



KITAB

AL IRSHAD

1

شكر

Shaikh al-Mufid

Chapter 1

Introduction

(This part gives) an account of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, the first of the Imams of the believers, of the rulers (wulat) of the Muslims and of God's (appointed) successors in religion after the Apostle of God, the truthful one and the trusted one, Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah, the seal of the Prophets, blessings on him and his pure family. (He was) the brother of the Apostle of God and his paternal cousin, and his helper (wazir) in his affair, his son-in-law (being married) to his daughter, Fatima the chaste, mistress of the women of the universe. (The full name of) the Commander of the faithful is 'Ali b. Abi Talib b. 'Abd al-Muttalib b. Hashim b. 'Abd Manaf. (He was) the Lord of the testamentary trustees of authority (wasiyyin), the best of blessing and peace be on him. His kunya was Abu al-Hasan.

He was born in the Sacred House (i.e. the Ka'ba) in Mecca on Friday, the thirteenth day of the month of Rajab, thirty years after the Year of the Elephant (c.570). Nobody before or after him has ever been born in the House of God, the Most High. (It was a mark) of him being honoured by God, the Most High, may His name be exalted, and of his position being dignified in its greatness.

His mother was Fatima, daughter of Asad b. Hashim b. 'Abd Manaf, may God be pleased with her. She was like a mother to the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, and he (the Apostle) was brought up under her care.

He was grateful for her kindness and she was among the first to believe in him and she emigrated with him in the group of the emigrants. When she died, the Prophet shrouded her with his own shirt in order to protect her from the insects of the earth, and he laid her to rest in her grave in order that,

through that, she might be protected f r o m (the crushing pressure of) the narrow space within the grave. He dictated to her her last words (which were) the statement of the authority (wilaya) of her son, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, so that at the examination after burial, she would be able to reply with those words. He singled her out with this great favour because of her position with God, may He be magnified and exalted, and with him, peace be on him. The report of that is well known.

The Commander of the faithful, 'Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him, and his brothers were among the leading members of the second generation of descendants of Hashim. In this way he gained two marks of nobility, through his growing up under the care and education of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family. He was the first of the family of the House and of the Companions to believe in God and His Apostle. He was the first male whom the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, summoned to Islam and who answered. He never ceased to support the religion and to strive against the polytheists. He constantly defended the faith and fought against those who supported deviation (f r o m the truth) and despotism. He spread the teachings of the sunna (the practice of the Prophet) and the Qur'an, judged with justice and enj o i ned (people) to do good.

He was with the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, twenty-three years after the (coming) of the (prophetic) mission. Of these, thirteen years were in Mecca before the emigration when he shared with him all the persecutions and bore most of his hardships. Then there were ten years in Medina after the emigration when he defended him against the polytheists and strove with him against the unbelievers. He protected him with his own life f r o m the enemies of religion until the time God, the Exalted, took (the Prophet) to His heaven, raised him to the highest place in heaven and bestowed His blessings and peace on him and his family. On that day the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, was thirty-three years of age.

On the day of the death of the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, the community differed over his Imamate. His Shi'a who were all the Banu Hashim, Salman, 'Ammar, Abu Dharr,

al-Miqdad, Khuzayma b. Thabit - the man who is known as the possessor of two testimonies - Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, Jabir b. 'Abd Allah al-Ansari, Abu Said al-Khudri and people like them among the important emigrants and Ansar, (all these) maintained that he was the successor (khalifa) after the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, and the Imam. (They did this) because of his outstanding merit (fadl) above all mankind, through the fact that there were gathered in him the qualities of outstanding merit, judgement and perfection, such as him being the first of the community to enter the faith, his superiority over them in knowledge of the laws, his precedence over them in fighting (jihad) and the distinction which set him apart from them in the extent of his piety, asceticism and righteousness.

Furthermore he had been specially singled out by the Prophet from among (all) his relations because of (the qualities) which no other relation, apart from him, shared with the Prophet and because of the nomination (nass) of his authority (wilaya) by God, may God be magnified and exalted, in the Qur'an where He, may His name be exalted, says: Your authority (wali) is God and His Apostle and those believers who perform the prayer and pay alms (zakat) while they are bowing (in prayer). (v 55) It is known that no one except him paid alms while bowing (in prayer).

It has been established in language that wali means "the most appropriate for authority" (awla), without there being any opposition (to this definition). If the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, was, by the stipulation of the Qur'an, more appropriate for authority among the people than themselves because of his being their war according to the textual nomination (nass) in the Clear Explanation (i.e. the Qur'an, tibyan). it was obviously necessary for all of them to obey him, just as obedience to God, the Most High, and obedience to His Apostle, peace be on him and his family, was required because of the information about their authority (wilaya) over creatures which is given in this verse with clear proof.

(Another reason for their support for the Commander of the faithful was) because of what the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, said on the day (of the assembly) at his house. He had especially gathered the Banu 'Abd al-Muttalib there in

order to make the (following) solemn pledge: "Whoever helps me in this matter will be my brother, my testamentary trustee (wasi), my helper (wazir), my heir and my successor after me." Then the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, stood up before him among all the gathering of them, and on that day he was the youngest of them, and he said: "O Apostle of God, I will help you."

Then the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, said: "Sit down, you are my brother, my trustee, my helper, my inheritor and successor after me." This is a clear statement about the succession (after the Prophet).

In addition, there is also what (the Prophet), peace be on him and his family, said on the day of Ghadir Khumm. The community had gathered to listen to the sermon (in which he asked): "Am I not more appropriate for authority (awla) over you than yourselves?"

"Yes," they answered.

Then he spoke to them in an ordered manner without any interruption in his speech: "Whomsoever I am the authority over (mawla), 'Ali is also the authority over."

Thus he (the Prophet) required for him (Ali), through laying down obedience to him and his authority (over them), the same authority as he had over them, and which he made them acknowledge and which they did not deny. This is clear (evidence) of the nomination (nass) of him for the Imamate and for succession to his position.

Furthermore there is (the Prophet's), peace be on him and his family, statement to him at the time of setting out to Tabuk: "You are in the same position with respect to me as Aaron (Harun) was to Moses (Musa) except that there is no prophet after me." Thus he required him (to have) the office of helping (i.e. administering) and to be characterised by love and outstanding merit over everyone. (He also required) his deputising for him both during his life and after his death. The Qur'an gives evidence for all that coming to Aaron (Harun) f r o m Moses, peace be on them, when God, may He be magnified and exalted, said in giving a report of what Moses, peace be on him, said: "Make Aaron, my brother, a helper for me f r o m my family. Give me support through him and make him participate in my affair so that we may glorify You much and we may

remember You frequently in that You have been a watcher over us. " (XX 29- 35) God, the Most Exalted said: "Your request is granted, Moses. " (XX 36) This (verse) confirmed that Aaron had a share with Moses in prophecy, and in helping in delivering the message and his support was strengthened through him by his aid. (Moses) also told him of deputising for him (when he said): "... .Deputise for me among my people. Act for (their) benefit and do not follow the path of the corrupters. " (VII 142) This confirms his succession by the precise statement of revelation. Therefore when the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, gave all the ranks which Aaron had f r o m Moses to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, in the same extent, except for prophecy, (all such things) were required of him as helping the Apostle, giving him support, outstanding merit and love, because these qualities were definitely required by that. Then by the clear statement there is his deputising for him during his life and "after the prophethood" which (gives evidence of his succession) by specification of the exception, (of Prophethood) when he excludes him f r o m it by mentioning "after".

Proofs similar to these are so numerous that it would make the book unduly long to mention them all, (especially) as we have examined thoroughly the statement of the evidence for them in other places in our books. Praise be to God.

The Imamate of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, was for thirty years after the Prophet, may God bless him and his family. For twenty-four years and six months of these he was prevented f r o m administering the laws (of the office) (and had to) exercise precautionary dissimulation (taqiyya) and withdrawal. For five years and six months of these, he was troubled by wars against the hypocrites, those who broke their pledges, the unjust and those who deviated (f r o m the religion) and he was plagued by the seditions of those who had gone astray. In the same way the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, had been prevented f r o m (administering) the laws (of his office) through fear and through being spied upon, and through being a fugitive and through being exiled, so that he had no power to fight the unbelievers and no means of defending the believers. Then he emigrated and for ten years after the emigration he remained making war on the

unbelievers and being troubled by the hypocrites until the time that God, may His name be exalted, took him unto Himself and made him dwell in the gardens of Paradise.

The death of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him occurred before dawn of Friday, the twenty-first of the month of Ramadan, in the year 40 A.H. He was a victim of the sword. Ibn Muljam al-Muradi, may God curse him, killed him at the mosque of Kufa, which he had come out to in order to wake the people for the dawn prayer on the night of the nineteenth of the month of Ramadan. He had been lying in wait for him from the beginning of the night. When he (the Commander of the faithful) passed by him while the latter was hiding his design by feigning sleep amid a group of people who were asleep, he (Ibn Muljam) sprang out and struck him on the top of his head with his sword which was poisoned. He lingered through the day of the nineteenth and the night and day of the twentieth and the first third of the night of the twenty-first. Then he, peace be on him, died a martyr and met his Lord, Most High, as one who has been wronged. He, peace be on him, knew of that before its time and he told the people of it before its time. His two sons, al-Hasan and al-Husayn, peace be on them, performed (the tasks) of washing him and shrouding him according to his bequest. Then they carried him to al-Ghari at Najaf in Kufa and they buried him there. They removed the traces of the place of his burial according to his bequest which was made about that to both of them by him, because of what he, peace be on him, knew about the regime of the Umayyads (which would come) after him, and their hostile attitude towards him. (For he knew) the evil action and abuse to which they would be led by their wicked intentions if they had been able to know that (place). His grave, peace be on him, remained hidden until al-Sadiq Ja'far b. Muhammad, peace be on them, pointed it out during the 'Abbasid regime. For he visited it when he came to visit Abu Ja'far (al-Mansur) while the latter was in al-Hira. Then the Shi'a knew of it and they began from that time to make visitation to his (grave), peace be on him and on his pure offspring.

On the day of his death he was 63 years of age.

Reports of him, Peace be on him, Mentioning and Knowing about the Event (of his Death) before its Occurrence

[It is reported on the authority of 'Ali b. al-Mundhir al-Tariqi, on the authority of Abu al-Fadl al-'Abdi, on the authority of Fitr, on the authority of Abu Tufayl 'Amir b. Wathila, may God be pleased with him,' who said:](1)

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, gathered the people for the pledge of allegiance. 'Abd al-Rahman b. Muljam al-Muradi, may God curse him, came but he (i.e. 'Ali) refused to accept his (pledge of allegiance) twice or three times. Then he (let him) make his pledge of allegiance to him. When he did so, he (i.e. 'All) said to him: "What prevents the most wretched person of the community (f r o m doing his wicked deed now)? For I swear by Him in Whose hand is my life, you will colour this (with blood) f r o m this." And he put his hand on his beard and his head.

When Ibn Muljam withdrew and left him, he, peace be on him, recited the following:

Stiffen your breast for death. Indeed death will meet you. Do not show grief at death, when it arrives in your valley.

[It is related f r o m al-Hasan b. Mahbub, on the authority of Abu Hamza al-Thumali, on the authority of Abu Ishaq al-Sabi'i, on the authority of al-Asbagh b. Nubata, who said:]

Ibn Muljam came to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, and pledged allegiance to him with the (others) who pledged their allegiance, and withdrew f r o m him. Then the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, called him back and warned him to be trustworthy and to be sure that he was not treacherous and did not break his oath. He did that (i.e. promised to keep his word). Then he withdrew. A second time the Commander of the faithful called him (back) and warned him to be trustworthy and to be sure that he was not treacherous and did not break his oath. Ibn Muljam, may God curse him, said: "By God, O Commander of the faithful, I have not seen you do this with anyone else except me."

Then the Commander of the faithful said:

I want his friendship and he wants my death. The one who

makes excuses to you is one of your bosom friends f r o m (the tribe of) Murad.(2)

(Then the Commander of the faithful continued): "Go, Ibn Muljam, I do not think that you will keep your word."

[It is related f r o m Ja'far b. Sulayman al-Dab'i, on the authority of al-Mu'alla b. Ziyad, who said:]

'Abd al-Rahman b. Muljam, may God curse him, came to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, to ask to be provided with a horse.

"O Commander of the faithful," he said, "provide me with a horse." The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, turned toward him and then said to him, "You are 'Abd al-Rahman b. Muljam al-Muradi?" '

"Yes," he replied.

"Ghazwan," called (the Commander of the faithful), "provide him with the roan."

That man came with a roan horse and Ibn Muljam, may God curse him, mounted it and took its reins. When he had gone away, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him said:

I want his friendship and he wants my death. The one who makes excuses to you is one of your bosom friends f r o m (the tribe of) Murad.

When he did what he did and struck the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, he was captured after he came out of the mosque and then brought to the Commander of the faithful. The latter said to him: "I have treated you as I have done, even though I knew that you would be my murderer. Yet, I treated you that way in order to seek God's support against you."

There are other reports in which he, peace be on him, announces his own death to his family and companions before his murder.

[Abu Zayd al-Ahwal reported on the authority of al-Ajlah, on the authority of the shaykhs of Kinda whom al-Ajlah said he heard say more than twenty times:]

'Ali said on the pulpit: "What prevents the most wretched person of the community dyeing this red with blood f r o m above it? And he, peace be on him, put his hand on his beard.

['Ali b. al-Hazawwar on the authority of al-Asbagh b. Nubata, who said:]

'Ali preached in the month in which he was killed and he said: "The month of Ramadan has come to you. It is the lord of the months, and foremost of the year. In it the mill of authority makes a (new) turn and you will make the pilgrimage of the (new) year in one rank (i.e. without an Imam to lead you). The sign of that will be that I will no longer be among you."

[A1-Asbagh added:] He was announcing his own death but we did not understand.

[It is related f r o m al-Fadl b. Dukayn, on the authority of Hayyan b. al-Abbas, on the authority of 'Uthman b. al-Mughira who said:]

When the month of Ramadan began, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, had supper one evening with al-Hasan, one evening with al-Husayn, peace be on them, and one evening with 'Abd Allah b. al- Abbas. He never had more than three mouthfuls (of food). One of those nights he was asked about that, he replied: "(I would rather) the decision of God come to me while I was hungry." It was only a night of two nights later when he, peace be on him, was struck towards the end of the night.

[Isma'il b. Ziyad reported, on the authority of Umm Musa, a woman servant of 'Ali, peace be on him, and the wet-nurse of his daughter, peace be on her, who told me:]

'Ali, peace be on him, said to his daughter, Umm Kulthum,: "O my little daughter, little time is left for me to be with you."

"Why is that, father?" she asked.

"I have seen the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, in my sleep," he replied. "He was rubbing the dust f r o m my face and saying: ' O 'Ali, do not be concerned, you have accomplished what you had to.' "

Only three days later he was struck by that blow. Umm Kulthum cried aloud (with sorrow).

"Don't do that, my daughter," he said. "For I see the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, pointing to me with his hand and saying: 'O 'Ali, come to us, for what we have is better for you.' "

[Ammar al-Duhni reported on the authority of Abu Salih al-Hanafi, who said:]

I heard 'Ali, peace be on him, saying: "I saw the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, in my sleep and I complained to

him about the trouble and quarrelling which I had met from his community. Then I wept. He said: Don't weep, 'Ali, but turn around.' I turned around. Behold, there were two fettered men, and then their heads were crushed by stones."(3)

[Abu Salih added:] I went to him in the morning as I had done every morning, and when I got to the (area of) the butchers I met the people who were saying: "The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, has been killed."

[Abd Allah b. Musa related, on the authority of al-Hasan b. Dinar, on the authority of al-Hasan al-Basri, who said:]

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, stayed up awake during the night on the morning of which he was killed and he did not go out to the mosque for the night prayer as was his custom. His daughter, Umm Kulthum, the mercy of God be on her, asked him: "What has kept you awake?"

"I will be killed, if I go out in the morning," he replied.

Then Ibn al-Nabbah came to him and summoned him to the prayer. He walked out a little way then returned. Umm Kulthum said to him: "Tell Ja'da to pray with the people."

"Yes, tell Ja'da to perform the prayer with the people," he answered. But then he said: "There is no escape from the appointed time."

He went out to the mosque and there was the man who had spent

the whole night lying in wait for him. However, when it had become cold in the early morning before dawn, he had fallen asleep. Now, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, moved him with his foot and said to him: "The prayer."

The man got up and struck him.

[In another account:]

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, spent that night awake and he frequently went out and looked up to the sky, saying: "By God, I have not lied nor have I been lied to. It is the night which I was promised."

Then he went back to his bed. When dawn rose, he put on his waistcloth (izar) and went out saying:

Stiffen your breast for death. Indeed death will meet you. Do not show grief at death when it arrives in your valley.

When he reached the courtyard of his house, the geese met him and hooted in his face. (The people) began to drive them

away but he said: "Leave them, they are those who wail (for my death)."

He, peace be on him, went out and was struck down.

1. Cf. Maqatil al-Talibiyyin. 31. The tradition is cited by Ibn Sa'd on the authority of al-Fadl b. Dukayn, al-Tabaqat al-Kubra (Beirut, 1978), III, 33; al-Baladhuri has the same tradition on the authority of Ibn Sa'd, Ansab al-Ashraf (Beirut, 1974), II, 500. The text of al-Irshad had Abu Fadl al-'Abdi. This has been corrected.

2. This verse is also reported by Maqatil al-Talibiyyin. 31, Ibn Sa'd, op. cit., 34, with a different isnad. It is given in a slightly different story in the next report. The verse is also cited by Ibn Ziyad in his confrontation with Hani b. 'Urwa cf.

3. Reference to the punishment Ibn Muljam and Shabib b. Bajura will receive f r o m God.

Chapter 2

Reports which have come down of the Motive for his Murder and how the Event occurred

[What is reported by a group of historians (ahl al-siyar), including Abu Mikhnaf, Isma'il b. Rashid, Abu Hashim al-Rifa'i, Abu 'Amr al-Thaqafi and others who relate:](4)

A group of the Kharijites gathered at Mecca and they mentioned the leaders (of the people) and blamed them and their actions. They mentioned the people of al-Nahrawan and they asked God's mercy for them. Then they said to each other: "If (only) we devoted ourselves to God, and went to the leaders (Imams) of error (dalal) and sought a moment when they were inattentive and then rid the country and men of them for the sake of God, and also avenged our brothers, the martyrs of al-Nahrawan."

They made a compact to do that after performing the pilgrimage. 'Abd al-Rahman b. Muljam, may God curse him, said: "I'll take care of (killing) 'Ali for you."

Al-Burak b. 'Abd Allah al-Tamimi said: "I will take care of (killing) Mu'awiya for you."

'Amr b. Bakr al-Tamimi said: "I will take care of (killing) 'Amr b. al-'As for you."

They made a compact to do that and bound themselves to its fulfilment. They agreed (to carry it out) on the night of the nineteenth of the month of Ramadan. On that they separated.

Ibn Muljam, may God curse him, set out - he was numbered among Kinda - until he came to Kufa. There he met his colleagues. But he kept his task secret from them out of fear that something of it might get spread around. The situation was like this when one day he visited one of his colleagues from Taym al-Rabab. At this man's house he met by chance Qatam,

daughter of al-Akhdar of Taym. The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, had killed her father and brother at al-Nahrawan. She was (also) one of the most beautiful of the women of her time. When Ibn Muljam, may God curse him, saw her, he fell in love with her and his admiration of her became very intense. He asked to marry her and became engaged to her. Then she said to him: "What dowry do you suggest for me?"

"Make your decision on that," he answered.

"I have decided," she said, "that you should (give me three thousand dirhams, a young serving boy, a servant and the murder of 'Ali b. Abi Talib."

"You can have all you asked for," he replied. "But as for the murder of 'Ali b. Abi Talib, how can I do that?"

"You should look (for a time) when he is careless," she said. "If you kill him, I will cure myself (of my obsession against him) and life with me will be a pleasure for you. If you are killed, God has nothing in this world which is better for you (than such a death)."

"The only thing which has brought me to this town (misr), "he said, "when I was a fugitive from it and could find no protection with its inhabitants, was to kill 'Ali b. Abi Talib, which you have asked me for. So you will have what you have asked for."

"I have been looking for someone to help you and strengthen you in that (undertaking)," she said. Then she went to Wardan b. Mujalid (another) from Taym al-Rabab. She gave him the information and asked help for Ibn Muljam, may God curse him. He undertook to share responsibility for that for her.

Then Ibn Muljam, may God curse him, went out and came to a man from Ashja' called Shabib b. Bajura and said to him: "Shabib, would you like nobility (sharaf) in this world and the next life?"

"What is that?" he asked.

"Will you help me to kill 'Ali b. Abi Talib?"

Shabib was one who held the view of the Kharijites, so he said to Ibn Muljam: "May a wailing woman wail for you (at your death), Ibn Muljam. For you have come to something which is horrific. How will you be able to do it?"

"We will lie in wait for him in the great mosque," Ibn Muljam, may God curse him, replied. "Then when he comes to the dawn

prayer, we will attack him. If we kill him, we will satisfy ourselves and attain our vengeance."

He insisted until he agreed and went with him in to the great mosque to Qatam, while she was performing the rite of i'tikaf (5) there and put up a tent. They both said to her: "We have reached agreement on killing this man."

"When you want (to do) that," she said, "come to me in this place."

Then they left her and waited for several days. They came to her finally on the night of Wednesday, the nineteenth of the month of Ramadan in the year 40 A.H. She ordered some silk which she tied around their chests. They put on their swords, and went out and sat opposite at the door from which the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, would come out to the prayer. However before that, they had told al-Ash'ath b. Qays of the resolution in their spirits to kill the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. Al-Ash'ath b. Qays, may God curse him, agreed with them in what they had agreed upon.

Hujr b. 'Adi, may God have mercy on him, was (also) spending that night in the mosque. He overheard al-Ash'ath saying to Ibn Muljam:

"Hurry, hurry to your task, for dawn is beginning to appear."

Hujr perceived the intention of al-Ash'ath and said to him: "You are going to kill him, you one-eyed man."

He left directly to go to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, and tell him the news to warn him about the group. However, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, missed him on the way and went in to the mosque. Ibn Muljam came to him first and struck him. Hujr approached as the people were crying: "The Commander of the faithful has been killed!"

[Abd Allah b. Muhammad al-Azdi has reported:](6)

On that night I was praying in the great mosque with men who were inhabitants of the town. During that month they used to pray from the beginning of the night to the end of it. I looked towards the men who were praying near the door and 'Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him, came out for the dawn prayer. He began to call out: "The prayer, the prayer."

I was hardly aware of the call before I saw the flashing of swords and I heard someone saying: "Judgement belongs to

God, 'Ali, not to you and your companions."

Then I heard 'Ali, peace be on him, saying: "Don't let the man escape from you."

Then 'Ali, peace be on him, was struck and Shabib b. Bajura came to strike him but he missed him, and his blow fell on air. The group fled towards the gates of the mosque and the people rushed to seize them.

A man caught Shabib b. Bajura, knocked him down and sat on his chest and took his sword to kill him with it. When he saw the people rushing towards him, he was afraid that they would act precipitately against him without listening to him. Therefore he jumped off him and let him go and threw the sword from his hand. Shabib made his escape to his house-Then his paternal cousin came to him. He saw him untying the silk cloth from his breast and said: "What is that? Perhaps (it was) you (who) killed the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him." (Shabib) meant to say 'no' but he said "yes". His cousin went away and put on his sword. Then he went to (Shabib) (again) and struck him with it until he killed him.

One of the men from Hamdan followed Ibn Muljam, may God curse him. He flung his cloak over what was in Ibn Muljam's hand and took his sword from him. Then he took him to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. In the meantime the third had escaped and dodged among the people.

When Ibn Muljam, may God curse him, was brought before the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, the latter looked at him and said: "A life for a life. If I die, kill him as he killed me. If I live, I will consider my judgement on him."

"By God", said Ibn Muljam, may God curse him, "I have bought his life for a thousand lives. I have plotted against him for a thousand lives. If he has betrayed me, then may God destroy him."

"Enemy of God," cried out Umm Kulthum, "you have killed the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him."

"I have killed only your father," he retorted.

"Enemy of God," she cried, "I hope that there is no danger for him."

"I think you are only crying for 'Ali," he replied. "Indeed, by God, I struck him. If I had been divided among the people of the land, I should have destroyed them."

Then he was taken from his presence, peace be on him, while the people (wanted) to tear his flesh with their teeth as if they were wild beasts. They were crying out: "O enemy of God, what have you done? You have destroyed the community of Muhammad, may God bless him and his family. You have killed the best of people."

He was silent and did not speak. He was taken to the prison.(7) Then the people went to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, and said: "Commander of the faithful, give us your order about the enemy of God. For he has destroyed the community, and corrupted the faith."

"If I live," answered the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, "then I will consider my judgement on him. But if I die then do to him what the Prophet did with a murderer. Kill him and after that burn him in a fire."

When the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, died (the people) wept for him. (After) his family had finished his burial, al-Hasan, peace be on him, sat in council and ordered Ibn Muljam to be brought to him. He was brought to him and when he stood before him (al-Hasan) said: "O enemy of God, you have killed the Commander of the faithful and you have increased corruption in religion."

Then he ordered him to be beheaded. Umm al-Haytham, daughter of al-Aswad of al-Nakha'a asked to be given his corpse so that she could be in charge of burning it. He gave it to her and he made her burn it in a fire.(8)

The poet said about the affair of Qatam and the killing of the Commander of the faithful peace be upon him:

I have never seen a dowry, given by a generous man, like the dowry of Qatam (whether the man was) rich or needy.

(It was) three thousand (dirhams), a slave and a young servant, and the striking of 'Ali with a sharp piercing sword.

(There has been) no dowry more precious - and no violence except that it was less than the violence of Ibn Muljam.(9)

As for the two men who were in agreement with Ibn Muljam to kill Mu'awiya and 'Amr b. al.'As, the one struck Mu'awiya while he was bending (in prayer). However his blow was delivered weakly and he was saved from its consequences. The man was seized and killed immediately. As for the other he went (to carry out) his mission that night. However 'Amr had felt sick

and had put a man in his place to pray with the people; the man was called Kharija b. Abi Habiba al-'Amiri. He struck with his sword when he thought that it was 'Amr. He was seized and taken to 'Amr who has him killed. kharija died on the second day!(10)

4. The following account agrees with Maqatil al-Talibiyyin, 31-33. It is slightly rearranged and there are occasional small differences in words. Al-Mufid even accepts Abu al-Faraj's collected isnad and cites his three principal authorities.

5. I'tikaf a ritual usually performed in Ramadan where a person cuts himself off from ordinary life by staying in a tent in a mosque.

6. The following account is almost identical with Maqatil al-Talibiyyin. 34-37. But the isnads have been omitted and the order slightly rearranged. There is one brief addition concerning the people going to 'Ali and details about al-Ash'ath are omitted.

7. See above. The account, which follows, of the people visiting the dying 'Ali is not in Maqatil al-Talibiyyin.

8. Cf. *ibid.*, 41.

9. Cf. *ibid.*, 37.

Chapter 3

Reports about the Place of the Grave of the Commander of the Faithful, Peace be on him, and an Explanation of the Circumstances of his Burial

[Abbad b. Ya'qub al-Rawajini related: Hayyan b. 'Ali al-'Anazi told us: A retainer of 'Ali b. Abi Talib told me:]

When death was close to the Commander of the faithful he said to al-Hasan and al-Husayn, peace be on them: "When I die, you two put me on my bier. Then take me out and carry (me) in the back of the bier. You two will protect the front of it. Then bring me to al-Ghariyyayn. You will see a white rock shining with light. Dig there and you will find a shield and bury me at it."

When he died, we took him out and began to carry him on the back of the bier while we guarded the front of it. We began to hear a rustling and whistling of the wind until we came to al-Ghariyyayn. Behold! There was a white rock whose light was shining. We dug there and behold, there was a shield on which was written: "This is one of the things which Noah has stored for 'Ali b. Abi Talib." We buried him there and went away. We were happy at God's mark of honour to the Commander of the faithful. A group of the Shi'a followed us but they had not witnessed the prayer performed for him. We told them about what had happened and about God's mark of honour to the Commander of the faithful.

Then they said: "We would like to see what you have seen of his affair."

"Traces of the place have been removed according to his bequest," we told them.

They kept coming back and forth to us and they told us that they had dug but could not find anything.

[Muhammad b. 'Umara related: Jabir b. Yazid al-Ju'fi told me:]

I asked Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Baqir where the Commander of the faithful was buried.

"He is buried," he answered, "in the region of al-Ghariyyayn. He was buried before the dawn rose and al-Hasan, al-Husayn, peace be on them, and Muhammad, the sons of 'Ali, and 'Abd Allah b. Ja'far, may God be pleased with him, went in to his grave."

[Ya'qub b. Yazid reported on the authority of Ibn Abi 'Umayr, on the authority of his men:](11)

Al-Husayn b. 'Ali, peace be on them, was asked: "Where did you bury the Commander of the faithful?" He answered: "We went out with him at night past the Mosque of al-Ash'ath until we brought him out on the upper ground beside al-Ghariyyayn. We buried him there."

[Muhammad b. Zakariyya reported: Abd Allah b. Muhammad told us on the authority of Ibn 'A'isha, who said: 'Abd Allah b. Hazim told me:]

. We went out from Kufa one day with (Harun) al-Rashid to hunt. We came to the region of al-Ghariyyayn and al-Thawiyya. Then we saw some gazelle. We sent the falcons and dogs after them. They raced after them for an hour but then the gazelle took refuge in a hill. They stopped chasing them; the falcons flew down to the ground and the dogs came back. Al-Rashid was amazed at that. Then the gazelles came down from the hill, and the falcons and dogs descended towards them. The gazelle returned to the hill, and the falcons and dogs came away from them. That happened three times.

Then Harun al-Rashid said: "Hurry and bring me whoever you meet."

We brought him an old man (shaykh) of the Banu Asad. Harun asked him: "Tell me what this hill is."

"I will tell you, if you grant me a pledge of security," he replied.

"You may have the compact of God and His guarantee that I will not be roused against you and harm you," said Harun.

"My father reported to me from his father," said the old man, "that they used to say that in this hill was the grave of 'Ali b. Abi Talib, and that God has made it a sanctuary (haram) so that whatever seeks refuge there will be safe."

Harun got down and called for water. Then he made ritual ablutions and performed the prayer at the hill. He rolled in the

ground there and began to weep. Then we left.

My mind could not accept that. Some days later I made the pilgrimage to Mecca. I saw there Yasir, one of al-Rashid's men. He used to sit with us. When we had made the tawwaf (circumambulation of the Ka'ba), the conversation went on until he said:

Al-Rashid said to me one night when we had come from Mecca and stopped at Kufa: "Tell 'Isa b. Ja'far to come riding with me."

I rode with them both until we came to al-Ghariyyayn. 'Isa threw himself down and slept. But al-Rashid went to the hill and prayed there. Whenever he performed two rak'as he called out, wept and rolled in the ground of the hill. Then he said: "O cousin, I know your outstanding merit (fadl), and your precedence (in Islam). By God, you have sat in my majlis (council) while I was there and you were what you were: but your descendants are harming me and revolting against me."

After this he stood and prayed two rak'as, then he began speaking again, calling out and weeping until it was daybreak. Then he said: "Yasir, wake 'Isa." I woke him and he said to him: "Isa, wake up and pray at the grave of your cousin."

"What cousin of mine is this?" asked 'Isa.

"This is the grave of 'Ali b. 'Abi Talib," he replied.

Then 'Isa made his ritual ablutions and stood up to pray. He did not stop doing that until the dawn arose. Then I said: "O Commander of the faithful, morning has come." So we rode off and returned to Kufa.

10. Summary of *ibid.*, 30.

11. *Ibid.*, 42.

Chapter 4

Reports of his Priority in Belief in God and His Apostle and of his Being the First of all Responsible Men in (Faith)

(This Chapter includes) a sample of the reports about the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him (including) his virtues and his eminent qualities, together with (some of) what has been preserved of his wise sayings and sermons, and (some of) what is told of his miracles, legal judgements and explanations.(1)

[Abu al-Jaysh al-Muzaffar b. Muhammad al-Balkhi informed me: Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Abi Thalj informed us: Abu al-Hasan Ahmad b. (Muhammad b.) al-Qasim al-Barqi told us: 'Abd al-Rahman b. Salih al-Azdi told me: Asad b. 'Ubayda told us on the authority of Yahya b. °Afif b. Qays, on the authority of his father ('Afif b. Qays),(2) who said:]

I was sitting with al-'Abbas b. 'Abd al-Muttalib, may God be pleased with him, in Mecca, before the affairs of the Prophet became known to the public. A man came and looked up towards the sky where the sun hovered above. He turned in the direction of the Ka'ba and stood to pray. Then a youth came and stood at his right and a woman came and stood behind them both. The man bowed, and the youth and the woman bowed. The man raised his hands and the youth and the woman raised their hands. Then he prostrated and they both prostrated.

"'Abbas!" I exclaimed, "it is a fantastic affair!"

"Indeed, it is a fantastic affair," replied al-'Abbas. "Do you

know who that man is? He is Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah b. 'Abd al-Muttalib, my cousin. Do you know who that youth is? He is 'Ali b. Abi Talib, my cousin. Do you know who that woman is? She is Khadija, daughter of Khuwaylid. This cousin of mine (i.e. Muhammad) has told me that his Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, Who has ordered him to carry out this religion (din) which he is practising. No, by God, there are not any on the face of the earth, who practise this religion except these three."

[Abu Hafs 'Umar b. Muhammad al-Sayrafi informed me: Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Abi Thalj told me on the authority of Ahmad b. Muhammad b. al-Qasim al-Barqi, on the authority of Abu Salih Sahl b. Salih - it was about the year 100 (A. H.) - who said I heard Abu al-Mu'ammara 'Abbad b. 'Abd al-Samad who said: I heard Anas b. Malik say:]

The Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, said: "The angels bless me and 'Ali for seventy years, because (for a time) only 'Ali and I raised the testimony to heaven that there is no god but God and Muhammad is the Apostle of God."

[By the same chain of transmitters on the authority of Ahmad b. (Muhammad b.) al-Qasim al-Barqi: Ishaq told us: Nuh b. Qays told us: Sulayman b. 'Ali al-Hashimi Abu Fatima told us: I heard Muadha al-'Adawiyya say:]

I heard 'Ali b. Abi Talib say on the pulpit at Basra: "I am the greater testifier of truth (siddiq) for I believed before Abu Bakr believed; I became a Muslim before he became a Muslim."

[Abu Nasr Muhammad b. al-Husayn al-Muqri al-Basri al-Sayrawani informed : Abu Bakr Muhammad b. (Ahmad b.) Abi Thalj told us: Abu Muhammad al-Nawfali told us on the authority of Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Hamid, on the authority of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-Ghiffar al-Faqimi who said: Ibrahim b. Hayyan reported to me on the authority of Abu 'Abd Allah, retainer of Banu Hashim, on the authority of Abu Sukhayla, who said:]

I and 'Ammar went on the pilgrimage. We stopped at the house

of Abu Dharr, may God be pleased with him, and stayed with him for three days. When the time of our departure was at hand, I said to him: "Abu Dharr, we consider that nothing except confusion has come over the people. What is your view?"

"Cleave to the Book and 'Ali b. Abi Talib," he replied, "then bear witness to the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, who said: "'Ali was the first to believe in me and will be the first to shake my hand in greetings on the Day of Resurrection. He is the greatest testifier of the truth (siddiq) and discerner of truth and falsehood. He is the chief of the believers and money is the chief cause of wrong-doing.'

Al-Shaykh al-Mufid, may God be pleased with him, comments: The reports with this meaning are numerous as testimonies (of it) are bulky.

[Among such are the words of Khuzayma b. Thabit al-Ansari, the man who gave two testimonies, in what was reported to me by Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Imran al-Marzubani on the authority of Muhammad b. al-'Abbas who said:]

Muhammad b. Yazid al-Nahwi recited to us on the authority of Ibn 'A'isha (the words) of Khuzayma b. Thabit al-Ansari, may God be pleased with him:

I never thought that this affair would leave the clan of Hashim, and then within it (that) it would leave Abu Hasan (i.e. 'Ali).

Was he not the first to pray with their (i.e. the Muslims') qibla (direction of prayer), and the most knowledgeable man in traditions and practice?

(Was he not) the last of men with whom the Prophet made a covenant (ahd), and the one whose helper was Gabriel in washing and shrouding (the body of the Prophet)?

He it is in whom there is what others are not distinguished by. There is not among the people the good which is in him.

What is it which makes you reject him, for we know him? Yet your pledge of allegiance is made through the greatest cheating.

1. Although mentioned here by al-Mufid, the arrangement of the chapters in the translations means that the sayings and sermons and miracles and legal judgments will be dealt with in separate chapters.

2. Al-Tabari, *Tarikh* (Leiden 1879-1901) I, 1160-1. The isnad has the same three first authorities, but it seems from the full isnad that it was not taken from al-Tabari.

Chapter 5

Reports of his Outstanding Merit, Peace be on him, over Everybody in Religious Knowledge (Ilm)

[Abu al-Hasan Muhammad b. Ja'far al-Tamimi al-Nahwi informed me: Muhammad b. al-Qasim al-Muharibi al-Bazzaz told me: Hisham b. Yunis al-Nahshali told us: 'A'idh b. Habib told us on the authority of Abu al-Sabbah al-Kinani, on the authority of Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami, on the authority of his father, on the authority of 'Ikrima, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas, who said:]

The Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, said: "Ali b. Abi Talib is the most learned of my community and the most capable of giving legal decisions after me in (matters upon) which (men) differ.

[Abu Bakr Muhammad b. 'Umar al-Ji'abi informed me: Ahmad b. 'Isa Abu Ja'far al-'Ijli told us: Isma'il b. 'Abd Allah b. Khalid told us: 'Ubayd Allah b. 'Umar told us: 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. 'Aqil told us on the authority of Hamza b. Abi Said al-Khudri, on the authority of his father (Abu Said al-Khudri), who said:]

I heard the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, say: "I am the city of knowledge and 'Ali is its gate. Therefore whoever wants knowledge should learn it from 'Ali, peace be on him."

[Abu Bakr Muhammad b. 'Umar al-Ji'abi informed me: Yusuf b. al-Hakam al-Hannat told us: Dawud b. Rashid told us: Salama b. Salih al-Ahmar told us on the authority of 'Abd al-Malik b.

'Abd al Rahman, on the authority of al-Ash'ath b. Taliq who said: I heard al-Hasan al-'Arani relating on the authority of Murra, on the authority of 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud, who said:]

The Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, summoned 'Ali and went apart with him. When he returned to us, we asked him: "What covenant (ahd) did he make with you?" He replied: "He taught me a thousand doors of knowledge and he opened from each (of these) doors a thousand (more) doors."

[Abu al-Hasan Muhammad b. al-Muzaffar al-Bazzaz informed me: Abu Malik Kuthayyir b. Yahya told us: Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Abi al-Sirri told us: Ahmad b. 'Abd Allah b. Yunis told us on the authority of Sa'd al-Kinani, on the authority of al-Asbagh b. Nubata who said:]

When the pledge of allegiance was made to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, for the caliphate, he went out to the mosque wearing the turban and cloak of the Apostle of God, peace be on him and his family. He went up on the pulpit. After praising and glorifying God, and giving admonition and warning, he sat down confidently, knitted his fingers together and placed them on his stomach. Then he said: "Question me before you lose me. Question me, for I have the knowledge of those who came earlier and those who will come later. If the cushion (on which a judge sits) was folded for me (to sit on), I could give judgements to the people of the Torah by their Torah, to the people of the Gospels by their Gospels, to the people of Psalms by their Psalms and to the people of the Furqan (i.e. Qur'an) by their Furqan, so that each one of these books will be fulfilled and will declare, 'O Lord, indeed 'Ali has given judgement according to Your decree.' By God, I know the Qur'an and its interpretation (better) than anyone who claims knowledge of it. If it were not for one verse in the Book of God, most High, I would be able to inform you of what will be until the Day of Resurrection." Then he said: "Question me before you lose me, for by Him Who split the seed and brought the soul in to being, if you questioned me about (it) verse by verse, I would tell you of the time of its revelation and why it was

revealed, I would inform of the abrogating (verse) and the abrogated, of the specific and general, the clearly defined and the ambiguous, of the Meccan and the Medinan. By God, there is not a party who can lead astray or guide until the Day of Resurrection, without me knowing its leader, the one who drives it forward and the one who urges it on."

Examples of such reports are (so many) that the book would become (unduly) long in (reporting) them.

Chapter 6

Reports of his Outstanding Merit, the Blessing of God be on him

[Abu al-Hasan Muhammad b. al-Muzaffar al-Bazzaz informed me: Umar b. 'Abd Allah b. 'Imran told us: Ahmad b. Bashir told us: 'Abd Allah b. Musa told us on the authority of Qays b. Abi Harun who said: I went to Abu Said al-Khudri and asked him whether he had witnessed (the battle of) Badr. He said:]

On that day (the Battle of Badr), I heard the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, speak to Fatima, peace be on her, when she came to him weeping and saying: "O Apostle of God, the women of Quraysh are reviling me because of the poverty of 'Ali peace be on him."

"Aren't you satisfied that I have married you to the first Muslim and the most knowledgeable of them?" the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, asked her. "Indeed, God, the Most High, looked thoroughly over the people of the earth and chose your father from them and made him a Prophet. Then He looked over them a second time and chose your (present) husband (ba'l) and made him a trustee of authority (wasi). God inspired me to marry you to him. Didn't you know, Fatima, that through God's kindness to you, your husband is the greatest of men in clemency, the most knowledgeable of men and the first of them in Islam."

Fatima laughed and rejoiced. Then the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, continued: "Fatima, 'Ali has eight molar teeth. No one before and after him will have the like. He is my brother in the world and the hereafter. No one else of the people has that (rank). Fatima, the mistress of the women of

heaven, is his wife. The grandsons of mercy, my grandsons, will be his sons. His brother, who will be adorned by two wings in heaven, will fly with the angels wherever he wishes. He has the knowledge of those who came before and those who will come after. He is the first who believed in me and he will be the last of the people to see me. He is my trustee of authority (wasi) and the inheritor (warith) of (all) the trustees of authority (wasiyyin)."

[Al-Shaykh al-Mufid, may God be pleased with him, said: I have found (the following report) in the book of Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. al-'Abbas al-Razi who said: Muhammad b. Khalid told us: Ibrahim b. 'Abd Allah told us: Muhammad b. Sulayman al-Daylami told us on the authority of Jabir b. Yazid al-Ju'fi, on the authority of 'Adi b. Hakim, on the authority of 'Abd Allah b. al-'Abbas, who said:]

We, (the members) of the house (Ahl al-bayt) have seven qualities none of which the (rest of the) people have;

From us (came) the Prophet may God bless him and his family ;

From us came the trustee of authority (wasi), the best of this community after him (i.e. Prophet), 'Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him

From us came Hamza, the lion of God and of His Apostle , and the lord of martyrs;

From us came Ja'far b. Abi Talib who is adorned by two wings with which he flies in heaven wherever he wishes;

From us (came) the two grandsons of this community, the two lords of the youth of paradise, al-Hasan and al-Husayn;

From us (came) the (one who will undertake the Imamate for the rest of time) Qa'im of the family of Muhammad, by which God graced His Prophet;

From us (came) the one who was given (final) victory (al-

mansur).

[Muhammad b. Ayman related on the authority of Abu Hazim, retainer of Ibn 'Abbas, who said:]

The Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, spoke to 'Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him: "'Ali, you will be engaged in disputes but you will overcome any dispute by seven qualities, the like of which no one else has: you are the first of those who believed with me, the greatest of them in war, the most knowledgeable of them in the battles (ayyam) on behalf of God, the one of them who is most loyal in keeping the covenant (ahd) of God, the most compassionate of them towards subjects, the most capable of giving equal treatment and the greatest of them in distinction before God."

Reports like this and in the same sense as this, which are better known by both the general populace and the Shi'a (khassa) are (so clear) that there is no need to lengthen (matters) with an explanation. Yet if there was only the tradition whose story is well known, whose narration has been spread abroad, of the bird and the words of the Prophet, may God bless him and his family: "O God, bring the creature most lovable to you to eat (some) of this bird with me," and then the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, came, it would be sufficient (to show that) he was the most lovable creature to God, the greatest in reward from Him, the nearest to Him, and the most outstanding in his action. (Similar) is the case of the words of Jabir b. 'Abd Allah al-Ansari when he was asked about the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, and he said, "He is the best of men. Only an unbeliever could doubt clear proof." Jabir had supported that in a narrative which has come through an uninterrupted chain of transmitters, and is well known to the traditionists (ahl al-naql).,The evidences for the fact that the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, is the most outstanding person after the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, are mutually verifiable. If our purpose was to establish it (by reporting and analysing all the reports) we would have to set aside a book for it. The reports of what we have outlined

are sufficient in so far as our intention is to give a summary, and put that in its (appropriate) place in this book.

Chapter 7

Reports of Love for him, Peace be on him, Being a Sign of Faith (in a Person) and Hatred of him Being a Sign of Hypocrisy (in a Person)

[Abu Bakr Muhammad b. 'Umar - known as Ibn al-Ji'abi al-Hafiz - told us: Muhammad b. Sahl b. al-Hasan told us: Ahmad b. 'Umar al-Dihqan told us: Muhammad b. Kathir told us: Ismail b. Muslim told us: al-A'mash told us on the authority of 'Adi b. Thabit, on the authority of Zirr b. Hubaysh, who said:]

I saw the Commander of the faithful, 'Ali b. Abi Talib, on the pulpit and I heard him say: "By Him Who split the seed and brought the soul in to being, the Prophet made a promise (ahd) to me: 'Only believers will love you and only hypocrites will hate you!'"

[Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Imran al-Marzubani informed me: 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Baghawi told us: 'Ubayd Allah b. 'Umar al-Qawariri told us: Ja'far b. Sulayman told us: al-Nadr b. Hamid told us on the authority of Abu al-Jarud, on the authority of al-Harith al-Hamdani who said:]

I saw 'Ali, peace be on him. One day he came and went up on the pulpit. He praised and glorified God. Then he said: "A decree which God, the Most High, decreed by the tongue of the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, was that only believers will love me and only hypocrites will hate me. Whoever forges a lie is lost."

[Abu al-Hasan Muhammad b. al-Muzaffar al-Bazzaz informed me: Muhammad b. Yahya told us: Muhammad b. Musa al-

Barbari told us: Khalaf b. Salim told us: Waki' told us: al-A'mash told us on the authority of 'Adi b. Thabit, on the authority of Zirr b. Hubaysh, on the authority of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, who said:]

The Prophet, may God bless him and his family, made a promise (ahd) to me: "Only believers will love you and only hypocrites will hate you."

Chapter 8

Reports of him, Peace be on him, and his Shi'a Being the Successful Ones

[Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Imran al-Marzubani informed me: 'Ali b. Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hafiz told me: 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. 'Ubayd al-Kufi told us: Isma'il b. Aban told us on the authority of Sa'd b. Talib, on the authority of Jabir b. Yazid, on them authority of Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Baqir, peace be on them both, who said:]

Umm Salama, the wife of the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, was asked about 'Ali- b. Abi Talib, peace be on him, she said: "I heard the Apostle of God say: "Ali and his Shi'a are the successful ones.' "

[Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Imran informed me: Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Jawhari told me: Muhammad b. Harun b. Isa al-Hashimi told me: Tamim b. Muhammad b. al-'Ala told us: 'Abd al-Razzaq told us: Yahya b. al-'Ala told us on the authority of Sa'd b. Tarif, on the authority of al-Asbagh b. Nubata, on the authority of 'Ali, peace be on him, who said:]

The Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family said: "God, the Most High, has a cane of ruby which none will obtain except us and our Shi'a. The rest of the people are excluded from it."

[Abu 'Abd Allah informed me: 'Ali' b. Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hafiz told me: 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. 'Ubayd al-Kufi told us: Isma'il b. Aban told us on the authority of 'Amr b. Hurayth, on the authority of Dawud b. al-Salil, on the authority of Anas b. Malik, who said:]

The Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family said: "Seventy thousand of my community will enter Heaven without any reckoning and punishment against them." Then he turned to 'Ali, peace be on him and said: "They are your Shi'a and you are their Imam."

[Abu 'Abd Allah informed me: Ahmad b. Isa al-Karkhi told me Abu al-'Ayna Muhammad b. al-Qasim told us: Muhammad b. 'A'isha told us on the authority of Isma'il b. 'Amr al-Bajali, who told us: 'Umar b. Musa told me on the authority of Zayd b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn, on the authority of his father, on the authority of his (Zayd's) grandfather, on the authority of 'Ali, peace be on them, who said:]

I complained to the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, about the people's envy of me. He said: "'Ali, the first four to enter heaven are myself, you, al-Hasan and al-Husayn. Our progeny (will come) behind us and our loved ones will be behind our progeny. To our right and left will be our Shi'a."

Chapter 9

Reports of Friendship to him, Peace be on him, Being a Sign of Good Birth and Enmity to him, Being a Sign of Disgraceful Birth

[Abu al-Jaysh al-Muzaffar b. Muhammad al-Balkhi informed me: Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Abi al-Thalj told us: Ja'far b. Muhammad al-'Alawi' told us: Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Mun'im told us: 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad al-Fazari told us on the authority of Ja'far b. Muhammad, on the authority of his father, peace be on them, on the authority of Jabir, b. 'Abd Allah al-Ansari, who said:]

I heard the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, say to 'Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him: "Shall I not make you happy, give you a gift, tell you good news?"

"Please do, Apostle of God," he replied.

"Both I, myself, and you have been created f r o m one (piece of) clay. Part of it was left over and f r o m that God created our Shi'a. On the Day of Resurrection (all) the people will be summoned by the names of their mothers except our Shi'a. They will be summoned by the names of their fathers because of their good birth."

[Abu al-Jaysh al-Muzaffar b. Muhammad informed me on the authority of Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Abi al-Thalj who said: Muhammad b. Muslim al-Kufi told us: 'Ubayd Allah b. Kathir told us: Ja'far b. Muhammad b. al-Husayn al-Zuhri told us: 'Ubayd Allah b. Musa told us on the authority of Isra'il, on the authority of Abu Husayn, on the authority of 'Ikrima, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas:]

The Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, said: "On the Day of Resurrection all the people will be summoned by the names of their mothers except our Shi'a. They will be summoned by the names of their fathers because of their good birth."

[Abu al-Qasim Ja'far b. Muhammad al-Qummi told us: Abu 'Ali Muhammad b. Hammam b. . Suhayl al-Iskafi told us: Ja'far b. Muhammad b. Malik told me: Muhammad b. Ni'ma al-Saluli told us: 'Abd Allah b. al-Qasim, told us on the authority of 'Abd Allah b. Jabala, on the authority of his father, who said: I heard Jabir b. 'Abd Allah b. Hizan al-Ansari say:]

One day a group of us Ansar were with the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family. He said to us: "O people of the Ansar, instill in your children a love for 'Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him. Whoever loves him should know that he is rightly guided and whoever hates him should know that he is in error."

Chapter 10

Reports of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his Family Naming him, Peace be on him, Commander of the Faithful

(Abu al-Jaysh Muzaffar b. Muhammad al-Balkhi informed me: Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Abi al-Thalj informed me: al-Husayn b. Ayyub informed me on the authority of Muhammad b. Ghalib, on the authority of 'Ali b. al-Husayn, on the authority of al-Hasan b. Mahbub, on the authority of Abu Hamza al-Thumali, on the authority of Abu Ishaq al-Sabi'i, on the authority of Bashir al-Ghiffari, on the authority of Anas b. Malik, who said:)]

I was a servant of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family. One night Umm Habiba, daughter of Abu Sufyan, brought water for ablutions to the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family. He said to me: "Anas, at this moment there will come to you through this door the Commander of the faithful, the best of testamentary trustees of authority (wasiyyin), the foremost of the people in Islam, and the most knowledgeable and most mindful of them."

"O God, make him one of my tribe," I said.

However, almost immediately 'Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him, came through the door. The Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, performed his ablutions. Then the Apostle of God threw the water in to, the face of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on them both, so that both his eyes were filled with water.

"Apostle of God, has any impurity occurred in me?" asked 'Ali.

"Only good has been occasioned in you," replied the Prophet, may God bless him and his family. "You belong to me and I belong to you. You will act on my behalf, fulfill my duties, wash my (corpse) and bury me in my grave. You will listen to the people's (questions) about me and you will explain to them after me."

"Apostle of God," 'Ali said, "haven't you told them?"

"Yes, but you will explain the things they differ on after me."

[Abu al-Jaysh al-Muzaffar b. Muhammad informed me on the authority of Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Abi al-Thalj who said: My grandfather told me: 'Abd Allah b. Dahir told us: My father, Dahir b. Yahya al-Ahmari al-Muqri told me on the authority of al-A'mash, on the authority of 'Abaya al-Asadi, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas:]

The Prophet, may God bless him and his family, said to Umm Salama, may God be pleased with her: "Listen and bear witness that this 'Ali is the Commander of the faithful and the master of the testamentary trustees."

[With the same isnad on the authority of Muhammad (b. Ahmad) b. Abi al-Thalj who said: my grandfather told me: 'Abd al-Salam b. Salih told us: Yahya b. al-Yaman told us: Sufyan al-Thawri told us on the authority of Abu al-Jahhaf, on the authority of Mu'awiya b. Tha'laba who said:]

Abu Dharr, may God be pleased with him, was told: "Make a will."

"I have made my will," he answered.

"To whom?" he was asked.

"To the Commander of the faithful," he replied.

"To 'Uthman?"

"No," he said. "To the Commander of the faithful, 'Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him. Indeed he is the pivot of the earth and the master of this community. If you lost him, you would not know the earth and those who were on it."

The report of Burayda b. Husayb al-Aslami is famous and well known among the religious scholars with (so many) isnds that their full elucidation would be very long. He reported:

The Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, ordered me while I was the seventh of a group of seven which included Abu Bakr, 'Umar, Talha and al-Zubayr: "Greet 'Ali with the title of Commander of the faithful."

We greeted him with that title while the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, lived among us.

There are many reports like these which would make the book too long (to report them all). God is the bringer of truth.

Chapter 11

His Qualities

As for his many qualities, the fact that they are so famous, so well authenticated and reported by tradition and by the consensus of the religious scholars (means) that they do not need their chains of authority to be put forward; for since they are (also) so numerous their full explanation would make the book too long. In our outline, an extract from them will do instead of reporting them all, in accordance with the purpose which we set down for this book, God willing.

Chapter 12

1. The Meeting of the Banu 'Abd al-Muttalib

Among these is the account that the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, gathered his own family and tribal kin together at the beginning of his mission for Islam. He showed them the faith and sought their help against the people of unbelief and enmity, and guaranteed for them, if they did that, favour and honour in this world and a reward in heaven. None of them answered him except the Commander of the faithful, 'Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him. Because of that he granted him the achievement of brotherhood (with himself), the office of helping him, of being his nominated trustee, his inheritor and his successor, and announced that his going to heaven was inevitable.

This is reported in the account of the (meeting in the) house, whose authenticity the reporters of tradition are agreed upon:(3)

When the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, gathered members of the clan of 'Abd al-Muttalib in the house of Abu Talib, they were more or less forty men on that day as the reporters mention. He ordered food to be set for them, a leg of a ewe with a measure of wheat. He measured a sa' of milk. Each man of them was known to be able to eat a lamb in one sitting and to drink a farq'(4) of drink in the same sitting. He, peace be on him and his family, intended by preparing little food and drink for their gathering, to reveal a clear sign to them through satisfying them and quenching their thirst with what would not normally satisfy and quench the thirst of one of them. He ordered the food and drink to be offered to them. From that little amount the whole group ate (and drank)

until they were full and what they had eaten and drunk was not clear. He dazzled them by that and showed them the clear sign of his prophetic mission and the evidence for his truthfulness, through the proof of God, the Exalted, with regard to it. After they had eaten and drunk their fill, he said to them: "Banu 'Abd al-Muttalib, God has sent me to all creation and He has especially sent me to you. He has said: Warn your clan (who are your) kin (XXVI214)I call you to make two statements light to the tongue but heavy in the scales (of God). By them you will be master of Arab and foreigner, by them nations shall submit to you, by them you will enter heaven and by them you will escape f r o m hell. They are the (twofold) testimony that there is no god but God and that I am the Apostle of God. Whoever answers me in this matter, helps me in it and in carrying it out, will be my brother, my trustee, my helper, my inheritor and my successor after me."

None of them answered.

The Commander of the faithful reported: I stood up before him amid them. At that time I was the youngest of them, still with very thin legs and with dirt still in the corners of my eyes. I said: "Apostle of God, I will help you."

"Sit down," he told me. Then he repeated his words to the people again. They were silent and I arose and said the same as I had said the first time. Again he told me to sit down and he repeated his words to the people a third time. None of them spoke a word. I arose and said:

"I will help you, Apostle of God, in this matter."

"Sit down," he said and then he went on, "You are my brother, my trustee, my helper, my inheritor, and my successor after me."

The people got up and they were saying to Abu Talib: "Abu Talib, you should be congratulated today that you have entered the religion of your nephew and he has made your son a commander over you."

This outstanding quality is exclusive to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. None of the first emigrants or the Ansar share in it, nor does anyone else of the people of Islam. No one else has the equal of it in merit, nor even an approximate in (the) circumstance (of it). What is shown by the report of it is that through him, peace be on him, the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, was able to communicate his message, to make public his mission and declare the truth of Islam. If it had not been for him, the religion would not have been established, the law of Islam (shari'a) would not have been set down and the mission would not have been made public. He, peace be on him, is the support of Islam, the helper of the one who undertook its mission on behalf of God, the Mighty and High. Through his guaranteeing support to the Prophet of guidance, peace be on him and his family, he brought about for (the Prophet) what he wanted with regard to the prophetic mission. In that there is such merit that not even the weight of mountains could outweigh it, nor do all other virtues go beyond it in position and rank.

3. Cf. al-Tabari, I, 1171-4. Al-Mufid seems to have a composite account of the two versions of al-Tabari from Ibn Ishaq and Zakariyya' b. Yahya al-Darir, with some additions. This is not reported in Ibn Hisham's *Sira*.

4. A sa'a and farq are measures of cubic capacity.

Chapter 13

2. The Circumstances of the Prophet's Emigration f r o m Mecca

Another example of his qualities occurs when the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, ordered the emigration after the council of Quraysh had decided to kill him and he, peace be on him, would not have been able to defeat their plans by leaving Mecca. For he, peace be on him, wanted to keep his departure secret and keep the reports about him hidden f r o m them so that he could carry out his departure in safety f r o m them. He told his news to the Commander of the faithful and made him keep it secret. He gave him the responsibility of protecting him by spending the night on his (i.e. the Prophet's) bed so that they would not know that it was 'Ali who was sleeping on the bed and they would think that the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, was sleeping there as he had normally done on previous nights.(5) The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him dedicated his life to God, the Exalted, devoted it to God, the Exalted, in obedience and exchanged it for His Prophet, the blessings and peace of God be on him and his family, in order that he might save him f r o m the plots of his enemies and thus make sure of his safety and survival and also arrange properly his purpose in summoning (the people) to the faith, establishing the religion and making public God's law (shari'a). He, peace be on him, spent the night on the bed of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, hidden by his waist-cover (izar). The people who had plotted to kill the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, came to him and surrounded him. They were carrying weapons. They waited until the dawn rose so that they could kill him openly and thus his blood would be shed in such a way that Banu Hashim would see that his murderers were f r o m all the clans (of Quraysh). Then it

would not be possible for them to take vengeance (on them) for him because everyone had shared in taking his blood and every tribe would be spared f r o m fighting his group and being separate f r o m his family.

That (i.e. 'Ali's action) was the reason for the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, being saved, his blood being kept safe and his survival until he died at (the time of) his Lord's command. If it had not been for the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, and his action, it would not have been possible for the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, to propagate and carry out (his mission), nor would he have remained alive and continued to survive. Thus through him he overcame the envy (of the people) and his enemies. In the morning when the people were intending to rush upon him, he, peace be on him, rushed towards them. They scattered f r o m him when they recognized him and departed. Their plot against the Prophet, peace be on him and his family, had gone wrong. The preparations they had made to kill him had been destroyed. Their plans had been betrayed and their hopes brought to nought. In this way was the faith properly set up, Satan humiliated and the people of unbelief and enmity betrayed. None of the people of Islam share this achievement with the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, nor is any equal to it in any circumstance known, nor is there anything approaching it in merit according to any correct consideration. Concerning the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, and the night he spent on the (Prophet's) bed, God, glory be to Him, revealed: Whoever among the people sells his life out of a desire to please God, God is kind to (such) servants (II 207).

5. Cf. al-Tabari, 1, 1232-3, citing Ibn Ishaq; Ibn Hisham, *Sira* (Gottingen, 1858-60), 325-6.

Chapter 14

3. The Commander of the Faithful fulfils the Prophet's Obligations in Mecca

(Another example) of that is that the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, was the one trusted by the Quraysh with the things which they wished to deposit. When the situation occurred which required his sudden flight f r o m Mecca, he could not find anyone among his people and his family to entrust (the things) which he had been entrusted with except the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. He appointed him (i.e. the Commander of the faithful) as his deputy to return the things deposited with him to their owners and to pay the debts which he owed.(6) Then he gathered his daughters, the womenfolk of his family and his wives and their emigration was entrusted to him for he did not consider that anyone could take his (i.e. the Commander of the faithful's) place among all the people. Thus he set his trust on his faithfulness, depended upon his courage and bravery, and in the defence of his family and his close associates he relied upon his fearlessness and his ability. He rested upon his reliability to look after his family and his womenfolk. He recognized in his piety and protection f r o m error that by which the soul could feel sure of his reliability in those matters.

'Ali, peace be on him, carried out (these tasks) very well: he returned every deposit to its owner; he paid every debt to the person to whom it was owed; he looked after the daughters and womenfolk of the Prophet, may God bless him and his family; and he emigrated with them, he himself going on foot to protect them f r o m the enemies and guard them against adversaries; he took them gently on the journey until he brought them to him at Medina, (having provided them) with complete

protection and guarding, good companionship and excellent organization. The Prophet gave him accommodation in his house when he arrived in Medina(7) and allowed him to stay with him and mix with his womenfolk and children. He did not exclude him f r o m anything which was special to himself, nor did he withhold f r o m him the inner meaning and the secrets of his affair. This is a quality which is uniquely held by (the Commander of the faithful) peace be on him, f r o m among all his house and Companions. None of his followers or supporters shared in it and there occurred in no other creature any merit like it, which equalled it in appearance and came near to it in its testing quality. It was in addition to his outstanding achievements which we have mentioned and their overwhelming merit and their nobility in the hearts of those who think.

6. Cf. al-Tabari, 1, 1244, citing Ibn Ishaq; Ibn Hisham, Sira, 334-5.

7. Cf. *ibid.*

Chapter 15

4. The Commander of the Faithful puts right Crimes committed by Khalid b. al-Walid

(Another example) of that is that God, the Exalted specified him for the task of putting right what had been done wrong by those who opposed the orders of His Prophet, may God bless him and his family, and of reforming what had been corrupted so that through him the causes of righteousness were established.(1) It (i.e. righteousness) was brought about by his hand, by the happiness of his endeavour, his good organization, and the necessary success (he brought) to the affairs of the Muslims. Through him, the pillars of religion were held firm.

The Prophet, may God bless him and his family, sent Khalid b. Walid to the Banu Jadhima to summon them to Islam and he did not send him to make war (on them). He disobeyed his order, renounced his treaty, rebelled against his religion and killed people who had embraced Islam. He betrayed their protected status when they were people who had accepted the faith. In that he had been acting according to the wild ways of the Jahiliyya and the methods of people of unbelief and enmity.

The result of his evil action (would have affected) Islam and through it those whom its Prophet, peace be on him and his family, had called to the faith, would have broken away and it is likely that the system of organization in religion would have been brought to nothing as a result of his action. Therefore the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, sought to repair the wrong that had been done and to reform what had been corrupted. He gave the blood-wit according to the law from God for that to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, and sent him to conciliate the people, to draw out their

hatred and to show gentleness to them in making firm their faith. He told him to pay the blood-wit for the dead and in that way satisfy the next of kin responsible for keeping their blood alive (by vengeance).

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, achieved complete satisfaction in that, for he gave more than was necessary by making a personal contribution to them f r o m money which he had. He said to them: "I have paid the blood-wit for your dead and in addition to that I have given you money which you can hand down to your successors so that God may be pleased with His Apostle and you may be pleased with his kindness to you. The Apostle of God, may

God bless him and his family, made a public renunciation in Medina of Khalid's action against them, which he, then, had communicated to them. By the Apostle of God's, may God bless him and his family, renunciation of Khalid's crime, and by the conciliation of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, the people agreed (to be reconciled) despite what had been done to them. In that way righteousness was achieved and those who carried out corrupt acts were foiled. No one was entrusted with that task except the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. nor did anyone else f r o m the community (jama'a) except him undertake such actions, nor was the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, satisfied to entrust anyone else with such a task. This is an achievement which is greater in merit than any claimed by men other than the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. No one else among them shared in it, nor was an action equal to it carried out by anyone else.

8. The full accounts of Khalid's mission and 'Ali's rectification of it are in al- Tabari, I, 1649, citing Ibn Ishaq; Ibn Hisham, Sira. 833-40, al-Waqidi, al-Maghazi, (Oxford, 1966), II, 875-84.

Chapter 16

5. Keeping the Conquest of Mecca Secret

Another example of that is that when the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, wanted to conquer Mecca, he asked God, may His name be exalted, to keep the reports of it hidden from Quraysh so that he could enter it unexpectedly. He, peace be on him, had based the plan for his going there on the secrecy of that. However, Hatib b.(9) Abi Balta'a wrote to the Meccans to inform them of the decision of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, to conquer it. He gave the letter to a black woman who had come to Medina to seek intercession there for the people and to ask for them to be forgiven. He instructed her to take it to some Meccans whose names he gave her and he ordered her not to take the (main) road. Revelation about that came down on the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family. He summoned the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, and told him: "One of my companions has written to the Meccans to inform them about us. I had asked God, the Mighty and High, to keep the reports about us hidden from them. The letter is with a black woman who has not taken the (main) road. Take your sword, follow her and take the letter from her. Let her go and bring it to me."

Then he summoned al-Zubayr b. al-'Awwam and told him: "Go with 'Ali b. Abi Talib on this mission."

The two departed and did not take the (main) road. They caught up with the woman. Al-Zubayr got to her first and he asked her about the letter which was with her. She denied it and swore that she had nothing with her and wept.

"I can't see a letter with her, Abu al-Hasan," said al-Zubayr.

"Let us go to the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, and tell him that her journey is innocent."

"The Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, told me that she had a letter," replied the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, "and he ordered me to take it from her. You say that she has no letter."

Then he drew his sword and advanced towards her and said to her: "By God, if you don't produce the letter, I will compel you to show it. Then I'll cut off your head."

"Since there is no escape from doing that," she answered, "turn your face away from me, Ibn Abi Talib."

He, peace be on him, turned his face away from her. She took off her veil and took the letter from her hair. The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, caught hold of it and took it to the Prophet, may God bless him and his family. He ordered that the call should be given: "The prayer is general" (al-salat jama'a)(i.e. everybody should attend). The call was made among the people and they gathered at the mosque until it was crowded with them. Then the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, went up on the pulpit and he took the letter in his hand. He said: "People, I had asked God, the Mighty and High, to keep reports about us hidden from Quraysh. However, one of you wrote to the Meccans to inform them about us. Let the writer of the letter stand up. If he does not, then revelation will make him known."

No one stood up. The Prophet repeated his words a second time. He said: "Let the writer of the letter stand up. If he does not, then revelation will make him known:"

(At this) Hatib b. Abi Balta'a stood up. He was shaking like a palm-bough on the day of a violent storm. He said: "Apostle of God, I am the writer of the letter. I have committed no (other) act of hypocrisy after becoming a Muslim, nor have I had any (other) doubt after my firm conviction (in Islam)."

"What made you write this letter?" the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, asked him.

"Apostle of God, I have a family in Mecca," he said, "and I have no other tribal connections (ashira) there. I was afraid that they would be overcome on account of us. So this letter of mine was (an attempt) to offer a helping hand to my family, (to give) support to them. I did not do it because of any doubt on my part in the religion."

"Apostle of God," said 'Umar b. al-Khattab, "command me to kill him. He has committed an act of hypocrisy."

"He is one of the men (who fought) at Badr," said the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family. "Perhaps God will look down on them and forgive them. Take him out of the mosque."

[He reported:]

Then people began to push him in the back until they had taken him out, while he had been turning towards the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, begging him for mercy. The Apostle of God ordered him to be brought back and he said to him: "I have forgiven you and your crime, so seek the forgiveness of your Lord and never do such a crime as you committed again."

The achievement belongs with his other achievements, peace be on him, which have been mentioned earlier. As a result of it, it was possible for the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, to organise the entry in to Mecca, to protect against trouble from the people and to avoid their knowledge of his intention towards them until he had come upon them unawares. In the matter of extracting the letter from the woman, he could only trust the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. In that he did not regard anyone else as a faithful adviser except him, nor did he rely on anyone else. Through him, peace be on him, the task was carried out and his purpose attained; his organization was properly established as was the advantage of

the Muslims in the matter, and the religion was able to be spread. No merit can be attributed to al-Zubayr in terms of him being sent with the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, because he did not fulfil his task and he was useless in carrying it out. The Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, only sent him because he was included in the number of Banu Hashim through his mother, Safiyya, daughter of 'Abd al-Muttalib, and he wanted to entrust the task, in the execution of which there was need for secrecy, to those specially belonging to his family. Al-Zubayr had courage and boldness in addition to the relationship which there was between him and the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. He (the Prophet) knew that he (al-Zubayr) would help him (the Commander of the faithful) in his mission since they both had (an interest) in the fulfilment of the task and since it referred to them both it so far as what was general to Banu Hashim was specific to them both. Al-Zubayr was a follower of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. There occurred from him during his mission (actions) which did not conform to correct reasoning and the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, prevented him (from following these actions).

In what we have explained in this story, there is clear evidence for the special achievement and virtue of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, which is shared by no one else. No one else approached him with any merit without him having more than it. God be He Who is praised.

9. Cf. al-Tabari, 1626-7, citing Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, 810-11, el-Waqidi, *al-Maghazi*, II, 797-9. In the first two accounts it is 'Ali who makes the women give up the letter. In al-Waqidi's account both men are equally responsible "for making her give it up.

Chapter 17

6. The Carrying of the Standard at the Conquest of Mecca.

(Yet another example) is the fact that the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, gave the standard to Sa'd b. 'Ubada on the day of the conquest of Mecca and ordered him to carry it in front of him in to Mecca. Sa'd took it and began to declare: "Today is the day of slaughter, the day of capturing (any) daughter." (10)

"Haven't you heard what Sa'd b. 'Ubada is saying?" some of the people asked the Prophet, may God bless him and his family. "We are afraid that today will (simply mean) to him, attacking Quraysh.-

"Ali, go to Sa'd," he, peace be on him, told the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, "and take the standard from him. You be the one to enter with it."

Thus the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, set right through the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, what was about to go astray in the organization through Sa'd rushing forward and attacking the Meccans. He knew that the Ansar would not be pleased if any (other) person had taken the standard from their leader Sa'd and taken that position from him except one who was similar in circumstance to the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, through the exaltedness of his rank, his high position, and the duty of obeying him, and someone who would not make Sa'd delay in giving up that command to trim. If there had been with the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, someone suitable for that other than the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, he would have

set the affair right through him, or he would have mentioned there his suitability for what the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, undertook. Since decisions are only required by virtue of the actions which actually happened and what the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, did to the Commander of the faithful was to magnify and exalt him, to consider him worthy of what he did consider him worthy in terms of putting right affairs and attaining what would not have been possible through the action of any one else as we have mentioned, it is necessary to judge him in this achievement as someone set apart from others who were not equal to him, and (someone) preferred through the honour of it over all others.

10. This account is based on al-Tabari, I, 1632, citing Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, 816; for a fuller version cf. al-Waqidi, *al-Maghazi*, II, 821-2.

Chapter 18

7. The Conversion of Yemen

(Another example) of that which is agreed upon by all the historians (biographers ahl al-sira) is that the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, sent, Khalid b. Walid to the people of Yemen to call them to Islam. With him, he sent a group of Muslims, among whom was al-Bara' b. (11)'Azib, may God have mercy on him. Khalid stayed with the people for six months calling them (to Islam) but no one of them responded. That depressed the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family. He summoned the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, and ordered him to send back Khalid and those who were with him. However, he told him that if anyone of those who had been with Khalid wanted to stay, he should let him

[Al-Bara' reported:]

I was one of those who followed him. When we came to the first people among the Yemenis and the news reached the people (generally), they gathered before him. 'Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him, prayed the dawn prayer with us, then he advanced in front of us. He praised and glorified God. Then he read the letter of the Apostle of God. The whole of Hamdan became Muslim in one day. The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, wrote about that to the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family. When he read his letter, he was pleased and delighted. He prostrated in thanks to God, the Exalted. He raised his head and sat. He said: "Greetings to Hamdan. After the submission to Islam of Hamdan, (the rest of) the people of Yemen will follow (them) in to Islam."

This is another achievement of the Commander of the faithful,

peace be on him, which no other of the Companions had done anything like or similar to. For (the Prophet), when he wanted to stop Khalid from carrying on with the mission on which he had sent him and he was afraid that corruption would be caused by him, could not find anyone to succeed him except the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. So he asked him (i.e. 'Ali) and the latter undertook it in the best possible manner. And as was God's custom with him, he performed it with success since it conformed to the preference of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace. He was a man of righteousness, gentleness, good administrative ability and sincere intentions in obedience to God, the Mighty and High, (a man) with the ability to guide those of the people who would be guided, and to respond to those of them who responded to (the call of) Islam. He was (an important element) in the building of the religion, the strength of the faith in (explaining) the message of the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, according to the meaning he (the Prophet) had traced for him. (Indeed he was capable) of organising matters in a way which delighted him (i.e. the Prophet). The promise of heaven was revealed about him (as was) his delight in his perfection among all the people of Islam. It has been confirmed that obedience is of great importance by virtue of the great importance of the benefit gained by it, just as sin is of great consequence by virtue of the great harm which comes through it. Thus prophets, peace be on them, are the creatures with the greatest rewards by virtue of the greatness of their benefit through their call to the rest of the beneficial things (which can be gained) by acts (performed) by the rest of the people.

11. This report is the same as reported by al-Tabari, 1, 1731-2.

Chapter 19

8. Taking up the Standard at Khaybar

Similar to that was the putting to flight of those who were put to flight at Khaybar.(12) The exalted rank of carrying the standard is considered highly. By the (standard-bearer's) being put to flight, there occurred such disarray as could not be hidden f r o m those with discernment. Then the standard was given to another man after that. However, he was put to flight in the same way as the first man had been before. In that there was fear for Islam and its position after two men (carrying its standard) had been put to flight. That troubled the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, and made public the disobedience to him and the bad attitude towards him. So he said in a (public) announcement: "Tomorrow, I will give the standard to one whom God and His Apostle love. God and His Apostle love him as one who returns to the battle without fleeing: he will not come back until God has brought victory at his hands."

Then he gave (the standard) to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, and victory came at his hands. His words, peace be on him, guided and prevented those who wanted to flee f r o m leaving the rank which had been assigned to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. Thus by the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, coming out to attack, giving support to the battle and restoring the situation at Khaybar, which had been beyond everyone else, there is evidence of his unequalled merit which no one else shared. Concerning that al-Hassan b. Thabit al-Ansari said:

'Ali was ashen-eyed needing medicine, even then he did not find (the help of anyone) to nurse him.

The Apostle of God healed him with saliva. He blessed the healer (raqi) and He blessed the healed.

He said: I will give the standard today to a dauntless man, brave, one who loves God as a follower.

He loves my God and God loves him. Through him God will overcome the fortress returning it to God.

He distinguished 'Ali by that apart f r o m all other creatures and he named him his helper (wazir) and brother.

12. Cf. al-Tabari, I, 1579, Ibn Hisham, Sira, 761-2. The two defeated men are identified as Abu Bakr and Umar. The verses are not reported by either authority.

Chapter 20

9. Delivery of the Verses of Renunciation in Mecca

Similar to that is the story of (the document of renunciation (bara'a) which the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, gave to Abu Bakr so that he could abrogate the alliance with the polytheists through it.(13) When he had travelled far away, Gabriel, peace be on him, descended to the Prophet, may God bless him and his family. He told him: "God recites His greeting to you and says to you that the act of renunciation should not be performed for you except by yourself or a man (related) to you."

The Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, summoned 'Ali, peace be on him, and told him: "Ride my camel, al-'Adba', and go after Abu Bakr. Take (the document of) renunciation from him and go with it to Mecca. You abrogate the alliance with the polytheists through it. Give Abu Bakr the choice of continuing to ride with you or of returning to me."

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, rode al-'Adba; the camel of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family and caught up with Abu Bakr. The latter was disturbed at being caught up with by him.

"Why have you come, Abu al-Hasan?" he asked as he greeted him. "Are you going to travel with me? Or is it for some other reason?"

"The Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, ordered me to come after you," the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, said, "to take the verses of renunciation

(bara'a) f r o m you and to abrogate the treaty with the polytheists through them. He ordered me to let -you choose between going with me or returning to him."

"Indeed, I will return to him," he said.

He went back to the Prophet, may God bless him and his family. When he came to him, he said: "Apostle of God, you regarded me as worthy to undertake a mission on account of which men craned their necks towards me. When I had set out on it, you dismissed me f r o m it. What has come down in revealed message (Qur'an) concerning me?"

"The trusty one, Gabriel, peace be on him, came down to me f r o m God, the Mighty and Exalted," the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, answered, "with (the command) that: 'The act of renunciation should not be performed for you except by yourself or a man (related) to you.' 'Ali is related to me and it should only be performed for me by 'Ali."

(This account occurs) in a famous tradition. The abrogation of a treaty was limited to the one who made it or to one who could take his place in terms of the necessary obedience, dignified regard, high rank, noble position, and one who was above suspicion in his actions and whose words could not be (legitimately) opposed- one who was the same as the maker of the treaty and whose affair was his affair. Since it was judged by what he had done in the past it was established and was secure f r o m opposition and (since) the strength of Islam, the completion (of the laws) of religion, the well-being of the Muslims, the conquest of Mecca, and the good organization of well-being was involved in the abrogation of the treaty, God, the Exalted, preferred that that should be entrusted to one who was illustrious in name, exalted in fame. This indicates the outstanding merit of such d man; it gives evidence of his high rank and distinguishes him f r o m others. Those (things) belonged to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. None of the other people had merit which came near to the merit which we have described nor did any of them share with him (any) of what we have explained.

Examples of what we have mentioned are so numerous that our work in presenting them would lengthen this book, and the speeches would encompass it. It is sufficient for those of intelligence to include what we have set out in the aims which we have outlined.

13. This account follows most closely the account given in al-Tabari, 1720-1, however it makes Gabriel responsible for the change. The name of the Prophet's camel is given by Ibn Hisham, Sira, 922.

Chapter 21

LEGAL DECISIONS OF THE COMMANDER OF THE FAITHFUL

As for the reports which have demonstrated his outstanding quality in the legal decisions (he has given) with regard to religion and the laws (he has propounded) for which all the believers were in need, they are too numerous to be counted and too illustrious to be dealt with (properly), as are those which have been confirmed with regard to his precedence in traditional knowledge ('ilm), his supremacy over the community in gnosis (ma'rifa) and understanding. (There are many reports that) the scholars of the Companions (frequently) used to resort to him in matters which were difficult for them and they would seek his help in them and submit to his judgement concerning them. I will endeavour to put forward a brief summary which will give some indication of the others, if God, the Exalted, wills.

Chapter 22

A. (Judgements of the Commander of the Faithful during the Lifetime of the Prophet)

With the regard to this, there are those of his judgements while the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, was alive which have been reported by the transmitters of tradition from the non-Shi'a ('amma) and from the Shi'a (khassa). In these (the Prophet) guided him and attested to the correctness of the decisions which he gave. He called attention to his goodness and praised him for it. Thus he separated him from the rest of men as a result of his outstanding merit in that. In this way he showed his entitlement to authority after him and the necessity for him to take precedence over others with regard to the position of the Imamate. Similarly, revelation has taken that (matter) within its compass in terms of the evidence for its meaning and what can be understood from the interpretation of its contents. Thus God, the Mighty and High, says: "Is not he who guides you to truth more entitled to be followed than one who does not go aright unless he is guided? For what is wrong with you, how do you judge? "(X 35). Then there is His statement, may He be praised: "Are those who know and those who do not know equal? Only those who possess hearts (ulu al-albab) remember "(XXXIX 9). There is the statement by Him, the Mighty and High, in the story of Adam when the angel said: "Are you creating in it one who will spread corruption there and shed blood while we (constantly) repeat Your praise and hallow You? He replied: I know what you do not know. And He taught Adam all the names (or things) and then He presented them to the angels. He said: Tell me the names of these if you are truthful. They answered: May You be praised, we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. You are the One Who knows and the Wise. Then He said: Adam, tell them their

names. When he had told them their names, He said to them: Have I not told you that I know the unseen in the heavens and the earth and I know what you are showing and what you are keeping hidden "(II 31-33). God, the Exalted, informed the angels that Adam was more entitled to the vice-regency (khilafa) than they were because He had informed him of the names and he was the most excellent of them in knowledge of things informed (to him). He, may His names be hallowed, (also) said in the story of Talut:" Their prophet said to them: God has sent Talut to you as a king. They asked: Shall he have (the right of) kingship over us while we are more entitled to kingship than he is? He has not brought any extent of wealth. He replied: God has chosen him to be over you and has increased him extensively in knowledge and substance. God bestows His kingship on whom He wishes. God is (all) embracing and One Who knows "(II 247).

Thus (God) made the manner of his right to precedence over them,, by virtue of what He granted him in the scope of his knowledge and substance, and His having chosen him above all of them. These verses are in agreement with rational evidence that the one who is more knowledgeable has more right in the area of the Imamate than those who do not equal him in knowledge. Thus they also give evidence for the necessity of the precedence of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, over all the rest of the Muslims in the succession (khilafa) of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, and in the Imamate of the community because of his precedence, peace be on him, over them in knowledge and wisdom and their falling short of his rank in that.

Chapter 23

1. His Judgements in Yemen

Among those reports which have been handed down about his legal decisions, peace be on him, while the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, was still alive and present, is the following:

When the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, wanted to invest him with the office of judge in Yemen and to send him to them so that he might teach them the laws, explain to them what was permitted and forbidden, and judge for them according to the laws of the Qur'an, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, asked him: "Apostle of God, you are inviting me to (undertake) the office of judge while I am still a young man without knowledge of all (the matters of) judgement."

"Come nearer to me," he told him. He went nearer and he struck him in the chest with his hand and said: "O God, guide his heart and strengthen his tongue."

The Commander of the faithful reported: "I never doubted in my ability to judge between two men after that occurrence."

When the administrative house (dar) in Yemen was occupied by him and he began to take care of the office of judging and giving decisions among the Muslims, which the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, had entrusted to him, two men were brought before him. Between them was a maid-servant over whom both of them had equal rights of possession as a slave. They had both been ignorant of the prohibition of having intercourse with her and had both had intercourse with her

in the same month of her menstrual cycle. (They had done this) in the belief that this was permissible, because of their recent acceptance of Islam and their lack of knowledge of the laws which were in the law of Islam (shari'a). The maidservant had become pregnant and given birth to a boy. They were in dispute as to (who was the father).

He drew lots with their names on for the boy. The lot fell upon one of them. He assigned the boy to him but required him to pay half his value as if he had been a slave of his partner. He said: "If I knew that you had both embarked on what you have done after the proof had been given you of it being prohibited, I would have exerted (every effort) to punish you both."

The Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, learned of this case. He accepted it and he acknowledged the judgement on them within Islam. He said: "Praise be to God Who has created among us, the family (ahl al-bayt), one who can judge according to the practice and method of David in judging." In that he was referring to judgement according to inspiration (ilham) which would have been taken in the sense of revelation (wahy) and the sending down of a text for it if there had been any explanation of such (an occurrence ever having taken place).

Among the cases brought before him, peace be on him, while he was in Yemen, is the report of (the case in which) a pit was dug for a lion. It fell in to it and the people gathered round to look at it. One man was standing on the edge of the pit. His foot slipped and he hung on to another man. That man hung on to a third, and the third to a fourth. They all fell in to the pit and were all killed. He, peace be on him, gave the judgement that the first was the prey of the lion and he (and his family) were responsible for the payment of a third of the blood-price for the second. Similarly the second (and his family) were responsible for the payment of a third of the blood-price for the third and the third (and his family) were responsible for the payment of a third of the blood-price for the fourth.

The report of that reached the Apostle of God, may God bless

him and his family. He said:, "Abu al-Hasan has given judgement in their regard with the judgement of God, the Mighty and High above (on) His throne."

Then there was brought before him (the case in which) it is reported that a girl was carrying (another) girl on her shoulder in a game. Another girl came along and pinched the girl who was carrying (the other one). She jumped because of being pinched. The girl who was being carried fell and broke her neck. She died.

He, peace be on him, judged that the girl who did the pinching was, responsible for a third of the blood-price, the girl who jumped was responsible for (another) third of it and the remaining third was inoperative because the riding of the girl, who broke her neck, on the girl who jumped was in fun.

The report of that reached the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family. He accepted it and testified to the correctness of it.

He, peace be on him, gave judgement on (a case where) a wall had fallen on some people and killed them. Among their number there was a slave-woman and a free woman. The free woman had had a small child, born of a free man, and the slave-woman had had a small child, born of a slave. The free child could not be distinguished from the slave child.

He drew lots between them; he adjudged freedom as belonging to the one of them for whom the lot for freedom was drawn and he adjudged slavery for the one for whom the lot for slavery was drawn. Then he freed (the slave child) and made him retainer (lit. client mawla)(of the free child). In this way he also decided about their inheritance with the decision going in accordance with (the norm for) the free one and his retainer.

The Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, accepted his judgement in this decision and he declared its correctness through his acceptance of it, as we have mentioned and described.

Chapter 24

2. A Case outside Yemen during the Life of the Prophet

Reports have been handed down that two men brought a dispute before the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, about a cow which had killed a donkey.

"Apostle of God," said one of them, "this man's cow has killed my donkey."

"Go to Abu Bakr," the Apostle of God told them, "and ask him about that."

They came to Abu Bakr and told him their story.

"Why have you left the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, and come to me? he asked them.

"He told us to do that," they answered.

"A beast has killed a beast and therefore its owner has no responsibility (for the dead beast)," he said.

They returned to the Apostle of God, the blessing of God be on him, and told him of that. He said to them: "Go to 'Umar b. al-Khattab and tell him your story. Ask him for a judgement about that."

They went to him and told him their story. He asked: "Why have you left the Apostle of God and come to me?"

"He told us to do that," they answered.

"Why did he not tell you to go to Abu Bakr?" he asked.

"We were ordered to do that," they told him, "and we went to him."

"What did he say to you about this case?" he enquired.

"He said such and such," they replied.

"My view agrees with Abu Bakr's," he said.

They returned to the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, and gave him a report of that. He said: "Go to 'Ali b. Abi Talib so that he may judge between you."

They went to him and told him their story.

"If the cow entered in to the stable of the donkey, then the owner (of the cow) must pay the price of the donkey to the owner (of the donkey)," he declared. "But if the donkey entered in to the stable of the cow, and (the cow) killed it, the owner (of the donkey) has no payment due from the owner (of the cow)."

They went back to the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, and told him about his judgement between them. He, may God bless him and his family, said: "'Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him, has given judgement between you with the judgement of God, the Exalted." Then he said: "Praise be to God who has created among us, the family (ahl al-bayt), one who can give judgement in the manner of David."

Some of the non-Shi'a ('amma) authorities report that this judgement between the two men was made by the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, in Yemen.

Chapter 25

B. Judgements of the Commander of the Faithful during the Rule of Abu Bakr

(This is) a brief summary of the legal decisions given by (the Commander of the faithful), peace be on him, during the rule of Abu Bakr. Among these is the account which has been handed down by both non-Shi'a and Shi'a authorities:

A man was brought before Abu Bakr. He had drunk wine, so Abu Bakr wanted to administer the prescribed punishment (hadd) on him. However the man pleaded: "I drank it without having knowledge that it was forbidden because I grew up among people who regarded it as lawful. I did not know that it was forbidden until now."

Abu Bakr became unable to deliver a decision in the matter. He did not know the way to judge him. Some of those present advised him to seek for information from the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, about the decision in that matter. He sent someone to ask him about it.

The Commander of the faithful advised: "Tell two trustworthy Muslims to go around the gatherings of the Emigrants and Ansar to ask them whether any of them had recited to (the man) the verse (of the Qur'an) forbidding (wine) or had reported it to him on the authority of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family. If two of them give testimony of that, then he should carry out the prescribed punishment on him. If no one can give testimony on that, he should tell him to repent and let him go."

Abu Bakr did that. Not one of the Emigrants and Ansar gave

evidence that they had recited the verse (of the Qur'an) forbidding (wine) or had reported it to him on the authority of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family. So he told him to repent and let him go. He submitted to (the authority of) 'Ali in judging it.

They have reported that Abu Bakr was asked about God's words: Fakihatan wa abban (XXXIII 40). He did not know the meaning of al-abb in the Qur'an and said: "Any sky which looks down (on me) or any land which holds me up rather what shall I do, if I say something about the Book of God, the Exalted, which I do not know. As for al-fakiha, (fruit), we know its meaning but as for al-abb God knows better."

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, was informed of that statement of his about it. "May God be praised, did he know that al-abb is fresh herbage (kala') and pasture (mar'an) and that His words, wa fakihatan wa abban, are the enumeration by God, the Exalted, of his favours to His creatures through the things which He has provided for them to eat and created for them and their animals; (these are some of) the things by which their spirits are kept alive and their bodies exist."

Abu Bakr was asked about al-kalala (IV 176). He answered: "I will give my opinion about it. If I am right, then it is f r o m God. If I am wrong, then it is f r o m myself and f r o m Satan."

The Commander of the faithful was informed of that. He said: "What makes him satisfied with opinion in this situation? Did he not know that al-kalala is brothers and sisters f r o m (the same) father and mother, and f r o m just the father and also f r o m the mother in the same way. God, the Mighty and High, said: If they seek a decision f r o m you, say: God gave a decision to you in terms of the brothers and sisters (al-kalala). If a man dies without children and he has a sister she shall have half of what he left (IV 176). He, the Mighty (also) said: If a man is succeeded by brothers and sisters (al-kalala) or by a wife while he had a brother or a sister, each one will have a sixth. If there are more than that, then they shall have a third

(IV 12)."

The report is handed down that one of the Jewish rabbis came to Abu Bakr and said: "You are the successor (khalifa) of this community."

"Yes," he replied.

"We find in the Torah that the successors (khulafa') of prophets are the most knowledgeable of the communities," he said. "Therefore tell me about God, the Exalted. Where is He? In heaven or on earth?"

"In heaven on the throne," answered Abu Bakr.

"Then I should consider that the earth is without Him and I should consider according to this statement that He is in one place and not in another," the Jew stated.

"That is doctrine of atheists (zanadiqa)," declared Abu Bakr. "Go away f r o m me or I will kill you."

The rabbi turned away in amazement and mockery at Islam. The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, met him.

"Jew, I know what you have asked about and did not get an answer for," he said. "We say that God, the Mighty and High, is the whereness of whereness, there is no where for Him. He avoids any place containing Him while He is in every place, without contact with anything and without being next to anything. He encompasses knowledge of what is there and nothing of it is outside His provenance. I am telling you about what is written in one of your books which attests the truth of what I have told you. If you know it, do you believe in it?"

"Yes," replied the Jew.

He said: "Didn't you find in one of your books that Moses, the son of 'Imran, peace be on him, was sitting down one day when an angel came to him f r o m the East. Moses asked him:' From

where have you come?' It answered: 'From God, the Mighty and High.' Then an angel came to him f r o m the West. He asked: 'From where have you come?' It answered: 'From God, the Mighty and High.' Then another angel came to him and said: 'I have come to you f r o m the Seventh Heaven, f r o m (being with) God, the Mighty and High.' Another angel came to him and said: 'I have come to you f r o m the Seventh Firmament, f r o m (being with) God, the Mighty and High.' Then Moses said: 'May God be praised, no place is without Him and He is not nearer to one place than another.' "

The Jew replied: "I testify that this is the truth and you have more right to (occupy) the place of your Prophet than the one who has control over it."

Reports like these are numerous.

Chapter 26

C. Reports of the Judgements of (the Commander of the faithful) during the Rule of 'Umar b. al-Khattab

Among these is what has been handed down by non-Shi'a ('amma) and Shi'a (khassa) authorities concerning the story of Qudama b. Maz'un. The latter had drunk wine and 'Umar wanted to carry out the prescribed punishment on him. However, Qudama had said: "It is not necessary to give me the prescribed punishment because God has said: There is no crime in what those who have believed and performed good works have tasted as long as they have feared God, believed and performed good works (V 93)."

So 'Umar withdrew the prescribed punishment.

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, learned of that. He went to 'Umar and said: "You failed to administer the prescribed punishment on Qudama for drinking wine."

"He recited the verse of Qur'an to me," said 'Umar and recited it.

"Qudama is not one of the people (referred to) in the verse " retorted the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. "Nor can anyone use it (as a pretext) for committing actions which God has forbidden. Those who have believed and performed good actions cannot make what is forbidden lawful. Send for Qudama and make him repent from what he said. If he repents, then administer the prescribed punishment on him. If he does not repent, kill him, for he has abandoned the religion (milla)."

Then 'Umar became aware (of the real situation). Qudama knew of the discussion and (publicly) showed his repentance and his withdrawal (of his assertion). 'Umar withdrew the punishment of death but he did not know how he should administer the prescribed punishment on him. He asked the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him: "Show me how the prescribed punishment (should be administered) on him."

"Give him the prescribed punishment of eighty (lashes)," he said. "For when the drinker of wine drinks it, he becomes drunk. When he becomes drunk, he talks nonsense. When he talks nonsense, he spreads calumnies."

Therefore 'Umar had him given eighty lashes and he gave judgement according to his advice in that matter.

It is reported that during the time of 'Umar, a man seduced a mad woman. Evidence for that was established against her. Therefore 'Umar ordered her to be flogged according to the prescribed punishment. She was brought past the Commander of the faithful (on her way) to be flogged.

"Why is the mad woman of the family of so-and-so being dragged along?" he asked.

"A man seduced her and fled and the evidence for fornication has been established against her. So 'Umar ordered her to be flogged," he was told.

"Take her back to him," he told them, "and ask him: Don't you know that this is a mad woman and the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family has said: The order (of punishment) should be withheld from the mad person until he recovers. Her reason and her soul have been overcome."

She was taken back to 'Umar and he was told what the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, had said. He said: "God has rescued (me) from it. I was almost destroyed through whipping her." And he withdrew the prescribed punishment from her.

It is reported that a pregnant woman who had committed adultery was brought before 'Umar. He ordered her to be stoned. The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, told him: "Take care that you have a (right to take) action against her, that is a (right to take) action against what is in her womb. For God, the Exalted, says; Nor does any bearer of a burden bear the burden of another (VI 164)."

"I have not lived (to see) a problem with which Abu al-Hasan is not (competent to deal)," said 'Umar. Then he asked: "What shall I do with her?"

"Take care of her until she gives birth," he said. "When she has given birth and you have found someone to nurse her child, then administer the prescribed punishment on her." `

Thus was 'Umar relieved of (his cares). In that decision, he relied on the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him.

It is reported that ('Umar) summoned a woman who had been conversing with men at her (house). When his messengers came to her, she was frightened and afraid. She had a miscarriage and her child fell to the ground crying but then died.

'Umar was informed of that. He gathered the Companions of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, together and asked them about the law concerning that. They all said: "We consider that you were acting correctly. You only wanted good and there is no (blame for) anything against you in that."

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, was sitting without saying anything about that. 'Umar asked him: "What is your view about this, Abu al-Hasan?"

"You have heard what they said," he answered.

"But what is your view?" he insisted.

"The people have said what you heard," he replied.

"I adjure you to give your view," he said.

"If people have (been trying to) come close to you, they have deceived you," he said. "If they thought about their advice then they have disregarded (the fact that) the blood-wit is required of you as the one responsible for the death and you thereby incur the blood-wit (aqila), because the killing of the child was (as a result of) a mistake connected with you."

"By God, you have advised differently from them," he said. "By God, I will not delay until the blood-wit is paid by (my clan) Banu 'Adi"

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, had brought that about.

It is reported that during the time of 'Umar, two women were disputing over a child. Each of them claimed that it was her child without any proof but no one else contested their claim to it. The decision with regard to that was not clear to 'Umar. He resorted to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, with regard to it.

He summoned the two women and warned them both, making them both afraid. But they both persisted in their dispute and difference. In the face of their both persisting in dispute, he, peace be on him, said: "Bring me a saw."

"What are you going to do?" the two women asked.

"I will cut it in to two halves," he said, "and each of you can have a half."

The one remained silent but the other said: "O God, O God, Abu al-Hasan, if there is no escape from that, then let her have it."

"God is greater (Allahu akbar)," he said. "This is your son not hers. If it had been her son, she would have had pity on him

and been anxious (about him)."

The other woman admitted that the right (to the child) belonged to her colleague and the child was not hers. Thus was 'Umar relieved (of his cares) .and he blessed the Commander of the faithful for the trouble that he had saved him from through (his) judgement.

[It is reported on the authority of Yunus, on the authority of al-Hasan:]

A woman was brought before 'Umar. She had given birth six months earlier and he now intended to stone her. The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, said to him: "If you quarrel with the Book of God, I will dispute with you. God, the exalted says: "The (period) of pregnancy and weaning (of a child) is thirty months" (XLVI 15). And He, the High, (also) says: "Mothers suckle their children for two complete years for anyone who wants to carry out (the full period of) suckling" (II 233). When the woman has carried out the suckling for two years, and the (period of) pregnancy and suckling (of the child) is thirty months At the moment (she has only fulfilled) the responsibility (of suckling) for six months (and therefore cannot be killed)."

'Umar freed the woman and confirmed the decision concerning that. The Companions acted according to it and the Successors (al-tabi'un) (to the Companions) and those who adopted it right up to the present time.

It is reported that witnesses gave evidence against a woman that they had found her at one of the watering places of the Bedouin and a man who was not her husband (ba'l) was having intercourse with her. 'Umar ordered her to be stoned as she had a husband (ba'l). She declared: "O God, You know that I am innocent."

"Do you impugn the witnesses as well?" remarked 'Umar.

"Let them bring her back and let them question her," said the

Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. "Perhaps she has an excuse."

She was brought back and questioned about the circumstances (of what she had done). She said: "My family had some camels. I went out with my family's camels and took with me some water. There was no milk in the camels. A neighbour of ours had camels with him and there was milk in his camels. My water was used up and I asked him to give me a drink. He refused to give me a drink unless I submitted myself to him. I refused. When my life was about to depart I submitted myself to him unwillingly."

"God is greater (Allahu akbar)," declared the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. "Whoever is compelled (to do something) without desiring (to do it) is not a transgressor and no sin is (counted) against him (II 173)."

When 'Umar heard that he freed her.

Among the reports about (the Commander of the faithful), peace be on him, with regard to the idea of giving judgement, and the soundness of (his) opinion, his guidance of the people to their (true) interests and his realisation of what would be likely to corrupt the people without his informing them of the proper course is the following:

[Shababa b. Suwar has reported on the authority of Abu Bakr al-Hudhali, who said: I heard one of our scholars saying:]

The foreigners (a'ajim) from Hamdhan, al-Rayy, Isfahan, Qumus and Nahawand sent letters to each other. They sent messengers to one another (saying): "The king of the Arabs who has brought them their religion and produced their Book has died." They were referring to the Prophet, may God bless him and his family. "Their king after him was an insignificant king and he has died." They were referring to Abu Bakr. "Another arose after him who has lived longer so that he has reached as far as you in your lands and he has sent his soldiers to attack you." They were referring to 'Umar b. al-Khattab. "He will not

desist from you until you expel those of his soldiers who are in your land, go against him and attack him in his land. Therefore make an alliance (to do) this and make a covenant (to carry) it (out)."

When the report (of this) came to the Muslims in Kufa, they sent it to 'Umar b. al-Khattab. When the report reached him, he was very afraid on account of it. He went to the mosque of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family. He went up on the pulpit and praised and glorified God. Then he said: "Men of the Emigrants and the Ansar, Satan has gathered groups (of men) against you. With them he has dared to attempt to put out the light of God. Indeed the people of Hamdhan, the people of Isfahan, the people of al-Rayy and Qumus, of Nahawand, despite difference in language, colour and religion, have made a covenant and an alliance to drive your brother Muslims from their land and to come against you and attack you in your land. Give me advice but be brief and not too lengthy in words This is a day for (such advice), after which there will be a day (to speak at greater length)."

They began to consult. Talha b. 'Ubayd Allah stood up he was one of the orators of Quraysh. He praised and glorified God. Then he said: "Commander of the faithful, affairs have begun to bridle you; times have brought hardship to you; misfortunes have tested you and experiences have taught you. You, the one blessed with authority (amr) and fortunate in nature, have been given authority. Therefore you have knowledge, you have been given information and you know it well. You have only avoided (evil) consequences of God's decision as a result of choosing good. So attend to this matter according to your own view and do not avoid that." Then he sat down.

"Speak," 'Umar urged (the people).

'Uthman b. 'Affan stood up. He praised and glorified God. Then he said: "I think that you should direct the Syrians from Syria and the Yemenis from Yemen, and that you should go with the inhabitants of these two sanctuaries (Mecca and Medina) and with the people of the two camp towns of Kufa and Basra. Then

all the polytheists would meet all the Muslims. Commander of the faithful, you would not seek to survive after the Arabs, nor would you enjoy with any delight the world, nor would you seek refuge from it in a well-fortified fortress. Therefore attend to (the matter) with your own view and do not avoid that." Then he sat down.

"Speak," 'Umar urged (the people).

The Commander of the faithful, 'Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him, spoke praising God until he had finished the introductory praises and he glorified Him and called for blessings on His Apostle, may God bless him and his family. Then he said: "If you sent the Syrians from Syria, the Byzantines would come against their children. If you sent the Yemenis from Yemen, the Abyssinians would come against their children. If you sent (the people) from the two sanctuaries, the bedouin would rebel against us on (every) flank and side. Thus the families of Arabs which you leave behind you are more important to you than what is in front of you. As for what you have mentioned of the number of foreigners and your fear of their groupings, we never fought in the time of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, with regard to number. We only used to fight with regard to the help (of God). As for what you have been informed of their gathering to come against the Muslims, God is more averse to their coming than you are to it. It is more appropriate for Him to change what He is averse to. When the foreigners look at you, they say (to themselves) that this is the man of the Arabs. If you break him, you break the Arabs and it would be much more difficult for (them to continue) their eager (advance). Thus you united them against yourself and those who did not use to support them are (now) supporting them. However, I consider that you should make them remain in their camp-town and write to the people of Basra. Let them divide in to three groups. Let one of their groups look after their offspring as guards of them. Let another group undertake (the task of resisting) the people who have made this covenant, to break them up. Let (the third) group go to their brothers as reinforcements for them."

"This is the best view," said 'Umar. "I would like to follow it." Then he began to repeat the words of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, setting it out in admiration of it and as his choice.

[Al-Shaykh al-Mufid, may God be pleased with him, said:]

Consider, may God support you, this view which was announced with the merit of sound judgement when the thoughtful leaders (ulu al-albab wa-al-'ilm) were in dispute. Reflect upon the success which God brought to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, in all circumstances and the way the people used to resort to him in difficult matters. Then add that to what has been established of his merit in religion which was not possible for the other prominent people so that they were in need of him because of his knowledge. You will find out about it in the chapter on miracles, which we have already mentioned. May God be the friend of success.

This has been a brief outline of the judgements delivered by (the Commander of the faithful), peace be on him, during the rule of 'Umar b. al-Khattab. There were similar (judgements) during the rule of 'Uthman b. 'Affan.

Chapter 27

D. Reports of the Judgements of the Commander of the Faithful during the Rule of 'Uthman b. 'Affan

Among these is the report which non-Shi'a ('amma) and Shi'a (khassa) historians (naqalat al-athar) relate.

An old man married a woman. The woman became pregnant but the old man claimed that he had not had intercourse with her and denounced her pregnancy. The matter was unclear to 'Uthman. He asked the woman: "Did the old man make you lose your virginity while (you) were a virgin?"

"No," she replied.

"Administer the prescribed punishment on her," ordered 'Uthman.

"A woman has two orifices," the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, interposed, "the orifice for the menstrual flow and the orifice for urine. Perhaps the old man was close to her and his semen managed to flow in to her menstrual orifice. Then she became pregnant through him."

He asked the man about that and he answered: "I used to discharge semen while kissing her but without ever going to the extent of making her lose her virginity."

"The pregnancy is due to him," declared the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, "and the child is his child. I consider that he should be punished for his (wrongful) denunciation."

'Uthman carried out his judgement in that and was amazed at him.

They have reported that a man had a concubine and he gave her a child. Then he separated from her and married her to one of his slaves. The master died. She was freed by virtue of her being in the possession of her son. Her son also inherited her husband. The son died and she inherited her husband from her child. They came before 'Uthman as a result of a dispute. She was claiming: "This is my slave." He was claiming: "She is my wife and I will not release her (from the marriage)."

"This is a difficult problem," said 'Uthman.

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, was present. He said: "Ask her whether he has had intercourse with her after her inheritance."

"No," she replied.

"If I was aware that he had done that, I would have punished him," he said. "Go. He is your slave without any rights over you. If you wish to keep possession of him, or to free him, or to sell him, that is your right."

They reported that in the time of 'Uthman a slave woman who was in the process of buying her freedom (mukatiba) committed fornication. She had already purchased three-quarters of her freedom. 'Uthman asked the Commander of the faithful whether he should have her flogged according to the amount (required) for a free woman or the amount required for a slave. He also asked Zayd b. Thabit. The latter said that she should be flogged according to the amount (required) for a slave." How can she be flogged according to the amount (required) for a slave when she has already purchased three-quarters of her freedom?" asked the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. "Should you not whip her according to the amount (required) for a free woman as she is much more of that?"

"If that is the case," said Zayd, "then she ought to inherit

according to the amount (required) for a free woman."

"Indeed, that is necessary," replied the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him.

Zayd was silenced but 'Uthman disagreed with the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. He followed Zayd's statement without paying attention to the proof which had been given to him (by the Commander of the faithful).

Mentioning further examples such as these would make the book unduly long. However the reports about them are well known.

E. Reports of the Judgements of (the Commander of the Faithful), peace be on him, after the Pledge of Allegiance of the General Populace to him and the Death of 'Uthman

The traditionists (ahl al-naql wa hamalat al-athar) report that a woman gave birth on the bed of her husband to a child who had two heads and bodies attached to one waist. His family were confused as to whether it was one or two. They went to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, to ask him about that so that they might know the law with regard to him. The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, told them: "Watch him when he goes to sleep. Then wake up one of the bodies and heads. If they both wake up at the same time, then they are a single human being. If one of them wakes up and the other remains asleep, they are two persons and their rights in inheritance are the rights of two persons."

[Al-Hasan b. 'Ali al-'Abdi reported on the authority of Sa'd b. Tarif, on the authority of al-Asbagh b. Nubata, who said:]

While Shurayh was in a session of judgements, a person came to him and said: "Abu Umayya, let me speak to you privately, for I have a (great) need."

He ordered those around him to leave him and they went away. Only his close associates (khassa) who attended him remained. He said: "Say what your need is."

"Abu Umayya," (the person) told him, "I have what men have and what women have. The judgement rests with you about whether I am a man or a woman."

He answered: "I have heard a decision about that from the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, which I remember. Tell me from which of the two orifices does your urine come?"

"From them both," answered the person.

"From which does it (finally) finish?" he asked.

"From them both together," was the reply.

Shurayh was amazed. The person said: "I will tell you something (else) about my affair which is (even) more amazing."

"What is that?" asked Shurayh.

"My father married me (to a man) on the assumption that I was a woman. I became pregnant from my husband and I bought a slave girl to look after me. I had intercourse with her and she became pregnant from me."

Shurayh struck one of his hands against the other in amazement and said: "This is a matter which must be taken before the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, for I have no knowledge of the ruling concerning it."

He got up and the person followed him and those present with him. He went in to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. He told the story to him and the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, summoned the person. He asked about (the story) which Shurayh had told him. (The person) admitted it.

"Who is your husband?" he asked.

"So-and-so b. so-and-so," was the reply, "and he is present in the town."

He had him summoned and asked him about what (the other) had said.

"It is true," he said.

"You have to be braver than a lion-hunter when you face this sort of situation," he said. Then he called Qanbar, his retainer (mawla) and said: "Take this person in to a house and with (the person) four just women and order them to strip (the person) naked and to count the ribs after making sure that the pudenda are covered." The man (i.e. Qanbar) said: "Commander of the faithful, men and women will not be secure from this person."

So (the Commander of the faithful) ordered that a straw-dealer should cover him with straw and he left him alone in a house. Then he went in to it and counted the ribs. There were seven on the left side and eight on the right side. He declared: "This is a man."

He ordered his hair to be cut and that he be dressed in a hat, sandals and a cloak (rida). He separated him from his (former) husband.

[Some traditionists reported:] When the person made the claim he made about two orifices, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, ordered two just Muslims to go to an empty house and take the person with them. He ordered two mirrors to be set up one of them facing the pudenda of the person and the other facing the (first) mirror. He ordered the person to show its nakedness by facing the mirror so that the two just men could not see it (directly). He ordered the two just men to look in to the mirror facing (the first) mirror. When the two just men realised the truth of what the person had claimed about (having) two orifices, he considered its status (to be established) by counting the ribs. When he declared him to be a man, he ignored his claims of being pregnant as being a mistake and he did not act in accordance with it. He declared the pregnancy of the slave girl as due to him and he associated him with it.

They reported that one day the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, went in to the mosque and found a young man weeping (there) with some people around him. The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, asked about it. He said: "Shurayh has judged a case against me and he has not done me justice."

"What is (the nature of) your affair?" he asked.

"These people" he said and he indicated a group who were present, "took my father out on a journey with them. They came back but he did not come back. I asked them about him and they said that he had died. I asked them about the money (maal) that he had taken with him and they said: 'We do not know of any money.' Then Shurayh made them swear an oath and ordered me to stop interfering with them."

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, told Qanbar: "Gather the people and summon the shurat al-khamis."(1)

Then he sat down and summoned the group (to come before him) and the young man with them. He asked him about what he had said and he repeated his claim and began to cry, saying: "By God, I accuse them of (killing) my father, Commander of the faithful. They tricked him so that they could take him with them out of a desire to (get) his money."

Then, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, questioned the people. They told him exactly what they had told Shurayh: "The man died and we do not know of any money of his."

Then he looked in to their faces and said to them: "What do you think? Do you think that I do not know what you have done with the father of this youth? Then I would have little knowledge."

He ordered them to separate from each other and they separated from each other within the mosque. Each one of them was

made to stand next to one of the pillars in the mosque. Next he summoned 'Ubayd Allah b. Abi Rafi', his scribe at that time, and told him to sit down. Then he called one of them. He told him: "Tell me on which day did you leave your houses while the father of this boy was with you? And (do it) without raising your voice."

"On such and such a day," he said.

"Write it down," he told 'Ubayd Allah.

"In which month was it?" he asked.

"In such and such a month," was the answer.

"Write it down," he instructed.

"In which year?"

"In such and such a year."

"Write it down."

'Ubayd Allah wrote all that down.

"Of what sickness did he die?" he asked.

"Of such and such a sickness."

"In which place did he die?"

"In such and such a place."

"Who washed and shrouded his corpse?"

"So-and-so."

"With what did you shroud him?"

"With such and such."

"Who said the prayer over him?"

"So-and-so."

"Who put him in to the grave?"

"So-and-so."

'Ubayd Allah b. Abi Rafi' was writing all that down. When he came to the statement about the burial, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, said: "God is greater (Allahu akbar)." (He said it) in a way that the people in the mosque could hear. Then he ordered the man to be taken back to his place.

He summoned another of the men and made him sit close to him. He questioned him in the same way as he had questioned the first man and he gave answers which disagreed with (the answers of) the first man throughout his interrogation. (All the time) 'Ubayd Allah was writing them down. When he had finished his questioning, he said: "God is greater," in a way that the people in the mosque could hear. He ordered that the two men be taken out of the mosque to the prison but they were to stand and wait at the door.

He summoned the third and questioned him in the same way as he had questioned the first. He gave answers which contradicted what both of them had said and he confirmed that to him. He said: "God is greater." Then he ordered him to be taken out to his two colleagues.

He summoned the fourth of the men. His words were confused and he stuttered. (The Commander of the faithful) warned him and made him afraid. (The man) confessed that his colleagues had killed the man and taken his money and that they had buried him in such and such a place near Kufa. The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, said: "God is greater." Then he ordered him to be taken to prison.

He summoned one of the men (already questioned) and said to

him: "You have claimed that the man died in bed. Yet you killed him. Tell me the truth about your situation, otherwise I will punish you as a warning to the others that I should be told the truth in your case." He confessed to killing the man with a similar confession to his colleague.

Then he summoned the rest (of them) and they confessed the murder. They were at a loss to do anything. Their statements about the man's murder and the theft of his money concurred. He ordered some of his men to go with some of them to the place where they had buried the money and to get it out and hand it over to the young man, the son of the murdered man.

"What do you want (to be done to them) now that you know what they did to your father?" he asked him.

"I want the judgement between us to take place before God, the Mighty and High," he said. "So I will spare their blood in this world."

Therefore the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, desisted from carrying out the prescribed punishment for murder but still punished them severely.

"Commander of the faithful," Shurayh asked him, "how (did you manage to come to) this decision?"

He said: "David, peace be on him, passed some boys playing and calling out to one of them, 'Religion is dead.' The boy would then answer them. David, peace be on him, approached them. He said: 'Boy, what is your name?' 'My name is Religion is Dead,' he answered. 'Who gave you this name?' David, peace be on him, asked. He replied: 'My mother.' Then David asked: 'Where is your mother?' He answered: 'In her house.' 'Go with us to your house,' said David. He went with him to her and brought her out of her house.' Maidservant of God', he said, 'what is the name of your son?' 'His name is Religion is Dead,' she answered. 'Who gave him this name?' David, peace be on him, asked her. 'His father,' she replied. 'What was the reason for that?' he asked. She said: 'He went out on a journey with

some people while I was pregnant with this boy. The people came back but my husband did not come back. I asked them about him and they told me that he had died. I asked them about his money and they told me that he did not leave any money. I asked them if he had made any instruction in his will. They said that he had. He had said that I was pregnant and if I bore a girl or a boy, I should name him Religion is Dead. Therefore I named him as I was instructed in his will as I did not wish to oppose him.' David, peace be on him, asked her: 'Do you know the people?' 'Yes,' she replied. He said to her, 'Come with me with these'-meaning the people who were in front of him-, Then he had them brought out of their houses. When they were (all) present, he judged them according to this judgment. The murder was proved against them and he got the money from them. Then he said to her: 'Maid servant of God, name this child of yours Religion is Alive.' "

It is reported that a woman desired a young man and she tried to seduce him but the young man refused. She went away and got an egg. She put the white (of the egg) on her dress. Then she began to make accusations against the young man and had him brought before the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. She claimed: "This young man has treated me shamefully. He has raped me."

She took her dress and showed the white (on it) from the egg, saying: "This is his semen on my dress."

The young man began to cry, pleading and swearing his innocence from her accusations.

"Order someone to heat water until it is very hot," the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, told Qanbar. "Then bring it to me while it is still like that."

The water was brought and he ordered it to be thrown on the woman's dress. They threw it on it and the water collected up the white of the egg and they came together. He ordered it to be taken and given to two of his followers. He said: "Taste it and spit it out."

They tasted it and found that it (tasted like) egg. He ordered the young man to be freed and the woman to be flogged as a punishment for her false accusation.

[Al-Hasan b. Mahbub reported: `Abd al-Rahman b. al-Hajjaj told me: I heard Ibn Abi Layla saying:]

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, judged a case which no one had dealt with before. That was that two men had travelled together on a journey. They sat eating together. One of them took out five loaves of bread and the other three. A man passed them and greeted them. They invited him to eat and he sat eating with them. When he had finished eating, he put down eight dirhams. saying: "This is compensation for your food which I have eaten."

The two men began to dispute over it. The one with three loaves said: "This (should be shared) between us, half each."

"Rather I should have five and you should have three," said the one with five loaves.

They came before the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, and told him their story. He said: "This is a matter in which meanness and rivalry is not proper. Reconciliation would be better."

"I will only be satisfied by the giving of judgement," said the one who had had three loaves.

"Since you will only be satisfied by the giving of judgement," said the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, "you have one of the eight and your companion seven."

"May God be praised," he exclaimed, "how can this matter come to be like that?"

"I have told you," he said. "Didn't you have three loaves?"

"Yes," he answered.

"And your companion had five?"

"Yes."

"That is twenty-four (when multiplied) by three," he said. "So you ate eight, your companion eight and your guest eight. Thus he gave you eight dirhams. Seven of which belong to your companion (as he supplied seven-eighths of the guest's food) and one to you (as you supplied one-eighth of the guest's food)."

The two men departed (reflecting on) the perspicacity of the judgement of their case.

The scholars of (religious) practices (siyar) report that during the time of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, four men drank alcohol. They became drunk and began to cut each other with knives. Each of them was wounded. An account of their (action) was brought to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, and he ordered them to be put in to prison until they became sober. Two of them died in prison but two survived. The families of the two (dead) men came to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, and demanded: "Give us the right to retaliate against these two men, Commander of the faithful. For they have killed two of our colleagues."

"How do you know that?" he asked. "Perhaps (the dead men) killed each other."

"We do not know," they answered. "So judge them according to what God has taught you."

He said: "The blood-wit of the two men who were killed is the responsibility of the tribes of the four men after the account has been settled by the payment for the two who are alive of the blood-wit for their wounds."

That was a judgement in a case for which there was no way of

establishing the truth other than by it. Don't you see that there was no evidence to distinguish the killer from the killed and no evidence of intention to kill? Therefore the judgement was made according to the rule of accidental killing and on the basis of confusion about (the actions of) the killer and killed.

It is reported that six men went down to the Euphrates and dived in to it to play. One of them drowned. Two of them testified that the (other) three had made him drown while the three testified that the two made him drown. He, peace be on him, adjudged the division of the blood-wit in to fifths on the five. The two were to pay three-fifths according to the amount of testimony against them and the three were to pay two-fifths in accord with the amount of testimony against them.

There was no judgement in that with more right to (be considered) correct than the judgement he, peace be on him, gave.

They reported that a man was about to die and he bequeathed part of his wealth without designating it. His heirs differed on that after his (death). They came before the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. He told them to exclude one-seventh of the wealth as the bequest and he recited the words of Him, the Exalted: It has seven gates, each of which is a divided part (XV 44).

He, peace be on him, judged (a case) concerning a man who, at his death, had made a bequest of a share of his wealth without specifying it. Similarly when he died, the heirs disputed about its significance. His judgement to them was to take out an eighth of his wealth and he recited the words of God, the Exalted: The sadaqat (alms tax) is only for the poor and needy. (IX 60). There were eight categories for the (sadaqat) and to each category (he gave) a share of the sadaqat.

He, peace be on him, judged a case concerning a man who made a bequest and said: "Free every slave of mine who has been long in my possession."

When he died, the executor did not know what to do. He asked

about that and (the Commander of the faithful) told him to free every slave (of the man) who had been in his possession for six months.

Then he recited His words, Exalted be His name: For the moon we have appointed stages until it becomes again like an old dry branch of a palm tree ('urjun) (XXVI 39).

It has been established that the branch of a palm tree only becomes similar to the new moon in its strength six months after fruit has been taken from it.

He gave judgement concerning a man who had made a vow to fast for a time but without mentioning any definite time. (He told him) to fast for six months and he recited the words of Him, the Mighty and High: It brings forth its fruit at every season by the permission of its Lord. (XIV 26)

That was every six months (so the time he interpreted to be equivalent to six months).

A man came to him and said: "Commander of the faithful, I had some dates. My wife rushed (up to me) and took one of them and put it in her mouth. I vowed that she would never eat it nor spit it out."

He, peace be on him, said: "Let her eat half of it and spit out the other half. Then you will be free of your vow."

He, peace be on him, gave judgement concerning a man who struck a woman and she had a miscarriage (when it was still) an embryo. (He ordered him) to pay the blood-wit for it of forty dinars and he recited the words of Him, the Mighty and High: We created man from an essence of clay. Then We made him a d r o p in a firm abode. Then We formed the d r o p in to an embryo, and We formed the embryo in to a clot of blood, and We formed the clot of blood in to bones. We clothed the bones with flesh. Then we caused it to grow as a final act of creation. Blessed be God the best of Creators. (XXIII 12-14). He explained that (the blood-wit for) the d r o p was twenty dinars,

for the embryo forty dinars, for the clot sixty dinars, for the bone before it was established as a creature eighty dinars, for the form (of the child) before the soul entered it a hundred dinars. If the soul had entered it, then (the blood-wit) was a thousand dinars.

This has been a sample of the judgements and difficult decisions pronounced by (the Commander of the faithful), peace be on him. No one had given judgements on (such cases) before him. Nor did any of the non-Shi'a ('amma) and Shi'a (khassa) know anything about them. His natural disposition ('itra) made him able to deal with them. If anyone else had been tested by having to give a decision about them, such a man would have shown his deficiency in (knowing) the truth about them, just as (the Commander of the faithful) had made it clear.

In this brief outline of the legal decisions (of the Commander of the faithful) which we have put forward here, there is sufficient for our purposes, if God wills.

1. According to Ahmad b. Abi 'Abd Allah al-Barqi, the Shurtat al-Khamis were six thousand of 'Ali's followers who had pledged themselves to serve him until death, al-Rijal, (Tehran 1342 A.H. S.), 3. They can be regarded as a combination of bodyguard, police force and front-line soldiers.

Chapter 29

His Words about God

(This is) a brief account of some of the words of (the Commander of the faithful), peace be on him, concerning the necessity of knowing God, the Exalted, His unity and the denial of anthropomorphism (tashbih), together with a description of God's justice, the different kinds of wisdom and the evidence and proof of these.

[Abu Bakr al-Hudhali reported on the authority of al-Zuhri, on the authority of 'Isa b. Zayd, on the authority of Salih b. Kaysan:]

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, said, in urging the knowledge of God, may He be praised, and (the acknowledgement) of His unity:

"The first act of worshipping God is to know Him. The basis of knowledge of Him lies in (the acknowledgement of) His Unity. The support for (the acknowledgement of) His Unity is the denial of any comparison of Him, the High, (with man) in terms of stating that human qualities (sifat) subsist in Him. (This is) because of the testimony of reason that everyone in whom human qualities subsist is created (masnu'). Whereas the testimony of reason (requires) that He, the High and Exalted, Who is the Creator (sani'), is not created Through the creation of God which points towards Himself, through reason which establishes the belief in knowledge of Him, through reflection which confirms the proof of His (existence), God has caused His creation to be evidence of Himself. Through it, He has revealed His Majesty. He is One, Unique in His eternity, without partner in His Godliness, without equal in His Godliness. By

virtue of the contradictory nature of things which contradict each other, there is knowledge that nothing is contrary to Him. By virtue of the nature of comparability in matters which can be compared, there is knowledge that nothing can be compared to Him."

(The Commander of the faithful said this) in a speech which, if it was fully reported, would make this book too long.

Among the speeches recorded on his authority, peace be on him, about the denial of any comparison of God (with human qualities) is that which al-Sha'bi reported. He said that the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, heard a man saying: "By Him Who is veiled with seven layers (of heaven)." Then he raised his stick towards the sky.

"Woe upon you," he said, "God is too exalted to be veiled from anything and for anything to be veiled from Him. Praise be to Him, Whom no place contains, yet from Whom nothing on earth or in heaven is hidden."

"Shall I redeem my oath, Commander of the faithful?" the man asked.

"No," he answered, "you did not swear by God. Therefore no atonement for perjury is required of you, for you were only swearing by something else."

The historians (ahl al-sira wa 'ulama al-naqala) report that a man (1) came to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, and asked: "Commander of the faithful, tell me about God, the Exalted. Did you see Him when you worshipped Him?"

"I am not one who worships someone whom I have not seen" he answered.

"Then how did you find Him when you saw Him?" he asked.

"Woe upon you," he said, "the eyes do not see Him in terms of human eye-sight. Rather the hearts see Him through the inner

realities of faith (Iman). (He can be) known through evidence and can be characterised by signs, which cannot be compared to people nor attained through sense perception."

The man went away saying: "Indeed, God knows well how He should deliver His message."

In this account there is evidence that (the Commander of the faithful) denied the possibility of direct vision of God, the Mighty and High.

[Al-Hasan b. Abi al-Hasan al-Basri reported:]

A man came to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, after his departure from the battle of Siffin. He asked him: ": commander of the faithful, tell me: Was the battle which took place between you and these people a result of the decree and determination of God?"

"You have never gone up a hill nor gone down in to a valley without God's decree and determination being present in the action," he answered.

"Then, Commander of the faithful, I regard (all) my concerns as God's responsibility," he said.

"Why?"

"If the decree and determination of God drive us to act," he said, "then what is the point of rewarding us for obedience and punishing us for disobedience?"

"Fellow," said the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, have you thought that it was a sealed decree and determination? Don't think that. That sort of statement is the doctrine of idolaters, supporters of Satan and opponents of God, the Merciful. (It is such people) and the Majis with them who have adopted it. God, exalted be His- Majesty, gives commands as a matter of free choice (takhyir), and gives prohibitions as a warning (against an action.) He puts the burden on us. He is

not obeyed unwillingly nor is He disobeyed as one who can be overcome. He has not created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in vain. That is the opinion of those who disbelieve. There will be woe from Hell-fire for those who disbelieve. (XXXVIII 27). "(2)

"What, then, is the decree and determination which you mentioned, Commander of the faithful?" asked the man.

He answered: "It is the command to obey, the prohibition of disobedience, the provision (to man) to draw near Him and to abandon those who disobey Him, the promise (of reward) and the threat (of punishment), the inspiration (He gives man) to do good and the fear of doing evil (which He arouses in man). All that is the decree of God with regard to our actions and His determination of our deeds. As for anything else (which has been claimed), do not give it any consideration. For the consideration of it will invalidate your action."

"You have dispelled my worries, Commander of the faithful," said the man. "May God dispel yours." And he began to recite:

You are the Imam, through obedience to whom we hope for forgiveness from God, the Merciful, on the Day of the Return (to Him). You have explained what was unclear in our religion. May your Lord bounteously reward you with kindness.

This account clarifies, through the words of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, the meaning of (divine) justice and the prohibition of (belief in) the doctrine of determinism (jabr), (in addition to) establishing the wisdom in the actions of God, the Exalted, and denying that there is any futility in them.

1- Nahj al-Balagha, (Beirut, 1967), I, tradition no. 258. The man is identified as Dhi'bil al-Yamani. The final part of the speech is slightly different.

2- This paragraph, though in a somewhat different order, is the same as Nahj al-Balagha. III, no. 78, 481.

Chapter 30

His Words about Knowledge ('Ilm)

(This is a selection of) some of the words of (the Commander of the faithful), peace be on him, in praise of (traditional) knowledge ('ilm), about the categories of people, the merit of (traditional) knowledge, and about acquiring it and wisdom.

The traditionists (ahl al-naql) have reported on the authority of Kumayl b. Ziyad, may God have mercy on him, that he said:(3) One day the Commander of the faithful took me by the hand in the mosque and led me out of it. When he had gone out into the desert, he breathed a deep sigh and said: "Kumayl, these hearts are containers (of knowledge); the best of them are those which best preserve (the knowledge). Therefore preserve what I say to you. There are three kinds of people: One who knows the Lord (for His own sake), one who acquires knowledge as a means of salvation and low class rabble, followers of every crower, who bend with every breeze. These men do not seek to be illuminated by the light of learning, nor do they resort to any sure authority(rukn).

"Kumayl, knowledge is better than wealth. Knowledge guards you while you guard wealth. Wealth is diminished by expenditure while knowledge is increased even by giving it away.

"Kumayl, the love of knowledge is a (kind of) religion which is professed (by a man) and through which he perfects his obedience (to God) during his life and acquires a noble reputation after his death. Knowledge is a judge and wealth is something which is judged.

"Kumayl, those who amass wealth die even as they live while

those who possess knowledge will continue to exist for as long as time lasts. Their individual entities will disappear but their images will remain in the hearts (of men).

"Here, indeed is much knowledge," and he pointed to his breast. "If I could come upon men who would carry it (hamala),..Indeed I came upon such as took it too quickly and (thus) did not protect it. Such a man would use the tools of religion for (success in) the world. He would seek to use the proofs of God and His favours as a means of dominating His friends and His Book. Or (there was the sort of man) who submitted to the wisdom (of God's knowledge) without having true vision of his own (need for) humility. At the first appearance of any problem, doubt would eat into his heart. Neither this man nor that one (was appropriate). (As each) eagerly sought pleasures and was easily dominated by passions or enamoured of amassing and hoarding wealth, they were not of the kind who would be shepherds of religion. They were both much more like cattle wandering without restraint in search of fodder. Thus in the (living) death of such carriers of knowledge would knowledge itself die.

"O God, indeed the earth will never be without (a man who is) a proof (hujja i.e. an Imam) of You to Your Creation, whether (he acts) openly in the public eye or secretly out of fear. (In this way) the proofs of God and His signs will not be brought to nought. Where are those men? They are men who are least in number yet greatest in God's esteem. Through them God preserves His proofs (to the world) until they hand them as a trust to their equals and sow them as seeds in the hearts of those like themselves. Through them knowledge has broken into the inner realities of faith and they have found the spirit of certainty to be something gentle and comforting. They have found easy what those who love the easy life have found to be hard and difficult. They are familiar with things which the ignorant distrust. They have travelled through this world with their bodies while their souls have been (always) associated with the Highest Abode. These are the representatives (khulafa) of God on His earth and those who summon His worshippers to His (true) religion.

Then he breathed a deep sigh and said: "Oh, how I long to see them." He took his hand from mine and said to me: "Go now, if you wish."

Among the words of (the Commander of the faithful), peace be on him, urging people to knowledge (ma'rifa), explaining its merit, and the qualities of those who possess knowledge ('ulama), and (describing) how those who seek knowledge should be, is (this report) of a speech which scholars have handed down in (their) accounts. However, we have omitted the beginning of it, (starting at) his words:

"Praise be to God, Who has guided us from error, Who has given us vision (and kept us away) from blindness, Who has (bestowed) on us the religion of Islam. (It is He) Who has caused prophethood to have been among us and Who has made us good men. He has made our ultimate pinnacle the ultimate pinnacle of prophets. He has made us the best community which has come for men. We enjoin the good and forbid the evil. We worship God and we do not associate anything with Him, nor do we take any master (wali) apart from Him. We are witnesses of God and the Apostle was our witness (of Him). We seek intercession and are given intercession along with those with whom we sought intercession from Him. We ask and our request is granted. He forgives the sins of those whom we pray for. God has elected us. We do not call on any master (wali) apart from Him.

"People, help one another to (acts of) good faith and piety. But do not help one another to sin and aggression. Fear God. Indeed God is severe in (His) punishment.(4)

"People, I am the cousin of your Prophet and the closest of you to God and His Apostle. Therefore question me, question me. It is as if knowledge ('ilm) has already wasted away among you. When any one who possesses knowledge perishes, then part of his knowledge perishes with him. Those among the people who possess knowledge ('ulama) are like the full-moon in the sky whose light illuminates the rest of the constellations. Take hold

of whatever knowledge appears to you. Beware of seeking it for four reasons: that through it you may vie with (other) possessors of knowledge; or that by it you may quarrel with the ignorant; or that as a result of it you act hypocritically in discussions; or that through it you may disregard the leaders of the people in favour of yourselves becoming leaders. Those who do (good) acts and those who do not will not receive equal punishment from God. May God benefit both us and you by what He has taught us. May (a man who has knowledge) use it only for the sake of God. Indeed He is One Who hears, One Who answers."

Among his statements, peace be on him, about the description of the one who possesses knowledge ('alim) and the training of one who seeks to possess knowledge is what is reported by al-Harith al-A'war. He said: I heard the Commander of the faithful say: "It is the right of the one who possesses knowledge ('alim) that he should not be questioned too much, nor be required to answer. Nor should he be troubled when he is tired, nor caught hold of by the sleeves when he rises (to leave). No (finger) should be pointed at him with regard to anything which is needed, nor should any secret of his be divulged. No one should speak slander in his presence. He should be given great respect in as much as he has preserved the command of God. The student should only sit in front of him and should not expose him to too much of his company. If a student (seeking) knowledge, or anyone else, comes to him while he is in a group, he should make a general greeting to them all and give particular good wishes to him.

"Let him be respected whether he is present or absent. Let his right be known. Indeed the man who possesses knowledge receives greater reward than the man who fasts, the man who undertakes (other religious duties), the man who strives along the path of God. When the one who possesses knowledge ('alim) dies, a breach is made in Islam which can only be filled by his successor and the one who seeks after knowledge. The angels ask for forgiveness for him and those in heaven and on earth pray for him."

3- Cf. Nahj al-Balagha, III, no. 147, 495 ff.

4- Part of this speech is the same as Nahj al-Balagha, 1, no. 17, 59ff.

Chapter 31

His Words concerning Heresy.

Among his speeches, peace be on him, concerning heretics (ahl al-bida') and those who speak of religion in terms of their own opinion while opposing the way of true believers (ahl al-haqq) through what they say, is (the speech) reported by sound traditionists of the non-Shi'a ('amma) and the Shi'a (khassa). The speech opens with the praising of God and blessings on His Prophet, may God bless him and his family, (and then goes on)⁴: "My responsibility for what I say is guaranteed and I am answerable for it. It will not wither the corn-seeds which men have sown, nor will roots be parched as a result of it.

All goodness is within a man who knows his own ability. Not knowing one's own ability is sufficient ignorance for man. A creature who is most hateful to God is a man whom God, the Exalted, has left to himself, (a man) who is deviating from the true path, (a man) enamoured of words of heresy. (In this heresy) he has become addicted to fasting and prayer. Yet he is seduction to those who are seduced by him, himself going astray from the guidance of those who came before him, and leading in to error those who follow him. Thus he bears (responsibility) for the sins of others, being (himself) settled in his own sinfulness. (Such a man) has picked up the refuse of ignorance amid ignorant men without guidance. Unaware of the intense darkness of rebellion, he is blind to guidance. Yet men like himself call him knowledgeable ('alim) while he is not constant in following it even for one complete day. He goes out early and seeks to make much of what is little (regarding it as) better than what is (truly) much, so that when he has quenched his thirst on polluted water and sought to increase (his knowledge) from what is vile, he sits as a judge responsible for the

clarification of what is obscure to everyone else. He fears that those who came before him were without his wisdom and that the action of those who come after him will be like the action of those who came before him. If an obscure matter is brought before him, he gives an irrelevant comment on it according to his own opinion and then asserts (that) categorically. Thus he is enmeshed in doubts as if in the spider's web, not knowing whether he is right or wrong. He does not see that what is beyond (him) is within the reach (of others). If he made an analogy of one thing with another, he would never regard his opinion as being wrong. If a matter is obscure to him, he conceals it because he knows his own ignorance, deficiency, and the necessity (of hiding it) in order that it cannot be said that he does not know. Therefore he puts himself forward without knowledge. He is one who wanders aimlessly like riders without direction amid the uncertainties of unknown tracts of desert. Never does he excuse himself for what he does not know. Thus he gives a decision without ever having bitten in to knowledge with a tooth that can bite. He scatters the traditions like the wind scatters sand. Inheritances (wrongly distributed) weep because of him, blood cries out for vengeance because of him. By his judgements he makes lawful the forbidden parts and forbids those that are allowed. He is invalid when he issues (judgements on cases) which come before him and he does not regret his inadequacy.

"People, it is required of you to obey and to know the one whom there is no excuse to be ignorant of. The knowledge with which Adam, peace be on him, descended, and everything with which the prophets were favoured down to your Prophet, the seal of the prophets, is in the offspring of your Prophet, Muhammad, may God bless him and his family. Where has it brought you? Or rather where are you going, you who are descended from the loins of the men who were on the Ark? This (offspring of the Prophet) is like (the Ark of Noah). Therefore (adhere to them as) you would board it. Just as those who were in it were saved, so those who enter in to (association with this family) will be save through them. I guarantee that by a true oath and I am not one of those who make false claims. Woe on those who hold back, woe again on those who hold back.

Haven't you been made aware of what your Prophet, may God bless him and his family, said among you, when he said in the Farewell Pilgrimage: 'I leave behind me among you two important things which, if you cleave to them, you will never go astray - that is the Book of God and the offspring from my family (ahl al-bayt). They will never scatter from you until they lead you to me at the (sacred) waters (of Heaven). Now take care how you oppose me with regard to these two (things). Otherwise there will be dread punishment. Indeed this (agreement with the Book and the family) is a sweet pleasant drink, so drink. But that (opposition) is salty and brackish, so avoid it.' "

Chapter 32

His Words about this World and the Next

(Here is an extract f r o m) his words, peace be on him, describing the world and warning against it.(5)

"The world is just like a snake ; a soft thing to touch but vicious in sting. Therefore avoid those things which please you in it because of the short length (of time) which they will be with you there. Be as familiar as you can with what is there while being as wary as you can of its possessions. For whenever one who possesses (the world) seeks to take ease f r o m it, it diverts him f r o m it to what is hateful."

(These are some of) his words, peace be on him, regarding getting ready to go to the next world, preparing to meet God, may His Name be exalted, and advice to the people about righteous deeds. The religious scholars report this in the traditions and the historians (ashab al-sira wa-al-athar) (also) report it:

Every night when the people were taking to their beds for sleep, he would call out in a voice which could be heard by all the people in the mosque and nearby:(6)

"May God have mercy on you, prepare yourselves, for the call has been made among you for you to set out on the journey (to God). Give scant (attention) to staying in this world and turn (to God) with the best provisions you have. For in front of you is a mountain-pass which will be difficult to climb and halting-places full of terror, f r o m which the one who travels (the

road) and stops along it has no escape. Through God's mercy, may you be saved f r o m its horrors. After destruction there will be no haughtiness. How sad it will be for the negligent man that his own life will be a proof against him and (the evils of) his days will lead him to the distress which God has made for (those of) us (who are like him). Beware of those who scorn grace and who will not be freed f r o m vengeance after death. We only (exist) through Him and for Him and by virtue of His kind hand. He has power over everything."

(These are some of) his words, peace be on him, concerning shaming the life of this world and seeking to carry out actions for the next world:

"Son of Adam, let not the greatest of your concerns be what happens to you today. For if it passes you by , it was not meant for you. Your concern should be now and on every day which comes to you, that God will provide you with provision for it. You should know that you will never acquire anything beyond your own sustenance, save as one who looks after things on behalf of others. (If) your share (of wealth) in this world is abundant, then soon your heir will take it over and together with him your account on the Day of Resurrection will be lengthy. So be happy with what you have and make provision for the day of your return (to God) which is ahead of you. The journey is long, the appointment is (on the day of) the Resurrection, the destiny is Heaven or the fire (of Hell)."

Another speech of his, peace be on him, similar to that, is well known among the religious scholars and has been preserved by men of understanding and wisdom.(7)

"People, this world has turned its back and made known its departure. The next world has drawn near and given notice of its appearance. Indeed today is (like) the day horses are prepared (for a race) and tomorrow is (like) the day of the race. The destiny of the winner is Paradise while the fate (of the loser) will be Hell-fire. You amid days of preparations for (men), behind whom the time of death is urging haste. Whoever dedicates his works to God, will not have his hopes destroyed. Whoever

allows the works (of the world) to delay him during the days of his preparations prior to the coming of the time of his death, his (worldly actions) will come to naught and his hopes will destroy him. Indeed act (righteously) with regard to both (what you) desire and (what you) fear. If your desire comes to you, thank God and add it to (what you) fear. If (what you fear) befalls you, then be mindful of God and add it to (what you) desire. God has permitted those who do good (to enjoy) goodness. To those who thank Him, He gives increase,(of blessings). There is no acquisition better than an acquisition for a day for which stores are stored, (a day) on which great sins are collected together and the intentions (of the heart) concerning them are tested. I have never seen one who aspires to Heaven asleep nor have I seen one who seeks to flee f r o m Hell-fire asleep. One who does not benefit f r o m certainty is harmed by doubt. The one who does not benefit f r o m the presence of his heart and sight (will attain) his (sad) end without them. You have been commanded to set out (to the next world) and have been guided with provisions (for the journey). There are two things which I most fear for you — the following of passion and the delay (of good actions) caused by hope. For following passion stops one f r o m (attaining) the truth and the delay (of good actions) caused by hope makes one forget about (the need for such actions for) the next world. Indeed the world has set out on a journey away (f r o m us) while the next world has set out on a journey towards (us). Both of them have children (who follow them). Therefore, if you can, be among the children of the next world and do not be among the children of this world. Today is (the day) for good actions without the account (to be settled). Tomorrow is (the day) for the account (to be settled) without (the opportunity for performing) good actions."

5- Nahj al-Balagha, III, no. 119, 489.

6- Nahj al-Balagha, I, no. 204, 321.

7- Cf. al-Jahiz, al-Bayan wa-al-Tabyin. II, 52-53. Elements f r o

m this speech are found in Nahj al-Balagha. I, no. 18, 71; no. 176, 110; and no. 41, 83.

Chapter 33

His Words about Companions, Ascetics and his Shi'a

Among the speeches which he, peace be on him, gave, mentioning the choice companions and ascetics, is that which Sa'sa'a b. Suhan al'Abdi reported: He said that one day the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, prayed the morning prayer with them. When he had said the final greeting (of the prayer) he turned his head toward the qibla (i.e. in the direction of Mecca) as he mentioned God. He did not turn to right or left until the sun's (shadow reached) the height of a spear on the wall of that mosque - meaning the Friday-mosque in Kufa. Then he, peace be on him, turned his head towards us and said:

"I knew upright men in the time of my bosom companion, the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, who used to spend this night alternating between prostration and kneeling. In the morning they would have dishevelled hair, be dusty, and between their eyes, there would be (a lump) like the knee of the goat (as a result of prostration). When they remembered death, they quivered like trees quiver in the wind. Then their eyes would shed tears until their clothes became wet."

Then he, peace be on him, arose and he was speaking as if the people had remained heedless (of his words).

(These are some of) his words, peace be on him, concerning his sincere Shi'a. The historians (naqalat al-athar) report that one evening he, peace be on him, left the mosque. It was a moon-lit

night. He headed towards the cemetery (jabbana). A group of men followed him, standing behind him. He stopped and said: "Who are you?"

"Commander of the faithful, we are your Shi'a," they replied.

He looked steadfastly at their faces and then said: "Why don't I see the mark of the Shi'a on you?"

"What is the mark of the Shi'a, Commander of the faithful?" they asked.

"Yellow faces through staying awake at night," he replied, "bleary eyes through weeping, hunched backs through standing (in prayer), hollow stomachs through fasting, dry lips through prayer, and there is the dust of those who show humility on them."(8)

8- For the last sentence, cf. Nahj al-Balagha, I, no. 12, 178.

Chapter 34

His Words concerning Death

Among his words, peace be on him, warning and mentioning death is (the speech) which has become well-known. From it (is the following):(9)

"Death is a greedy pursuer. As for the pursued, neither will the one who stays be able to weaken it, nor will the one who flees be able to escape it. Therefore go forward in to battle and do not shrink away since there is no escape from death. Even if you are not killed, you will die. By (God), in Whose hand is the life of 'Ali, a thousand sword blows on the head is easier than death in bed."

Concerning that are his words, peace be on him:(10)

"People, you have become targets so that the Fates are shooting arrows down on you. Your properties have been plundered by the blows (of Fortune). Whatever food you have eaten has stuck in your throat. Whatever drink you have drunk has choked you. I testify by God that you will not gain from this world any advantage which you can enjoy except by losing another which you were showing regard for.

"People, we have been created. Therefore be (eager) for eternity and not for transitory existence. For you will travel from one abode to another. So make provision for where you are going and where you will dwell for ever. Peace (be with you)."

9- Cf. Nahj al-Balagha, I, no. 123, 180

10- Cf. Nahj al-Balagha, I, no. 145, 202

Speeches Urging Men to Himself and his Family

(There are) among his speeches, peace be on him, those which urge men (to follow) him, give evidence of his own outstanding merit and of his being deprived of his right, and explain what oppression was committed against him, indicating it and drawing attention to it. (This is) what the Shi'a (khassa) and non-Shi'a ('amma) have reported. It is mentioned by Abu 'Ubayda Ma'mar b. al-Muthanna and others whom the opponents of the Shi'a cannot accuse of (partiality) in their report.(11) The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, said at the beginning of the address which he gave after the people's pledge of allegiance to his leadership (had been given) - that was after the murder of 'Uthman - (the following):

"The ruler should only pay attention to his own soul. (If he pays attention to others) he will be distracted from Heaven and Hell will be in front of him. One who earnestly strives will be saved. One who seeks has hope. One who is remiss will be in Hell-fire. These are three (kinds of person). There are two (more): an angel who flies with his wings and a prophet whom God has taken by his hand. There is no sixth (kind). The one who makes false claims will be destroyed. Those who rush heedlessly (in to bad actions) will be made to fall. The right-hand side and the left-hand side lead (men) astray. The middle road is a path on which there still remains the Book, the sunna and the reports (athar) of prophethood. Indeed God, the Exalted, has treated the community with two medicines ; the whip and the sword. There will be no hesitation by the Imam in applying them. Take cover in your houses and reconcile (the differences) which are between you. (There should be) repentance for what you have

done. Whoever makes himself appear (falsely) to support truth will be destroyed. You were in some affairs, (in which you were inclined against me, it was an inclination for which) you had no excuse in my eyes. As for me, if I had wanted to say (it), I would have said: May God forgive what has gone before. The two men (Abu Bakr and 'Umar) came first (in depriving me of my rights).

"Then the third stood like a crow, his concern for his stomach. Woe to him, if his wings have been clipped and his head cut off, it is better for him. Watch me. If you find something to denounce, denounce it. If you recognise it, then hasten (to carry it out). There is truth and falsehood. Each has its supporters. If the false becomes leader, then he will do as (was done) in the past. If truth becomes scarce, then perhaps for a short time it will recede but only to advance again. If your lives returned (to what they were before) you would be happy. I fear that you are now living in an intermediate period (without a prophet). I have only the ability to use reason (ijtihad) (to guide you). However, the pious of my family and the good ones of my offspring are the most forbearing of the people when they are young and the most knowledgeable of the people when they are older. We are the family of the House (ahl al-bayt), we know our knowledge from the knowledge of God. We judge according to the law of God, and we have taken (knowledge) from the words of the truthful one (i.e. the Prophet). If you follow our pronouncement, you will be guided by our clear vision. If you do not, God will destroy you at our hands. We have the standard of truth. Whoever follows it, will attain it. Whoever delays from it will be drowned. Indeed through us, the vengeance of every believer will be realised. Through us, the rope of humiliation will be removed from your necks. It is through us, not you, that God brings conquest. It is through us, not you, that He sets the seal (on life)."

Another extract from his speech, peace be on him, urging (men) to himself and his family, peace be on him, are his words:

"God singled out Muhammad for prophethood, and chose him

for the mission. He gave him information through inspiration. He set (him) among the people ; He set him (there). We, the family of the House (ahl al-bayt), have the strongholds of knowledge, the gates of decision and the illumination of authority. Whoever loves us, his faith will benefit him and his works will bring him close (to God). Whoever does not love us, his faith will not benefit him and his works will not bring him close to God, even though he should strive night and day in prayer and fasting."

In addition to that is what is reported by 'Abd al-Rahman b. Jundub on the authority of his father, Jundub b. 'Abd Allah. The latter said: I visited 'Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him, in Medina after the people had given the pledge of allegiance to 'Uthman. I found him with head lowered and sorrowful. I asked him: "What has come upon your people?"

"Beautiful endurance," he answered.

"Praise be to God!" I said. "By God, you are indeed enduring. Do what you said you would do among the people. Summon them to yourself and inform them that you are the closest and most appropriate of the people by virtue (of your relationship) with the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, by virtue of your outstanding merit (fadl) and your priority (in Islam). Ask them to help you against these men who have conspired against you. If ten out of a hundred answer you, you would be a powerful influence with the ten over the hundred. If they approached you, that would be as you would want. If they refused, you could fight them. If you are victorious, then the authority is God's, Who gave it to his Prophet, blessing and peace be on him, and you are more appropriate for it than them. If you are killed in seeking it, then you would be killed as a martyr and you would be more deserving of God's forgiveness and have more right to the inheritance of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family."

"Jundub," he said, "do you think that ten out of a hundred would pledge allegiance to me?"

"I would hope so," I replied.

"However," he retorted, "I do not expect two men from every hundred. I will tell you why. The people look to Quraysh. Quraysh says that the family of Muhammad think that they have merit over the rest of the people and that they are the masters (awliya) of the affair apart from (the rest of) Quraysh. (They say that) if they took charge of it, this authority would never leave them to go to anyone else. Since it is already with others, you should circulate it among yourselves. No, by God, Quraysh will never give this authority to us voluntarily."

"Won't you go back and tell the people what you have just said?" I asked him. "Then summon them to yourself."

"Jundub," he said, "this is not the time for that."

After that, I returned to Iraq. Whenever I used to mention any of his virtues, accomplishments and rights to the people, they would treat me roughly and drive me away until the matter of my words was brought before al-Walid b.'Uqba who was our governor at that time. He sent for me and imprisoned me until someone spoke to him about me and then he freed me.

Speeches about those who refrained from Pledging Allegiance to him and those who broke their Pledge.

Among the speeches which he, peace be on him, made when 'Abd Allah b.'Umar b. al-Khattab, Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas, Muhammad b. Maslama, Hassan b. Thabit and Usama b. Zayd withheld the pledge of allegiance from him is what al-Sha'bi reported:

When Sa'd and the others whom we have named withdrew from the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, and withheld their pledge of allegiance, he praised and glorified God. Then he said:(12)

"People, you have pledged allegiance to me in the same way as the pledge was made to those before me. Choice (khiyar) only belongs to people before they make their pledge of allegiance. When the pledge of allegiance is made, then they no longer have any choice. It is duty of the Imam to follow the right course and it is the duty of subjects to submit. However, this is a general pledge of allegiance. Whoever turns away from it turns away from the religion of Islam and does not follow the path of its people. Your pledge of allegiance to me was not a random matter (falta). My affair and your affair are not one. I want God to be (the ultimate end) for you and you want me in the interests of yourselves. I swear by God that I will give sincere advice to a rival and I will give justice to the oppressed. I have learnt matters about Sa'd, Ibn Maslama, Usama, 'Abd Allah and Hassan b. Thabit which I dislike. Truth (will be decided) between them and me."

(These are some of) his words, peace be upon him, when Talha and al-Zubayr reneged on their pledge of allegiance and set out for Mecca to meet A'isha to incite (people) against him and to make an alliance opposed to him. The religious scholars have preserved on his authority, peace be on him, that after he had praised and glorified God, he said:(13)

"God sent Muhammad, may God bless him and his family, to all the people. He made him a mercy for the worlds. He made manifest what he had been ordered to and spread the message of his Lord. The manifestation was carried out through him and that which was split was united in him. Roads were made safe through him and (the shedding of) blood was brought to an end by him. By him reconciliation was brought about between men with feuds and hostility, with hatred in their breasts and malice rooted in their hearts. Then God took him to Himself, as a man to be praised who had not fallen short in the object for which he performed his mission. He had not achieved anything which fell short of his intention. After him there occurred the strife which there was over the leadership. Abu Bakr took control. Then after him (came) 'Umar. Then 'Uthman took control. When there happened with regard to his affair what you already know, you came to me and said: ' We will pledge

allegiance to you.' I said: 'I will not do it.' You said: 'Yes.' I said: 'No.' Then you seized my hand and stretched (yours) out towards it. I tried to withdraw it from you but you tugged at it and you pressed upon me like thirsty camels at the watering pools on a day when they are brought to them, so that I thought that you would kill me and that you would kill each other on my account. Therefore I stretched out my hand and you pledged allegiance to me of your own accord. The first of you to pledge allegiance to me were Talha and al-Zubayr; they were acting voluntarily without any compulsion. It was not much later that they asked me to allow them to make the 'umra (lesser pilgrimage). God knows that they already intended treachery. I made them renew their covenant of obedience to me and (promise) that they would not harm the community with evil deeds. They gave their covenants to me. However, they did not fulfill their promises to me, they reneged on their pledge of allegiance to me and they broke their covenant to me. How surprising it is that they submitted to Abu Bakr and 'Umar yet showed hostility to me. But I am not inferior to either of those two men. If I wanted to, I would say: O God, judge them both for what they have done against my rights and how they have attempted to diminish my authority. Give me victory over them."

Elsewhere, he, peace be on him, spoke in a similar manner, (when) he said, after praising and glorifying God:

"When God, the Exalted, took His Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, we said: We are the family of his House, his group, his inheritors and his close friends and next of kin (awliya), the creatures with most right with regard to him. There is no dispute about his right and authority. While we were in this position, the hypocrites rushed forward and took the authority of our Prophet by force away from us, and gave it to someone else. By God, at that, our eyes all wept and our hearts (grieved). Because of it our breasts became worn (with sorrow) and our souls were afflicted with grief. I was humiliated. But I swear by God that if it had not been for my fear of division among the Muslims and that most of them would return to unbelief and that religion would have been placed in jeopardy, we

would have changed that as far as we could. But now you have pledged allegiance to me and those two men, Talha and al-Zubayr, have pledged allegiance to me. Both you and they (have acted) spontaneously and according to (your own) choice. Yet both of them have arisen, heading for Basra to cause division in your unity (jama'a) and to thrust misfortune in to your midst. O God, seize them for the way they have deceived this community and for their evil attitude towards the general populace."

Then he said (to the people): "May God have mercy on you, hurry to seek out these two treacherous sinful perjurers before the opportunity of (preventing) the realisation of their criminal activities escapes."

When he was informed of the journey of A'isha, Talha and al-Zubayr from Mecca to Basra, he praised and glorified God. Then he said:

"A'isha, Talha and al-Zubayr have set out. Each one of the two (men) makes claims for the caliphate separately from his colleague. Talha only claims the caliphate because he is the paternal cousin of A'isha and al-Zubayr only claims it because he is the brother-in-law of her father. By God, if the two are successful in what they intend, then al-Zubayr will execute Talha or Talha will execute al-Zubayr, this one disputing the (right to) kingship of the other. By God, I know that she is one who rides a camel. She will not stop at any pasturage; she will not go along any mountain path, and she will not be able to stop anywhere except in rebellion against God until her soul and (that of) those with her comes to its final end. A third (of those with her) will be killed, a third will flee, and a third will come back. Talha and al-Zubayr know that they are wrong. They are not ignorant. How often does the ignorance of one who knows kill him and the knowledge that he has does not benefit him? By God, the dogs of al-Haw'ab(14) bark at her but does one who reflects interpret and one who ponders ponder? The sinful party has established itself. Where are the good?"

When the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, headed

for Basra, he stopped at al-Rabadha. The last (of the returning) pilgrims met him there. They gathered together to listen to some words from him, while he was still in his tent.

Ibn 'Abbas, may God be pleased with him, reported:(15)

I went to him and found him stitching a sandal. I said to him: "We have a great need (to know) what you will do in order to put right our affairs."

He did not speak to me until he had finished his sandal. He put it next to the other one and then he asked me: "(How much do you) value them?"

"They have no value," I answered.

"More than that," he retorted.

"A fraction of a dirham," I suggested.

He said: "By God, they are more lovable to me than these affairs of yours but for the fact that I must establish (what is) true and ward off (what is) false."

"The pilgrims have gathered together to listen to some of your words," I said. "Would you permit me to address them? If (my words) are good, they will be yours. If they are not, then they will be mine."

"No, I will speak," he answered, and he put his hands on my breast. The palms were rough and hard and it hurt me.

He got up. I seized hold of his clothes and said: "I commend God and kinship to you."

"You should not (bother to) commend them to me," he replied and went out.

They gathered around him. He praised and glorified God. Then he said:

"God sent Muhammad, may God bless him and his family, while there was no one among the Arabs who recited an (Arabic) scripture nor claimed prophethood. He drove the people towards their salvation. By God, I am still driving them towards it. I have not changed, I have altered nothing, I have betrayed nothing until the whole of it has passed away. What is between me and the Quraysh? By God, I fought against them when they were unbelievers and I will fight against them when they bring sedition. This journey of mine (is made) on account of a covenant (made by the Prophet) to me. By God, I will split open the false so that the truth may come out of its sides. Quraysh will not take vengeance on me, for God has chosen us to be over them, and we will bring them under our control."

Then he recited:

By my life, you continued your drinking of pure milk and your eating of dry dates with yoghurt.

Yet we bestowed on you the highest rank even though you are not enough (for it). Around you, we give protection in the shield and spear.

When he stopped at Dhu Qar, he took the pledge of allegiance from those who were present. After that he addressed them. He was profuse in his praise and glorification of God and in calling for blessings on the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family. Then he said:

"Affairs which we have (resolutely) endured have taken place earlier; (it was as if) there was a mote in our eyes in surrendering to the authority of God, the Exalted, in matters by which he tested us. There is reward for that, for endurance of them was better than causing division among the Muslims and shedding their blood. We are the family of the House of Prophethood and the offspring of the Apostle, the creatures with the most right to the authority of the (prophetic) mission. (We are) the source of favour by which God initiated this community. This Talha and al-Zubayr are not from the family of prophethood nor from

the offspring of the Apostle. When they saw that God had restored our right to us after some time, they could not wait for one year, nor even one full month before they launched an attack, following in the footsteps of those before them, so that they might take away my rights and separate the unity (jama'a) of the Muslims from me."

Then he made a prayer against them.

[Abd al-Hamid b. 'Imran al-'Ijli reported on the authority of Salama b. Kuhayl, who said:] When the people of Kufa met the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, at Dhu Qar, they welcomed him and said: "Praise be to God, who has singled us out for (the honour of) granting you neighbourly protection and has honoured us by (enabling us to) support you."

Then the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, stood up among them to address them. He praised and glorified God and said:

"People of Kufa, you are the noblest of the Muslims, the most purposeful of them in following the correct course, the most upright of them in practice, the best of them in (your) participation in Islam, and the best among the Arabs in composition and origin. You are the fiercest of the Arabs in your love for the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, and the members of his House. I only came to you out of my trust in you after God because of the fact that you will give your lives against Talha and al-Zubayr's renunciation (of their fealty to me), opposition to giving obedience to me, setting out with A'isha to create discord and taking her from her house until they had brought her to Basra. The common and confused people there were seduced. However I have been informed that men of merit and the choice men in religion among them had kept aloof and have shown their dislike for what Talha and al-Zubayr have done."

He, peace be on him, fell silent and the Kufans declared: "We are your supporters and helpers against your enemy. If you summon us to weaken their (hold) over the people, we would

consider that good and we would hope (to do) it."

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, called to them and praised them. Then he said:

"You know, Muslims, that Talha and al-Zubayr gave their pledge of allegiance to me, willingly, without compulsion and of their own accord. Then they asked permission from me to go on the lesser pilgrimage ('umra). I gave permission to them. However, they went to Basra and killed Muslims and committed forbidden actions. O God, they have cut themselves off from me, they have oppressed me and have broken their pledge of allegiance to me, they have gathered the people against me. Therefore, loose what they have bound, do not give (favourable) judgement on anything which they have done well and show them the evil (which will result) from their actions."

Among his speeches, peace be on him, is (the speech he made) when he left Dhu Qar setting out for Basra. After praising and glorifying God and calling for blessings on the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, (he said:)(16)

"God, the Exalted, has imposed the duty of struggling (on his behalf) (Jihad). He magnified it and He has made it a means of helping Him. By God, neither the world nor religion will be properly maintained without it.

"Satan has gathered his party and has assembled his cavalry. He has brought doubt and deception in to that when matters had been clear and restored.

"By God, they have not blamed me correctly, nor have they done justice between me and themselves. They are demanding (restitution of) a right which they themselves abandoned, and (vengeance for) blood which they themselves shed. Even if I had been in partnership with them in it, they would have had a share in it. But if they have perpetrated it without me, the consequences of it are only theirs. Their greatest argument against me is against themselves. I have my clear vision which has not confused me.

"Indeed it is a wicked group in which there is kin and a scorpion's sting whose vehemence lasts for a long time and the fever from it is possible. They are being suckled by a mother who is already dry. They revive a pledge of allegiance (i.e. to 'Uthman) which had already been forsaken by them in order that straying from truth might be restored to the place it (formerly) had. I am not to blame for what was done. I am innocent of (the crime) which was perpetrated.

"How disappointing is such a man to call on you! Who does he call? If he was asked: To whom is your call addressed and to whom do you answer? Who is your Imam and what is the practice (you call for), since falsehood has been removed from its place, his tongue would be silenced about what it had said.

"By God, I shall make a tank overflow for them, from which I alone will draw. They will not be able to go away from it nor will they every be able to drink from it.

"I am content with God's proof against them and His blaming them, since I call to them and ask them to apologise. If they repent and accept (my call), then forgiveness will be given and the right course will have been accepted. There should be no ingratitude to God. If they refuse, I will let them have the edge of the sword. There is sufficiency in it as a healer of a false man and a helper of a believer."

11- Al-Jahiz, al-Bayan wa-al-Tabyin, II, 50-2.

12- Most of this speech is included in Nahj al-Balagha, I, no. 136, 194.

13- Elements of this speech are in Nahj al-Balagha, I, no. 231, 353 and no. 54, 90.

14- There is a tradition that the Prophet warned 'Aisha that when she heard these dogs barking she would know that she

was doing wrong.

15- Cf. Nahj al-Balagha, I, no. 33, 76.

16- Elements of this speech are in Nahj al-Balagha, I, no. 10, 53, and no. 22, 63.

Chapter 36

His Words before and after the Battle of the Camel

(This is) from his speech, peace be on him, when he entered Basra and gathered his followers, to urge them to the struggle. Among the things he said, was:

"Servants of God, arise against these people, exposing your breasts to battle against them. They have reneged on their pledge of allegiance to me. They have expelled Ibn Hunayf, my governor, after grievous blows and violent punishment. They have killed al-Sababija and retaliated against Hakim b. Jabala al-'Abdi.

They have killed righteous men and pursued those who escaped to capture them behind every wall and under every hillock. They brought them and executed them in chains. What is their purpose? May God fight them. Indeed they are liars.

"Arise against them and be fierce against them. Hurl yourself against them with endurance and with fore-thought, for you know that you are attacking and fighting them after you have disposed yourselves (to give) the most piercing thrust and the most severe blow and a contest of equals. Any individual among you who feels strong hearted at the (coming) engagement and sees any of his brothers failing should defend his brother who is a benefit to him just as he would defend himself. If God wishes, he would do the same for him.

(This is an extract) from his speech, peace be on him, when Talha had been killed and the Basrans scattered."(17)

"Through us you were raised to nobility. Through us you broke in to a new dawn of light out of darkness like the darkness of a moonless night. Through us you were guided amid darkness. Ears which do not comprehend the severe warning (given them) have become deaf. How does one who is deaf to the loud cries (of God) hear a weaker call (of myself)? The heart which palpitation (out of fear of God) never leaves is strengthened. I have always expected the consequences of treachery from you and I have perceived in you the quality of the deceitful. The garments of religion have concealed me from you but the true nature of my purpose revealed you to me. I established the right way for you where you might recognize it. Yet without a guide, you were digging (aimlessly for the water of truth) and did not find such water.

"Today I am making things unknown to you speak out to you with clarity. The understanding of a man who has kept apart from me, has deserted him. I have never doubted in the truth from the time it was shown to me. The sons of Jacob were provided with the greatest evidence (for the truth) until they disobeyed their father and sold their brother (in to slavery). Their repentance came after their confession of guilt, and through seeking the forgiveness of their father and their brother they were forgiven."

Some of his words, peace be on him, spoken on his walking around the corpses (after the Battle of the Camel):

"Here are (members of) Quraysh who have cut off my kinship with them (literally, my nose). Yet my life has been restored. I had come forward to you warning you against seizing hold of the sword but you were like young men: You did not have any (real) knowledge of what you were seeing. However, it was destruction and an evil end. I seek refuge with God from an evil end."

He passed Mu'id b. al-Miqdad and said: "May God have mercy on the father of this man. If he had been alive, his judgement would have been better than this man's."

"Praise be to God Who brought him down and made his side the inferior one," said 'Ammar b. Yasir. "Indeed, by God, Commander of the faithful, we do not esteem those who obstinately resist the truth, whether father or son."

"May God have mercy on you and reward you well for your (adhering to the) truth," replied the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him.

He passed 'Abd Allah b. Rabi'a b. Darraj who was among the slain. He said: "This hopeless man, what brought him out (in revolution)? Was it religion or support for 'Uthman which brought him out (in revolution)? By God, 'Uthman had an unfavourable opinion of him and his father."

Then he passed Mu'id b. Zuhayr b. Umayya and said: "If the sedition had been at the top of the Pleiades, this young man would have grasped at it. By God, he was not there with a (brave) shout. The one who met him told me that he screamed with fear of the sword."

Then he passed Muslim b. Quraza and said: "Piety brought this man out (in revolution). Yet by God he asked me to ask 'Uthman about something which he used to claim (as his) before in Mecca. 'Uthman gave it to him and said to me: 'If it had not been for you, I would not have given it to him.' Indeed this is what I knew. How sad for the brother of the clan. Then came the time for destruction as a result of helping 'Uthman."

He went by 'Abd Allah b. Hamid b. Zuhayr and he said: "This is also one of those who went in to battle against us with the claim that he was seeking God by that. Yet he had written letters to me in which he made accusations against 'Uthman. Then he gave him something and he was satisfied with that."

He went beside 'Abd Allah b. Hakim b. Hizam and said: "This man opposed his father in coming out in revolution even when his father would not help us. For the latter remained loyal in his pledge of allegiance to us even though he had held back

(from helping us) and remained at home when he had doubts about the battle. The man who held back from us and the others today is not as blameworthy as he who fought against us is blameworthy."

Then he passed 'Abd Allah b. al-Mughira b. al-Akhnas and he said: "This man's father was killed on the day 'Uthman was killed in his house. He came out in revolt enraged at the killing of his father. He is a young man and he became afraid because of his being killed."

Then he came to 'Abd Allah b. Abi 'Uthman b. al-Akhnas b. Shariq and said: "As for this man, it is just as if I was looking at him. The people had seized their swords as he fled running from the ranks. I turned away from him but he did not listen to the man who called to him until he killed him. This is one of the things which were hidden to the young inexperienced men of Quraysh. They had no knowledge of war. They were deceived and led in to error. When they stopped, they were struck down and killed."

He walked on a little way and came to Ka'b b. Sur. He said: "This is a man who came out against us with the Qur'an (moshaf) around his neck, claiming that he was a supporter of the community and urging the people to what was in (the Qur'an) without himself knowing what was in it. Then he opened the Qur'an for a decision at: 'Every obstinate tyrant is disappointed' (XIV 15) (which he understood) as meaning God had called (him) to kill me. However, God killed him. Make Ka'b b. Sur sit." So he was put in a sitting position.

Then the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, said: "Ka'b, you have now discovered what my Lord truly promised me. Have you found what your Lord truly promised you?" Then he said, "Lay Ka'b to rest."

He came upon Talha b.'Ubayd Allah and he said: "This is the man who broke the pledge of allegiance to me, the man who produced discord in the community, the man who gathered the people against me, the man who urged them to kill me and kill

my offspring. Make Talha b. 'Ubayd Allah sit." So he was put in a sitting position. Then the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, said to him: "Talha, you have discovered what my Lord truly promised me. Have you discovered what my Lord truly promised you?" Then he said, "Lay Talha to rest." . He went on and one of those who was with him said to him: "Commander of the faithful, were you speaking to Ka'b and Talha after they had been killed?"

"By God, he replied, "they heard my words just as the people of Qulayb heard the words of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, on the day of the Battle of Badr."

(This is some of) his speech at Basra after the defeat of the enemy. After praising and glorifying God, he said:

"God is One Who possesses extensive mercy, eternal forgiveness and abundant pardon, (as He possesses) dread punishment. He dispenses His mercy and forgiveness to those of His creatures who obey Him and by His mercy those who are rightly guided are guided. He dispenses His vengeance, His severity and His punishment on those of His creatures who are disobedient. After guidance and clear explanations, those who have gone astray should not go astray. What is your view, people of Basra? You have reneged on your pledge of allegiance; you have publicly declared yourselves enemies against me."

A man stood up before him and said: "We think better now, for we see you have conquered and are powerful. If you punish us, that (would be because) we have committed a crime. If you forgive us, then forgiveness is more lovable to God, the Exalted."

He said: "I forgive you but beware of sedition. You are the first subjects to have broken the pledge of allegiance and spread sedition in this community."

Then he sat down before the people and they pledged allegiance to him.

He, peace be on him, wrote about the victory to the Kufans:

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate,

From the servant of God 'Ali b. Abi Talib, Commander of the faithful.

To the people of Kufa.

Greetings, I commend to you the praise of God, other than Whom there is no god. God is a just arbitrator who does not change what is in people until they change what is in themselves. If God wants evil for a people, there is no escape from it and they do not have a friend other than Him. I will tell you about ourselves and about those whom we went against -(that is) groups of the Basrans and the men of Quraysh and others who mixed with them in support of Talha and al-Zubayr —and about their breaking of the agreement made with their oaths. I left Medina when news came to me about the men who had set off for (Basra), and about their gathering there and what they had done to my governor 'Uthman b. Hunayf. (I went on) until I came to Dhaqan. There I sent al-Hasan b. 'Ali, 'Ammar b. Yasir and Qays b. Sa'd (to you) and I summoned you to (support) the right of God and His Apostle, may God bless him and his family, and my right. Your brothers soon set out to come to me. I went with them until we reached the outskirts (zahr) of Basra. I sought to excuse them through summoning them, and I presented them with proof. I (endeavoured to) diminish the stumbling and slipping caused by the apostates among Quraysh and others. I summoned them to repent from breaking their pledge of allegiance to me and the covenant which they had made to God. They refused (everything) except to fight against me and to fight against those with me, and to persist in their quarrelsome error. I rose against them in battle. God killed those of them who were killed as perjurers and He drove back those who withdrew to their town. Talha and al—Zubayr were killed as a result of their perjury and rebellion. The woman (i.e.'Aisha) was worse for them than the she-camel of Thamud.

They deserted and turned their backs (in flight). They were cut off from all means of protection. When they saw what had happened to them, they asked me to forgive them. I accepted that from them and sheathed the sword from them. I carried out (the requirements of) truth and the sunna among them and appointed 'Abd Allah b. al-'Abbas as governor of Basra. Now I am coming to Kufa, God, the Exalted, willing. I have sent Zahar b. Qays al-Ju'fi to you so that you can ask him and he will tell you about us and them. Truth has brought them back to us and God has been restored to them while they were reluctant. Greetings and the mercy and blessings of God.

Among the words he, peace be upon him, spoke when he came to Kufa from Basra (are the following):

"Praise be to God Who has aided His friend (wali), deserted His enemy, Who has given power to the truthful who was entitled and has brought low the false liar. People of the city, it is your duty to show respect to God and obedience to those of the family of Your Prophet to whom God has enjoined obedience. They are more appropriate (awla) to be obeyed than those who make false claims saying, 'Come) to us. (Come) to us.' Such men were pretending to have our merit and were striving against our authority and sought to divest us of our right and keep it away (from us). They have tasted evil misfortune for what they dared (to do) and they will discover the error. (There are) among you men who have desisted from supporting us. I blame them. Desert them and make them hear (words) which they will dislike until they admit their bad behaviour towards us. Then we will see in such men things which we will like."

17- Nahj al-Balagha, I, no. 4, 51.

Chapter 37

His Words about the Campaign against Mu'awiya and the Battle of Siffin

Among the speeches which he, peace be on him, made when he undertook to set out for Syria to fight Mu'awiya b. Abi Sufyan (is the following):

After praising and glorifying God and calling for blessings on the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, (he said):

"Servants of God, fear God and obey Him and your Imam. Righteous subjects are saved by the just Imam. But sinful subjects are destroyed by the sinful Imam. Mu'awiya has begun to usurp the right which belongs to me, and to break the pledge of allegiance to me, seeking to harm the religion of God, the Mighty and High. Muslims, you know what the people did before when you came to me seeking for me to be in authority over you, so that you took me out of my house to pledge allegiance to me. I was reluctant with you in order to test your integrity. Then you repeated your words many times and I repeated (my reluctance) with you. You crowded upon me like thirsty camels at their pools of water in your anxiety to pledge allegiance to me so that I was afraid that some of you would kill others. When I beheld this from you, I considered my position and your position. I said: If I do not agree to their request, to undertake authority over them, they will not find anyone among them to take my place and act with my (degree of) justice among them. So I said: By God, that I should rule them while they acknowledge my right and my merit is preferable to me than that they should rule me without acknowledging my right and my merit. Therefore I stretched out my hand to you

and you pledged allegiance to me.

"O Muslims, among you are Emigrants and Ansar and those who follow good practice. I have received f r o m you the covenant of your pledge of allegiance and I respond with my agreement through a covenant and agreement (mithaq) made before God. It was stronger than covenants and agreements made to prophets; (you pledged) that you would support me, listen to my command, obey me, and consult me, that you would fight with me against every tyrant, aggressor or one who deviated, if he deviated. You all gave me that (pledge). I demanded f r o m you all the covenant and promise made before God and (under) the protection of God and His Apostle and you responded to me by (giving me) that. I made God the witness to your (words) and I made some of you witnesses to others. Then I applied the Book of God and the sunna of His Prophet, may God bless him and his family, among you. Then surprisingly Mu'awiya b. Abi Sufyan disputes the succession (khilafa)with me and denies me the (right to) the Imamate. He claims that he has more right to it than me, an act of boldness against God and His Apostle concerning something which he has no right to and no argument for. None of the Emigrants have pledged allegiance to him for it, nor have the Ansar and Muslims submitted to him.

"O men of the Emigrants and Ansar, people who hear my words, have you made obedience to me something required of yourselves, whether you have pledged allegiance to me as subjects, or I have received a promise f r o m you to accept my words. On that day your pledge to me was more certain than the pledge to Abu Bakr and 'Umar. Therefore why did those who have opposed me not revoke (their pledge) to those two until they had departed, while they have revoked (their pledge to me) and have not carried out the instructions which I was entitled to expect them (to obey) and they have not kept to my commands? Do you now know that the pledge of allegiance to me is required of those of you who are present and those of you who are absent? Who do Mu'awiya and his followers find fault with in the pledge of allegiance to me and why do they not fulfil it since my close relationship (to the Prophet), my

priority (as a Muslim), and my being son-in-law (of the Prophet) makes me more entitled to authority than those who came before me. Have you not heard the words of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, at Ghadir concerning my authority (wilaya) and my being the one entitled to rule (mawla)?

"Muslims, fear God and rise to battle against Mu'awiya, the one who has broken his pledge and the unjust man, and (rise) against his unjust followers. Listen to what I recite to you from the Book of God which was sent down to His Prophet, the man He sent (to you), so that you may understand. By God it is a warning to you, so take advantage of God's warning and hold back from disobedience to God. God warned you through (His warning to others) when He said to His Prophet, may God bless him and his family: Have' you not considered the leaders of the Banu Isra'il after Moses when they said to one of their prophets: Send us a king so that we may fight on the path of God. He replied: Perhaps if fighting was ordained for you, you would not fight. They answered We have no other (idea) than to fight on the path of God and we have been brought out of our houses and our villages. When fighting was ordained for them, they turned their backs except a few of them. God is aware of wrong-doers. Their prophet said to them: God has sent Talut to you as a king. They asked: Shall he have (the right of) kingship over us when we are more entitled to kingship than he is? He has not brought any extent of wealth. He said: God has chosen him to be over you and has increased him extensively in knowledge and substance. God gives His kingship to whomsoever He wishes. God is all-embracing, knowing (II 246-7).

"People, in these verses is an example so that you may learn that God has given the succession (khilafa) and the command after prophets to their progeny. He favoured Talut and brought him forward over the people (jama'a) by His choice of him and by increasing him in abundance of knowledge and substance. Do you think that God has chosen the Banu Umayya over the Banu Hashim and has increased Mu'awiya extensively in knowledge and substance? Therefore, servants of God, fear God and strive on His path before His anger takes hold of you for your

disobedience. God said: May those of the Banu Isra'il be cursed by the tongue of David and Jesus, son of Mary, because they have disobeyed and transgressed. They forbade them f r o m doing evil. Yet they did it. How evil was what they were doing! Only the believers who believe in God and His Apostle and then have not doubted and have striven with their wealth and their lives on the path of God, only they are the truthful ones (V 77-79). O you who believe, shall I show you a trade which will grant you escape f r o m dread punishment. You should believe in God and His Apostle and you should strive with your property and your lives on the path of God. That is better for you if you would (only) realise it. That will bring forgiveness of your sins and cause you to enter gardens beneath which flow rivers and in the gardens of Eden are beautiful houses. That is the great triumph. (LXI 10-12).

"Servants of God, fear God and rise to fight on behalf of your Imam. If I had a group of you only the number of the men (who fought) at Badr, when I ordered them, they would obey me. When I urged them to rise, they would rise with me so that with them I could dispense with many of you and hurry to rise in battle against Mu'awiya and his followers. For it is a required battle."

Among his speeches, peace be on him, (which he delivered) when he heard about Mu'awiya and the Syrians and the harmful words they were saying, (is the following):

"Praise be to God, the Eternal yet the New. However the sinful men have become my enemy, God becomes their enemy. Are you not amazed that this is a great matter. Indeed sinners, not satisfied and turning aside f r o m Islam and its followers, have deceived some of this community and have filled their hearts with the love of discord. They have inclined their passions towards lying and slander. They have prepared for war against us and have embarked on putting out the light of God. Yet God is the one who terminates His light even though the unbelievers may dislike it. O God, they have rejected the truth, so

scatter their army, break up their words and destroy them for their sins. May him whom I have befriended not be humiliated and may him whom I fight against not be made strong."

From his words, peace be on him, urging battle at Siffin, (are those when he said) after praising and glorifying God:

"Servants of God, fear God, lower your glances and your voices, be sparing in your words, make yourselves ready for battle, dispute and combat, and to pave the way and make the place ready, to be friendly and to be generous. Be strong and mention God much. Perhaps you will be successful. Obey God and His Apostle. Do not dispute with one another, for then you will fail and lose your spirit. Be steadfast. Indeed God is with those who are steadfast. O God, inspire them with steadfastness, grant them victory and make the reward for them great."

Another of his speeches, peace be on him, in the same sense (is the following):

"Muslims, God has shown you a trade by which He will grant you an escape from dread punishment and which will bring you great good. It is faith in God and His Apostle and striving on His path. He has made the reward for it forgiveness of sin and beautiful (houris) in the gardens of Eden. Therefore I told you that He loves those who fight on His path in ranks like a tightly-packed building. Therefore bring forward the man clad in armour and keep back the one who loses (his spirit), bite hard on the teeth. This makes swords stronger (to shield) against the head. Twist the edges of lances; this is a matter for the points of spears. Lower your glances; it is a firmer bond of the brave and surer for (men's) hearts. Deaden your voices; for that is the pursuit of failure and (quiet) is more appropriate for dignity. As for your standard, do not incline it and do not desert it. Only put it in the hands of the brave among you. Those who defend honour and are steadfast at the revelation of truth are the defenders who are right in their opinions and make them public. May God have mercy on any man of you who comforts his brother with his own life and does not leave his opponent with his brother so that his own opponent and his

brother's opponent gather against (his brother). For by that he will acquire blame and inferiority will come upon him. Do not expose yourselves to the loathing of God and do not flee f r o m death. God, may He be exalted, says:" Say: Flight will never benefit you. If you flee f r o m death or being killed, then you will only enjoy it for a little "(XXX 16).

"I swear by God that if you flee f r o m the sword which is at hand, you will not be safe f r o m the sword of the next world. Therefore seek help in steadfastness, prayers, truthfulness of intention. For God, the Exalted, will grant victory after steadfastness (is shown)."

Among his words, peace be on him, (are those) when he passed the standard of the Syrians and the followers of it did not withdraw f r o m the positions (but remained) steadfast to fight the Commander of the faithful. He said to his followers:

"These men will never withdraw f r o m their positions without a successful attack by which life will be taken (f r o m them) and a blow which will split their heads, chop down their bones and cut off their wrists and hands. (They will not do it) until their brows are beaten down by iron rods and (the blood f r o m) their brows is scattered over chests and their chins. Where are the people of victory? Where are those who seek reward?"

Immediately a group of Muslims rose against them and defeated them.

Among his words, peace be on him, in the same sense (are the following):

"These people have not been acting for truth nor have they responded to the words of an equal, until the vanguard attacks, followed by the front line ('asakir), until phalanxes are hurled against them, followed by the reserves (jala'ib), until army after army drives through their land, until the cavalry remains in areas of their land with its reins over their river beds and lands, until raids will be made in every direction and their standards will shake in their hands. A true people will come

against them. Their steadfastness will only increase the destruction of those of their killed and dead who will be destroyed in the path of God (by those) renewing obedience to God and anxious to meet God. By God, we were with the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, when our fathers, our sons, our brothers and our uncles fought together. That has only served to increase us in faith, submission and endurance in face of the tribulations of suffering and (to increase us) in bravery to fight against the enemy and to scorn fighting anyone except equals. One of our men and one of our enemies will assault each other ferociously and contend with each other to take each other's life. Which one of the two will make his opponent drink the cup of death? At one time it could be for us (to do it) to our enemy, at another for our enemy (to do it) to us. Yet when God beholds our endurance and our faith, He will send down the decrees against the enemy and He will send down victory to us. However, by my life, if we were to give an example like the one you have just given, neither would religion be sustained nor Islam strengthened. I swear by God, that you will lose fresh blood (as a result of your inactivity). So remember what I say."

Chapter 38

His Words about the Truce and the Revolt of the Kharijites

Among his words, peace be on him, when his followers had returned from the battle at Siffin after Mu'awiya had deceived them by raising copies of the Qur'an and thus they withdrew from the fight (is the following):

"You have committed an action which has pulled down the power from Islam, reduced its strength and bequeathed (it) weakness and humiliation. When you were successful and your enemy was afraid of being destroyed, for the fighting was crushing them and they felt the pain of wounds, they raised copies of the Qur'an and called you to (accept) something which was only so that they might turn you away from themselves and bring to an end the battle between you and them and that they might cause the suspicion of death to lay in wait for you. It was deception, trickery. What have you done? You have agreed to what they wanted and have given it to men who only asked for it out of deception. I swear by God, I do not consider you have any guidance after (failing to obey) my views nor any resolution (after failing to follow) my purpose."

Among his words, peace be on him, (spoken) after the writing of the document for a truce and arbitration and the dispute about it among the Iraqis (are those when) he said:

"By God, I did not consent (to do this) and I did not want you to consent. However you refused everything except giving consent. So I consented. Since I have consented, it is not proper to withdraw after giving consent and to change after acceptance. Indeed we would rebel against God by breaking the covenant

and by transgressing its text through abrogating its agreement. Therefore fight against whoever abandons the command of God. As for what you have mentioned about al-Ashtar having abandoned my command to put his signature to the document and being opposed to it, he is not such a man and I have no fear of him doing that. I wish there were two men like him among you. Indeed I wish there was a single man like him among you, who could see in your enemy what he sees. Then your burden would be lightened for me. I hope that he will straighten some of your crookedness for me. I forbade you (from doing) what you did and you disobeyed me. Myself and you are as the man of Hawazin described:

Am I anything with regard to Ghuzzaya?

If she is mistaken, I am mistaken. If Ghuzzaya are right, I am right."

(The following is) among his speeches to the Kharijites when he returned to Kufa. He was on the outskirts (of Kufa) before entering it. After praising and glorifying God and calling for blessings on Muhammad, His Apostle, may God bless him and his family, he said:

"O God, this is a position where whoever succeeds in it, will be more entitled to succeed on the Day of Resurrection and whoever is wrong and commits a crime in it will be blind and lose the path in the next world. I commend God to you. You know that when they raised the copies of the Qur'an, you said: We will answer their call to the Book of God. I told you then: I know these people better than you. They are not followers of religion nor of the Qur'an. I have been with them and I have known them as children and as men. They were evil children and they are evil men who seek to exploit your right and your belief. The people have only raised these copies of the Qur'an before you as a deception, as a sign of weakness and as a trick. You rejected my opinion and said: No, rather you accept (this call) from them. I told you: Remember my words to you and your disobedience of me. Then when you refused everything except to make a truce (kitab). I made the condition on the two

arbitrators that they should allow to revive whatever the Qur'an revives and make obsolete whatever the Qur'an makes obsolete. None of us can oppose the judgement of anyone who judges according to what is in the Book. However if (the two arbitrators) rejected that, then we would be exempt from their judgement."

One of the Kharijites said: "Tell us, do you regard the arbitration of men concerning blood (which has been shed) as just?"

"We do not judge men," he, peace be on him, answered. "The Qur'an judges us. This Qur'an is only lines of writings between two covers. It does not speak. It is only men who speak it."

Then (the Kharijite) said to him: "Tell us about the time-limit you made in what is between you and them"

He answered: "Let the ignorant learn and let the one who knows be confirmed (in his knowledge). Perhaps God will set right the community during this armistice. Go in to your city, may God have mercy on you."

They departed to the last man.

Chapter 39

His Words concerning the Syrian Raids after the Truce

(The following is) among the words which he spoke, peace be on him, when Mu'awiya broke the covenant and sent al-Dahhak b. Qays on a raid against the Iraqis. 'Amr b. 'Abs b. Mas'ud had met him and al-Dahhak had killed him and some of his men. After praising and glorifying God, he said:

"People of Kufa, go out to a good man, to your army. Part of it has been struck down. Therefore go out and fight your enemy. Protect your women if you are men who act."

[The narrator reported:]

They rejected him weakly and he perceived weakness and failure in them. Then he said: "By God, I wish I had one man of them for every eight of you. Woe upon you, go out with me. Then withdraw from me, if it seems good to you. By God, I am not unwilling to meet my Lord as a result of my resolution and perception. In that I would have a spirit which is great and a release from your (malicious) whispering, your ill-treatment and your deceit which is like the deceit of wilful brides and nagging women; whenever they sew one side, they tear the other for their husbands."

(Here is) another of his speeches, peace be on him, summoning the people and finding them slow to go to war. (When) he learnt that Busr b. Arta'a had gone to Yemen, (he said)

"People, the beginning of your unseemly talk and your refusal was the loss of the men of influence and authority (ra'y) among

you. These were men who would meet and speak the truth; they would discuss and follow the just course; they would ask and they would answer. By God, I have summoned a second time and a first, secretly and aloud, at night and by day, in the morning and in the afternoon. Yet my call to you does nothing except increase your flight and (your turning) your backs. Does not warning and a call to guidance bring you benefit?

"Indeed I am one who knows what is of advantage to you and what will straighten your crookedness for me. Yet, by God, I will bring you no (worldly) advantage by the corruption of my soul. Grant me a respite. By God, it is as if you are with a man (i.e. Mu'awiya) who has come to you, forbidding you and punishing you. Then God will punish him just as He will punish you. Indeed (his actions) are the humiliation of the Muslims and the destruction of religion. Indeed the sons of Abu Sufyan summon (men) to wicked vices and (their call) is answered. I summon you as virtuous and good men and you are deceitful and put me off. This is not the action of pious men."

Another of his speeches, peace be on him, concerning the dilatoriness of those who held back from supporting him, is:"(18)

"People, whose bodies are gathered together but whose inclinations are diverse, your words would weaken the firmest of hard-hearted men. Yet your actions would make your doubting enemy full of confidence against you. In your gatherings you say 'such and such' but when the battle comes, you say 'turn aside'. The call of the one who calls you (away) is not strong. The heart of the one who will make you endure uncertainties and weaknesses will not rest. You ask me to delay defending religion. Holding back (from its defence) will not prevent humiliating oppression. Nor will right be achieved except by serious endeavour. What house will you defend after your own house (is destroyed)? With what Imam will you fight after I (am killed)? By God, deluded is the one whom you have deluded. Whoever acquires you, acquires the most deceitful partner.

By God, I have come not to believe in your words nor to aspire to your help. May God make a separation between me and you.

May He give me in exchange for you those who will be better for me than you. By God. I wish I had for every ten of you, one man from the tribe of Firas b. Ghanam. It would be exchanging dirhams for dinars."

In a further speech of his, peace be on him. concerning the same idea, after praising and glorifying God, (he said):

"I can only think that these people - meaning the Syrians - will overcome you."

"Why is that, Commander of the faithful?" they asked.

"I can see their affairs in the ascendancy," he said, "while your fires are dying away. I see them as in earnest while I see you as being weak. I see them as united while I see you as divided among yourselves. I see them obedient to their leader while I see you as disobedient. By God, if they overcome you, you will find them evil masters for you after me. It is as if I was looking at them now. They have become partners of you in your land. They carry off your share of the booty held by the central government to their land. It is as if I was looking at you rustling like lizards without taking your due and without protecting those sacred to God. It is as if I was looking at them killing the righteous men among you and terrorising your reciters of the Qur'an; they are forbidding you and hindering you; they are bringing other people close to themselves apart from you. If you could see the privation, the selfishness, the blows of the swords and the coming of terror, you would regret and be sorry for your neglect in going to war and you would remember the ease and well-being you had today when the memory will no longer benefit you."

(This is) from his words, peace be on him, when Mu'awiya b. Abi Sufyan broke the terms of the truce and began to launch attacks against the people of Iraq. He said, after he had praised and glorified God:

"What is (the intention) of Mu'awiya, may God kill him. He wants me (to involve myself) in a dreadful matter. He wants me

to act as he has acted. Then I would have broken my compact and revoked my covenant. He would use that as a proof against me and it would be disgrace against me until the Day of the Resurrection whenever (my name) was mentioned. If it was said to him, 'You began it', he would reply: 'I did not know about (those raids) and I did not order them' Then some will say, 'He is truthful' and others will say, 'He is lying.' By God, indeed God is the (true) possessor of compassion and great forbearance. Forbearance was shown by many of the first Pharaohs and by those who followed the Pharaohs. If God gives him a respite now, He will never let him escape. He is at the watchtower looking down on the path he follows. Let him do what seems appropriate to him. We will not break our compact, we will not revoke our covenant. We will not terrorize a man who has submitted, nor one who has made a covenant until the terms of the truce between us are proved to be nothing, if God wishes."

The following is from his speech in another place:

"Praise be to God and peace be on the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family. Indeed the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, was pleased to make me his own brother and he described me as his helper (wazir). People, I am the very nose of guidance and its eyes. Do not keep yourselves isolated from the path of guidance because of the small numbers of those who come to it. Whoever claims that the one who will kill me is a believer (is wrong). It is time which will kill me. Indeed at some time there is an avenger for all blood that is shed. The avenger of our blood, the judge concerning the rights of himself and the right of those who are kin, of orphans, of the poor, and the traveller, is the one who does not fail to get what he searches for and whom no one who flees will escape. Those who do wrong will be aware of it. By what kind of change shall they be changed (XXVI 227). I swear by God, Who split the seed and created man, you will be seized by the throat, Banu Umayya, en account of it (i.e. dominion) and you will recognize it in the possession of others and in the house of your enemy after (only) a short while. You will be aware of His prophecy after a time."

This is another speech with the same idea as the previous one.
(He said:)

"People of Kufa, make your preparations to fight against your enemy, Mu'awiya and his followers."

"Give us a respite, Commander of the faithful," they said. "He will leave the land."

He said: "By God, Who split the seed and created man, let these people overcome you. It is not because they have greater right than you but because of their obedience to Mu'awiya and your disobedience of me. By God, all the nations have come to fear the tyranny of their rulers but I have come to fear the tyranny of my subjects. I have appointed to office men from among you and they have been treacherous and betrayed (me). Some have gathered the booty which they were entrusted with for distribution to the Muslims and carried it off to Mu'awiya while others took it to their own. Thus they have ignored the Qur'an and have been bold before the Merciful. (It has come to such a state) that if I entrusted anyone with the handle of a whip, he would betray it. 'You have made me tired.'"

Then he raised his hand to heaven and said: "O God, I loathe life amid these people, I am weary of hope. Let my companion (i.e. the angel of death) come home so that I may rest from them and they may rest from me. They will never be successful after me."

This is a speech which he, peace be on him, made on another occasion: (19)

"People, I have summoned you to fight against these people and you have not helped. I have asked you to listen and you have not answered. I have given you sincere advice and you have not accepted. You are present and you are like absent people. I have recited to you (God's) wisdom and you have turned aside from it. I have given you eloquent warnings and you have refused them. It is as if you were scared donkeys who

had fled from a lion (LXXI v 50). I urge you to fight against men of oppression and I do not reach the end of my words before I see you scattering from me like the people of Saba' (after the breaking of the dam) in Yemen. You go back to your own councils, you sit in your circles, you coin maxims, you recite poetry. You know the news yet when you leave, you are asking about poetry, ignoring any other kind of knowledge, careless of any other conduct and distracted from fear, you have forgotten the war, the need to prepare for it. Your hearts become empty of any talk of it. You occupy them with diversion and idle (chatter). It is wonderful, completely wonderful. But it is not for me to feel wonder that people have agreed on the wicked plan and to deprive you of your rights.

"People of Kufa, you are like the mother of Mujalid: She became pregnant and gave birth. Then her husband died and her widowhood was long. Her inheritance was lost to her. By Him Who split the seed and created man, behind you, who are one-eyed and keep turning away, is the hell of the present life which does not remain and does not leave anything. After it are wolves and lions in various packs. So Banu Umayya will inherit from you. Their number from first to last will not treat you with compassion except for one man. It is a tribulation which God has decreed for the community which is inescapable. They will kill your choice men and enslave the wicked among you. They will take out your treasure and your stores even from within the bridal chamber as a punishment for what you have abandoned of your affairs, the goodness of your own souls and your religion.

"People of Kufa, I tell you of what will happen before it happens so that you may be on your guard against it and warned of it; whoever (of you) will be warned and consider. Sometimes you say that 'Ali is a liar, just like Quraysh said of their Prophet, may God bless him and his family, their master, Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah, beloved of God. Woe to you, it is I who am accused of lying. May God be exalted, I was the first to worship Him, to believe in His unity. Or (is it) the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family (who is accused of lying)? I was the first who had faith in him, who believed in him, who helped

him. No, by God, they are deceitful words. You would be better without them. By Him Who split the seed and created man, you will know their news after a time but that will be when your ignorance has brought you to it. Then your knowledge will not benefit you. Disgrace upon you, you mere images, you are not men but dreams of children with the minds of the ladies of the bridal chamber. By God, their bodies are present but their minds are absent from them and their inclinations are diverse. God has not strengthened the support of the one who calls to you (to desert). Nor will the hearts of those who will treat you harshly take rest. There is no joy for anyone who seeks refuge with you. Your words would weaken the firmest of hardhearted men.

"Yet actions would make your doubting enemy full of confidence against you. Woe upon you, what house will you defend after your own house (is destroyed)? With what Imam will you fight after I (am killed)? By God, deluded is the one whom you have deluded. Whoever acquires you, acquires the most deceitful partner. I have not come to aspire in your help or believe in your words. May God make a separation between me and you. May He give me in exchange for you, those who will be better for me than you. May he give you in exchange for me one who will be worse for you than me. Your Imam obeys God and you disobey him. The Imam of the Syrians disobeys God and they obey him. By God, I wish Mu'awiya would agree with me to exchange you: it would be exchanging dirhams for dinars. He could take ten of you and give me one of them. By God, I wish that I did not know you and that you did not know me. For it is a knowledge that flows with regret. You have wounded my breast with anger, you have brought my affair to nought through your desertion and disobedience so that Quraysh have begun to say: 'Ali is a brave man but he has no knowledge of war.' Yet is there anyone among them who has been longer engaged in it than I and are there any of them fiercer in battle than me? I was involved in it when I had not reached twenty and I am still in it now when I am more than sixty. However a man who is not obeyed has no power. By God, I wish that my Lord had taken me from among you to His Paradise. Indeed death is looking down on me. There is nothing preventing the

most wicked of (the community) from dyeing (this)" - he put his hand on his head and his beard - "It is a promise which the unlettered prophet made to me. Whoever makes false statements is lost, whoever is pious and is truthful about the good is saved.

"People of Kufa, I have summoned you to fight these people at night and during the day, secretly and in public. I have said to you: Attack them before they attack you. Only men who are humiliated are attacked in the ruins of their own home. You rely on one another and desert one another. My words weigh heavily on you. My command is difficult for you. You put it behind you as something to be neglected until attacks have been launched against you and abominations and detestable things appear in your midst which will be with you at night and in the morning. (This is) just as happened to the people of the stories of old (matholaat) before you, where God gave information about haughty tyrannous despots and those weakened by seducers in His words, the Mighty and High: They slaughter your sons and disgrace your women. In that there is great tribulation from your Lord (XIV 6). By Him who split the seed and created man, what you were promised has happened to you.

"People of Kufa, I have remonstrated with you by reminding you of the warning of the Qur'an, yet I have not benefited you. I have punished you with the whip, yet have not corrected your attitude towards me. I have flogged you with the lash, with which the revealed criminal punishments (hudud) are carried out, yet you have not abstained from unlawful things. I know that the only thing suitable for you is the sword but I would not bring about your righteousness at the cost of the destruction of my own soul. However, after me a harder authority will have domination over you. It will not show respect to the old among you, nor be merciful to the children among you. It will not honour the learned among you, nor will it distribute the booty for distribution fairly among you. It will strike you down, humiliate you and kill the wounded among you in battles. It will hinder your path and block you at its door so that it may gorge itself on your strong men, on your weak men. God will only destroy those of you who do wrong. Rarely can one turn one's back on something and then go forward. I think you are in a period

(where there is no prophetic help). It is only my duty to give you sincere advice.

"People of Kufa, I have been tested by two or three among you who are deaf while having ears, who are dumb yet have tongues, who are blind but have eyes, brothers who are not trustworthy at a meeting, brothers who are not reliable in a test. O God! I make them bored and they bore me. I disgust them and they disgust me. O God! Let no commander please them and let them please no commander. Mix their hearts as salt is mixed with water. By God, if I could find an escape from your words and your correspondence, I would use it. I have remonstrated with you for your guidance until life has become distasteful. (Despite) all that you repeat the sneering at my words, fleeing from the truth and deviating to the false. God will not strengthen the religion of those who support (the false). I know that the only thing you do more of for me is to cause me loss. Whenever I order you to fight against your enemy, you lower your heads to the ground and ask me to postpone the defence of the religion which is being nullified. When I say to you in the winter 'give me assistance', you say 'this is (impossible) in such a cold time.' If I say to you in the summer 'give me assistance', you say 'this (is impossible) in such intense heat. Call us when the heat has left us.' All that is fleeing from Heaven since you were unable (to act) because of the heat and the cold, by God, you are more unable because of the heat of sword, much more unable. We belong to God and to Him do we return.

"People of Kufa, an Arab has come to me to tell me that a man of the tribe of Ghamid has descended on the people of al-Anbar at night with four thousand men and attacked them as if he was attacking the Byzantines or the Khazars. He killed my governor there, Hassan, and with him he killed righteous men of merit, devotion and courage, may God make a home for them in the blessed gardens (of Heaven). Indeed He has declared it to be permitted (for them). I have learnt that a group of Syrians broke in on a Muslim woman and another who was protected by treaty. They tore off her veil and took her scarf from her head, the earrings from her ears, the bracelets from her wrists

and legs and upper arms, and the silver-bands and waistwrapper from her legs. She was unable to defend herself except by the repetition of the verse of return to God and by calling out: 'O Muslims.' But no one gave her help. No one gave her assistance. If a believer died in sorrow at this, I would not blame him. On the contrary in my view he would be pious and good. The strangest of all is the gathering of these people in support of their falsehood and your failure to support your truth. You have become a target which is shot at and you do not shoot back. You are attacked and you do not fight back. (The enemy) rebels against God and you are content. May your hands be filled with dust, O men like camels whose masters are absent from them so that as soon as they gather at one side, they begin to split up on the other side."

[Among his speeches complaining of his enemies and defending his rights is the speech reported by al-'Abbas b. 'Abd Allah al-'Abdi, on the authority of 'Amr b. Shamir on the authority of his narrators, who said:]

We (i.e. the narrators of 'Amr b. Shamir) heard the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, say:

"Since God sent Muhammad, may God bless him and his family, I have never seen (a time of) ease. Praise be to God. By God, as a little one I lived in fear. When I was bigger, I fought in battle against the polytheists and made war on the hypocrites until God took His Prophet to Himself. Then tribulations were worse. I have not ceased being careful and cautious. I was afraid that something would happen which would make me rise up. I have seen only good, praise be to God. By God I have not ceased striking with my sword from the time I was a boy until I have become an old man. What gives me endurance for what I am involved in is that all that is for the sake of God and His Apostle. I am hopeful that the Spirit is near at hand. I have seen its threads."

[They reported:]

Only a few days after this speech he, peace be on him, was

struck down.

['Abd Allah b. Bukayr al-Ghamawi reported on the authority of Hakim b. Jubayr, who said: One who was present when 'Ali-spoke at al-Rahaba told us:]

Among the things he said was:

"People, you have refused me. I say, by the Lord of the heavens and the earth, my bosom friend promised me: 'The community will betray you after me.' "

[Isma'il b. Salim reported on the authority of Abu Idris al-Awdi, who said:]

I (i.e. Abu Idris) heard 'Ali, peace be on him, say: "Among the things which the unlettered Prophet, may God bless him and his family, promised me was: 'The community will betray you after me' "

His Words about the Succession and Men's Desertion of him

[Among his words, peace be on him, about the consultative committee (shura) (for the election of a successor to 'Umar b. al-Khattab) at the house is (the conversation) which is reported by Yahya b. 'Abd al-Hamid al-Himmani, on the authority of Yahya b. Salama b. Kuhayl, on the authority of his father, on the authority of Abu Sadiq, who said:]

When 'Umar made a consultative committee (to elect a successor) consisting of six, he said: "If two make the pledge to one man (of the six) and two to another (of the six), the people must be with the three (i.e. the two men and their candidate) among whom is 'Abd al-Rahman (b.'Awf) and kill the three who do not include 'Abd al-Rahman ."

The. Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, came out of the house, leaning on the arm of 'Abd Allah b. al-'Abbas. He said: "Ibn al-'Abbas, the people have opposed you after your Prophet just as they used to oppose your Prophet, may God

bless him and his family, during his life. By God, nothing will bring them back to the truth except the sword."

"How is that?" Ibn al-'Abbas asked him.

He answered: "Haven't you heard 'Umar's statement: If two make the pledge to one man (of the six) and two to another (of the six), (the people) must be with the three among whom is 'Abd al-Rahman and kill the three who do not include 'Abd al-Rahman?" .

"Yes," replied Ibn al-'Abbas.

"Don't you realise," he went on, "that 'Abd al-Rahman is the cousin of Sa'd and 'Uthman is the brother-in-law of 'Abd al-Rahman?"

"Yes," he replied.

"'Umar knew," he said, "that Sa'd, 'Abd al-Rahman and 'Uthman would not differ in their view. Therefore whoever among them they make the pledge of allegiance to, will have two of them (as supporters). Then he ordered that those who oppose them should be killed. He does not care if Talha is killed as long as he kills me and al-Zubayr is killed. By God if 'Umar lives, I will make known to him his evil attitude toward us which has existed of old and recently. If he dies there will be a day which will bring him and me together and on which will be the Last Judgement."

['Amr b. Sa'id reported on the authority of Jaysh al-Kinani, who said:]

When 'Abd al-Rahman struck the hand of 'Uthman as (a token of) his pledge of allegiance to him on the day of (the meeting at) the house, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, said: "Marriage relationship has made and encouraged you (to do) what you have done. By God what you expected from him is

what your colleague (i.e.'Umar) expected from his colleague (i.e. Abu Bakr). May God spread among you the perfumes of death."

[A group of traditionists (ahl al-naql) report by a variety of chains of authority (turuq) on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas, who said:](20)

I (i.e. Ibn 'Abbas) was with the Commander of the faithful at al-Rahaba. I mentioned the caliphate and those who had preceded him He breathed heavily and said:

"By God, Ibn Abi Quhafa (i.e. Abu Bakr) took on its clothes although he was aware that my position with regard to it was like the position of the axle of a mill. The stream (of knowledge) flows from me and the birds cannot rise to (the exaltedness of) my position. I allowed myself to let another robe cover me instead of it and I turned aside from it. I began to consider whether I should attempt to attack (when I would be like a man) with a hand cut off or I should endure the blind darkness (of oppression), in which the old man would grow feeble and the young become white-haired, while 'a believer' would toil until he meets his Lord.

"I realised that endurance in this was most appropriate. So I endured while all the time there was a mote in my eye and an obstruction in my throat. I could see my inheritance plundered until the time of his death came to him (i.e. Abu Bakr) and he handed it down to 'Umar. How amazing that, while he used to offer to give it up during his life, he should make a bequest ('aqd) of it after his death! How eagerly the two divided its two udders between them:

How different was my time in its saddle and the time of a man of wickedness, my brother Jabir.

"By God, he (i.e. Abu Bakr) directed it towards a coarse direction (i.e.'Umar) whose touch was harsh, who was wounding in his roughness. The man in control of it was like the rider of an obstinate camel. If he pulled its reins, he choked it. If he held

its reins loosely, he caused it to go at random so that it stumbled frequently and its excuses were few. In the name of God, the people were afflicted with disorderliness, with refractoriness, with constant changes and with obstruction until death came to him. Yet even then he made it (the decision of) a consultative committee consisting of a group among whom he claimed that I was merely one. O God! O what a consultative-committee it was when doubt was stirred up against me through (being put alongside) the leading members among them so that I now come to be regarded (as merely an equal) with these men as my equals. However I descended (like a bird) when they descended and I flew like (a bird) when they flew (acting) out of a patience as a result of the long trial (I had endured) and the passage of time. One man (of the group) inclined (against me) because of his jealousy (i.e. Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas). Another man (i.e. 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Awf) favoured his brother-in-law (i.e. 'Uthman) for other reasons which I will not mention. Eventually the third person (i.e. 'Uthman) among these people arose lifting his chest from out of his excrement and his trough. His family (i.e. the Umayyads) rushed to devour the treasury of God like the camel devours spring vegetation until its stomach is satiated by it. His actions brought about his death. The action of the people which shocked was that they (came) as messengers to me - like waves of hyenas - asking me that I should give them my acceptance of the pledge of allegiance. They were crowding in on me so that (my two sons) al-Hasan and al-Husayn would have been trampled underfoot and my two shoulders pulled apart. Yet when I undertook the affair (of the Caliphate), a group broke their oath of allegiance, another deviated from the truth and others acted wickedly as if they had never heard God say: That last abode is that which we have made for those who seek nobleness on earth and not corruption. Good health is for those who fear God (XXVIII 82). Rather, by God, they heard these words and they were aware of them but their own world was more attractive to their eyes and its adornments excited wonder in them.

By Him who split the seed and created man, if it was not for the presence of those present and the necessity of a proof (hujja) to man through the existence of such supporters and

the fact that God does not give the true possessors of authority it without them being resigned (to it being swallowed) by the over-full bellies of the wrongdoers while the oppressed starve (for their rights) - (if it was not for all that) - I would throw down the reins (of the Caliphate) on to its withers and I would swallow the last with the cup of its beginning. 'Then in my view, they would find their world scantier than snot from the nose ."

A man from the Sawad came before him and handed him a letter. He broke off from his speech.

[Ibn 'Abbas added:]

I have never regretted anything nor felt such distress like the distress I felt at Losing the rest of the speech of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. When he had finished the letter, I said: "Commander of the faithful, would you continue your speech from the point which you reached?"

He answered: "In no way, in no way. It was like foam on the camel's mouth (shiqshiqa) as it opens its mouth to bellow and then falls silent."

[Mas'ada b. Sadaqa reported: I heard Abu 'Abd A11ah Ja'far b. Muhammad (al-Sadiq), peace be on them, say:]

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, addressed the people at Kufa. He praised and glorified God. Then he said: "I am the master of the white-haired men and in me is an example of what happened to Job. God will gather my family for me just like He gathered his family for Jacob. That will be when the globe turns around - and you have been told - and it goes astray and is destroyed. Indeed, therefore before that put on the garment of endurance and acknowledge your sins to God. You have cast off your sanctity, you have put out your torches. You entrusted your guidance to those who do not even have control over themselves. You have neither ear nor eye, which is (even) weak. By God, the seeker and the sought are thus. If you had not forsaken your task, abandoned support for the truth

which is in your midst, and become weak through the weakening power of the false, one who is not like you would not have taken courage at you, and the one who becomes strong against you would not have become strong and (been able) to destroy your obedience and take it away from those of you who had it. You went astray like the children of Israel went astray in the time of Moses. I speak truly (when I say): Indeed your being astray will be doubled for you after me through your persecution of my sons; it will double the loss which the children of Israel suffered. If you have drunk and filled yourselves with the illnesses brought about by the authority of the tree cursed in the Qur'an, you have gathered with the one who calls croakingly (to you) to go astray and have run to answer the false. You have betrayed the one who summons (you) to the truth; you have cut yourselves off from those close to the men who fought (for the Prophet) at Badr and you have joined those of the sons of war who are furthest away (from the Muslims who fought at Badr). Indeed if what they had possessed had melted away, the test for punishment would have been near, the covering would have been revealed and the period would have been brought to an end. Then the threat (of hell) would be near. The stars would have appeared to you from the east and your moon would shine for you like the full moon. Since that is clear, come back to repentance and throw off sin.

"You should be aware that if you are obedient, the rising star of the east will take you along the path of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace; you would then have treated yourself for deafness and have sought a cure for dumbness; you would have been given sufficient provisions against straying from the path and seeking them (outside it); you would have cast a crushing burden from your necks. God only destroys those who refuse His mercy and forsake His protection: Those who do wrong will be aware of it. By what kind of change shall they be changed? (XXVI 227). "

[Mas'ada b. Sadaqa also reported on the authority of Abu 'Abd Allah (Ja'far al-Sadiq); peace be on him, who said:]

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, addressed

the people at Medina. After praising and glorifying God, he said:

"God, the Exalted, never destroyed tyrants except after showing forbearance and giving a respite. He did not rej o i n a broken bone of anyone in (all) the nations except after constraint and testing. People, the problems which you have faced in the times which have passed are a lesson. Not every one who has a heart is gifted with sound judgement. Not every one who has ears can hear. Not everyone who looks through an eye can see. Therefore, servants of God, make your view good concerning (the things) which God makes your concern and look at the ruins of those whom God has destroyed because He knew that they were following the practices of the people of Pharaoh. They were people with gardens, with fantasies, with farms and high position. Those are the ruins of those who were oppressors. Indeed it is everlasting hell which will warn the one who sees it of destruction. (It comes) after well-being, joyfulness and temporary security and happiness. To whoever is steadfast, there is the happy end. The final end of affairs belongs to God. How surprising for people with intelligence! How would they live amid the rolling torrents and how would they gain sustenance without one who was protected a friend and ruler (wali) for His community which thirsts in its journey and which desires guidance? For they do not follow the tracks of a prophet, nor do they copy the practice of a testamentary trustee of authority (wasi), nor do they believe in supernatural (things), nor do they turn away from sin. How indeed, while they resort to their own minds in ambiguous matters? Each person among them, being the leader of himself, adopts in (these matters) what he considers appropriate without authorities who are able to follow a just path. They will never increase (in anything) except after violence. Some are kind to each other, and believe one another in disagreement to everything which the Apostle, may God bless him and his family, bequeathed, and in deserting whatever he carried out on the authority of the Creator of the heavens and the earths, the Aware, the Knowing. They are people from the darkness of caves of shadows, leaders of bewilderment and doubt. Whoever trusts to himself, will sink in to errors. This is so for God has

guaranteed the end of this path: "So that whoever is destroyed will be destroyed with proof (which has been given to him) and whoever lives will live with proof. Indeed God is hearing, aware (VIII 42). What is in greater error than a community which shuns its rulers and turns away from its shepherds. O sorrow, sorrow, the heart is wounded and grief becomes a habit as a result of the actions of our Shi'a after my death despite the nearness of its love and the intertwining of its friendship. How do some of them kill others and how does their friendship turn to hatred? By God, tomorrow (there is) the family caused to deviate from its root, encamped around a branch, given hope of victory from another direction, expecting spirit from a place other than which it will come. Every group among them will cling to a branch by which they will be taken wherever the branch inclines despite the fact that God - and praise be to Him - will gather them like the scattered clouds of spring, will bring them together and make them heaped together like heavy clouds. He will open gates for them to which they will flow, at (the advice of) their advisor, like torrents of rain where no land can resist it, no dam can stop it and the base of a lofty mountain cannot resist its path. God will plant them in the middle of valleys. He will make springs in the land for them. Through them, He will remove the privation of people and He will make available for them the estates of people so that they will take forcibly what had been taken from them forcibly. Through them, He will pull down columns and through them He will break down the casings of bricks at Iram. He will let them enjoy the stones of olives. By Him Who split the seed and created man, what they possess will melt away after they have had power in the land and high position over men just as tar and lead melt in the fire. Perhaps God will gather my Shi'a after scattering them because of the evil day of these men. No man has a right to goodness from God. Rather goodness belongs to God and the matter is all (with Him)."

The historians (naqalat al-athar) report that a man from the tribe of Asad stood before the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him and said to him: "Commander of the faithful, there is wonder among you, Banu Hashim, how this authority came to be diverted from you. You are the highest in family

and in connection and closeness to the Apostle, may God bless him and his family, as well as in understanding of the Book."

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, replied: "Son of a worm, you are unstable and the gap is narrow so that you shoot in a way which is not straight. You have protection through your relationship by marriage and therefore the right to ask. You have sought information so know then that it was preference through which the souls of the people were generous while other souls were niggardly with it. Therefore leave off plundering the rooms which are (already) empty. Pay attention to the disasters concerning the affairs of the son of Abu Sufyan (i.e. Mu'awiya). Time has made me laugh after it had made me weep. There is no deceit which the people despaired of. By God, through my restraint and my dignity they tried to act in a false way with regard to the nature of God. How very far that is from me. They have mixed drink and dwelling between them and me. If the trials of misfortune are taken from us, I would make them responsible for the truth in its purity. If it is otherwise, do not give yourself sorrows for them and do not console sinful people."

Some of his Words of Wisdom and Warning, Peace be on him

May God have mercy on you, take your (eternal) abode from your transitory (life).

Do not rend your veils before One from Whom even your secrets are not concealed.

Take your hearts out of the world before your bodies are taken from it.

For the next life you were created and in the world you are imprisoned.

When a man dies, the angels ask about what he has brought while the people ask about what he has left behind. By God, your fathers brought some of what was for you. Do not leave behind anything at all, for then you will owe it.

The world is like a poison which the one who does not recognise it eats.

There is no life without religion and there is no death except through the denial of certain truth.

Drink the sweet water. It will wake you from the slumber of rest. Beware of the pestilential torrid winds which bring destruction.

The world is the abode of truth for those who know it and the place of salvation for those who take provisions from it. It is the place to which the inspiration of God has been sent down and the market place of His friends. So trade and gain the profit of heaven.

Similar words were addressed by him, peace be on him, to a man whom he heard blaming the world without knowing what he ought to say about its (true) meaning:

"The world is the place (dar) of truth for those who believe in it, and a place which is to be wiped out for those who understand it. It is a place which is full of wealth for those who take their provision from it and the place of prostration for the prophets of God and a place to which His inspiration has been sent down. It is the place of prayer for His angels and the market-place of His friends, in which they gain mercy and in which they earn the profit of Heaven. Who is the man who blames it when it has called out (for men) to keep apart from it and it has cried out (for men) to separate from it, when it has announced its own death? Through its own joy it has yearned for joy. Through its own tribulation it has warned against tribulation, bringing fear, giving warning, trying to turn (men) away and terrify them. O you, who blame the world and (yet are one) who is seduced in to rushing blindly in to it, when did it tempt you to kill your fathers as a test and to sleep with your mothers under the earth? How did it weaken your hand and make your arm sick so that a cure is necessary for them, and doctors prescribe for them and medicines are sought for them without

your search bringing them any benefit, without your (seeking) intercession bringing them any intercession? The world has made an example of them for you with your killing and your intercourse so that your weeping will not avail you not will your darlings be of any use to you."

People, take five things from me. For by God if you travelled on a camel for them, you would exhaust it before you found anything like them. No one should hope for anything except from His Lord, nor should one fear (anything) except his sins. The scholar ('alim), when asked about something he does not know, should not be ashamed to say that God knows. Steadfastness is of the same rank with faith as the head is to the body. He who has no patience has no faith.

Every statement in which God is not mentioned is a vanity. Every silence in which there is no thought (of Him) is carelessness. Every reflection in which there is no consideration (of Him) is an idle pastime.

One who buys his soul and sets it free is not like the one who sells his soul and imprisons it.

The one who gets to the shade first has been exposed to the sun. The one who gets to water first is thirsty.

Good breeding takes the place of a good family.

The man who is abstemious towards the world increases his renunciation of it whenever it increases its manifestation of itself to him.

Affection is the greatest of traps. Knowledge is the noblest of qualities.

If work is an effort then being concerned with avoiding (it) is an act of corruption

The man who goes to the extreme in rivalry commits a sin. The man who falls short in it will be subjected to it.

Forgiveness corrupts the wicked to the same extent as it restores the noble.

Whoever loves noble actions avoids crimes.

Men cast their eyes on a man whose thoughts adorn him.

The ultimate generosity is that you should give what you are able.

There is no distance for one who is present and no nearness for one who is separate.

One of the greatest sins of a man is to be unaware of his faults.

The perfection of moderation is a willingness to accept what is sufficient.

Generosity is perfected through the adoption of noble deeds and the payment of debts.

Nobility is revealed through loyalty to brotherhood in hard times and easy times.

If the sinner is displeased, he slanders. If he is content, he lies. If he is covetous, he wounds.

One who is not more concerned with his reason for what is, will more (inevitably) come to his death.

Put up with an error by your friend for the time of an attack by your enemy.

A good confession wipes out the act of committing a wrong.

What money is spent to make you aware of reforming your character is not wasted.

Acting moderately is easier than acting immoderately and

restraint is greater in protection than profligacy.

The vilest of provisions for the return (to God) is the committing of a crime against men.

No benefit is wasted if it is received with thanks. No grace remains if it is received ungratefully.

Time is of two kinds: time you have and time you owe. When you have it don't undervalue it and when you owe it, be steadfast.

Often a mighty man is the humblest of creatures and a humble man is the mightiest of creatures.

Whoever is not tested by affairs is deceived and the one who struggles against the truth is brought down.

If the allotted span of life is known, hope is diminished.

Thankfulness is the ornament of sufficiency and steadfastness is the ornament of tribulation.

The value of each person lies in the good he does.

People are the children of their own good actions.

The person is found under his tongue.

Whoever consults those with understanding is guided correctly.

One who is satisfied with little can do without much. Those who cannot do without much have need of wicked men.

Whoever has sound roots has branches which will bear fruit.

Whoever gives hope to man regards him with awe. Whoever is deficient in the knowledge of anything, shames him.

Part of his speech, peace be on him, describing man are his words:

"The most amazing thing in man is his heart. It loves wisdom and its opposite. If hope occurs to it, ambition reduces it. If ambition rouses in it, covetousness destroys it. If despair possesses it, sorrow kills it. If anger occurs to it, rage intensifies it. If it comes near contentment, it forgets to be on guard. If fear takes hold of it, caution (totally) occupies it. If protection is provided for it, heedlessness takes possession of it. If a blessing is renewed for it, (love of) power seizes it. If a tragedy befalls it, violent grief disgraces it. If it acquires wealth, riches make it unjust. If poverty gnaws at it, misfortune (completely) occupies it. If hunger presses upon it, weakness makes it idle. If it has earlier satisfied its stomach to satiety, then every diminution of it is harmful and every increase of it is corrupting."

When Shahzaman, daughter of Chroesroe was captured, he, peace be on him, asked her: "What did you learn from your father after the Battle of the Elephant?"

"I learned from him," she replied, "that he used to say: When God controls a matter, ambitions are brought to nought without Him and when the allotted time comes to an end, death is in view."

"How well your father spoke," he, peace be on him, answered. "Affairs are led towards their destinations until death takes part in their control."

One who followed certain truth and then was struck by doubt, should remain with his certain truth. Indeed certain truth cannot be removed by doubt.

A believer is tired of himself while the people find themselves in comfortable position with regard to him.

The man who is lazy does not love God's truth.

The best kind of worship is steadfastness, silence, and waiting

for relief.

Steadfastness is of three types: steadfastness in tragedy, steadfastness against disobedience, and steadfastness in obedience.

Clemency is the helper of the believer. Knowledge is his friend, gentleness his brother, piety his father and steadfastness is the commander of his troops.

Three things (which will earn) the treasures of Heaven are: giving alms secretly, keeping tragedy hidden and keeping sickness hidden.

Feel need for the one whose prisoner you wish to be, dispense with the one whose equal you wish to be and prefer the one whose leader you wish to be.

There is no satisfaction for the licentious, no rest for the envious and no affection for the weary.

He, peace be on him, said to Ahnaf b. Qays:

"The silent is the brother of the one who gives consent. Whoever is not with us is against us."

Generosity belongs to the nobility of nature but over-generosity is a corruption of creation.

The abandonment of a promise to a friend is the motive for being cut off (from his friendship).

Rumours of anything among the ordinary people are evidence for the beginnings of its existence.

Search out sustenance. It is guaranteed to one who looks for it.

Four kinds of men whose prayer will not be rejected: the prayer of the just Imam for his subjects; the son who is respectful to his father; the father who is respectful to his son; and the oppressed man. Of them God says: By My strength and My

majesty, I will support you even after (some) time.

The best kind of wealth is the abandonment of begging. The worst kind of poverty is the clinging to subservience.

Good behaviour lies in protection from destruction. Gentleness is the alleviation of distress.

A man who laughingly acknowledges hissing is better than one who behaves boldly towards God in tears.

If it was not for discussion, the (different) schools of thought would be ignorant.

No tool is more beneficial than intelligence. No enemy is more harmful than ignorance.

One who widens his hopes lessens his effort.

The most grateful of the people is the most satisfied of them. The most ungrateful of them is the most covetous of them.'

In such speeches as these wisdom may be gained. We have not included in this chapter of speeches, all of those which have been reported with these ideas from him, lest by that the speeches would become too diffuse and the book become too long. In what we have presented, there is sufficient for those with intelligence.

18- Nahj al-Balagha, I, no. 29, 72-3. Except for the last sentence.

19- This is a composite speech. It contains elements already reported by al-Mufid and references to it are scattered throughout Nahj al-Balagha.

20- This is the famous speech known as al-Shiqshiqiyya; cf. Nahj al-Balagha, I, no. 3, 48-50.

Chapter 40

SOME OF THE MIRACLES OF THE COMMANDER OF THE FAITHFUL

(The following are) some of the signs of God, the Exalted, and His clear proof of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, which indicate his position with regard to God, the Mighty and High, and his special endowment with miracles by which he was set apart f r o m everyone else through the call for obedience to him, to remain steadfast in respecting his authority and closeness to God (wilaya), to recognise his rights and the certainty of His Imamate, and to be aware of his protection (f r o m error), perfection and the demonstration of the proof of him.,

Chapter 41

The Miracle of his Wisdom while still a Boy

Among these are some qualities which make him equal to two of the prophets, apostles and proofs of God to His creatures and about the authenticity and correctness of which there can be no doubt. God, the Mighty and High, said in mentioning Jesus, son of Mary, the spirit (ruh) and word of God, and the prophet and apostle of God to His creatures, when He mentioned the story of his mother's conceiving and giving birth to him and the miraculous nature of that:

She said: How can I have a son when no man has ever touched me and I have not been adulterous. He answered: As it (shall be), for your Lord said: That will be easy for Me and We will make him a sign to the people and a mercy f r o m us. It is a matter which is decreed (XIX 21).

Among the signs of God, the Blessed and Exalted, concerning the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, peace be on him, was his speaking in the cradle. By that normal human behaviour was transcended and in it there was great wonder and an illustrious miracle to the minds of men.

Among the signs of God concerning the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, was the perfection of his intellect, dignity and knowledge of God and His Apostle, His blessing and peace be on him and his family, despite his youth and his being in outward form still only a child when the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, summoned him to believe in him and acknowledge him, and made him responsible for knowing his rights, and recognising his Creator and His unity. (He also) entrusted him with the secrets of His religion,

the defence and preservation of it, and the fulfilment of the trust in it. At that time, he, peace be on him, was according to some statements a boy of seven years of age, according to others a boy of nine but according to the majority he was a boy of ten. The perfection of his intellect, peace be on him, (at that age) and the occurrence (in a boy of that age) of the ability to acknowledge God and His Apostle, may God bless him and his family, is an illustrious sign f r o m God which transcends normal human behaviour, and thus indicates his position with Him, his special endowment and his being worthy for what he was nurtured for the Imamate of the Muslims, and the proof (of God) to all mankind. In this transcendence of ordinary human behaviour which we have mentioned there is a similarity with Jesus and John the Baptist as we have described. If it was not for the fact that at that (time) he was perfect, complete and (capable of) acknowledging God, the Exalted, the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, would not have made him responsible to acknowledge his prophethood, nor would he have bound him to believe in himself and to accept his mission, nor would he have summoned him to accept his rights, nor would he have begun his mission with him before every other person except his wife, Khadija, peace be on her.

Because the Prophet of God, may God bless him and his family, entrusted him with his secret which he ordered him to protect and because he set him apart by that f r o m all the other children of his time and endowed him apart f r o m all others as we have mentioned, that indicates that he, peace be on him, was perfect despite his youth, (capable of) acknowledging God, the Exalted and His Prophet, may God bless him and his family, before adolescence. This is the meaning of the words of God, the Exalted concerning John the Baptist, peace be on him: We gave him wisdom while still a boy (XIX 12). There is no wisdom dearer than knowledge of God, nor more obvious than the knowledge of the prophethood of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, nor more celebrated than the ability of rational deduction, nor more discerning than the understanding of speculation (nazar) and consideration and the knowledge of the aspects of elucidation, by which one is able to arrive at the realities of the unknown. If the matter is as we have explained

it, it confirms that God, the Exalted, caused ordinary human behaviour to be transcended in the case of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, by an illustrious sign which is equivalent to His two prophets whom the Qur'an speaks of in its great verses as we have explained.

Chapter 42

The Miracle of his Military Prowess

Among the signs of God, the Exalted, concerning the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, which transcend ordinary human behaviour is that He never endowed anyone else, with regard to fighting in single combat against one's rivals and against heroes, with what is known about him, peace be on him, in terms of the vast amount of (fighting) which he had to engage in during the course of time. Among those who have engaged in warfare there can only be found men to whom it brings disgrace and who acquire wounds and deformities through it except the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. Despite the length of time which he fought against his enemies, he acquired no ugly wound nor was anyone able to do him any harm until there occurred what happened at his assassination by Ibn Muljam, may God curse him. This is a marvel by which God set him apart through this sign and endowed him with illustrious knowledge of its meaning. By that He indicated his position with regard to Him and his being characterised by miracles, the favour of which set him apart from all other men.

Among the signs of God, the Exalted, concerning him, peace be on him, is the fact that there is not mentioned a single contestant during the battles whom he met as an opponent, whom he did not overcome at one time and did not overcome at another time. He did not give any of his enemies a wound unless that man died of it immediately or recovered after a time. No rival escaped from him in battle, no one could escape his blow. For that it is appropriate that there was no doubt about his victory over every rival who came against him and his killing of every hero who fought. This is also among the things by which

he, peace be on him, was set apart f r o m all other men and by which God caused ordinary human behaviour to be transcended at every time and occasion. It is among the clear indications of his (position).

Among the signs of God, the Exalted, concerning him is the fact that despite the long period in which he was engaged and occupied in warfare and in which he was tested by the bravery of his enemies and their leaders, and by all the efforts which they made to gather against him and to bring about his death through deceit, he never turned his back and fled f r o m one of them, nor did he weaken in his position or show fear to any of his rivals. He never met any opponent in battle without transfixing him at one time or turning aside f r o m him (to another part of the battle) at another time. He would advance against him immediately and attack him at that time. Since his conduct was as we have described, it confirms what we have mentioned about his being set apart by an illustrious sign and a clear miracle transcending ordinary human behaviour by which God indicated his Imamate and revealed the duty to obey him. By that He set him apart f r o m all mankind.

Chapter 43

The Miracle of the Survival of his Reputation and his Family despite Suppression and Oppression

Among the signs and indications of him, peace be on him, by which he was set apart from those who opposed him is the clear appearance of his outstanding qualities to both the Shi'a (khassa) and the general populace ('amma). (This has been sufficient) to force the people to transmit reports of his merits and his qualities endowed by God and for them to be admitted to even by opponents of the proof that there is in them. It has occurred despite the great number who have attempted to deviate from him and oppose him and the great number of occasions they have been prompted to suppress his merit and deny his rights. (It has occurred when) the (control of the) world has been in possession of his rivals and has been turned aside from his friends (awliya). (Despite this) his opponents who possess authority over the world and the narrators of the people, have not been able to put out his light and to deny his career (amr). God has caused ordinary human behaviour to be transcended by spreading his merit and revealing his outstanding qualities, by forcing everyone to recognize that and to admit its truth, and to refute the deceitful attempts of his enemies to conceal his outstanding qualities and to deny his rights so that the proof of him may be brought about and the justification of his rights may be revealed. Because the normal view among those who agree to render his career obscure continues to oppose what we have mentioned, and yet it has not been able to bring that about with regard to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, and the normal view has been transcended, that indicates his being apart from the rest of men through the illustriousness of the sign which we have described.

The report is well-known and widespread on the authority of al-Sha'bi that he used to say:

"I (i.e. al-Sha'bi) used to hear the preachers of the Umayyads curse the Commander of the faithful, 'Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him, on their pulpits." He would raise his finger to the sky and (go on): "I used to hear them praising their ancestors on their pulpits as if they could reveal their corpses."

One day al-Walid b. 'Abd al-Malik said to his sons: "My sons, your duty is to religion. I do not see that religion has built anything which the world has destroyed. I see that the world has built a building which religion has destroyed. I still hear our followers and the members of our family curse 'Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him, suppress his merits and urge the people to hate him. Yet that does not bring the people's hearts anything but closeness (to him). They strive to bring the spirits of the people closer to themselves. Yet that does not bring their hearts anything except (to make the people) more distant f r o m them."

The manner of suppressing the merits of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, of the deception practised by the religious scholars and of their spreading of what seemed authentic to a rational being reached the extent that when a man wanted to report a tradition on the authority of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, he was not able to refer to him either by mentioning his name or his family background. Necessity required him to say: "A man f r o m the Companions of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, told me." Or he might say: "A man f r o m Quraysh told me." Some used to say: "Abu Zaynab told me."

'Ikrima reported on the authority of 'Aisha in her account of the sickness and death of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, that she said in a sentence of it: "The Apostle came out, leaning on two men f r o m his House, one of whom was al-Fadl b. al-'Abbas." When he (i.e. 'Ikrima) reported that on her authority to 'Abd Allah b. al-'Abbas, the latter asked:

"Do you know the other man?"

"No," he replied, "she did not name him."

"That was 'Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him," he told him. "'Our mother' would not mention any good of him while she could (avoid it)."(1)

The tyrannical governors would flog anyone who mentioned any good of him. Indeed their heads were cut off for doing that and exposed to the people to make them disassociate themselves f r o m him. The normal course (of events) followed this pattern for it to become accepted that no good should be mentioned of him in any way much less his outstanding merits be mentioned, his qualities be reported and proof of his rights be set out. Yet since the appearance of his merits and the spreading of his qualities has taken place as we have mentioned its being widespread both among the Shi'a (khassa) and the general populace ('amma), and since the compulsion of both enemy and friend to report it is now established, (this) has transcended the normal course of events as far as he is concerned and the nature of the proof of this idea is explained by the illustrious sign (of God) as we have said before.

Another of the signs of God, the Exalted, concerning him, peace be on him, is that no one has suffered such tribulation with regard to his sons and his offspring as he, peace be on him, suffered with regard to his sons and offspring. The fact is that no terror is known to have encompassed the group of children of any prophet, of any Imam, of the king of any period whether pious or profligate like the terror which encompassed the offspring of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. Nor were any so much subjected to being killed, to being pursued f r o m their houses and lands, and to being terrorised as the offspring and sons of the Commander of the faithful were subjected to. The different kinds of severity meted out to them did not occur for any other group of people. They were killed by murderous treachery, by treason and by deception. It was done to most of them during their lifetimes as an example. They were tormented by hunger and thirst until their lives

were taken by death. This required them to scatter throughout the land and to become separated f r o m their houses, their families and their countries. (It required) their family background to be kept secret f r o m the majority of the people. The fear surrounding them extended to keeping themselves hidden f r o m those who loved them in addition to their enemies. Their flight extended f r o m their lands to the furthest east and west, to places which lacked civilisation and where the majority of the people were without knowledge of them. They avoided bringing such people close to them and mixing with them, out of fear for their own lives and their offsprings' f r o m the tyrants of those times. All of these are the reasons which should bring about the disruption of their organisation, the pulling out of their roots, and the paucity of their numbers. Yet they, despite everything we have described, are the most numerous offspring of any one of the prophets, the righteous men and the friends (of God). Indeed they are more numerous than the offspring of anyone else among the people. They have extended across the lands through their great number and have become more numerous than the offspring of most men. They have done this despite their marriages within their (family circles) to the exclusion of those outside them and by limiting them to those possessing their own genealogies of the nearer members of the relations. In that the normal practice has been transcended as we have explained. It is proof of the illustrious sign concerning the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, as we have already described and explained.

This is something about which there can be no doubt. Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds.

1. Same tradition reported in al-Tabari, I, 1800-1, but 'Ikrima is not the authority. 'Abd Allah b. al-'Abbas explains 'Aisha's omission to 'Ubayd Allah b. 'Abd Allah.

Chapter 44

The Prophecies and Inner Knowledge of the Commander of the Faithful

Among the illustrious signs of God concerning him, peace be on him, and the special characteristic by which he has been set apart, the miraculous nature of which is evidence for his Imamate, for the duty to obey him, and for the confirmation of his proof, are the group of arguments by which God, the Exalted, makes known prophets and apostles, peace be on them, and which He gives as signs of their truthfulness. Of these are the widespread reports of him, peace be on him, concerning the unknown and (foretelling) things which will happen before they happen. He never asserted anything of that without his statement agreeing with the report of the event so that in this way his truthfulness was established. This is one of the most illustrious of the miracles of prophets, peace be on them. Will you not look at the words of God, the Exalted, in which He makes manifest Jesus, son of Mary, peace be on him, through illustrious miracles and signs which indicate his prophethood? I will tell you what you will eat and what you will store in your houses (III 49). He, may His name be mighty, made similar miraculous signs for the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, when he said at the defeat of the Romans' (i.e. Byzantines) horsemen: Alif Lam mim, Rome has been conquered in the lower lands (of its empire) but in a few years after their defeat they will conquer (XXX 1-4). The matter turned out just as God, the Mighty and High, had said. He, may His name be mighty, said of those who took part in the Battle of Badr before the battle (occurred): The groups (of the enemy) will be defeated and they will turn their backs (in flight) (LIV 45). The matter occurred just as God, the Exalted, had said without there being any difference in it. He, the Mighty and High, said:

Indeed you will enter the Sacred Mosque in safety, if God wills, with your heads shaved or shortened, without fear (XLVIII 27). The matter took place as God, the Exalted said. He, may He be praised, said: When the help of God comes and victory, you will see the people entering the religion of God in parties (CX 1-3). The event occurred as He, the Exalted, described. He, may He be praised, said, giving information about the inner feelings of the Hypocrites: They say within themselves: If it was not for the fact that God would punish us for what we say (LVIII 8). Thus He gave information about the inner feelings and the secrets which they kept hidden. He, may the mention of Him be extolled, said concerning the story of the Jews: Say: O those who have been guided, if you claim that you are friends of God apart from other people, then you should seek death if you are truthful. Yet they do not seek it in an attempt to escape from (the crimes) which their hands have committed. Indeed God is aware of the wrongdoers (LXII 5-7). The matter happened as God, the Exalted, had said and not one of them dared to seek it. That established (the reliability of the prophet's) reports and by it He made clear his truthfulness. He gave evidence of his prophethood, peace be on him, with similar examples, which, to present in this book, would make it too long.

(The evidence for) this kind (of miracle) by the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, is such that it can only be denied through stupidity, ignorance, slander and obstinacy. Can you not see what the reports have made public knowledge, what traditions have been widespread and what everybody hands down about him, peace be on him?

He said before fighting against the three groups after the pledge of allegiance had been made to him: "I have been ordered to fight against those who break their pledges, those who are unjust and those who deviate (from the truth)."

He, peace be on him, fought against them and the matter was just as he had predicted.

He, peace be on him, said to Talha and al-Zubayr, when they asked permission to leave to go on the lesser pilgrimage: "By

God, you are not going to make the lesser pilgrimage, you are going to Basra."

The matter was as he had said.

He, peace be on him, also said to Ibn 'Abbas when informing him about their asking for permission to go on the lesser pilgrimage: "I have given them permission despite knowing of the treachery they harboured within themselves. I have appealed for the help of God against them. Indeed God, the Exalted, will rebuff their plotting and give me victory against them."

The matter happened as he predicted.

At Dhu Qar, he said while sitting to receive the pledge of allegiance: "Exactly a thousand men will come from the direction of Kufa to pledge themselves to me until death."

[Ibn 'Abbas commented:]

I (i.e. Ibn 'Abbas) was disturbed at that and was afraid that if the number of the people was less or more, the matter would bring failure on us. The anxiety to count them continued to trouble me so that when the first of them came, I began to count them. Their number reached nine hundred and ninety-nine and then the people stopped coming. I said: "We belong to God and to Him we will return. What is the interpretation of what he said!"

As I was thinking that I saw a person coming towards us. He was a man wearing a woollen cloak and he had a sword with him, a shield and (other) weapons. He went up to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, and said: "Stretch out your hand so that I may pledge allegiance to you."

"On what conditions do you make the pledge of allegiance to me?" the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, asked him.

"To hear and to obey and to fight before you until I die or God

grants you victory," he replied.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"Uways," he answered.

"You are Uways al-Qarani," he said.

"Yes," he replied.

"God is greater (Allahu akbar)," he said. "My dear friend, the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, told me that I would meet a man from his community called Uways al-Qarani who would be of the party of God and His Apostle, who would die in martyrdom and the number who would gain his intercession was like the number of the tribes of Mudar and Rabi'a."

[Ibn 'Abbas reported:]

Then, by God, (my anxiety) left me.

Another example of that is what he, peace be on him, said when the Syrians raised copies of the Qur'an and a group of his followers began to have doubts (about their position) and insisted (that he agree) to making a truce: "Shame on you, this is a deceitful trick. Those people do not really mean (to settle the issue by) the Qur'an because they are not people (who accept) the Qur'an. Fear God and carry out your decision to fight against them. If you do not, you will be separated in to (different) groups and you will regret it when regret will not bring any advantage."

The matter turned out just as he had predicted. This group of people fell in to disbelief after the arbitration (between 'Ali and Mu'awiya) and they regretted the action which they had previously hastily embarked on and made him accept. They were separated in to different groups and destruction came to them soon after.

He, peace be on him, said as he was setting out to fight against the Kharijites: "If it was not for the fact that I am afraid that you would just carry on discussions and abandon (all other) action, I would tell you the decision God has made through the words of His Prophet, peace be on him, concerning those who fight against these people (i.e. against the Kharijites) as a result of seeing them to be misguided. Indeed, among them is a man with a stunted arm who has breasts like the breasts of a woman. They are the wickedest of creatures and the one who fights against them is the closest in relationship to God among His creatures."

The malformation of the man (mukhdaj) had not been known to the people. After the battle, he, peace be on him, caused a search to be made for him among those killed saying: "By God, I have not lied nor have I been lied to."

Eventually (his body) was found among those people and his shirt was torn open, On his shoulder there was a swelling like the breast of a woman, on which were hairs. When the hairs were pulled, his shoulder came forward with it. When they were left, his shoulder went back to its position. When he was found, he said: "God is greater. In this there is a warning for anyone who reflects."(2)

[The historians (ashab al-sira) report in their account on the authority of Jundub b.'Abd Allah al-Azdi, who said:]

I (i.e. Jundub b.'Abd Allah) took part with 'Ali in the battles of the Camel and Siffin. I never had any doubts about fighting against those who fought him until I took part in the battle of al-Nahrawan (against the Kharijites). Then doubts came to me about fighting against these people. I said: "It is our reciters of the Qur'an and our choice men whom we are killing. This matter is dreadful."

In the morning I went for a walk, (taking) some vessels of water with me, until I left the lines (of the army). Then I fixed my spear in the ground, fitted my shield on it and shaded myself from the sun. While I was sitting, the Commander of the

faithful, peace be on him, came along. He said to me: "Brother from (the tribe of) al-Azd, do you have water for ritual purification with you?"

"Yes," I answered and I gave him a vessel.

He went aside so that I could not see him. Then he came back after he had purified himself. He sat down in the shade of the spear. Suddenly a horseman appeared asking for him. I said: "Commander of the faithful, there is a horseman who wants you."

"Make a sign to him (to come here)," he told me.

I made a sign and he came. He said: "Commander of the faithful, the people have crossed the river."

"No," he retorted, "they have not crossed."

"Yes, by God, they have crossed," (the man) insisted.

"You are lying," he said.

Then another man came. He said: "Commander of the faithful, the people have crossed."

"No," he replied, "they have not crossed."

"By God," (the man) said, "I did not come to you until I saw the standards and the baggage on that side."

"By God," he declared, "they have not done so. (What you want) is to kill them and shed their blood."

Then he arose and I arose with him. I said to myself: "Praise be to God, who has given me insight in to this man and enabled me to recognise his affair. He is one of two men: he is either a thoroughgoing liar or (one given) evidence (for his authority) by his Lord and a covenant by his Prophet. O God, I give You a solemn undertaking which You can ask me about on the Day of

Resurrection. If I find that the people have crossed, I will be the first to fight against him, the first to thrust my spear in to his eye. If the people have not crossed, then I will go forth with him and fight alongside him."

We returned to the lines (of the army) and we found that the standards and baggage were as they had been (before).

He took me by the scruff of the neck and pushed me. Then he said: "Brother of (the tribe of) al-Azd, has the matter become clear to you?"

"Yes, Commander of the faithful," I replied.

"Your business is with your enemy," he said.

I killed one man from those people (i.e. the Kharijites) and then I killed another. I and another of them were exchanging blows. I struck him and he struck me. We both fell together. My comrades carried me back. By the time I recovered consciousness, there were none of the people (i.e. the Kharijites) left (there).

This is a famous account which has a wide circulation among the reporters of historical traditions (athar). In it the man tells of his own solemn undertaking towards the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, and (what happened) after that. There is no way that it can be rejected or its truthfulness denied. In it (the Commander of the faithful) provides information about the unknown, gives clear evidence of his knowledge of the inner conscience (of man) and his knowledge of what is in men's souls. The evidence in it is outstanding which could only be equalled by evidence of a similar nature in terms of the greatness of the miracle and its clear proof.

Of a similar kind are the narrations which have been reported on a wide scale (tawatur) about him, peace be on him, announcing his own death before it took place and giving information about the event and the fact that he would leave the world as a martyr through a blow on the head, the blood from which would colour his beard. The event came to happen exactly as

he described.

Among the expressions which the reporters report concerning that are his words, peace be on him: "By God, this will be coloured by this." He put his hand on his head and his beard.

(Similarly) there are his words, peace be on him: "By God, it will colour it from above." He indicated his white hair. "The most wretched of the community will not be prevented from colouring it with blood from above."

(Other) of his words, peace be on him are: "The most wretched (of the community) will not be prevented from colouring it with blood from above."

He, peace be on him, (also) said: "The month of Ramadan has come to you. It is the lord of the months and the beginning of the year. In it the mill of authority will change. (Next) year, you will make the pilgrimage in one rank (i.e. there will be no Imam). The sign of that will be that I will not be among you."

His followers began to say that he was announcing his own death. He, peace be on him, was struck down on the night of the 19th of the month of Ramadan and he died on the night of the 21st of that month.

On the same (subject) is what trustworthy men report about him, peace be on him. During this month he used to break his fast one night with al-Hasan, one night with al-Husayn, peace be on them, and one night with 'Abd Allah b. Ja'far, may God be pleased with him. He never used to have more than three mouthfuls. One of his two sons, al-Hasan and al-Husayn, peace be on them, commented on that. He replied: "My son, God's command (to leave the world) is coming and I am enduring hunger (in preparation for it)."

It was only one night or two later when he was struck down.

[The historians (ashab al-athar) also report:]

Ja'd b. Ba'ja, one of the Kharijites, said to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him: "Fear God, 'Ali, for you will die."

"By God," said the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. "Rather I will be killed by a blow on this which will colour this." He put his hand on his head and his beard. "It is a promise which will be fulfilled. Let anyone who lies despair."

(Similarly) there are his words, peace be on him, on the night at the end of which the wretched man struck him. He had set out for the mosque and the geese screeched in his face. The people drove them away from him but he said: "Leave them, they are wailing at death."

In a similar vein is the account which al-Walid b. al-Harith and others report on the authority of the men (whom they cite):

When the Commander of the faithful learnt what Busr b. Artā'a had done in Yemen, he said: "O God, Busr has sold his religion for the world, so take his reason away. Do not let there remain to him in his religion anything by which he would merit Your mercy. May Busr survive until his mind becomes disordered."

(Later) Busr used to ask for a sword and a sword of wood would be brought to him. He would strike with it until he became unconscious. When he recovered consciousness, he would say: "The sword, the sword." It would be given to him and he would strike with it. He continued like that until he died.

The report of these words of his is also well-known: "After I (am gone) you will be exposed to my being cursed. For they will curse me. If they give you the opportunity to disassociate yourselves from me, do not do so, for I was born for (the service of) Islam. Whoever is given the opportunity to disassociate himself from me, let him (rather) stretch out his neck (for his head to be cut off). The man who does disassociate himself from me will gain neither this world or the next."

That matter turned out as he, peace be on him, described.

There is another report of his words, peace be on him, with the same implication: "People, I have called you to the truth and you turned your backs away from me. I have flogged you and you have made me tired. After me rulers will rule you. They will not be satisfied with this (attitude) from you so that they will torment you with whips and iron. Whoever torments people in this world will be tormented by God in the next. The sign of that will be that the ruler of Yemen will come against you to settle in your midst. A man called Yusuf b.'Umar will seize the tax-collectors and those who collect the taxes of the tax-collectors."

That happened as he, peace be on him, predicted.

Then there is the report which the religious scholars recount:

Juwayriyya b. Mishar stood at the gate of the palace.

"Where is the Commander of the faithful?" he asked.

"Sleeping." was the reply.

"You who are sleeping wake up," he shouted. "For by Him in Whose hands is my soul, a blow will be struck on your head from which your beard will be coloured with blood, as you have told us before."

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, heard that. He called out: "Come, Juwayriyya so that I can discuss with you what you are saying."

He came and (the Commander of the faithful) said to him: "By Him in Whose hands is my soul, you will be pulled before a rough harsh man. He will cut off your hand and your leg. Then you will be crucified below the tree trunk where an unbeliever (has already been crucified)."

Time went by after that until in the days of Mu'awiya, Ziyad became governor. He cut off his hand and his leg, then he

crucified him on the tree trunk where Ibn Muka'bir (was crucified). It was a long trunk and he was under him.

There is in addition this report:

Maytham al-Tammar was a slave of a woman from (the tribe of) Banu Asad. The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, bought him from her and then gave him his freedom.

"What is your name?" he asked him.

"Salim," he replied.

"The Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, told me that the name which your father gave you in Persian was Maytham," he said.

"God and His Apostle are true and you are true, Commander of the faithful," he said. "By God that is my name."

"Go back to the name by which the Apostle of God referred to you and leave (the name) Salim," he told him.

He returned to (the name) Maytham and was given the kunya Abu Salim. On the same day, 'Ali, peace be on him, told him: "After me, you will be seized and crucified and stabbed by a spear. On the third day your nostrils and mouth will flow with blood which will colour your beard. So wait for that colour (to come). You will be crucified on the gate of the house of 'Amr b. Hurayth. You will be the tenth one of ten (crucified) men. You will have the shortest timber among them but you will be the nearest of them to the place for washing. Come so that I may show you the palm-tree on (the timber of) whose trunk you will be crucified."

He showed it to him. Maytham used to go there and pray at it. He used to say: "What a blessed palm-tree you are. I am created for you and you grew up for me."

He continued to frequent it until it was cut down and he knew

the place in Kufa where he would be crucified. He used to meet 'Amr b. Hurayth and say to him: "I will be your neighbour, so show neighbourliness to me."

"You want to buy the house of Ibn Mas'ud or the house of Ibn Hakim," 'Amr used to say, because he did not understand what he meant.

In the year in which he was killed he made a pilgrimage. He visited Umm Salama, may God be pleased with her.

"Who are you?" she asked.

"I am Maytham," he said.

"By God, how often I heard the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, mention you," she said. "He used to commend you to 'Ali in the middle of the night."

Then he asked her about al-Husayn, peace be on him.

"He is at an estate of his," she said.

"Tell him that I would have liked to greet him and that we will meet before the Lord of the Worlds, if God, the Exalted, wills," he told her.

Umm Salama called for some perfume and she perfumed his beard.

"Soon it will be coloured by blood," she said.

He went to Kufa and 'Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad, may God curse him, had him arrested and brought to him. He had been told that that man was one of the closest people to 'Ali, peace be on him.

"For shame, is he not a Persian?" he said.

"Yes," he was told.

"Where is your master?" he asked him.

"He is looking down on every wrongdoer and you are one of the wrongdoers," he answered.

"Despite your foreign accent you say what you mean," he said. "What has your leader told you that I will do to you?"

"He told me that you would crucify me as the tenth one of ten men," he answered. "I will have the shortest timber among them but will be the nearest of them to the place for washing."

"We will oppose him" ('Ubayd Allah) declared.

"How could you oppose him?" he retorted. "He did nothing but give me information on the authority of the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, on the authority of Gabriel, peace be on him, on the authority of God, the Exalted. How could you oppose these? I know the place in Kufa where I will be crucified. I am the first of God's creatures to be bridled in Islam."

He imprisoned him and he imprisoned al-Mukhtar b. Abi 'Ubayda with him.

"You will escape," Maytham told him, "and you will rebel to avenge the blood of al-Husayn, peace be on him. Then you will kill this man who is going to kill us."

When 'Ubayd Allah called for al-Mukhtar to kill him, a messenger (barid) arrived with a letter for 'Ubayd Allah from Yazid, ordering him to free (al-Mukhtar). He freed him and ordered Maytham to be crucified.

A man who met (Maytham) said to him: "Would not something satisfy you rather than this, Maytham?"

He smiled and said, pointing to the palm tree: "I was created for it and it has grown for me."

When he was put on the wood, the people gathered around him at the gate of 'Amr b. Hurayth.

"By God he used to say: I will be your neighbour," 'Amr said. After he had been crucified, he ordered a maidservant to sweep under the wood, to sprinkle it with water and to fumigate it.

Maytham began to speak of the virtues of Banu Hashim and it was reported to Ibn Ziyad: "That slave has insulted you."

"Bridle him," he ordered.

He was the first of God's creatures to be bridled in Islam. Maytham, may God have mercy on him, was killed ten days before al-Husayn came to Iraq. On the third day after his crucifixion, he was stabbed with a spear, and He declared the greatness of God. At the end of that day blood flowed from his mouth and his nose. This is one of the group of reports about the unknown which have been preserved concerning the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. Its reputation is extensive and the narration of it is widespread among the religious scholars ('ulama).

[Another such report has been related by Ibn 'Abbas. It has been reported on the authority of Mujalid, on the authority of al-Sha'bi, on the authority of Ziyad b. al-Nadr al-Harithi, who said:]

I was with Ziyad when Rushayd al-Hijri was brought to him. Ziyad said to him: "What did your leader say to you?" -meaning 'Ali, peace be on him - "For we will do that to you."

"You will cut off my hands and my legs and then you will crucify me," he answered.

"By God, I will make his word false," declared Ziyad. "Free him."

When he was about to leave, Ziyad said: "By God, we do not

find anything wrong with what his leader told him. Therefore cut off his hands and legs and crucify him"

"Wait a moment," Rushayd said to him, "I still have something (to tell) you which the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, told me."

"Cut out his tongue," ordered Ziyad.

"Now, by God, is the verification of the words of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him," declared Rushayd.

This report has also been handed down by those friendly and those hostile on the authority of men they regard as trustworthy, on the authority of those persons whom we have named. Its content is well known to all the religious scholars. It is one of the group already mentioned of (his) miracles and giving information about the unknown.

[A further account is reported by 'Abd al-Aziz b. Suhayb on the authority of Abu al-'Aliyya, who said: Mazra' b. 'Abd Allah told me:]

I (i.e. Mazra' b.'Abd Allah) heard the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, say: "By God, an army will advance so that when it is at al-Bayda' it will be swallowed up."

"You are telling me about the unknown," I said.

"Remember what I tell you," he said. "By God, what the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, tells you, will happen. A man will be taken. He will be killed and crucified between the two sides of the walls of the mosque."

"You are telling me about the unknown," I said.

"The trustworthy, the one protected by God, 'Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him, told me," he replied:

[Abu `Aliyya reported:]

Friday had not come when Mazra' was seized, killed and crucified between the two sides of the wall.

[(Abu 'Aliyya) said: He used to tell me about a third thing but I have forgotten it.]

Yet a further example is reported by Jarir on the authority of al-Mughira, who said:]

When al-Hajjaj, may God curse him, became governor, he sought for Kumayl b. Ziyad. The latter fled from him. (al-Hajjaj) deprived his people of their allowances ('ata`'). When Kumayl saw that, he said: "I am an old man and my life is nearly finished. It is not right for me to deprive my people of their allowances."

So he went and offered his hand to al-Hajjaj. When the latter saw him, he said: "I would have liked to have found a way to get you, myself."

"Don't gnash your teeth at me and don't threaten me," Kumayl replied. "What is left of my life is like mere specks of dust. Therefore give judgement as long as you are a judge. For there is an appointed time to be with God and after death there is the reckoning. The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, told me that you would kill me."

"Then that is evidence against yourself," al-Hajjaj said to him.

"But the judgement is yours," answered Kumayl.

"Indeed," he retorted, "you were among those who killed 'Uthman b.'Affan. Strike off his head."

Then he was e x e c u t e d.

This report is also recorded by the non-Shi'a ('amma) which they report on the authority of men whom they regard as trustworthy. The Shi'a (khassa) participate in reporting it. Hence it

has been included in this section where we mention miracles, proofs and evidence (concerning him).

There is, in addition, the account recorded by the historians (ashab al-sira) on various authorities:

One day al-Hajjaj b. Yusuf al-Thaqafi said: "I would like to strike down one of the followers of Abu Turab (derogatory name of 'Ali). Through his blood, I would get closer to God."

"We know of no one who was a companion of Abu Turab for a longer time than Qanbar, his retainer," he was told.

He sent in search of him and he was brought.

"Are you Qanbar?" he asked.

"Yes," he replied

"(Your kunya) is Abu Hamdan?" he asked.

"Yes," he replied

"Is your master 'Ali b. Abi Talib?"

"God is my Master," he replied, "and the Commander of the faithful 'Ali is the master of my provisions."

"Disassociate yourself, from his religion," he ordered him.

"If I disassociate myself from his religion, will you show me another better than it?" he asked.

"I will kill you," he answered. "So choose what sort of death you prefer."

"I leave that to you," he responded.

"Why?" he asked.

"Because in whatever way you kill me, you will be killed in the same way," he said. "The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, told me that my fate would be to be slaughtered unjustly and without right."

Then he ordered him to be slaughtered.

This is also one of the reports which is established with regard to the Commander of the faithful, speaking about the unknown. It has been included in the section concerning the compelling miracles and outstanding evidence and the knowledge which God specially endowed to His proof among His prophets, apostles and chosen ones, peace be on them. Therefore it follows on from what has been presented before.

[Of a similar kind is the account reported by al-Hasan b. Mahbub on the authority of Thabit al-Thumali, on the authority of Abu Ishaq al-Sabi'i, on the authority of Suwayd b. Ghafila, (who said):]

A man came to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. He said: "Commander of the faithful, I have passed through Wadi al-Qarni and I saw that Khalid b. 'Arfata had died there. I asked forgiveness for him."

"Nonsense!" declared the Commander of the faithful. "He has not died and he will not die until he leads an army of error whose standard-bearer will be- Habib b. Himaz."

A man from below the pulpit said: "Commander of the faithful, I belong to your Shi'a and I am one who loves you."

"Who are you?" he asked.

"I am Habib b. Himaz," he replied.

"Beware," he said, "you will carry (that standard). Indeed you will carry it and you will enter from this gate." He pointed with his hand to the Gate of al-Fil.

After the death of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him,,. and al-Hasan, peace be on him, after that, and the events concerning al-Husayn and his revolt, Ibn Ziyad sent 'Umar b. Sa'd against al-Husayn, peace be upon him. He put Khalid b.'Arfata in command of the vanguard and he made Habib b. Himaz the standard-bearer. He went there until he entered the mosque through the gate of al-Fil.

This is also a widespread report which the traditionists (ahl al-'ilm) and the narrators of historical reports (athar) have not refused to acknowledge. It is widespread among the Kufans and well known in their circles. Not even two of them have denied it. It belongs to the class of miraculous (knowledge) which we have mentioned.

[Another example is the report of Zakariyya b. Yahya al-Qattan, on the authority of Fadl b. al-Zubayr, on the authority of Abu al-Hakam, who said: I heard our shaykhs and our religious scholars say:]

'Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him, preached. In his sermon, he said:

"Ask me before you lose me. But, by God, do not ask me about a group who will lead a hundred astray and which will guide a hundred, otherwise I will tell you about the screecher of that group and the driver of it until the day of Resurrection."

A man rose before him and said: "Tell me how many pieces of hair there are on my head and my beard?"

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, said: "By God, my bosom friend, the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, told me about what you have asked. For every piece of hair on your beard there is an angel who curses you and for every piece of hair on your beard there is a devil who provokes you. In your house there is a worthless (child) who will kill the (grand)son of the Apostle of God. That will be the proof of the truthfulness of what I have told you. If it was not for the fact that it is difficult to prove what you asked about, I

would (simply) have informed you of it. However the proof of (my answer to) that (question) lies in the information I have given about your curse and your cursed worthless (child)."

At that time his son was a small boy still crawling. When the (tragic) events in the affair of al-Husayn, peace be on him, occurred, he took part in killing him. So the event occurred as the Commander of the faithful had described.

[In the same way Isma'il b. Sabih reported on the authority of Yahya b. al-Musawir al-'Abdi, on the authority of Isma'il b. Ziyad, who said;

One day 'Ali, peace be on him, said to al-Bara' b. 'Azib: "Bara', my son al-Husayn, peace be on him, will be killed while you are alive and you will not help him."

After al-Husayn, peace be on him, was killed, al-Bara' b. 'Azib used to say: "By God, 'Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him, spoke the truth about al-Husayn being killed and my not helping him."

He showed (much) grief and regret about that.

This belongs to what we have mentioned about him giving information about the unknown and the prevailing attitudes of men's hearts.

[Another account is reported by 'Uthman b. 'Isa al-'Amiri on the authority of Jabir b. al-Hurr, on the authority of Juwayriyya b Mishar al-'Abdi, who said:]

When we set out with the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, to Siffin. We reached the plains of Karbala'. He stood at the side of the camp and looked right and left. He cried and he said: "By God, this is the place where the camels will kneel for their riders. This is the place of their fate."

"Commander of the faithful, what is this place?" he was asked.

"This is Karbala'," he said. "Here people will be killed who will enter heaven without any reckoning (against them)."

Then he went on and the people did not understand the explanation of what he had said until the tragedy of al-Husayn b.'Ali, peace be on them, and his followers took place on the plain. Then those who had heard his words recognised the truthfulness of what he had told them.

This has been (a summary) of his knowledge of the unknown and his telling what would happen before it happened. It is clearly miraculous in nature and wonderful knowledge as we have mentioned. Reports conveying the same sense are so numerous that their explanation would make the book unduly long. What we have presented is sufficient for our intention.

2. Cf. al-Tabari, I, 3383-4.

Chapter 45

His Miraculous Strength at Khaybar

Among his wonderful signs is the ability by which God set him apart and the strength which he specially endowed to him, and the transcendence of normal events through miracles.

Of that kind is that which has been handed down in the historical reports and has become well-known through accounts. The religious scholars have agreed on it and both opponents and friends accept it, (namely) the story of Khaybar and of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, removing the gate of the fortress with his own hand, and laying it on the ground with, his own hand, while it was of such a weight that (it took) not less than fifty men to carry it.

[‘Abd Allah b. Ahmad b. Hanbal has mentioned that in what he reports on the authority of his transmitter. The latter reported: Isma’il b. Ishaq, the qadi, told us: Ibrahim b. Hamza told us: ‘Abd al-‘Aziz b. Muhammad told us on the authority of Hizam, on the authority of Abu ‘Atiq on the authority of Jabir:]

At the battle of Khaybar, the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, gave the standard to ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him. After he had prayed for him, ‘Ali, peace be on him, began to rush forward while his comrades were telling him to go slowly. He came to the fortress, and pulled away its gate throwing it to the ground. Then seventy of us gathered around it. It was only as a result of their (combined) effort that they could lift the door.(3)

This is an example of the special strength with which God endowed him. Through it the normal (human) qualities were

transcended and it became a miraculous sign as we have said before.

3. This has already been presented, cf 83-88.

Chapter 46

The Miracle of Moving the Rock and the Water under it

Another example is reported by the historians (ashab al-siyar) and the account of it is widespread among both the non-Shi'a ('amma) and the Shi'a (khassa) so that poets have written verses about it; rhetoricians have compiled sermons on it and men of understanding and learning have reported it. (It is) the story of the monk in the area of Karbala' and the stone. Its reputation (is such) that it does not need the presentation of its chain of authorities (isnad).

[It is that the whole group (of scholars) report.]

When the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, headed toward Siffin, a terrible thirst came on his followers. The water with them had been used up. They began to search for water to right and left but they did not find any trace of it. The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, turned off the main road with them and went a little way. A hermitage appeared before them in the middle of the desert. He went with them towards it. When he reached its courtyard, he ordered those (with him) to call for its occupant to come before them. They called him and he came. The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, asked him: "Is this residence of yours near water, which will quench the thirst of these people?"

"There is more than six miles between me and water," he answered.

"There is no water nearer than that to me. If it was not for the fact that I am brought enough water for each month to sustain

me, I would be destroyed by thirst."

"Did you hear what the monk said?" the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, asked.

"Yes," they answered. "Order us to go to the place which he indicated. Perhaps we will reach water while we still have strength."

"There is no need for you to do that," the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, told them. He turned the neck of his mule in the direction of the qibla (i.e. towards Mecca) and he directed them to a place near the hermitage. "Uncover the ground in this place," he ordered them.

A group of them went straight to the place and uncovered it with iron shovels. A great shiny rock appeared. They said: "Commander of the faithful, here is a great rock on which the shovels are useless."

"This rock is over water," he told them. "If it moves. f r o m its position, you will find the water."

They struggled to remove it. All the people gathered together and tried to move it but they could find no way to do that. It was too difficult for them. When he, peace be on him, saw that they had gathered together and striven to remove the rock but it was too difficult for them, he put his leg over his saddle until it reached the ground. Then he rolled up his sleeves. He put his fingers under the side of the rock and he moved it. He removed it with his hand and pushed it many yards away. When it had moved f r o m its position, the white (glitter) of water appeared before them. They hurried to it and drank f r o m it. It was the sweetest, coldest and purest water that they had ever drunk f r o m on their journey.

"Get supplies and quench your thirst," he told them.

They did that. Then he went to the rock and took it with his hand and put it back where it had been. He ordered that its

traces be removed with earth. The hermit had been watching from on top of his hermitage. When he realised what had happened, he called out: "People, help me down, help me down."

They helped him to get down. He stood in front of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him and said: "Man, are you a prophet sent (by God)?"

"No," he replied.

"(Then are you) an angel who is close to God?" he asked.

"No," was the answer.

"Then who are you?" asked (the hermit).

"I am the testamentary trustee of the Apostle of God, Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah, the seal of the prophets, may God bless him and his family," he replied.

"Stretch out your hand," said the hermit, "so that I may submit to God, the Blessed and Exalted, at your hands."

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, stretched out his hand and told him: "Make the twofold testimony."

He said: "I testify that there is no god but God alone without any partner. I testify that Muhammad is His servant and His Apostle. I testify that you are the testamentary trustee of the Apostle of God, the one with most right among the people to authority after him."

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, made him understand the conditions of being a Muslim and then asked him: "What is it that has prompted you to enter Islam after your long residence in this hermitage in opposition to it?"

"I will tell you, Commander of the faithful," he said. -"This hermitage was built to seek out the one who would remove that

rock and then water would come from underneath it. Scholars before me died and they did not attain that (knowledge) but God, the Mighty and High, has provided me with it. We find in one of our books and a prose writer of our scholars that in this land there is a spring with a rock over it. No one knows its place except a prophet or the testamentary trustee of a prophet. He must be a friend of God who calls (men) to truth, whose sign is the knowledge of the place of this rock and his ability to remove it. When I saw you do that, I realised what we had been waiting for. The object of desire had been attained. Today I am a Muslim (converted) at your hands, a believer in your right and your servant (mawla)."

When he heard that, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, wept until his beard became moist with tears. He said: "Praise be to God, by Whom I have not been forgotten. Praise be to God in Whose books I have been mentioned."

Then he summoned the people and told them: "Listen to what your brother Muslim says."

They listened to his words. Then they gave much praise to God and thanks for the blessing which he had bestowed upon them in giving them knowledge of the right of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. Then they went on and the hermit went before him amid a group of his followers until he met the Syrians. The hermit was among a group of those who were martyred there. He, peace be upon him, carried out the prayer over him. He buried him and sought much forgiveness for him. Whenever he was mentioned, ('Ali) would say: "That was my servant (mawla)."

In this report there are (several) kinds of miracle. One of them is knowledge of the unknown, a second is the strength by which normal human capabilities were transcended, and (another) is the distinction (of him) from other men through the confirmation of the message about him in the first Books of God. This is validated by the words of God, the Exalted: That is their example in the Torah and their example in the Gospels (XLVII 29).

Al-Sayyid Isma'il b. Muhammad al-Himyari, may God have mercy on him, speaks of the same thing in his glorious golden ode:

During his journey he went by night after the evening prayer to Karbala' in a procession.

Until he came to one who devoted himself to God on a piece of raised ground. He made his camp on inhospitable land.

O wilderness, it is not (a place) where he meets a living soul other than the wild animals and the balding white haired man (i.e. 'Ali).

He approaches and cries out at it. (The holy man) looks down as he stands, like the defender (looks down) over his bow from a watchtower.

Is there water which can be attained near the position which you have settled at. He answers: There is nothing to drink,

Except at a distance of six miles and the water I have with me (here) between the sandy hill and the vast desert.

He turns the reins towards the flat ground. He uncovers a smooth rock which shines like golden leaf-paste for camels.

He says: Turn it around. If you turn it around, you will see. You; will not see if it is not turned around.

They gang together to remove it. It is impossible for them. It is a difficult impossible task which cannot be performed.

When it had weakened them, he stretched a hand towards it when the conqueror comes, it is conquered.

It was as if it was a ball of fallen cotton in a skein, which he pushed in a playground.

He gave them sweet delicious water to drink f r o m under it, which was better than the most delicious, the sweetest.

Then when they had all drunk, he put it back and went away. Its position is left alone. It cannot be approached.

Ibn Maymun added these words concerning that:

The signs for the monk were a miraculous secret there and he believed in the noble born testamentary trustee of authority (wasi).

He died a martyr, truthful in his (statement of) support, most noble of monks who have become fearful (of God).

I mean that the son of Fatima is the testamentary trustee of authority. Whoever declares (their belief in) his outstanding merit and his (illustrious) actions does not lie.

He is a man both of whose sides are (descended) f r o m Shem, without any father f r o m Ham, nor a father of a father.

He is one who does not flee and in battle only the striking of his sword dyed red (with blood) can be seen.

Chapter 47

His Miraculous Victory over the Jinn

Another example is the tradition which has become well-known about the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, sending him to the valley of the jinn. Gabriel, peace be on him, had told him that groups of them had gathered to plot against him. (The Commander of the faithful) took the place of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, and through God was sufficient for the believers against the plotting (of the jinn). He repelled them from the believers through his strength by which he was set apart from the rest of them.

[Muhammad b. Abi al-Sirri al-Tamimi reported on the authority of Ahmad b. al-Faraj, on the authority of al-Hasan b. Musa al-Nahdi, on the authority of his father, on the authority of Wabira b. al-Harith, on the authority of Ibn al-'Abbas, may God have mercy on him, who said:]

When the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, set out against the Banu al-Mustaliq, he avoided the road. Night came and he stopped near a rugged valley. Towards the end of the night, Gabriel, peace be on him, came down to tell him that a group of unbelieving jinn had gone in to the valley with the intention of plotting against him, peace be on him, and causing harm to his Companions. He called for the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, and told him: "Go to this valley, those of the jinn who are enemies of God, who want (to attack) you, will come against you. Repel them with the strength which God, the Mighty and High, has given you. You will be protected by the names of God, the Mighty and High, which He has specially endowed you with knowledge of."

He sent with him a hundred men from different groups among the people. He told them: "Stay with him and obey his orders."

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, set out for the valley. When he was near the side of the valley, he ordered the hundred men who had accompanied him to stand close to the side and not to do anything until he gave them permission. He went forward and stood at the edge of the valley. He sought refuge with God from his enemies and he named God, may His name be magnified. He signalled to the people who had followed him to come closer. They came closer and there was a gap between him and them of the distance of a bow-shot. Then he began to go down in to the valley when a hurricane arose, which almost made the people fall on their faces because of its violence. They could not keep their feet on the ground because of terror of opposition and terror of what would come upon them. The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him shouted: "I am 'Ali b. Abi Talib b.'Abd al-Muttalib, the testamentary trustee of authority (wasi) of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, and his cousin. Defy (us) is if you want to." Persons in the form of gipsies appeared before the people who seemed to have torches of fire in their hands and they dried up (all) the sides of the valley. The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, penetrated deep in to the valley, while reciting the Qur'an and signalling to right and left with his sword. It was not long before the persons became like black smoke. The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, magnified God. Then he climbed back the way he had come down. He stood with the people who had accompanied him. The place became yellow as a result of what had happened to it. The Companions of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, said to him: "Abu al-Hasan ('Ali), we almost died of fear and anxiety for you because of what you met. It was worse than (anything else) that has happened to us."

"When the enemy showed themselves to me," he told them, "and I shouted the names of God, the Exalted, among them, they became smaller and I knew the terror which had come upon them. Therefore I went in to the valley without any fear of them. If they had remained in substantial forms, I would

have attacked them to the last one. God was sufficient (protection) against their plotting and He was sufficient (help) for the Muslims against their wickedness. The rest of them will go ahead of me to the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, in order to (confess that they) believe in him."

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, returned with those who had been with him to the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family. He gave him the news. (The Apostle) was delighted with him and prayed for his well-being. Then he said to him: "Ali, those whom God filled with fear through you have come ahead of you to me. They submitted to Islam and I accepted their submission."

Then he continued the journey with all the Muslims and they passed through the valley in safety and without fear.

The non-Shi'a ('amma) report that account as well as the Shi'a (khassa) and they do not refuse to accept it. However, the Mu'tazila because of their inclination to the beliefs of the Brahmins reject it. In addition to that they deny it because of their understanding of traditional reports. However, they are following the methods of atheism in imputing error to the Qur'an and the reports which it includes about the jinn, their believing in God and His Apostle and the information about them which God gives in the Qur'an in the Surat al-Jinn (LXXII) where they say: We heard a wonderful recitation (Qur'an) which gave guidance to righteousness and we believed in it (LXXII 1-2) to the end of the contents of the sura which gives information about them. Since the opposition of the atheists to that is invalidated by the possibility of minds (conceiving) the existence of jinn and of their being made responsible (for their action) and the proof of this is through the Qur'an and the glorious wonder in it. In the same way it demonstrates the invalidity of the accusation of the Mu'tazila against the report which we have given, (when they accuse it) of being impossible to be sustained by (human) intellects. Insofar as it is reported by two different chains of authority and by two groups to give evidence for two dissimilar attitudes, that is proof of its validity. There is no substance in its rejection by those who deviate from true justice

like the Mu'tazila and the determinists (mujabbara), nor in the denigration of the necessity of using it which we have mentioned, just as there is no substance in the denial by the atheists, and varieties of agnostics, the Jews, the Christians, the Zoroastrians and the Sabians of the validity of the reports of the miracles of the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, such as: the splitting of the moon, the bending of the palm trunk, stones speaking in his hand, the camel complaining, wild calves speaking, the tree moving (to him), water coming from his hands at the place for ritual ablution and feeding great crowds of people. (There are indeed no grounds for them) to denigrate the validity, the truthfulness of their narration and the establishment of the proof of them. Indeed their error in rejecting that, even in finding it weak, is much greater than the error of those who deny the miracles of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, and their proof. Since such things are not hidden to people capable of considering them, there is no need for us to explain their arguments in this place. Since the special nature of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, apart from (the rest of) the people has been established by what we have described as has his being separate from all others in the knowledge which we have explained, (this) has made clear the statement of his right to precedence over (the rest of) the community with regard to the position of the Imamate and his right to precedence over them in the place of leadership. (It is further confirmed) by what the Wise Words (i.e. the Qur'an) contain concerning the story of David and Talut where He, may His name be exalted, says: Their prophet said to them: God has sent Talut to you as a king. They asked: Shall he have (the right of) kingship over us while we are more entitled to kingship than he is? He has not brought any extent of wealth. He replied: God has chosen him to be over you and increased him extensively in knowledge and substance. God bestows His kingship on whom He wishes. God is (all) embracing, one who knows (II 247). God, the Exalted, gives the proof for Talut's precedence over the community of his people. (Similarly) He gave him a proof of (being) His friend and the brother of His Prophet in having precedence of the rest of the community through choosing (him to be) over them and adding to him a (great) extent knowledge and

substance. That is corroborated by similar things which have corroborated the right of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, through his wonderful miraculous nature, in addition to him being separate from the people through the addition of the great extent of his knowledge and substance. God, may He be praised and exalted, said: The sign of his kingship is that he will bring you the ark in which there is assurance from your Lord and the rest of what the family of Moses and the family of Aaron left, which the angels brought. In that there is a sign for you if you would believe (II 248).

The transcendence of ordinary human behaviour by the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, lies in the knowledge which we have recounted and other things similar to the transcendency of ordinary human behaviour by Talut in bringing the ark. This is clear. May God be the bringer of success.

I still find the ignorant and the obstinate among the anti-Shi'a (nasiba) showing surprise at the report of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, meeting the jinn, and keeping their evil away from the Prophet, may God bless him, his family, and his Companions. They laugh at that and attribute the story to such useless nonsense. They diminish such things concerning reports of similar miracles by him, peace be on him, and say these are forgeries by the Shi'a, and those of them who forge have forged them in order to acquire (prestige) and in order to defend desperately (their beliefs). This is exactly what all the atheists (zanadiqa) and the enemies of Islam say about what the Qur'an mentions with regard to the report of the jinn and their submission to Islam in its words: We have heard a wondrous Qur'an which leads to guidance (LXXII 1-2). (They take a similar attitude) about the report of Ibn Mas'ud concerning the story of the night of the jinn and him seeing them like gipsies. (They also have the same view) of the miracles of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family-They show surprise at all of these and laugh when they hear the account of them, dispute their authenticity, mock and talk nonsense in a slanderous way in which they conduct themselves against Islam and its followers, regarding as stupid those who believe in it and support it, accusing the followers of Islam of

deficiency and ignorance, and forging false stories. Let the people examine the crime which they have committed against Islam by their hostility to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, and their relying on removing his virtues, noble actions and signs by which they resemble the classes of the atheists (zanadiqa) and unbelievers through their departure from the roads of (true) proofs in to the gates of deviation and ignorance. In God do we seek help.

Chapter 48

His Sending back the Sun

Among the wonderful signs which God, the Exalted, has brought forth through the hands of the Commander of the faithful, 'Ali b. Abi Talib, is one, the reports of which have become widespread among the biographers and historians ('ulama' al-siyar wa al-athar) and about which the poets have composed verses (namely) when he, peace be on him, sent back the sun (to its earlier position) on two occasions, once during the life of the Prophet and another time after his death.

The account of it being sent back on the first occasion has been reported by Asma' daughter of 'Umays, Umm Salama, the wife of the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, Jabir b. 'Abd Allah al-Ansari, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri and a group of the Companions.

One day the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, was in his house and 'Ali, peace be on him, was in front of him when Gabriel, peace be on him, came to him to speak privately to him about God. When inspiration closed in upon him, he used the thigh of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, as a pillow. He did not raise his head from it until the sun had set. Thus he compelled the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, (to remain) in that position. So he prayed the afternoon prayer sitting, giving a nod (with his head) for his bowing and prostration. When (the Apostle) awoke" from his trance, he said to the Commander of the faithful: "Have you missed the afternoon prayer?"

"I could not pray it standing because of your position, Apostle of God, and the circumstances of hearing inspiration which I

was in," he answered.

"Ask God to send the sun back for you so that you may pray it standing at its proper time just as (it was) when you missed being able to do it," he told him. "God, the Exalted, will answer you because of your obedience to God and to His Apostle."

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, asked God to send back the sun. It was sent back for him so that it came in to its position in the sky at the time for the afternoon prayer. The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, prayed the afternoon prayer at its proper time. Then it set. [Asma' reported:]

By God we heard it at its setting, screeching like the screech of the saw in wood.

Its being sent back for him after the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, was when he wanted to cross the Euphrates at Babylon, many of his followers were occupied in taking their animals and baggage across. He, peace be on him, prayed the afternoon prayer himself with a group who were with him. The people did not finish their crossing and many of them missed the time of the prayer. The people recalled the merit of being together for that (prayer) and they spoke about that. When he heard their talk about it, he asked God to send back the sun so that all his followers might be together to perform the afternoon prayer at its proper time. God, the Exalted, answered him by sending back the sun for him. The horizons became such as they are for the time of the afternoon prayer. When the people had said the final greeting (at the end of the prayer), the sun disappeared and a violent throbbing was heard from it which terrified the people. They became profuse in their glorification of God, in their declarations of His uniqueness, and in seeking forgiveness from him, and in praising God for the favour which he had shown to them.

The reports of that have reached the (distant) horizons and its account is widespread among the people. Concerning that al-Sayyid b. Muhammad al-Himyari, may God have mercy on him,

recited:

The sun was sent back for him when he missed the time of the afternoon prayer and sunset had drawn near.

So that its light shone (the same as) at its time for the afternoon. Then it fell like a shooting star.

For him it was sent back another time at Babylon. It has not been sent back for any Arab creature,

Only so that his first (view of it) may be mixed with his later (view of it) and so that it being sent back may be an explanation of a wondrous matter.

Chapter 49

The Miracle of Speaking to the Fish

Similar to that is (the account) which the historians (ahl al-athar) report and which has become famous among the Kufans because of it being widespread among them. Hence the report has spread to other people in other places. The scholars also confirm it. (It is) that the fish talked to him at the Euphrates by Kufa.

[They report:]

The waters of the Euphrates overflowed and grew so big that the people of Kufa became anxious about drowning. They resorted to the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. He rode out on the mule of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, and the people went with him until he reached the banks of the Euphrates. He, peace be on him, dismounted and performed the ritual ablution and prayed alone, by himself, while the people watched him. Then he called on God with prayers which most of them heard. He went towards the Euphrates, leaning on a stick which was in his hand. He struck the surface of the water with it and said: "Abate, with God's permission and His will."

The waters sank so that the fish at the bottom (of the flood) appeared. Many of them greeted him with title of the Commander of the faithful. However some kinds of fish did not speak. They were eels, a scaleless fish (marmaliq) and mud fish (zumar). The people were amazed at that and they asked for the reason that the ones who spoke spoke and the ones who were silent were silent. He said: "God made those fish which were ritually pure speak to me and he kept those silent towards me which

were forbidden, impure and worse."

This is a widespread report, the fame of which is, through its transmission and narration, like the fame of the wolves speaking to the Prophet, the stones praising God in the palm of his hand, the trunk of the tree bending towards him and the feeding of many with little food. Whoever continues to find fault with ('Ali's miracles) is one who can only find the doubts about it in what the denigrators depend upon, in what we have enumerated of the miracles of the Apostle.

Chapter 50

The Commander of the Faithful and the Jinn

The historians (hamalat al-athar wa ruwat al-akhbar) have also reported the story of the snake and the sign and miraculous nature of it which is like the story of the fishes and the abating of the waters of the Euphrates.

[They reported:]

One day the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, was making a speech on the pulpit at Kufa, when a snake appeared at the side of the pulpit and began to climb up until it was near the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. The people shook with fear at that and were worried about its purpose and about driving it away f r o m the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. He signalled to them to keep away f r o m it. When it reached the raised platform on which the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, was standing, he bent down towards the snake and the snake spread itself up towards him so that it could gobble his ear.

The people fell silent and became distraught at that. It made a croaking sound which many of them heard. Then it went down f r o m its position. The Commander of the faithful moved his lips in a whisper and the snake acted as if it was listening to him. Then it glided away. The ground had swallowed it up. The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, went on with his speech and brought it to a close.

When he had finished it and gone down, the people gathered around him, questioning him about the circumstances of the snake and the wonder of it. He told them: "That was not as you

had thought. It was only one of the judges of the jinn, whom a case had confused. He came to me to find out f r o m me about it. I informed him about it. He wished me well and departed."

Often the ignorant among the people regard the appearance of jinn in the form of animals which cannot speak as impossible. However, that was well-known by the Arabs, before the mission (of the Prophet) and after it, and reports f r o m people belonging to Islam corroborate it. Nor is it more unlikely than the report which is agreed on by Muslims (ahl al-qibla) of the appearance of the Devil to the people in the assembly building in the form of an old man f r o m Najd, and his agreement with them to deceive the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, and of his appearing to the polytheists at the Battle of Badr in the form of Saraqa b. Ja'sham al-Madliji. He, the Exalted, said: There will be no conqueror of you among the people today. I am one who grants you neighbourly protection (VIII 48). God, the Mighty and High, said: When the two groups looked at each other, he turned on his heels and said: I am innocent of you. I see what you do not see. I fear God. God is violent in His punishment (VIII 48).

All who continue to find fault with the signs which we have mentioned only say about them the same as the atheists and unbelievers among the opponents of religion, say. They find fault with them in the same way as they find fault with the signs of the Prophet in confirmation of his prophethood, and with the validity of the miracles of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family.

Chapter 51

Some other Miracles of the Commander of the Faithful

[Another example is reported by 'Abd al-Qahir b.'Abd al-Malik b.'Ata` al-Ashja'i on the authority of al-Walid b.'Imran al-Bajali, on the authority of Jami' b.'Umayr, who said:]

'Ali, peace be on him, suspected a man called al-Ghayzar of giving information to Mu'awiya. He denied that and disputed it. The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, said: "Do you swear by God that you have not done so?"

"Yes," he answered and he hurried forward and took the oath.

"If you are a liar," the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, told him, "God will blind you."

The Friday had not come when he was brought out blind, being led. God had taken away his sight.

[Of the same kind is what is reported by Isma'il b.'Umayr, who said: Mis'ar b. Kidam told me: Talha b.'Umayra told us:]

'Ali, peace be on him, recited the words of the Prophet to the people: To whomsoever I am his master (mawla), 'Ali is his master. Twelve men f r o m the Ansar testified to that but Anas b. Malik was among the people who did not give testimony to it. The Commander of the faithful, said to him: "Anas."

"At your service," he replied

"What stopped you f r o m testifying?" he asked. "You have

heard what they heard."

"Commander of the faithful," he replied, "I have grown old and I have forgotten."

"O God," the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, prayed, "if he is a liar, strike him with leprosy" [or he said a word for it which is understood by the ordinary people].

[Talha reported:]

"I testify before God, I saw a whiteness (of leprosy) between his eyes."

[Similarly Abu Isra'il has reported on the authority of al-Hakam b. Abi Salman, the mu'adhdhin, on the authority of Zayd b. Arqam, who said:]

'Ali, peace be on him, recited before the people in the mosque and said: "May God adjure to arise any man who heard the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, say: To whomsoever I am his master (mawla), 'Ali is his master. O God, be a friend to those who befriend him and an enemy to those who are hostile to him."

Twelve men, who fought at Badr, stood up, six on the right and six on the left, and they testified to that.

[Zayd b. Arqam added:]

I was among those who heard that but I kept it hidden. Then God took away my sight.

He used to regret failing to give testimony and he used to seek forgiveness from God.

[Another example is what is reported by 'Ali b. Mushir on the authority of al-A'mash, on the authority of Musa b. Tarif, on the authority of 'Abaya and (also it is reported on the authority of) Musa b. Ukayl al-Numayri, on the authority of 'Imran b.

Maytham on the authority of 'Abaya. (It is further reported on the authority of) Musa al-Wajihi, on the authority of al-Minhal b. 'Umar, and on the authority of 'Abd Allah b. al-Harith, 'Uthman b. Sa'id, and 'Abd Allah b. Bukayr, on the authority of Hakim b. Jubayr: They (all) said:]

We witnessed 'Ali, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, on the pulpit saying: "I am the servant of God, the brother of the Apostle of God. I have inherited the blessing f r o m the Apostle. I have married the mistress of the women of Heaven. I am the master of the testamentary trustees of authority, and those who are the last trustees of the Prophet. No one except me can claim that without God striking him with evil."

A man f r o m (the tribe of) 'Abs who was sitting in front of the people said: "Who is not good enough to say this. I am the servant of God, the brother of the Apostle of God."

He had not left his place when the Devil caught hold of him and dragged him by his leg to the door of the mosque. His people asked us about him and we said: "Did you know him to be a man of (stupid) risks before this?"

"O God, no," they answered.

[Al-Shaykh al-Mufid, may God be pleased with him, says:]

The reports about similar things to what we have mentioned are (such) that the book would become too long as a result of them. We have put forward in this book of ours sufficiency in its outline to do without what is similar to them. We ask God for success and we seek help f r o m Him along the path of guidance.

Chapter 52

THE CHILDREN OF THE COMMANDER OF THE FAITHFUL

(This is) an account of the children of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, their number and names, and a selection of reports about them.

The Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, had twenty-seven children, male and female:

1. Al-Hasan
2. Al-Husayn
3. Zaynab the elder
4. Zaynab the younger, who was given the kunya Umm Kulthum.

Their mother was Fatima, the blessed, mistress of the women of the worlds, daughter of the master of those sent by God and the seal of the prophets, the Prophet Muhammad.

5. Muhammad, who was given the kunya Abu al-Qasim.

His mother was Khawla, daughter of Ja'far b. Qays al-Hanafi.

6. 'Umar
7. Ruqayya

They were twins. Their mother was Umm Habib, daughter of

Rabi'a.

8. Al-'Abbas

9. Ja'far

10. 'Uthman

11. 'Abd Allah

(The last four) were martyrs with their brother al-Husayn on the plain of Karbala'. Their mother was Umm al-Banin, daughter of Hizam b. Khalid b. Darim.

12. Muhammad, the younger, who was given the kunya Abu Bakr.

13. Ubayd Allah

Both of these were martyrs with their brother al-Husayn on that plain. Their mother was Layla, daughter of Mas'ud al-Darimi.

14. Yahya

His mother was Asma', daughter of 'Umays al-Khath'ami, may God be pleased with her.

15. Umm al-Hasan

16. Ramla

The mother of these two was Umm Sa'id, daughter of 'Urwa b. Mas'ud al-Thaqafi.

17. Nafisa

18. Zaynab, the youngest

19. Ruqayya, the younger

20. Umm Hani'
21. Umm al-Kiram
22. Jumana, who was given the kunya Umm Ja'far.
23. Umana
24. Umm Salama
25. Maymuna
26. Khadija
27. Fatima

These, the blessings of God be on them, had different mothers.

Among the Shi'a, there are those who mention (another) Fatima, the blessing of God be on her, who was born after the Prophet. They say that the Apostle of God named her while he was carrying Muhsin. According to this group there were twenty-eight children of the Commander of the faithful, the blessing and peace of God be on him. God knows and judges best.

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*"Wisdom is the lost property of the Believer,
let him claim it wherever he finds it"*

Imam Ali (as)