral prayer, which was attended by only 17 persons.
Conclusion

Uthmaan, the third Khalifah of Islam, was indeed a most pious and noble soul. His assassination at the hands of the Muslim insurgents was the most heinous crime committed in the annals of Islamic history. Since his conversion to Islam, Uthmaan incessantly worked under the guidance of the Prophet for the growth of Islam, and was always concerned about the welfare of the Muslim community. It was Uthmaan who purchased Bayr Roma from a Jew, at exorbitant price, and dedicated it to the people of Madinah to solve their drinking water problem. It was he who, at his cost, arranged to feed the Arab forces proceeding to Tabook under the Command of the Prophet: Uthmaan’s generosity for the cause of Islam was unbounded and earned him the title of Ghani i.e. the generous. He even helped Ali, in his marriage with Fatimah, the youngest daughter of the Prophet. The Prophet asked Ali “to sell your armour and come back with its value so that I may prepare what is good for you and Fatimah.” Ali sold his armour to Uthmaan bin Affaan for 400 Dirham. After having bought the armour Uthmaan told Ali; “Don’t you need the armour more than I do and don’t you need the money more than I do.” Ali answered yes! Then Uthmaan said: “take back the armour. It is a gift from me to you.” Ali took it back with gratitude and informed the Prophet accordingly, who blessed Uthmaan.

(Abu Al-Fath Al-Arballi: Kashfa Al-Ghumah, vol.1, p: 368) The Prophet was so impressed by the nobility of Uthmaan that he readily agreed to marry a second daughter Umm-e Kulthum to him after the death of his daughter Ruqayyah.
Thereafter he was known as Zun-Nurain “the one with two lights. When Umm-e Kulthum died the Prophet said to Uthmaan: “If I had third daughter I would wed you to her.” (Bukhari)

Uthmaan was noted for his honesty, simplicity, humility and modesty. Uthmaan could never be seen with any part of his body uncovered. Even the Prophet respected his modesty. It was narrated by Ayesha: “The Messenger of Allah was reclining in his house with his legs uncovered. Abu Bakr asked permission to enter and he permitted him to enter while he was in that state and they began talking. Then Umar asked permission to enter and he permitted him to enter while he was in the same state and the conversation continued. Then Uthmaan asked permission to enter and the Messenger of Allah sat up and adjusted his clothes and then he asked Uthmaan to enter, and they all continued talking. When they departed, I (Ayesha) said: ‘(When) Abu Bakr and Umar entered you did not become enlivened and you did not (change your) state, (but) when Uthmaan entered, you sat up and adjusted your clothing.’ The Messenger of Allah replied: ‘Should I not be bashful in front of one even the angels are bashful?’” (Bukhari & Muslim)

His knowledge and understanding of the Qur’an was incomparable among his contemporaries. On all matters relating to Shar’iyah his predecessors Abu Bakr and Umar, always consulted him and his ruling was always deemed as final. One of the signal services he rendered to Islam was to prepare multiple copies of the
standardized authentic text of the Qur’an and distributed them among the then main centers of Islam in Arabia, Iraq and Syria. This guaranteed that the originality, unity and integrity of the Qur’an will ever be maintained. The Muslims owe it to Uthmaan that they have only one standard text of the Qur’an, used the world over.

*Khalifah* Uthmaan carried on the unfinished task of his predecessor *Khalifah* Umar of consolidating and expanding the political territory under Islamic rule. It was during his regime that the political territory of Islam extended to Kabul in the east, Armenia and Anatolia in the North, and Libya, Algeria and Marrakech in North Africa in the west. He developed an excellent road network in the entire Islamic territory for the movement of goods, army and travellers. As a welfare measure, he raised substantially the subsistence allowance of the people, which made them really happy.

Perhaps the greatest flaw in his administration was to discontinue the consultative process which is enjoined in the Qur’an, which was scrupulously followed by the Prophet and Uthmaan’s two predecessors, Abu Bakr and Umar. In the absence of this consultative machinery he appointed members of his tribe, competent or incompetent, to various important administrative and military positions. This led to serious charges of nepotism against him to which he could not offer satisfactory explanation. In many cases he was, therefore, forced to remove his appointees. His choice of men to important positions particularly that of his son-in-law, Marwaan bin
Hakam, proved his undoing. Khalifah Uthmaan on the advice of Ali, Talha, Zubayr and Abdur Rahmaan bin Auf had almost retrieved the deteriorating situation by signing the declaration that henceforth he would be fair, just and promised to redress the grievances of those unjustly affected by his decisions. He also agreed to appoint Muhammad bin Abu Bakr as Governor of Egypt replacing Abu Sarah. It was this decision to replace the Governor of Egypt that Marwaan attempted to torpedo through a forged letter in the name of the Khalifah and under Khalifah’s seal, which turned out to be fatal for Uthmaan. He was accused of being a liar when he denied having dictated that letter. He could have saved the situation by handing over Marwaan, who had allegedly forged that letter, to Ali and other senior Sahaabah for questioning and thorough investigation. One of his serious mistakes was not to use force to suppress the insurgency. The insurgents were acting against the unity and integrity of Islam at the instigation of Ibn Saba, the Jew. Many of the leading Sahaabah, both among the Quraysh and Ansaar, urged him to crush the revolt by force for that would be right action against the detractors of Islam. It ought to have been dealt the same way as Abu Bakr had dealt with apostasy. Khalifah Uthmaan consistently refused to shed the blood of Muslims for he recalled the Prophet having once said: “Once the sword is unsheathed among my followers it will not be sheathed until the Last Day.” (Bukhari) Being a true and sincere follower of the Prophet he preferred to die an unjust and martyr’s death than be guilty of infidelity to the Prophet and to the faith of Islam
by initiating the process of “unsheathing the sword” and starting internecine war among the Muslims.

While the insurgents were justified in their indignation against the Khalifah, their assassination of the Khalifah was blatantly wrong. In this entire scenario of insurgency the role of Muhammad bin Abu Bakr, the son of the first Khalifah, was unworthy of him. He was misguided by the Jew Ibn Saba (Ibn Sauda) and the Egyptian Al-Ghafiqay bin Herb Al-Akbay in setting up a bad precedent to remove a legitimately elected Khalifah by violent means, and thereby caused an irreparable damage to the institution of Khilafat in Islam, and to the unity of Islam. As regards the Khalifah, history testifies to his innocence. Talha said loudly and clearly “O Allah! I know nothing of Uthmaan except that he is an innocent man.” (Mawaqif Al-Sahaabah fi al-Fitnah, vol.2, p: 24)

Uthmaan died a martyr’s death, defending the ideals of Islam, whose unjust death in an affliction was even testified and predicted by the Prophet himself: “Ahmed also narrated in his book that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, mentioned of a great affliction. Then a masked man in a piece of white cloth passed by. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, ‘This man – the masked man – will be on the true side (in that affliction).’ Ka’b bin Ojrah ran fast and caught the masked man from behind and said, ‘Is this the man you are talking about O’ Messenger of Allah?’ The Prophet, peace be upon him, answered, ‘Yes.’ And that man was Uthmaan bin Affaan. (Virtues of the Companions, by Ahmed, vol.1, p: 450, with an authentic chain of narrators)
CHAPTER - 5

ALI BIN ABI TALIB:
THE FOURTH KHALIFAH

Ali was the son of Abu Taalib ibn Abdul Muttalib. He was the first cousin of Prophet Muhammad whose father Abdullah and Abu Taalib were born of the same mother. Ali belonged to the clan of Banu Hashim, one of the most honoured clans among the Quraysh. His grandfather Abdul Muttalib enjoyed a position of great honour and distinction among the Quraysh, being the custodian of the spring of Zam Zam, and was responsible for arrangements for the annual pilgrimage to Ka’bah and for the supply of drinking water to the pilgrims. Ali was first named Zayd by his father, but his mother Fatima bint Asad named him Aas ad’, because once during infancy he gripped an approaching viper so firmly that the viper was killed by the force of his grip. As the mother witnessed this act she spontaneously called out Asad i.e. the lion.

Ali was born some thirty years after the birth of the Prophet. Ali’s father Abu Taalib, who had brought up Muhammad, was very poor. He had many children, four sons (Taalib, Aqeel, Ja’far and Ali) and two daughters (Umm-e Hani and Jumana) and was not able to support them because of his poverty. Abu Taalib’s brother Abbas and nephew Muhammad offered to support Ja’far and Ali respectively. Abu Taalib readily agreed. Ali was the youngest among the children of Abu Taalib and came
under the guardianship of the Prophet right from early childhood. He lived with the Prophet and grew up with the Prophet’s family as a family member. Ali was thus brought up in an undiluted atmosphere of virtue and piety, which no other home could offer. This had a tremendous impact on Ali’s total personality, which evolved in the company of the Prophet and was fully reflected in his behaviour, psychology, intellectual and spiritual approach to life. This perhaps also accounts for the acceptance of Islam by Ali at the young age of 10 years.

Ali was over 9 years of age when Muhammad was called to divine mission. One day Ali observed his cousin and his wife Khadijah prostrating their foreheads on the ground. Further he heard them uttering praises of Allah, the Almighty. Ali was amazed for, never before he had seen anybody praying in this fashion. After the prayer was over, Ali asked the Prophet about this strange way of worshipping. The Prophet answered: “We were worshipping Allah, the one and only Allah, and invited him to join Islam, worship only Allah. He also advised him never to worship Lat, Uzzah and any other idol. Since Ali had not seen nor heard of this form of worship he said he would consult his father Abu Taalib before consenting. The Prophet then told him. “You should not as yet talk to anyone about this matter. Think for yourself and make up your mind.” Ali deeply thought about it during the night and was convinced about the correctness and truthfulness of the new religion. The next morning he conveyed his consent, embraced Islam, and recited the Shahadah: “I
stand witness that there is no God but Allah, refuse to accept Uzzah and Lat as god and do not join anyone with Allah.” Ali thus became the first Quraysh male child to accept Islam. It is being said that Khadijah was the first woman, Abu Bakr was the first adult male, Ali the first child, and Zayd the first slave to embrace Islam. Except Abu Bakr, the other three converts were members of the Prophet’s household. Ali stayed with the Prophet for thirteen years in Makkah after his conversion to Islam. He was therefore a participant in all the meetings conducted by the Prophet for the propagation of Deen Islam. Ali literally shadowed the Prophet in all his movements and helped in the propagation of Islam in his own way. He used to go quietly and stealthily with the Prophet to an isolated location to offer daily Salaat with the Prophet. Once Ali and Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) were offering Salaat (prayer) together, meanwhile Abu Taalib happened to pass that way. He asked the Prophet as to what sort of Deen they had adopted. He replied that this was the Deen of Allah, His Angels, and His Prophets and of our chief Abraham from whom the Quraysh have stemmed. Abu Taalib appreciated and asked them to stay firm with this religion. This further reinforced Ali’s resolve to adhere firmly to Deen Islam.

Ali also helped others to quietly reach the Prophet so that he could explain to them the meaning and significance of Islam. Abu Dhar Ghiffari was one such person. Abu Dhar Ghiffari came to Makkah looking for the Prophet but he did not ask anyone about his address. Ali quietly watched his movements for a couple of days,
and on the third day he asked Abu Dhar Ghiffari the purpose of his visit. He asked Ali to solemnly commit that he would not speak to anyone about it and that Ali would guide him correctly. Ali made a firm promise. Then Abu Dhar told him that he had come to find about the Prophet. Ali repeatedly assured him about the truthfulness of the message of the Prophet, and promised to arrange a meeting with him the next morning. The following morning Abu Dhar Ghiffari left Ka‘bah with Ali to meet the Prophet, and after a brief dialogue with the Prophet, Abu Dhar Ghiffari embraced Islam. Ali was also responsible for demolishing an idol made of copper or brass fixed on the roof of Ka‘bah at the behest of the Prophet. Ali climbed on the shoulders of the Prophet, reached the roof of Ka‘bah, firmly pulled out the idol, dashed it down, it was smashed to pieces. It happened before Prophet’s migration. (Nadwi; op. cit. p: 54) There were two other important events in which Ali was directly involved together with the Prophet. One was the feast which the Prophet held at his residence wherein he had invited leaders of Banu Muttalib. The guests included among others Abu Taalib, Hamzah, Abbas and Abu Lahab. At the conclusion of the dinner the Prophet explained the fundamentals of Islam to his guests, and invited them to accept Islam. He invited them thrice, each time only Ali responded to help the Prophet through thick and thin. Ali said: “I am the youngest of all present here. My eyes trouble me because they are sore, and my legs are thin and weak, but I shall join you and help you in whatever way I can.” (Nadwi; op. cit. pp: 268-269 and Islamic - world.net/Khilafat site p: 2 of 6) The other was a critically
important event related to the migration of the Prophet in which Ali even risked his life for the sake of the Prophet. The pagan leaders of Makkah had planned to kill the Prophet just before his migration. He was divinely forewarned about it. The night they had planned to kill him he quietly walked out of the house and left for the cave Thaur with Abu Bakr. Ali replaced the Prophet in his bed. In the morning, when Ali got up, the assassins were amazed to notice that Muhammad had outwitted them, escaped miraculously leaving Ali behind. Some of them even suggested to kill Ali but dropped the idea. They immediately rushed out of the house, ashamed at the failure of their treacherous plan. Before his migration to Madinah the Prophet had handed over to Ali to return to their owners all the articles, which they had kept in his custody. Ali did as asked by the Prophet. He handed over the various items and goods to their respective owners in two to three days, and thereafter decided to migrate to Madinah. He took the same route, which the Prophet had taken to reach Madinah. He travelled on foot during night and rested under a shady tree during the day. By the time he reached the residence of Kulthum bin Al-Haddam his left foot was torn with blisters. He was immobilized to such an extent that he could not even move out of his bed when summoned by the Prophet. The Prophet came over to see him and literally cried on his miserable condition. He applied saliva on Ali’s wounds and caressed with his hands his blistered feet. As a result Ali soon recovered and thereafter he had no problem with his feet. The Prophet after reaching Madinah had started a system of brotherhood, as observed earlier between Ansaar and
Muhajireen (migrants) but he kept Ali in his own brotherhood.

In the second year after migration Ali was married to the youngest daughter of the Prophet, Fatima. She was fifteen and a half years of age and Ali was of 21 years. Ali sold his armour called Khatimah to Uthmaan (RA) for 500 dirham, but later Uthmaan gifted the armour back to Ali to arrange for dowry and Walima dinner. It has been narrated by reliable sources that Abu Bakr also helped in Ali’s dowry purchases. The Prophet gifted to his daughter, on her marriage, a thick large sheet of cloth (chador), leather drum and leather pillow filled with a fragrant grass (Izkhar). Both Ali and Fatima were extremely dear to the Prophet, but they lived their early life under extreme hardship. Sometimes for days together they had practically nothing to eat. Hannad Ata narrated that Ali and Fatima had been starving for a few days. He walked out of the house in search of some food that he found a dinar on the way. He picked it up after considerable hesitation, bought some wheat flour and Fatima cooked some bread from this flour. Before eating it Ali told the whole story to the Prophet who permitted him to eat the good as gift from Allah. (Nadwi; op. cit. narrated in Abu Dawud by Sohail bin Sa’ad, pp: 66-67)

There are numerous stories regarding the hardship in life experienced by Ali and Fatima, the son-in-law and daughter of the Prophet. One story is most poignant. Fatima was of frail constitution and she used to get tired working on the grindstone. She came to know once that
lots of slaves had come to the Prophet as spoils of war. Ali asked Fatima to approach the Prophet to allot a slave to her from the spoils of war. She went to his residence but the Prophet was not there, she told Ayesha the purpose of her visit. Ayesha informed the Prophet on his return. By that time the slaves were sold off to feed the people of Suffah who were also starving. The Prophet immediately went to Fatima’s house, expressed his inability to help, as desired, but before leaving he asked her to recite before going to bed *Allahu Akbar* 34 times, *Al-hamdulillah* 33 times and *Subhanallah* 33 times which he told her will be more useful and effective than getting a few slaves. (Nadwi; op. cit. p: 68-69)

Ali was equally concerned about the welfare of the Prophet. Once he came to know that members of the Prophet’s household were starving. He immediately went out in search of a job to earn enough to buy some food for the Prophet and his family. He worked as a labourer in the date farm of a Jew. He earned enough to get 17 Ajwa dates from the Jew’s farm and presented them to the Prophet, which he profoundly appreciated.

Islam was firmly entrenched within six months in Madinah and the number of the followers of Islam both among *Ansar* and *Muhajireen* had considerably increased, hence the need for the construction of a mosque for *Salaat* (Prayer) was strongly felt. The construction of a mosque started in right earnest. Every male Muslim of Madinah including the Prophet joined the labour pool to build the mosque. Ali used to carry bricks and plaster for the
Ali’s Role in the Battles fought by the Prophet:

Ali played a stellar role and made a mark as a brave and skilled soldier of Islam in all the battles fought by the Prophet from Badr to Tabook.

The Battle of Badr was fought in the month of Ramadhaan 2nd A.H. It was one of the most decisive battles fought in the history of Islam. Ali was the standard bearer of Islam in this battle. When the Quraysh challenged the Prophet to send fighters of Quraysh origin to face their individual challenges, then Ali along with Hamzah and Ubaidah of the Quraysh tribe and among the closest relatives of the Prophet were asked to enter the battle field and face the enemies in individual fights. Ali while going for the fight was gifted by the Prophet his personal sword, Zulfiquar, which after the battle of Badr stayed permanently with Ali. As he entered the battle field Ali challenged his rival Waleed bin Atbah and killed him with one deadly blow and subsequently rushed to save Ubaidah who was under pressure and severely wounded. Ubaidah eventually succumbed to his injuries. Infuriated by this setback in the fight between individuals, the pagans launched a massive assault. Ali again played a heroic role and no enemy could survive who came within the striking range of his sword. (Nadwi: SM [1997] Ali Murtaza, p: 19) The Muslims scored a decisive victory with large spoils of war including 70 prisoners. Ali’s share from
the booty was an armour, a camel and a sword. (Nadwi: op .cit. pp: 72-73)

The Battle of Uhud took place in the month of Shawwal 3rd H. Ali was given charge of the right flank. He and other Muslim soldiers bravely fought the pagans and had almost won the war but unfortunately it ended in a serious setback and virtual defeat because the Muslim soldiers mistook the strategic retreat of the enemy as decisive victory and left their assigned posts to grab their share of the spoils of war. It was in this battle that the Prophet was badly injured. Ali supported him with his hand and Fatima tended his wounds. Ali was also given the charge of the flag after the martyrdom of Musab bin Umayr the standard-bearer of Islam for the battle of Uhud.

Battle of the Trench (Shawwal 5 A.H):

The Quraysh of Makkah marched with a 10,000 well equipped infantry and cavalry to storm Madinah in order to crush the forces of Islam. As they tried to enter Madinah from the North-West they were confronted with a wide and deep trench standing between them and their target. They found the obstacle insurmountable. However they surveyed the trench which was totally a new line of defence and were perplexed. However some of cavalrymen from the pagans which included Amr bin Abdu, a highly skilled and brave fighter considered alone equal to 1000 cavalry, crossed the trench, entered Madinah and challenged for individual fight. Ali wanted to accept the challenge, the Prophet stopped him but when Amr
challenged third time Ali could not resist, and the Prophet also allowed him but also warned him that he was going to fight against the bravest Quraysh warrior. As Ali came forward Amr told him condescendingly that he did not want to kill a child of his brother. Ali replied that he wanted to spill Amr’s blood. This remark angered Amr who charged on Ali dismounting from his horse. After a brief but intense encounter Ali killed Amr. The pagans lost heart. A prolonged siege without any result and a deadly storm on an extremely cold night, which blew up the tents of the Quraysh and their cooking utensils, totally demoralised them. They raised the siege and returned to Makkah. After this reverse the Quraysh never ventured to attack Madinah. This was precisely what the Prophet had predicted. (Nadwi; A. Hasan; op. cit. pp: 76-77)

**Ali’s Attitude on the Draft Text of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah:**

In the 6th H the Prophet decided to go on a minor pilgrimage (Umrah) to Makkah accompanied by nearly 1,400 Muslim pilgrims. The pagans of Makkah obstinately objected and after considerable discussion and argument a treaty, called The Treaty of Hudaibiyah was signed between the Prophet and pagans. Ali was the scribe and wrote, “This is the text of Agreement between Muhammad Rasoolullah...” The pagans objected to the use of word Rasoolullah. They argued that if they accepted Muhammad as Rasoolullah, there was no ground for discord; hence Rasoolullah be deleted and replaced by Muhammad ibn Abdullah. The Prophet reluctantly agreed
and asked Ali to delete that word. Ali refused to strike it off with his hands. The Prophet then deleted it himself.

**Miscellaneous Military Excursions before the Conquest of Makkah:**

**Banu Nadheer:** This Jewish tribe located within the precincts of Madinah was forced out of their settlement because of their arrogant behaviour, rebellious tendencies and breach of agreement. Ali was in the forefront of this expedition as the standard bearer of the Muslim forces. This was executed in the 4th H after the Battle of Uhad.

**Banu Quraizah:** The Jewish tribe of Banu Quraizah conspired with the Quraysh to uproot Islam from Madinah. They were spying for the Quraysh in Madinah. Hence immediately after the Battle of the Trench, the Prophet launched a military expedition with Ali as the standard bearer in the 5th H. The fort of Banu Quraizah was captured. The Islamic flag was installed in the court yard of the fort where the Muslim forces offered their evening prayer (Salaat ul-Asr).

**Banu Sa’ad:** In the 6th H a military expedition under the command of Ali was launched against the Jewish tribe of Banu Sa’ad for conspiring with the Jews of Khyber to disturb peace and political stability of Madinah. Banu Sa’ad was overpowered by the forces under the command of Ali. They were expelled from their fortress. In the spoils of war Ali brought with him 500 camels and 2000 goats.
**Expedition and victory over Khyber (7th H):** Khyber was a prominent Jewish settlement 70 miles to the north west of Madinah. It consisted of a series of fortified prosperous settlements. The Jewish leaders of Khyber were inciting the Jews of Madinah to rebel against the Islamic government and were also conspiring with the Quraysh to disturb peace and stability in Madinah. Thus on return to Madinah, after the Treaty of Hudaibiyah, the Prophet directed a major military operation against the Jews of Khyber. Their forts were being captured one after the other and only the fort of Al-Qamus proved difficult to overpower. Many attacks were launched under the command of leading *Sahaabah* such as Abu Bakr and Umar but they could not secure it. Eventually the Prophet said that he would now hand over the command to someone whom Allah will bless with victory. It was a great moment of suspense among the *Sahaabah* for many of them were keen to have the distinction. The selection went in favour of Ali although his both eyes were swollen. The Prophet applied his saliva on Ali’s swollen and irritating eyes and handed over the flag and the command to Ali. Ali was instantly relieved of the ailment of his eyes and marched forward to accomplish the task assigned to him. As he approached the gates of the fort of Al-Qamus, Mazhab the famous Jewish warrior, came forward and challenged Ali. After a short but fierce encounter Ali attacked him so forcefully that Mazhab was beheaded together with his headgear. With the death of Mazhab Al-Qamus surrendered and the Jewish menace was eliminated. (Nadwi AM; op. cit. pp: 27-28)
The victory of Makkah (8th H):

The Prophet with 10,000 companions marched for Makkah on 10th Ramadan 8th H and accomplished a bloodless victory. There were many standard bearers because the Muslims entered Makkah from different directions. One of the standards was held by Sa’ad bin Abadah who was loudly reciting a battle song “that today was the day of fierce war when war even in the precincts of Ka’bah would be valid.” The Prophet stopped him from reciting this battle verse and told him that this was the day of honour and majesty of Ka’bah and asked Ali to replace Sa’ad ibn Abadah as the standard bearer.

Ali Repaired the Damage Done by Khalid as Missionary:

After the conquest of Makkah, the Apostle sent out troops in the districts around Makkah inviting people living there to embrace Islam. The missionaries were instructed not to use force. Khalid bin al-Waleed led one such mission to the tribe of Banu Huzaina in south Makkah. The tribesmen were asked by Khalid to surrender. If they did so they would not be beheaded. Once they surrendered they were all bound and some of them even beheaded. This unnecessary bloodshed damaged the reputation of Islam. Khalid was recalled, and Ali was dispatched to repair the damage done with money to pay the blood wit and to make good their monetary loss even for a dog’s bowl. Ali accomplished his mission with
kindness and generosity which is the hallmark of Islam. All the tribesmen were moved by the way Ali treated and voluntarily accepted Islam. (Ibn-Ish’aq – Seerah; pp: 561-562)

**Battle of Hunain (8 A.H.):**

On return from the victory of Makkah the Muslims encountered a serious battle with the tribes of Banu Hawazin and Banu Thaqif, in which the Muslims first suffered severe reverses but eventually emerged victorious. Ali played a stellar role in turning defeat into victory in this battle.

When the Prophet marched for Tabook in 9 A.H Ali was asked to stay in Madinah to look after the members of the extended family of the Prophet and that of his own. In the same year Abu Bakr was asked to lead the Hajj ceremonies so that the Muslims are guided to perform the Hajj rituals in the right way. While Abu Bakr was on his way to Makkah that Surah Tawbah (Bara’at) was revealed, which commanded that the pagans will not be allowed to join the Hajj ceremonies from the next year onward. Ali was specially deputed to recite this Surah during the course of Hajj, while Abu Bakr continued to lead the Hajj ceremonies. The Prophet gave Ali his own she camel, Qaswah, to go to Makkah, and was asked by the Prophet to recite this Surah on the 10th of Dhil-Hajj (Yaum-un Nahar or the Day of Sacrifice) that no one who believes in god other than Allah will enter the Heaven, and henceforth they will not be allowed to perform the
Hajj, and that no one will be allowed to circumambulate the Ka'bah naked.

Ali was also assigned another significant assignment to propagate Islam in Yemen. Prior to him, Khalid bin Waleed was posted in Yemen but despite his best efforts, during his six month’s stay there, Khalid met with little success. Ali was then asked to go on that mission. He was reluctant to accept it but on the insistence of the Prophet he had no choice. He had however a very successful tenure and the Tribe of Hamadan of Yemen got converted to Islam. From Yemen Ali joined the Prophet in his last Hajj pilgrimage to Makkah in 10 A.H. During his stay in Makkah the Prophet had arranged for 100 animals for sacrifice. He himself sacrificed only 63, and asked Ali to sacrifice the rest. The figure of 63 coincides with the age of the Prophet at his death. On his return journey to Madinah after the last pilgrimage the Prophet stopped at Ghadir Khum, a place between Makkah and Madinah and two miles from Juhfah. There he delivered a Khutbah, in which he praised Ali for his qualities of head and heart, his honesty and integrity, his keen sense of justice. During the course of the Khutbah he also declared that all those whom he supported and treated as friend, Ali also was their supporter and friend. This Khutbah (Sermon) removed lot of misunderstandings against Ali, which had crept up during his Governorship of Yemen.

The Prophet did not live long after the last pilgrimage. He had clearly indicated about his impending death during his last Khutbah from the plain of Arafat and
in his sermons in Madinah. He died on Monday 12 Rabbi-ul-Awwal 11\textsuperscript{th} H, which was a rude shock to the entire Islamic world, to the people in Madinah and Makkah and most of all to his daughters Fatima and Zainab and son-in-law Ali. This was natural also because of their close blood relationship with the Prophet. But they put up with immense patience, fortitude and courage of faith this irreparable loss. They got fully involved in the arrangement for funeral and burial of the body of the Prophet.

\textit{Ali and Khalifah Abu Bakr:}

Some contemporary sources have attempted to focus on differences between Ali and \textit{Khalifah} Abu Bakr that their relations were strained, and Ali therefore did not take the oath of allegiance until after the death of his wife and youngest daughter of the Prophet, Fatimat-uz-Zahra. Behaqi and Ibn Kathir have categorically stated that Ali took his oath of allegiance immediately after Abu Bakr took over charge of \textit{Khilafat}. (Nadwi; op. cit. pp: 146-147) The oath of allegiance taken by him publicly after the demise of Fatima was reconfirmation of his earlier oath of allegiance. His acceptance of the \textit{Khalifahate} of Abu Bakr was firm, which is evident from a number of facts. On the death of Fatima, Ali insisted that Abu Bakr would lead the funeral prayer, although the \textit{Khalifah} himself wanted Ali to lead it.

Ali was an embodiment of self sacrifice who could never have conceived of destroying the foundation and
fabric of the incipient Islamic state. According to Ibn Asakir, Abu Sufiyan came with the proposal that he would take oath of allegiance on Ali’s hand, as the Khalifah, and will fill the city of Madinah with his supporters to topple Abu Bakr who belonged to a lower rank of Quraysh clan. Ali rejected the proposal outright and warned Abu Sufiyan never to disturb the stability of the Islamic state. To him the peaceful spread of Islam was far more dear than promoting his own personal interest. Further he whole-heartedly supported the election of Abu Bakr as a Khalifah. That Ali had total faith and lent full support to the Khalifat of Abu Bakr (RA) is further reinforced by the fact, that once the Khalifah himself was keen to lead a military expedition against the apostates. He was almost ready to mount his camel when Ali took control of the camel’s rein, and urged him to return to Madinah because any harm to his person would be most damaging to the cause of Islam. (Hasan; op. cit. pp: 145-150) If Ali had any hard feelings against Abu Bakr he would not have stopped him, instead would have encouraged him to lead the military expedition against the apostates. But Ali was a man of integrity, honesty, totally dedicated to the cause of Islam, because he was brought up by the Prophet and had inherited from him the strength of character, supreme courage of conviction and self sacrifice. Therefore, he could have never even conceived of intriguing and conspiring against Khalifah Abu Bakr. The mutual relations between Ali and Abu Bakr were cordial is also supported by the fact that on the death of Khalifah Abu Bakr the former took up the responsibility of bringing up the late Khalifah’s youngest son, Muhammad
bin Abu Bakr, who was appointed Governor of Egypt during the Khalifah of Ali.

Ali during the Khilafat of Umar:

The relations between Khalifah Umar and Ali were cordial. Umar used to say “that he would have been finished if Ali had not been there.” (Nadwi; op. cit. p: 169) He used to consult Ali on all important matters of the state including military campaigns. Two critical historic events of epoch making consequence occurred which shaped the future of Islam against the Persian Empire in the east and the Byzantine (Roman) Empire in the west. Suddenly the Persians assembled a well-equipped, overwhelmingly large force, to challenge the Muslims and drive them out of the captured Persian territories. Umar raised this matter in his Consultative Assembly (Shura). Excepting Ali other Senior Sahaabah supported the idea to raise a large force to be dispatched under the personal command of Khalifah Umar and face boldly the challenge of the Persians. Ali opposed the idea. At no cost, he said, the Khalifah should leave the capital Madinah for if any mishap overtakes the Khalifah in the battle it will be disastrous for Islam. Umar agreed with his views and dropped the idea. No’man bin al Maqran al Mazzini was appointed the commander of the Arab forces for the battle of Nihawand. In fact the Khalifah had even asked Ali to officiate as Khalifah during his absence which he declined. On the western front the Byzantines (Romans) were threatening to attack the Muslims in order to regain their lost territories. Khalifah Umar received a disturbing message from Abu Ubaidah
that the Byzantine forces were assembling in thousands from both land and sea and therefore he asked for prompt and large reinforcements. Abdur Rahmaan bin Auf suggested that the Khalifah himself should lead the Islamic forces to counter this challenge, which Ali again opposed, and Khalifah Umar agreed with him. It has been reported that for the surrender of Jerusalem, the Christian Bishop insisted that he would surrender personally to the Khalifah in Jerusalem. Uthmaan opposed the visit of Khalifah to Jerusalem but Ali forcefully supported the idea that such a step would be a distinct honour and an unforgettable historic moment. It will also satisfy the ego of the Christians. Umar agreed, left for Jerusalem and gave the charge of Madinah to Ali. The relationship between Ali and Umar were further strengthened when Umar desired to marry Ali’s daughter Kulthum and Ali consented.

**Ali (RA) During the Khilafat of Uthmaan:**

It has been earlier observed that Ali played a very dignified and helpful role to protect Khalifah Uthmaan from the insurgents. It was Ali who argued with the Egyptian insurgents, who had come to demonstrate against Khalifah Uthmaan, and forced them to go back. Ali even offered to organize forces to fight against these insurgents. Uthmaan firmly asked him not to do so as he was against internecine war among the Muslims. Then Ali posted his two sons to guard the house of the Khalifah against the attack of the insurgents. The insurgents had also cut off the supply of water. Ali arranged for the supply of water for the Khalifah. He did everything what
was humanly possible to protect Khalifah Uthmaan, who unfortunately weakened Ali’s hand by over protecting his son-in-law Marwaan.

**Election of Ali as the Fourth Khalifah (24 Dhil-Hajj, 35 A.H/ June 26, 656 AD):**

After the brutal assassination of Khalifah Uthmaan (Friday, 24 Dhil-Hajj, 35 H / 26th June, 656 A.D.) there was total chaos in Madinah for three days. During this period Ghafaqi, the ringleader of the Egyptian insurgents led the prayers in the Masjid-un Nabi. There was unanimity among the Muhajireen and Ansar that Ali was the most suitable person to take up the post of Khalifah but he was most reluctant, Muhammad Ibn Al-Hansiah (Ali’s son – from a wife other than Fatimah) said: “I have been with my father (Ali) when Uthmaan was killed, some people came to Ali and said: “This man was killed (they meant Uthmaan) and the people should have an Imam, we do not find any one who deserves this position more than you ---.” Ali said: “Do not do it” (giving the Bay’at) – They said we are not leaving until we give you the Bay’at. He said then it should be in the mosque. My Bay’at should not be held in secret. It should be after the consent of the Muslims. (Tareekh al-Tabri, vol.3, p:450; see also The Bay’at in the Islamic Political Thinking by Mahmud al-Khalid, page 107-108, Islamic world net p: 1 of 6). Those people who came to Ali were from among the insurgents. Ali came to the Masjid-un Nabi to receive the pledge of loyalty. Maalik Ashtar was the first to take the pledge. He was followed by other people. Talha and Zubayr, the two noted
Companions, were in Medina at the time. They were among the six electors nominated by Umar, Ali wanted to make sure that they were with him. So he sent for them. Ali said when they came: “If either one of you wants to be the Khalifah, I am ready to pledge loyalty to him.” They both refused to carry this burden. “Then pledge loyalty to me,” said Ali. Zubayr kept quiet but Talha showed unwillingness. At this time Maalik Ashtar drew his sword. “Pledge loyalty,” he said, “or I will strike off your heads.” Both of them took pledge. Sa’ad bin Waqqas and Abdullah bin Umar assured Ali of their loyalty.

Some of the leading Ansar also did not pledge loyalty to Ali. Meanwhile members of the Omayyad family fled to Syria. They took away with them the blood-stained shirt of the late Khalifah and the chopped fingers of his wife, Nailah. Ali took the oath of Khilafat on Friday 24 Dhil-Hajj 35 H (26 June, 656 A.D). Immediately after assuming charge as Khalifah he tried to find out the assassins of Uthmaan on the complaint of Nailah, the widow of Uthmaan. Muhammad bin Abu Bakr was identified as the person who had brought the assassins into the house. Muhammad bin Abu Bakr however denied that he had committed the murder. Nailah corroborated his statement but then insisted that he had brought the assassins and must be knowing them. Muhammad pleaded that he did not know them. The matter was left at that and Muhammad bin Abu Bakr, the leader of insurgents, was released. This is one of the gravest charges against Ali that he did not pursue the search vigorously to find the assassins of Uthmaan. Further there was a
seething discontent against the Quraysh aristocracy in Basra and Kufa, which Ali could not read correctly and did not deal with it firmly. This led to further deterioration in the law and order situation. A hot pursuit of the insurgents, vigorous action against them would have certainly united the entire Arab aristocracy with him and might have even brought Mu’avia into the fold of Ali but he vacillated, which eventually proved harmful to the stability of his Khilafat.

The other pressing matter on which Ali, as Khalifah, was called upon to take early action was the continuation or removal of the officials appointed by Uthmaan. He rationalized that all these disturbances were caused mainly because of the wrong action of these officials, he; therefore, decided to dismiss them all without assessing the situation dispassionately. He was advised by Moghirah not to take precipitate action unless his status as Khalifah was firmly established and accepted by all. Ali would have none of it and obstinately stuck to his viewpoint. The process of consultation in taking important decisions was almost abandoned by Khalifah Uthmaan and Ali did not reintroduce it. He took his own decisions and rigidly adhered to them irrespective of the consequences.

Ibn Abbas, on return from Hajj Pilgrimage, cogently argued with him against the dismissal of Mu’avia, the Governor of Syria. He was appointed by Umar and was in Syria for the last twenty years and entrenched firmly there. Ibn Abbas argued: “Let your election be accepted by all. Since your own position was
unstable you should not precipitate any action against Mu’avia.” Ali rejected this suggestion saying: “Nay; I shall not confirm him even for a single day.” Ibn Abbas again tried to make Ali realise the gravity of his action. “If thou depose him the Syrians will question thy election: and, worse, they may accuse thee of the blood of Uthmaan and, as one man rise up against thee. Confirm him in his government, and they care not who is Khalifah. When thou art firmly seated, depose him if thou wilt, it will be easy with thee then.” Ali again answered “never! He shall not have but the sword from me.” Ibn Abbas was irritated and told Ali “thou art brave, but innocent of the craft of war.” (Muir; op. cit. p: 316) Ali flatly rejected his suggestion, then Ibn Abbas warned him that he would be completely isolated. He repeatedly pleaded with Ali to make peace with Mu’avia but Ali was in no mood to listen to any argument. On principle, Ali was absolutely right, as he was the legitimately elected Khalifah by the electorate i.e. the Ansaars and Muhajireen of Madinah. It was they who elected the preceding three Khalifah’s. He, therefore, asserted his right to demand oath of allegiance from Mu’avia and stressed this principle in his letter to Mu’avia: “all those who had offered oath of allegiance to Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthmaan have offered their oath of allegiance to me. It is thus binding on the rest to offer their oath of allegiance to me and on the same terms and conditions. They have no other course of action open to them. It is the electorate of Ansaars and Muhajireen in Madinah, which has the right to elect a Khalifah. They have duly elected me and also declared me as their Imam. This also reflects the pleasure of Allah. Those who refused
military action will be launched to force them to submission.” (Nadwi; op. cit. p: 249)

Ali did as he had decided. He changed all the governors. Uthmaan bin Haneef replaced Ibn Amir in Basra; Qays was appointed the governor of Egypt. He was an able and competent officer and managed the affairs well. There was a small rebellious faction in the district of Kharbana in Egypt. He overlooked and concentrated on stabilising his position first. Ali’s nominee took charge in Yemen but with some difficulty. His appointees to the posts of Governor in Kufa and Syria were Ammarah bin Hasan and Sahal respectively. They were severely rebuffed and just managed to escape and return to Madinah. Ali felt deeply frustrated and could discern strong rebellious trends against his Khilafat. He consulted Talha and Zubayr who counselled strong and immediate military action to stem the tide. However, before launching military action he addressed letters to Mu’avia, Governor of Syria and Abu Musa Ashri Governor of Kufa demanding their allegiance. Abu Musa Ashri vowed allegiance and warned him of a grave discontent in and around Kufa particularly amongst the Bedouins.

Mu’avia ignored Ali’s letter and kept his emissary waiting. Meanwhile the blood stained clothes of Uthmaan and clipped portions of the fingers of Nailah, the widow of Uthmaan, were prominently hung up near the pulpit of the main mosque in Damascus. There was however no trouble in Syria, it was simply waiting for the measures
that the new *Khalifah* will initiate to bring to book the assassins of Uthmaan. In this Mu’avia could have been a great help, but Ali spurned the very thought of it. Ali felt helpless in taking action against the assassins of Uthmaan. They had disappeared from Madinah and no one was prepared to identify them. Unfortunately, most of those who had abetted in the crime were the great supporters of Ali such as Muhammad bin Abu Bakr, Ashtar Nakhai etc. He could not afford to lose their support either. Ali was, therefore, in a dilemma and had no clue how to handle it. When no action was initiated against the assassins of Uthmaan, Mu’avia refused to abide by the orders of Ali. Syria was totally loyal to Mu’avia. He had efficiently and sagaciously administered Syria for nearly 22 years since the *Khilafat* of Umar. Hence the order to replace Mu’avia was abortive and the reply to Ali’s letter was most derogatory. It was simply addressed from Mu’avia to Ali and the rest of the paper was blank. When asked to explain the envoy of Mu’avia, Cabisa said “know then that but now I left behind me, weeping under blood-stained shirt of Uthmaan, by the pulpit of the Great Mosque of Damascus, sixty thousands warriors, all bent on revenging the *Khalifah*’s death, and revenging on thee!” (Muir; op. cit. p:349). Ali was stunned to hear and he swore “Oh Lord! I take Thee to witness that I am guiltless to Uthmaan’s blood.” He summarily dismissed the envoy and started military preparations against Syria. But before launching military action against Mu’avia he was confronted with the demand for the Qisas of the murder of Uthmaan emanating from Makkah, in which Talha, Zubayr and Ummul Momineen Ayesha were directly involved.
Battle of Jamal (Battle of Camel) 36 A.H (656 A.D):

Observing the chaotic situation in Madinah, Talha and Zubayr, on the pretext of Umrah or little pilgrimage, left for Makkah with the permission of Ali. Earlier Zubayr and Talha had jointly demanded that the assassins of Uthmaan should be apprehended and punished according to Shar’i’ya i.e. Qisas. Ali explained to Talha and Zubayr that it was not possible because there was no single individual but a group of persons who had committed the crime and there were numerous abettors to this crime. Talha and Zubayr were not satisfied. In Makkah they met Ayesha (RA), and the three jointly demanded Qisas for the assassination of Uthmaan, and proceeded to mobilize men and resources to launch struggle against Ali for the fulfillment of their demand.

Meanwhile Ali had decided to shift his capital to Kufa. This news upset the Ansaar considerably. They were totally opposed to the idea of the capital being shifted from Madinah. Further they argued that Ali, who was now himself Ameer-ul Mu’mineen, should not go out to conduct punitive action against the recalcitrant elements. A very distinguished Ansaar Sahabi (companion) Aqbah bin Aamer who had fought in the Battle of Badr strongly urged Ali not to go out personally which none of his predecessors had done earlier. In fact Ali himself had prevented both Abu Bakr and Umar from doing so. They were able to achieve spectacular success through their loyal, brave, skilful courageous commanders. He further
added such loyal, skilled and courageous commanders are still available and can faithfully execute his orders. In view of this fact it will not be advisable for him to leave Madinah. Before his departure from Madinah another Companion of the Prophet held the bridle of his horse and urged him not to leave. He said to Ali “if thou goest forth from this city, the government will depart from here never to return.” (Muir; op. cit. p: 369) This prophecy proved absolutely correct. Ali’s eldest son Hasan was also against the shifting of the Capital from Madinah but Ali ignored his advice also. Ali was adamant and felt that without his personal intervention things may go out of his control. Further he pointed out that in order to consolidate his position the control of Kufa and Basra and their vast resources in men and material was essential. Since he had made up his mind he issued an order to march towards Basra and Kufa. Barring a few leading Sahaabah most of the elites of Madinah accompanied him. He appointed Sahal bin Hunayf Wahab-ul Ansari as his Deputy in Madinah and moved on to Iraq.

While Ali was preparing to leave for Basra, Zubayr, Talha and Ayesha had already moved to Basra, taken control of the city and its resources. A large number of people of Basra took oath of allegiance on the hands of both Zubayr and Talha who acclaimed themselves as joint Khalifah. Talha and Zubayr raised the question of punishment to the assassins of the martyred Khalifah Uthmaan, and they had killed a number of insurgents but Horcus, one of the actuAl-Assassins, had somehow escaped through the intercession of Bani Sa’d. (Muir; op.
Having learnt that Ayesha, Talha and Zubayr had already taken control of Basra, Ali immediately dispatched his son Hasan and Ammar bin Yasser to Kufa in order to obtain the allegiance of the people of Kufa to his Khilafat with the message that he had chosen Kufa as his future capital, which he thought might induce them to support him. Initially this did not have much of an impact but later through the persuasion of Hajr bin Kundi, a highly respected person of Kufa, the people of that city accepted Ali as the Khalifah and agreed to support him to suppress the rebellion in Basra. Immediately after, Hasan with Hajr bin Kundi and other such distinguished leaders as Adi bin Hatim and Cacaa and with a large contingent of 9000 men marched towards Dhu Qarr (Dheeqar) to join Ali’s forces which were stationed there. Initially the people of Basra were not prepared to join in a battle with Khalifah Ali and were inclined for peace. However when they learnt that Ali was marching to attack Basra with a large army they agreed to fight against his forces under their leader Ahnaf and marched out with Talha, Zubayr and Ayesha. Ayesha was seated in a well fenced litter on her camel. The rival forces faced each other at Dhu Qarr.

Ayesha was initially enthusiastic to fight Ali for the Qisas of Uthmaan, but as soon as she reached Hawab, in the desert of Iraq, and heard the barking of dogs she was upset, and asked her camel guide to stop and make the camel kneel down. She got off the camel because she recalled the Prophet having once told his wives. “O that I knew which among you it is at whom the dogs of Hawab will bark” She loudly said: “it is me. I am the wretched
woman of Hawab. I declare that I will not take another step on this illomened expedition.” (Muir; op. cit. p:354)

Hence forth Ayesha (RA) was totally against waging war with Ali, who was also inclined for peace. Negotiations were being carried on by QaQa (Cacaa) and there was every sign that some compromise could be struck and war be averted. This alarmed a large number of insurgents, who had joined the Khalifah’s forces, such as Ashtar and Ibn Sawda, the chief of the regicides. They knew that their fate was sealed if peace was patched up. Talha and Zubayr, who were bent on Qisas, will not spare their lives. They therefore waited for an opportune moment to sabotage the peace move. Because of the presence of Ayesha there was considerable enthusiasm in the camp opposed to Ali. She, with her well fenced camel, was conspicuous in the centre of the army. Muhammad bin Talha was in command of the cavalry, Abdullah bin Zubayr commanded the infantry. Talha and Zubayr were in overall command. However before the start of the battle Ali moved on his horse to meet Talha and Zubayr. They also moved towards him and talked of peace, and Ayesha was already strongly inclined towards peace. Ali when he met Zubayr reminded him of a prophecy of the Prophet that “Zubayr would fight Ali an unjust war.” Zubayr recollected this prophecy and decided to withdraw and promised Ali that he would not fight. He wanted his son to get out of it but he refused. The insurgents, who were in very large numbers in his camp, again felt endangered because of this possibility of peace. Thus early next morning they made a surprise attack on Talha and Ayesha’s camps, which sparked a terrible fight. Ali,
despite all his efforts, could not hold back his men because they were motivated by other factors. According to Muir “The sense of treachery embittered the conflict. It was a strange engagement and the first occasion on which Muslims crossed swords with the Muslims” (p: 363). Since Zubayr and Talha were gradually dissociating themselves from this war the anti-Ali forces were losing benefit of their leadership. Some leading members in the forces of Ali were fighting fiercely for their survival. They knew that their life was in jeopardy unless they achieve a decisive victory. However as Ayesha was still there with her camel standing in the middle of the battle ground, the Basra forces led by the sons of Talha and Zubayr thought that her life was in danger and therefore, they put up stiff resistance to save her. Ali realised that as long as she was in the middle of the battle field sitting in her litter on the back of her camel the fight will not stop. Ali noticed that when Abdullah bin Zubayr fell, who was holding the standard with the rein of Ayesha’s camel in his hand, another warrior held the rein of Ayesha’s camel. In this way nearly 50 warriors sacrificed their lives protecting Ayesha. A brave warrior of Bahra tribe, Amr bin Bahra, fought so bravely to protect Ayesha that no one was able to face him. Finally a distinguished horseman of Ali, Harith bin Zubayr Azdi came out to face Amr bin Bahra and they fought so furiously that they both killed each other. Immediately after Amr’s death Banu Dhabah came forward to protect Ayesha. Ali was now all the more convinced that so long as Ayesha’s camel remained standing in the midst of the battle field the fight would never stop. Hence he asked one of his captains to hit the
back leg of her camel with a sword and she immediately sat down with a loud grunt. As the camel sat down the enemy forces against Ali immediately ceased resistance. Immediately after, Ayesha’s brother Muhammad bin Abu Bakr took charge of her litter. She shouted at the fellow stranger handling her litter, when he identified himself she was pacified. She was immediately taken to a safe tent under the care of her brother. It was called Battle of Jamal because of Ayesha on the back of her camel standing right in the middle. The battle ended on Jumad-il Aakhir 36 A.H (December 656 A.D.) with Ali emerging victorious. The loss of life was enormous approximately 13000 were killed. After the battle was over Ali issued firm orders that “no fugitive should be followed, nor any wounded soldier slain, nor plunder seized, nor the privacy of any house invaded.” (Muir; op. cit. p: 365) This was resented by the supporters of Ali because they were keen to have a share in the spoils of war as was customary. Ali got mad at this persistent demand and angrily asked, who among you, would dare to ask for Ummul Momineen Ayesha as a part of the booty. This silenced the protesters and they felt ashamed.

Ali treated Ayesha with great honour and dignity. She was lodged in the best house in Basra for a few days wherein her adherents looked after her. At the time of her departure 40 leading ladies of Basra accompanied her in her journey to Madinah. It was protected by armed guards and her brother Muhammad bin Abu Bakr went with her as overall in charge. Before departure Ali personally called on her. Ayesha bid farewell and stated that there
was no misunderstanding between her and Ali, and whatever little differences we had were that of the nature of sister-in-law with her brother-in-law. That was all over now and she wished Ali well in his Khilafat (1st Rajjab, 36 A.H). Ali went with her on foot for a couple of miles. A considerable amount was also paid to her for the journey. Her nephew Abdullah bin Zubayr (son of his elder sister Asma) also retired with her. They went first to Makkah for Umrah (little pilgrimage) and then from there to Madinah. After this unfortunate incident Ayesha never interfered in the affairs of the state. It is being reported by authoritative sources that Ayesha always repented having participated in the Battle of Jamal and “wished she had died before Yaum-al Jamal (Day of Battle of Camel) and used to cry so much that her chador would be soaked with tears.” (Nadwi; op. cit. p: 241)

Ali did not stay long in Basra. He appointed Abdullah Ibn Abbas, his cousin as governor of Basra. Before leaving Basra, Ali made some major administrative arrangements. Yazid ibn Qays was appointed governor of Madinah, Muhammad bin Salem in Isfahan, Qadama bin Ajlân Azdi at Kaskar, Rabiah bin Kas at Sjestan, Khalid bin Kas as Governor of Khurasan. The daughter of Kisra revolted in Neshapur. Khalid firmly suppressed the revolt. The daughter of Kisra was arrested. Khalid bin Kas offered to marry her with his son which she rejected. She was willing to marry Khalid bin Kas, which he declined. He then made her free with full freedom to marry whomsoever she wanted. Ashtar was appointed governor of Mosul and territories adjoining Syria. Ashtar
with his frequent forays in Syria considerably harassed Mauvia’s forces and kept them in check.

**Ali and Mu’avia Confrontation and War of Siffin:**

Ali and Mu’avia were two distinctly different personalities. Ali was uncompromisingly for the supremacy of Islamic values irrespective of the circumstances in which he was placed. In contradistinction Mu’avia, though a good Muslim, was an astute politician and administrator. Through his administrative acumen he kept peace in the territory controlled by him and the people happy with his generosity. Mu’avia was able to outwit Ali in political stratagem. Ali was a straight-forward and honest Muslim in the mould of the Prophet; he therefore could simply not play that political game in which Mu’avia was adept.

After gaining a resounding victory in the Battle of the Camel, Ali turned his attention to Syria. He had decided to fight against Mu’avia. Meanwhile, Mu’avia tried to spoil relations between Ali and Qays his Governor in Egypt. Qays was the son of Sa’d ibn Ubadah, who was keen to be the Khalifah after the death of the Prophet. Qays was totally loyal to Ali and administered Egypt efficiently. He was able to win over the whole of Egypt but for a small fraction in the Kharanba, whose people resolutely refused to owe allegiance to Ali. Mu’avia was afraid of the administrative sagacity and military ability of Qays. He feared that if he got engaged in a war with Ali on the Iraq front, Qays might open a front in his rear from Egypt,
which will place him in a precarious position. He started his machinations to forestall this danger. He first sent feelers to Qays to win him over. Despite many overtures Mu‘avia failed to win over Qays who “frankly declared that he was and would remain a staunch supporter of the Khalifah (Ali).” (Muir; op. cit. p: 372) Mu‘avia was so much afraid of the abilities of Qays that he once wrote to Marwaan: “If thou hadst helped Ali with a hundred thousand men, it had been a lesser evil than is the gain to Ali of such a counselor (Qays).” (Muir; op. cit. p: 373) Mu‘avia then craftily started another stratagem to sow discord between Governor Qays and Ali. First the rumour was spread that Qays had joined Mu‘avia’s camp. Ali refused to believe it. He was told that Qays, because of his affiliation with Mu‘avia, was not taking military action to seek the allegiance of Kharbana who were pro-Mu‘avia. Ali, unfortunately, did not realise that it was a trick of Mu‘avia to create a rift between him and Qays. Ali was instigated by Mu‘avia’s men who had infiltrated into Ali’s camp, to test the loyalty of Qays by insisting on military action against Kharanba. Qays tried to explain to him that at such a critical juncture of his Khilafat military action was inadvisable and may harm the interest of the Khalifah. But Ali was adamant hence Qays resigned and returned to Madinah. He was replaced by Muhammad bin Abu Bakr who was among the ring leaders to foment insurgency against Uthmaan and inabetting his assassination. Ali lost this advantage by his obstinacy because Muhammad bin Abu Bakr was no match to wily Mu‘avia. Meanwhile, Mu‘avia won over Amr bin Al-Aas to his side. Amr bin Al-Aas was not only a great commander but also a crafty
schemer, and therefore his friendship with Mu’avia was of great advantage to the latter in his fight against Ali.

As stated earlier Ali had abandoned Madinah and selected Kufa as the new capital of his Khalifah. He entered Kufa in the month of Rajab, 36 A.H (January, 657 A.D.) and started preparation for a final showdown with Mu’avia. However, he had to first deal with the factious tendencies in Kufa, a revolt in Sijestan by an Arab faction, which had moved from Basra. They had killed the local governor but were subsequently crushed by Ibn Abbas, the Governor of Basra. After overcoming all these factious tendencies Ali was focused to deal with Mu’avia. Ali again sent a letter through Jarir, a tribal chief, who had maintained good relations with Mu’avia, demanding Mu’avia’s allegiance. Mu’avia replied through Abu Muslim that he would owe allegiance provided the assassins of Uthmaan are handed over to him. A vast concourse had gathered in the mosque in Kufa to hear Mu’avia’s reply. They all shouted in one voice that they were all the assassins of Uthmaan. Then Ali told Abu Muslim how helpless he was in the matter. However that reply from Mu’avia unified the Arabs of Iraq for military action against Mu’avia and war preparations started feverishly from both the sides.

In this demand by Ali for taking oath of allegiance to the legitimately elected Khalifah of Islam and counter demand by Mu’avia to hand over to him the assassins of Uthmaan as a condition to offer allegiance to Ali, Ibn Arabi fully supports the stand taken by Ali because he
points out that “a person who claims justice against killers cannot be the one who judges in the matter.” In other words, “since Mu’avia and his side demanded that justice should be done, they could not be given the killer to pass judgement on them. This was to be left to the Khalifah as he was the highest judge. Ibn Arabi also does not justify the rebellion of Mu’avia on the ground that he suspected Ali to take sides. In Ibn Arabi’s view Mu’avia should have continued to demand forcefully that justice be administered instead of staging a rebellion against a legally constituted authority. (Adil Islahi: Fighting During Ali’s Reign – Arab News August 2004) — also see www.aljazeera.info/islam p: 3 of 4)

Battle of Siffin (11 Safar 37 H / 29 July, 660 A.D):

Ali was able to mobilise a force of nearly 80,000, moved out of Kufa in the month of Dhul-Q’ad, 36 A.H (April, 657 A.D.). They marched through Median, crossed River Tigris, the plain of Mesopotamia and reached river Euphrates at the point of Erica where a bridge was constructed and the forces crossed to the other bank of the Euphrates, therefrom to Aleppo and eventually met the Syrian outposts at Sur. As soon as Mu’avia heard of the march of the forces of Ali he advanced fast, and was soon face to face with the forces of Ali at Siffin. Mu’avia’s forces had earlier taken control of water and were not allowing Ali’s forces to draw water from that point. The

8. Note: Siffin was to the west of Ricca, about half-way to Balis, opposite the fort of Jabor or Darwa and about 100 miles from the coast. It was located southwest of Aleppo, and northeast of Hims.
desperate Iraqi’s launched an offensive against the Syrian forces and forcibly took control of the river water point at Siffin. Now the Syrians had to face the same difficulty but Ali graciously allowed their forces to draw water.

Mu’avia’s forces were under the command of Amr bin Al-Aas’s two sons and freed slave Werdan, as lieutenants. Ali had given definite instructions to his captains that they should not initiate fight at any cost. However, he used this lull in war to try again for peace. He sent three commanders of his army asking Mu’avia to take the oath of allegiance and avoid bloodshed of fellow Muslims. Mu’avia again repeated his demand to surrender the assassins of Uthmaan and in a subtle and disguised way claimed the Khilafat also. Ali immediately dismissed the emissaries of Mu’avia, and ordered the forces to organize in battle formation. Initially minor skirmishes were initiated to probe the strength and weaknesses of the opposing forces. However, with the onset of the month of Rajab and until the end of the month of Muharram, when fighting is forbidden in Islam, the opposing forces ceased fighting, withdrew to their respective positions. Some leading companions again used these months of lull to bring about reconciliation between Ali and Mu’avia. Abu Darda and Abu Umamah Bahli called on Mu’avia and argued with him that Ali deserved Khilafat and he should owe allegiance to Ali in order to avoid this blood bath. Mu’avia agreed to take the oath of allegiance provided the assassins of Uthmaan were handed over to him. Abu Darda and Abu Umamah Bahli conveyed this message to Ali but over 20,000 soldiers,
who all shouted together that all of them were the assassins of Uthmaan, rejected this demand. The two peacemakers were deeply disappointed, gave up their efforts, quietly moved out towards the coastline and did not participate in this internecine war.

The command of the forces in both the camps was being periodically changed. On the side of Ali, Ashtar Nakhai, Hajar bin Adi, Thabit bin Rabia, Khalid bin al-Umrah, Zayd bin al-Nadhir, Zayd bin Hafsah al-Yatimi, Sa’eed bin Qays, Muhammad bin Hanfan, Ma’qal bin Qays, Qays bin Sa’d, and sometimes Ali himself would take the command of the forces. On the side of Mu’avia Amr bin Al-Aas, Habib ibn Maslamah, Hashim the hero of Qadisiyah, Ammar one of Amr’s sons, Ubaydullah son of Umar etc. Thus relations against relations and even cousins were divided in rival camps (sounds like Mahabharata) and were pitched in a deadly battle against each other.

With the beginning of the month of Safar following the month of Muharram preparations of war began feverishly. It commenced in a desultory way with minor skirmishes. However on 11th Safar 37 A.H (29 July, 657 A.D.) it suddenly intensified and Amr bin al-As attacked the Kufa wing with such great ferocity that it was forced to retreat and the lives of Ali and of his sons were seriously imperilled. Ali, however, recovered after initial shock and counter attacked vehemently assisted by Ashtar Nakhai that four of the five ranks of Mu’avia’s personal bodyguards were wiped out, and Mu’avia called for his
horse to flee. The forces of Mu’avia were almost defeated and Ali had nearly reached the tent of Mu’avia and loudly summoned him for a personal fight between the two to decide the issue rather shed the blood of thousands of Muslims. Amr bin Al-Aas asked Mu’avia to accept the challenge but he refused saying anyone fighting Ali cannot escape death and he would not risk his life. Amr bin Al-Aas came out in place of Mu’avia. They fought each other bravely but finally Ali struck him so ferociously that he lost his balance and fell down from his horse. Ali, seeing him lying helpless, did not strike another blow and left him alive. However the battle continued with acute intensity, marked for the loud clanking sound of the swords. Therefore this battle has been called the Battle of Harir, the ground being red with the blood of dead soldiers on either side. The battle continued intensely for two consecutive days and nights. There was a pause in the battle to collect the dead and tend the wounded. Many heroes of earlier battles were killed in this battle such as Hashim the victor of Qadisiyah and Ammar. About Ammar, who fought for Ali, the Prophet had once predicted “By a godless and a rebellious race, O Ammar, thou shalt one day be slain. (Muir; op. cit. p: 382) This convinced most of the people even in the Syrian camp that Ali was fighting for the right cause.

Mu’avia now realising his weak position and criticality of the situation that his defeat was imminent if the war continued, made a peace initiative utilising a day’s pause in war. Further his commanders also asked him to sue for peace. Thus forced by the imminent danger
of defeat he wrote to Ali. “Had you and I realised that the war would be so long drawn and bloody, we would not have opted for it. We both are off shoots of the same tribe Abd Manaf and therefore one cannot claim superiority over the other let us therefore call off this war and come to peace settlement which will be mutually acceptable to us and equally respectable.” (Nadwi; op. cit. p: 303) Ali who was now so near total victory rejected outright the offer of peace and next day came out with full preparation to clinch the issue on the battlefield but could not anticipate that Mu’avia was under no circumstance prepared for the continuation of war as he was sure to be defeated. He therefore used some other stratagem to avoid war and outwitted Ali.

**Exploitation of the Qur’an to end the War and Appointment of Arbitrators to decide about the Khalifah:**

After Ali rejected the peace proposal Amr bin Al-Aas thought of a crafty move, which will end the war, and will also create a rift in Ali’s ranks. The next morning when Ali came fully prepared for a decisive assault on the Syrian forces of Mu’avia, he observed that the Syrian forces were moving with copies of the Qur’an on top of their swords. Five soldiers were holding aloft on the blades of their swords the Damascus copy of Mus’haf Qur’an sent by Khalifah Uthmaan. When Ashtar Nakhai launched a fierce attack then Fazal bin Awham, Shareeh Al-Jazami and Dharqa bin Mo’mer came forward from Mu’avia’s camp and pleaded that this Qur’an will protect
us from further bloodshed and settle the matter amicably. Similarly Abul Daoor Salma approached the forces of Ali and loudly declared that this book, the Holy Qur’an, will arbitrate between Ali and Mu’avia. This strategy worked miraculously. It found a positive response from Ali’s forces. Ali and his other commanders such as Ashtar Nakhai, Kardoos bin Hani, Sufiyan bin Tharer and Khalid bin Al-Mummar all tried to explain to their forces that the use of the Qur’an was a mere façade to avoid defeat and we should not fall into their trap. But the trick of Amr bin al-As worked and the forces of Iraq refused to take the battlefield. They were overwhelmingly in favour of Qur’anic arbitration. From among the Iraqi leaders Ma’r bin Fidki al Yatimi, Zayd bin Hussain Altai, Sanbi and Ibn al Kaura together with a group of people insisted that Ali should accept the arbitration of the Qur’an when it was being offered. Ash’ath bin Qays said “Ya Ameer ul Momineen I am as loyal to you today as I was yesterday but in my opinion it is better to accept Qur’an as our best judge.” Some of the Iraqi leaders even threatened to fight against him, or hand him over to Mu’avia or treat him the way Khalifah Uthmaan was treated. (Nadwi; op. cit. p:257, Nadwi, AM op. cit. p:66). Ali was thus left with no choice but to accept arbitration.

Arbitration Based on the Principle of Qur’an and Nomination of Arbitrators:

After the concurrence on arbitration from both the sides, religious leaders were consulted by both the sides, correspondence was exchanged, and it was finally decided
that the two contenders will nominate an impartial arbitrator each. The two arbitrators would discuss, deliberate and would jointly communicate an agreed decision. Mu‘avia suggested the name of Amr bin al-As from his side. Ashab bin Qays suggested the name of Abu Musa Ashri. Ali suggested the name of Abdullah ibn Abbas, his cousin, which Iraqis did not accept because of their relationship. Alternately he suggested Ashtar Nakhai but he was not acceptable because of his keenness to continue the war. The Iraqis overwhelmingly favoured Abu Musa Ashri and Ali had to agree. Abu Musa was summoned from his self-imposed retirement, somewhere in Syria, and an agreement was to be signed by the two contenders authorising the arbitrators to take a united decision, and that they would abide by it. In the draft agreement it was mentioned that the agreement was between Ameer ul Momineen Ali and Mu‘avia. Mu‘avia objected to the use of the word Ameer ul Momineen because he had not accepted that status of Ali, hence the problem. The followers of Ali particularly Ahnaf bin Qays and others insisted on its retention, but Ali, following in the footsteps of the Prophet, agreed to its deletion as the Prophet had agreed to the deletion of the word Rasul-Allah in the Treaty of Hudaibiyah. It was clearly stipulated in the agreement that the arbitrators would in no way deviate from the Qur’anic injunctions and the Traditions. It was further agreed that their decision will be binding on the contesting parties. In case they deviate from the injunctions of the Qur’an and Traditions of the Prophet their decision will not be binding and they can restart the war to decide the issue.
The agreement stated that Ali and Mu‘avia willingly consented and committed themselves to abide by the decision of Abu Musa Ashri and Amr bin al-As, which would be in accordance with the injunctions of the Qur’an and Traditions of the Prophet. (Nadwi; op. cit. p: 306 and Muir; op. cit. p: 386) The arbitrators were also asked to swear “that they would judge righteously so as to stay hostilities and reconcile the faithful.” (Muir; op. cit. p: 386) Their verdict could be delivered within a period of six months or even later if the arbitrators fail to reach an agreed judgement until then. The Judgement will be announced in a neutral place between Kufa and Damascus. Meanwhile the hostilities ceased. Ali and Mu‘avia with their respective armies had returned to Kufa and Damascus. Ali knew that it was a useless exercise and a victory which he had almost accomplished was slipping out of his hands. Mu‘avia emerged a gainer though he had almost given up. It was the misuse of the Qur’an by Mu‘avia on the advice of Amr bin Al-Aas, which saved Mu‘avia from an ignominious defeat.

Ali and Mu‘avia fixed Dhumatul Jandal midway between Kufa and Damascus as the meeting place for the arbitrators. They reached there accompanied by four hundred soldiers each. Shareeh bin Hani commanded the Kufa forces. Abdullah bin Abbas also accompanied to advise on religious issues. The matter was of such crucial importance that some of the leading Sahaabah, who were non-partisan and living in Madinah such as Abdullah bin Umar, Sa’ad ibn Waqqas and Moghirah bin Shaibah, also
Moghirah was a man with keen perceptive mind. He met separately Abu Musa and Amr bin Al-Aas and realised that the two held such widely varying views that they could never come to an agreement. He was thus not hopeful of a satisfactory outcome of their deliberations. The arbitrators met and had a frank discussion. During the course of their deliberation Abu Musa proposed that Ali and Mu‘avia be both deposed and replaced by Abdullah bin Umar who was completely neutral and was known for his piety. Amr then proposed the name of his son for this post. Musa agreed that he was able and competent but he was not neutral, fought against Ali’s forces. After long and protracted deliberations the Arbitrators agreed both Ali and Mu‘avia be deposed and the Ansaar and Muhajireen of Madinah be asked to elect a new Khalifah. After this decision was jointly agreed by the two arbitrators Abdullah ibn Abbas cautioned Abu Musa that he should let Amr bin Al-Aas announce the decision first, because he was treacherous and deceitful, may go back on his words and “ditch you at the last moment.” Abu Musa assured that the agreement was such that Amr could not retract. Having decided, the Arbitrators convened a meeting in a mosque in Dhumatul Jandal to announce their decision. Amr bin Al-Aas urged Abu Musa to take the lead because of his age, rank and status as Sahabi and hence he dared not precede him. Abu Musa got flattered and came forward to announce the jointly agreed decision. He announced “we have deposed both Ali and Mu‘avia and want the consultative Assembly (Majlis Shoora) to elect a new leader.” After Abu Musa read out the joint decision.
Amr bin Al-Aas climbed to the pulpit and announced: “Gentlemen Ali has been deposed by Abu Musa, I also depose him and declare Mu’avia as Khalifah because he is the true successor of Khalifah Uthmaan and rightfully deserving.” Abu Musa, a pious man, was shocked at this blatantly treacherous and deceitful act of Amr bin Al-Aas. This created a chaotic situation. Shareeh ibn Hani was so enraged that he started whipping Amr bin Al-Aas. In order to protect his father Amr’s son attacked Shareeh but people intervened and saved the situation from worsening further. However, Abu Musa felt so ashamed and let down that he immediately left for Makkah and cut himself off from the rest of the world.

Rise of Khariji and Rift in Ali’s Ranks:

When the agreement between Ali and Mu’avia was read out to the people of Bani Tameem by Ashab bin Qays then Uzwah challenged it and said that “you want men to decide an issue relating to the Deen of Allah.” His objection appealed to many people who declared Qur’an as the only arbitrator and supported the concept of ‘No command except that of Allah.’ Thus was founded the faction of the Khariji. When Ali marched back to Kufa with his troops, nearly 12000 people, belonging to the various tribes of Qurra, separated themselves from the rest of forces, moved in the direction of Harora and settled there. They were the adherents to the Khariji faction. The main object of this group was that there would be no Khalifah to rule over them. They were basically against the rule of the Quraysh since Ali and Mu’avia both belonged to the same
Arab tribe. The Khariji wanted the authority to be vested in a council of state, which would govern according to the injunctions of the Qur’an and Traditions of the Prophet. Ali decided to reason out with the Khariji and to persuade them to return to Kufa. As regards the slogans of the Khariji: “No command except that of God”, Ali remarked that “the slogan was right but the interpretation was perverted. The presence of Amir or leader is absolutely essential in order to implement the command of Allah. The Amir will frame rules and regulations to govern the affairs of the people in an orderly way. There will be total chaos in the absence of the Amir. He will supervise the just and proper distribution of the spoils of war. He will issue orders to fight against the enemies, will crush rebellions and free the country of rebels. He will force the strong to give the weak their rights. He will maintain law and order and peace and harmony for the people to move freely and do their business without fear.” (Nadwi; op. cit. p:255). He first sent Ibn Abbas to talk to them and bring them back. Ibn Abbas failed in his mission. Then Ali himself went and could eventually prevail upon them to return to Kufa. Meanwhile the rumour was spread that the Khalifah had conceded to the objection of the Khariji and declared that the decision of the Arbitrators was against the Qur’anic injunctions. This misinformation spread like a wild fire in Kufa and as Khalifah Ali came to know he immediately contradicted it in a sermon in the mosque of Kufa. He solemnly declared that he would not be a party to a breach of trust, and would at no cost restart the war. He was very bitter against the Khariji and stated: “These were the people who on the first occasion
compelled me to postpone the war, then showed anger over the award of the Judges, now they want that I should go back on my words and open a war front before the actual award is enforced. By God it is impossible.” (Nadwi SM; op. cit. p: 75) Some of the Khariji were listening to the sermon and immediately objected and one of them came forward and recited the following verse: “But it has already been revealed as it was before you ‘if you were to join gods with Allah truly fruitless will be your work (in life) and will surely be in the ranks of those who lose’ all spiritual good.” (Az-Zumr; 39:65) Ali immediately countered him by reciting the following verse: “So patiently persevere for verily the promise of Allah is true, nor let those shake your firmness who (themselves) have no certainty of faith.” (Ar-Rum; 30:60) The differences however continued to grow, and when the tragic decision of arbitration came to be known throughout the Islamic realm the adherents of Khariji withdrew their allegiance from Ali and took oath of allegiance on the hands of Abdullah ibn Wahab at Rasi. The adherents of Khariji school of thought living in Kufa, Basra, Anbar, Median and other places moved out and concentrated in Nehrawan.

The disastrous consequence of the deceitful act of Amr bin Al-Aas, who was one of the arbitrators in Dhumatul Jandal, was that the Islamic realm was divided into two parallel and rival Khalifah, one led by Ali and the other by Mu’avia. Mu’avia was, however, was not addressed as Amir-ul Mu’mineen till Ali was alive.
Since there was no possibility of implementation of the agreed award of the Arbitrators, as read out by Abu Musa Ashri because of the treachery of Amr bin Al-Aas, Ali wanted to march to Syria again to dislodge Mu’avia but he found little enthusiasm among the people of Kufa. However, he was eventually able to mobilise a force of 65,000 and commenced his march to Syria. Meanwhile he had sent a letter to the Khariji asking them to join the march. They were in a rebellious mood and replied arrogantly, refused to join and started killing people in Nehrawan. When the destructive activities of the Khariji exceeded limits, Ali decided to punish them first. Postponing his march to Siffin, he proceeded first to Nehrawan. Before starting punitive action he attempted to bring them back to his fold. Some of them agreed and returned to Kufa, about 500 disbanded and went over to Persia. Only 4000 hardheaded Khariji fanatics remained to battle it out with Ali’s forces. They attacked the Kufa forces and were killed to a man. Although the Khariji were routed in the battle yet the movement survived.

After suppressing the Khariji revolt in Nehrawan Ali returned to Kufa, and immediately decided to march for Syria. Before the march Ashab bin Qays submitted to Ali. “That we should furbish up our swords and lances and replenish our quivers (arrows).” (Muir: p: 401; Nadwi: p: 313) Ali agreed and halted the march. As the march was halted, people started deserting the camp and only 1,000 men stayed. Observing this situation Ali dropped the idea of marching on Syria. Thus the 37th H ended very disappointingly for Ali.
Revolt of Egypt and its Loss: (Safar 38 A.H/July 658 AD):

An element of revolt was always smouldering in the District of Kharbana in Egypt. Qays had handled the situation cleverly. He had stabilised the position and did not take punitive action against Kharbana but kept them in total check. We have already observed how cleverly Mu‘avia saw to it, through sustained misinformation, that a rift was created between Ali and Qays and the latter in disgust decided to resign and return to Madinah. Muhammad bin Abu Bakr was the new governor of Egypt. He tried to control the rebels of Kharbana but miserably failed. Ali wanted Qays to take again charge of Egypt which he refused. He then sent Ashtar Nakhai who was poisoned by his host in the house he was resting for the night. The Syrians rejoiced on Ashtar’s death because he was the chief of the insurgents against Khalifah Uthmaan and the Syrians also feared Ashtar most. Ashtar’s death was a great set-back to Ali. Encouraged by the death of Ashtar and weakness of Muhammad, the resurgents multiplied in Egypt and were later joined by Amr bin Al-Aas who invaded Egypt, Muhammad bin Abu Bakr fought against the rebels and the forces of Amr bin Al-Aas, but was eventually killed. Hence in the month of Safar 38 A.H (July, 658 A.D), Amr conquered Egypt for Mu‘avia and was appointed its Governor which position he retained till his death. Even the loss of Egypt did not rouse the people of Kufa to challenge Mu‘avia despite eloquent exhortation by Ali. He felt extremely frustrated
and very bitter over the callous indifference of the people. He would scold them and address them sarcastically outpouring his frustration: “Your enemies will overpower you not because they are right but they are firm and determined to fight even for a wrong cause. You are indifferent and callous in supporting me although our cause is just. People are generally afraid of the tyranny of their rulers but I am scared of the tyranny of my own people. I try to inspire you to action and rise for jihad but you ignore my call for action. I urge you to fight against the rebels but you deliberately ignore it and look the other side. I set you straight during the day but you return to crookedness by the evening because you just cannot be set right. Instead of helping and supporting me you act like a prickly thorn and are a source of pain and agony to me.” (Nadwi; op. cit. pp: 292-295)

**Revolt in Basra and Persia:**

Ali was deeply disappointed at the loss of Egypt, was in a pensive mood and had almost become a recluse. Ibn Abbas, his cousin, who was the Governor of Basra, was concerned that Ali might take some desperate step such as resign the Khalifah in frustration, and went to Kufa to console him and made Zayd as Governor-in-charge in Basra. Basra was a stronghold of *Khariji* and a considerable section of population was against Ali. Mu’avia seized this opportunity to foment trouble in Basra. He sent his emissary Abdullah with a letter to rebel leaders. Abdullah succeeded in instigating rebellion. Zayd immediately moved to a loyal tribal leader in Hadan
with treasury and Governor’s pulpit and sent a message to Ali for help. Ali immediately sent reinforcement with an influential tribal leader Jaria bin Qudhama, of Basra. With the help of this leader and reinforcement the rebellion was crushed and Abdullah, the emissary of Mu’avia and the rebel leader Ibn Hadhrami were burnt to death in a house where they had taken shelter.

The Khariji were decisively crushed but they survived and were now distributed in smaller groups in Iraq (Ajam). They started instigating the Parsis and the Christians to rebel against the authorities and refuse to pay taxes. The chief among the instigators was Khirit in south Persia. He was pursued until Ahwaz and Ram Hormuz in South Persia. An army from Basra under the command of Zayd bin Hafsah drove Khariji and these rebels to shores of Indian Ocean where in a fierce encounter Khirit was killed and the rebels surrendered. Ali treated the rebels, Parsis and Christians, generously and they owed their allegiance back to him.

The inroads of Mu’avia in northern and western and their initial successes did sow the seed of rebellion in the Persian region particularly in Faras and Kirman. The Christians and Parsis refused to pay taxes, drove away the officials and took control of the administration. Ali in consultation with his senior advisors and counselors in Kufa deputed Zayd bin Abiah to suppress the revolt in Fars and Kirman. Zayd handled the situation very tactfully, crushed the revolt but treated the rebels generously. They all came back to the fold of Ali who was
so pleased with the achievements of Zayd that he appointed him Governor of Fars. Zayd fixed his court in Istakhr (Persepolis). His administration became so famous in Fars “as to recall to Persian memories of the happy days of Nushirwan” (39 AH). (Muir; op. cit. p: 407)

The 40th year of Hijri brought in its wake new troubles for Ali. Mu‘avia continued to harass him. Mu‘avia sent a military expedition to Madinah, Makkah and Yemen with a force of 3000 under Basar bin Artat in early 40th A.H. Basar entered Madinah, unopposed, because the Governor Abu Ayyub had fled to Kufa. Basar intimidated the people of Madinah and forced them to take oath of allegiance to Mu‘avia. Opponents were mercilessly put to sword. From Madinah Basar bin Artat proceeded to Yemen. Abu Musa had secretly informed the Governor of Yemen Ubaydullah bin Abbas about the impending attack on Yemen by Basar. The governor promptly left Yemen with treasury for Kufa to seek military help from Khalifah Ali. Basar ravaged Yemen, killed thousands of people and brutally killed two little children of the Governor and their Bedouin guards who tried to protect them. As Ali came to know of the military forays and ravages by Basar he dispatched a force of 4000 soldiers under the command of Jaria bin Qudhama and Wahab bin Masud to counter-attack Basar and capture him. Ali’s forces brought back Madinah and Makkah under the fold of Ali. The citizens in both the cities retracted their oath of allegiance to Mu‘avia and took a fresh oath of allegiance to Ali. By the time Ali’s forces marched towards Yemen in pursuit of Basar bin Artat he
made good his escape to Syria. However Yemen, Makkah and Madinah continued to be loyal to Ali.

Ali was further depressed that his own brother Aqeel had joined Mu’avia and his cousin Abdullah ibn Abbas, the Governor of Basra, deserted him and retired with treasures to Makkah. He never for a moment suspected that his own blood, on whom he had lavished favours, would desert him at this critical moment of history when his surviv Al-Aas a Khalifah itself was in peril because of Mu’avia’s growing military power. It looked as if the two parallel and rival Khalifah under Ali and Mu’avia would continue to coexist; it was however destined to be otherwise.

Assassination of Ali (20 Ramadhan 40 A.H./28 June 661 A.D):

The Khariji were crushed, as stated earlier, in the Battle of Nehrawan but the movement survived. There were still many isolated pockets where adherents of Khariji movement demanding theocratic rule of God lived. Three fanatic Khariji namely Abdur-Rahmaan bin Muljam, Nazal and Abdullah met at the time of hajj in Mecca and started deliberating as to how to bring to an end this internecine war among the Muslims and establish a pure and perfect rule of God based on the Qur’anic injunctions and Sunnah (Tradition) of the Prophet. They came to the conclusion that so long as Ali and Mu’avia were alive the internecine war will continue and they will not allow the pure theoretic rule, as conceived by the Khariji, to be
established. They therefore decided that these two must be killed and together with them Amr bin al-As must also be killed. In case he survived he would usurp the Khalifah, after the death of Ali and Mu’avia. Hence he also must be killed along with the two rivals Ali and Mu’avia. These conspirators conceived that it is only after these three were eliminated that a genuine theoretic state could be established which would end the internecine war. Having agreed thus the three Khariji, named above, planned that these persons should be simultaneously killed on the same day and almost at the same time i.e. the time of the Friday prayers in the mosques of Kufa, Fustat (Cairo) and Damascus. Having finalised their conspiracy Nazal took upon himself the task of killing Mu’avia, Abdullah would assassinate Amr bin al-As, and Ibn Muljam opted for Ali.

They executed their plans as conceived on the 20th of Ramadan, at the time of the Friday prayer, with fully poisoned swords but could not achieve the desired result. Except for Ali the other two escaped death. Amr bin al-As escaped as he did not turn up at the mosque to lead the Friday prayer. Instead, his deputy, who came to lead the Friday prayer, was killed. Mu’avia was struck but not fatally. He was saved after treatment but he became impotent. In Kufa Ibn Muljam was able to get two equally eager accomplices, Werdan and Shuhib, from the tribe of Bani Taym to kill Ali. This tribe fanatically believed in the religious beliefs of the Khariji and had suffered severely at the hands of Ali. They were also thus keen on revenge. On the appointed Friday, Ibn Muljam accompanied by these two entered the mosque as Ali (RA) came out calling
people to get ready for prayers. Right at that moment Shuhib attacked the Khalifah but he was not hurt. A little later after the prayer commenced Ibn Muljam struck him a deadly blow on the head with his poisoned sword as the Khalifah prostrated for Sajda, which proved fatal, and Ali (RA) was martyred. Ibn Muljam was immediately arrested. Before his death Ali called his eldest son Hasan and asked him to keep the assassin in close custody and further “if I die, his life is forfeited to justice, and he shall be slain for the deed he hath done, but see that thou mutilated him not for that was forbidden by the Prophet.” (Muir; op. cit. p: 413) It was becoming evident that the Khalifah would not survive. Janab bin Abdullah then asked him if they should owe allegiance to Hasan after his death he answered, “I do not command this, neither do I forbid. See you to it i.e. the decision is left to the people.” (Muir; op. cit. p: 414) Ali died a martyr on the same day i.e. Friday 20 Ramadan, 40 A.H (28 June, 661 A.D). His son, Imam Hasan, lead the funeral prayer with five Takbir instead of the normal four and the body was laid to rest in the grave-yard of Aza in Kufa. (Nadwi; op. cit. p: 321) The assassin, Ibn Muljam, was tried and found guilty. He was done to death; his body tied in a sack was committed to the flames. (Muir; op. cit. p: 414)

Ali’s Khalifat passed through such a turbulent period that he could hardly find time and peace of mind to think of political and administrative reforms. He did however raise the punishment for wine drinking during the month of Ramadhan from 80 to 100 lashes because it was a gross disrespect of the holy month. He also treated
the Sabais harshly because they raised Ali to the status of God and punished them severely for this blasphemous act.

**Survivors in the Family:**

After the death of Fatima, Ali (RA) married a number of times. He had 17 daughters and 14 sons. Of the sons only four survived i.e. Hasan, Hussain, Muhammad bin Hanifah and Umar. Hassan was elected *Khalifah* after his martyrdom and people owed allegiance to him in the mosque of Kufa.

**Personal Qualities and Moral Values:**

Ali (RA) alone, among the companions, had the privilege of being in the company of the Prophet as a member of the family for over 30 years. He was inspired thoroughly by the Prophet in his personal behaviour and approach to life. Ali was thus humility and piety personified. Intellectually he was a genius who learnt to read and write right from his childhood. Even the Prophet as impressed by his intellectual accomplishments and used to say: “I am the store house of knowledge and Ali is its gate.” (Tirmidhi) Ali was among the foremost scholars of the Qur’an and had profound understanding of the meanings, nuances and significance of the Qur’anic verses. He had full knowledge of when, where and under what circumstances various chapters (*Surahs*) and verses were revealed. He had even compiled the Qur’anic text in its chronological order but allowed it to be destroyed when
copies of the standardized Qur’anic text were prepared during the Khilafat of Uthmaan. The only person who could compare with him in the knowledge of the Qur’an was Ibn Abbas.

Ali was an illustrious brave warrior totally dedicated to the cause of Islam. His courage was exemplary. When all the senior Sahaabah failed to conquer the fort of Khyber he was assigned the task. He accomplished it fast and skillfully. As a young Sahabi of 21 years he did not hesitate to fight Amru, the renowned brave pagan warrior, and killed him in the Battle of Trenches. Ali would never kill a person out of vengeance to satisfy his ego. In one of the battles he was about to kill a person that he spat on his face. Ali spared his life for killing at that moment would have amounted to an act of vengeance to satisfy his ego, and not in the cause of Allah.

Ali was an eloquent and forceful speaker. His diction was excellent and none among his contemporaries could compare with him in oratory. The words simply rolled out of his tongue as if woven together in a silken thread and many of his phrases turned out to be proverbs of lasting value. The beauty and sublimity of the following quotes are self-evident: “a mean fellow loses his senses in affluence and prosperity,” “The real worth of a person is concealed under his tongue, he is exposed the moment he speaks out;” One who is conscious of his own weaknesses and strength saves himself from extreme danger and fraud, etc.
Ali had moulded his life on the lines of the Prophet and would even sacrifice his life for the sake of the Prophet. The Prophet used to say that Ali was to him what Haroon (Aaron) was to Musa (Moses). He risked his life by sleeping in his bed the night the pagans of Makkah had planned to assassinate the Prophet. He knew precisely how to earn the pleasure of the Prophet. Abu Sufiyan had embraced Islam after the conquest of Makkah. Before his conversion he had tortured the Muslims brutally in Makkah. Once in Madinah Abu Sufiyan sighted the Prophet and greeted him with Salaam but the Prophet turned away his face. On the expression of this displeasure Abu Sufiyan approached Ali for his advice. Ali advised him to act as the brother of Yusuf had acted to seek Yusuf’s pardon. Sufiya again approached the Prophet and said as advised by Ali: “Allah had granted you superiority over us and we were indeed at fault and sinners.” The Prophet promptly replied: “You will not be condemned henceforth, may Allah pardon you. He is most merciful.” (Nadwi, A. Hasan; op. cit. pp: 338-339)

Despite his status as Ameer ul Momineen and supreme authority within his territorial, jurisdiction Ali lived a simple life like his predecessors Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthmaan. He ate the same meals which was available to the common folks and wore coarse clothes. He received from the treasury merely subsistence allowance for himself and for his family. He lived in a simple house easily accessible to the people of Kufa. He was always available to listen to their grievances and redress them if found legitimate. Despite all the wealth and resources of
the Khalifah which Ali commanded, he did not have the money to buy for himself a new loin cloth. He therefore decided to sell his sword for this purpose. He announced the sale of his sword while addressing a congregation in the Kufa mosque. Someone from the congregation offered to lend him money to buy the loin cloth. (Nadwi S.M.; op. cit. pp: 139-140) He hated wealth and worldly pleasures, preferred to live the life of a poor man, and identified himself with the poor. This was in sharp contrast to the life style of his rival and cousin Mu‘avia who enjoyed living a regal life. This highlights the contrast in the character, behaviour and approach to life of two contemporary distinguished men of Islam.

Ali’s character has been eloquently summed up by Dharar bin Zamrah in Mu‘avia’s court on the insistence of Mu‘avia. Dharar said about Ali: “He was far sighted, very healthy, frank and outspoken, delivered even handed justice, an epitome of knowledge, despised the luxuries of life, used to pray nights after nights in total submission to Allah when his tears would just not stop, always concerned about the well being of the people, sometime even talking to himself. He used to wear coarse cloth and eat ordinary meals, totally identified himself with the common man. He used to talk sparingly answering only when asked, would initiate conversation when anyone called on him. He would even visit us when invited. Despite this proximity we were always in awe of him and would dare not talk to him, whenever he smiled his white glistening teeth would appear as if strung together as beads of pearls. He used to respect pious men, love the
poor and the needy. The influential people could never expect his support for falsehood and the poor would never be disappointed for they will always be justly treated.

Dharar continued citing Allah as his witness that he had himself watched: “In the pitched darkness of night and under the fading light of the stars Ali would be crying endlessly holding his beard in agonizing pain, would appear to be addressing the world and rebuking it ‘not to tempt me with pleasures of life to cheat and deceive me because I have totally forsaken you and irrevocably divorced you.’ This world is short lived and will eventually vanish. The worldly wealth, honour and position are worthless; the dangers of worldly life are scary and immense. We have to go a long and lonely way but have hardly prepared for this arduous journey.” Tears streamed down the eyes of Mu‘avia and he was as grief stricken like a mother whose child was killed in her lap who could not control her tears and was inconsolable.” (Nadwi: op. cit. pp: 299-300)

Conclusion:

Ali was the legitimately elected Khalifah of the Islamic domain after the tragic assassination of Khalifah Uthmaan. He was the unanimous choice of the electors, the Ansar and Muhajireen of Madinah. Mu‘avia did not offer his bay’at and refused to do so until the assassins of Uthmaan were handed over to him to be punished according to Shari‘ah law. This was nothing but a mere
camouflage to conceal his ulterior design to usurp the Khalifah. His demand to hand over the assassins to him for punishment was simply ridiculous. Firstly, he himself was the complainant and therefore could not act as judge as well. Secondly, the authority to punish the guilty was vested only in the Khalifah and hence Mu‘avia had no authority to inflict punishment while fully aware of this legal position he continued to aggressively demand that the assassins be apprehended and handed over to him in order to harass Ali and destabilize his position. This was a clever stratagem to usurp the mantle of Khilafat. It became apparent when agreement for arbitration was being drafted after the Battle of Siffin, he clearly stated that the position of Khilafat was the point of contention.

The struggle between Ali and Mu‘avia was a fight between two ideologies. Ali was a personification of piety and righteousness. He was fighting for the supremacy of principles to maintain the unity of Ummah, and stability and continuity of the institution of Khilafat, and rigidly adhered to them. In contrast, Mu‘avia was a pragmatist and a skilled politician who assiduously worked for the hegemony of his clan Bani Umayyad to perpetuate a dynastic system of Khilafat as against the electoral system initiated with the Khilafat of Abu Bakr. Mu‘avia played his cards very well and Ali could not foresee his clever moves. Mu‘avia had no qualms of conscience in welcoming Amr bin Al-Aas knowing full well that Uthmaan was displeased with him, and that Amr bin Al-Aas had encouraged the insurgents against Uthmaan. Mu‘avia did not hesitate to exploit the Qur'an when he
had almost lost the battle of Siffin and would have been dislodged. Further he did not condemn the treacherous act of Amr bin Al-Aas when he went back on his words, after solemnly agreeing with Abu Musa Ashri that both Mu’avia and Ali should be disqualified from Khilafat, and some new person be elected as Khalifah by the Ansaars and Muhajireen of Madinah. His ambition to Khilafat was whetted by Ibn Ka’b, the jew convert to Islam, who remarked within the hearing of Mu’avia in Madinah that the “man on the white mule will eventually succeed,” meaning Mu’avia, who had come to Madinah to attend a meeting of the Governors convened by the late Khalifah Uthmaan.

Ali was on the right side in the two wars, which were forced upon i.e. the Battle of the Camel (Jamal) and the Battle of Siffin against Mu’avia. This was confirmed by the two prophecies of the Prophet made during his life time. Once while talking to his wives the Prophet remarked that he wished he knew on which of his wives ‘The dogs of Hawab” would bark. Ayesha recalled this as soon as she reached Hawab and heard the dogs barking. She immediately wanted to call off the military expedition but became victim of circumstances. The Battle of Camel (Jamal) was forced on her by vested interests. Similarly in the Battle of Siffin, Ammar (RA) who was fighting for Ali was martyred. The Prophet again had predicted that Ammar would be killed by a rebellious group. Even the Syrians were aware of this Prophecy and had commenced to realise that Ali was fighting for the right cause. It was at this point that Mu’avia, on the advice of crafty Amr bin
Al-Aas, exploited the Qur’an for the cessation of hostilities and for the appointment of Arbitrators to decide the issue of Khilafat.

The transfer of capital of the Khilafat from Madinah to Kufa was perhaps not a well-conceived move by Ali. Despite repeated requests by senior Sahaabah and even by his elder son Hasan to reconsider his decision he remained adamant. By shifting the capital he damaged the political primacy of Madinah and harmed the system i.e. the election of the Khalifah by the Ansaars and Muhajireen, under which he was elected and on the basis of which he claimed his legitimacy to the office of the Khilafat. This shift of capital seemed inappropriate and unprecedented for none of his predecessors had even thought of it. It was an ill-fated shift for he moved from the firmly loyal Ansaar and Muhajireen of Madinah to the people of Iraq (Arab) who were rather lukewarm in their loyalty to Ali. They were not prepared to fight to finish against Mu’avia to uphold Ali’s legitimacy to the Khilafat. They were the people, with a vacillating heart and mind, who failed to discriminate between ‘right’ and ‘wrong’. Thus Ali faced insurmountable difficulties in motivating the people of Kufa and Basra to fight against Mu’avia, even though it was for a legitimate cause.

Ali was a most frustrated man towards the end of his short tenure as Khalifah of a bifurcated Khilafat from 36 to 41 A.H/656~661 A.D. He was all the more disillusioned when his own brother Aqeel betrayed him and transferred his loyalties to Mu’avia. He was profoundly hurt by the
disobedience of cousin, Abdullah ibn Abbas. He was endlessly harassed by the Khariji. Confronted with all these tragic and ironic events he had almost turned a recluse when he was martyred by a misguided and fanatic Khariji. He deserved the death of a martyr for he always fought for the right and noble cause.

Ali was an intellectual genius who founded the Arabic grammar (Nahu), and his knowledge of the Qur’an was unparalleled. He practiced faithfully the injunctions of the Qur’an and the Traditions of the Prophet. It was because of this firm adherence to principles, governing the conduct of Muslims, that he lost sight of pragmatism and could not evolve a sound strategy to counteract the clever political moves of Mu‘avia. Irrespective of the reverses and obstacles he faced in life Ali (RA) always stood for a right and just cause which is eloquently confirmed by Mas‘udi: “If the glorious name of being the first Muslim, a comrade of the Prophet in exile, his faithful companion in the struggle for faith, his intimate in life, and his kinsman; if a true knowledge of the spirit of his teachings and of the Book; if self abnegation and practice of justice, if honesty, purity and love of truth, if a knowledge of Law and Science, constitute a claim to pre-eminence, then all must regard Ali as one of the foremost Muslims.” (Quote in Ahmad, K.J. [1987] Hundred Great Muslims, Library of Islam, Kazi Publications Inc. Chicago, U.S.A, p: 47)
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