

Succession of Mohammad Mustafa (saws)

Source: (A Restatement of The History of Islam & Muslims by Sayed A.A Razwy, 1997-USA)

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The main and the most important reason for the existing differences in “believes and Practices” among the sects of Islam is about the *succession* of Apostle of God, Hazrat Mohammad Mustafa (saws).

As a Statesman, Mohammad (saws) ranks among the greatest in the whole world. He was endowed with amazing perspicacity, vision and political genius. During the last ten years of his life, he was called upon to make the most momentous decisions in the history of Islam. Those decisions affected not only the Muslims or the Arabs but all mankind. He was also aware that his actions and decisions would affect the actions and decisions of every generation of Muslims to the end of time itself.

Mohammad (saws), the Messenger of God, therefore, did not make any decision, no matter how trivial, on *ad hoc* basis; nor did he make decisions by a “trial and error” method. His decisions were all inspired. They were precedents for the Muslim *Umma* (nation or community) for all time. It was with his knowledge and understanding that he said or did anything and everything.

Mohammad (saws) had succeeded, after a long and sanguinary struggle against the idolaters and polytheists of Arabia, in establishing the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth so that his umma (people) may live in it in peace and security, admired and envied by the rest of mankind.

The Kingdom of Heaven on Earth was the life work of Mohammad (saws). He knew that he was a mortal, and would die someday, but his work, as embodied in the "Kingdom" would live. He knew that after his death, someone else would have to carry on the work begun by him. He also knew that orderly succession is the anchor of stability. He knew all this and much else besides. No Muslim would ever presume that Mohammad (saws), the Messenger of God, did not know all this better than anyone else.

The succession of Mohammad (saws) was also a subject of much speculation among many Muslims. One question that had been uppermost in the minds of many of them, especially since the conquest of Makkah, was, who would succeed him as the new head of the state of Medina, after his death.

This question admits of only one answer, viz., the best Muslim! The successor of Mohammad (saws) ought to be, not a second rate person, but the finest product of Islam; someone that Islam itself might uphold with pride as its "masterpiece".

But, unfortunately the succession, after the death of the Prophet, was not peaceful and orderly. There was a grim struggle for power among his companions in which some new candidates for power succeeded in capturing the government of Medina. Their success signaled an abrupt end of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, and signaled, at the same time, the birth of the Muslim State – a State run by people who were Muslims. The Kingdom of Heaven on Earth or the Islamic State did not survive the death of its founder.

This demise of the Islamic State, while still in its infancy, may arouse the curiosity of the student of history. He may wonder why it was so short-lived, and how it was possible for these new candidates to subvert the arrangement made by the Prophet himself for a peaceful and orderly transfer of power, and to foist an arrangement of their own upon the Muslim *umma*.

Following is an attempt to answer this question.

The new candidates for power had not endorsed the arrangement made by the Prophet for transfer of sovereignty. They and their supporters had many reservations about it, and they were resolved to capture the government of Medina for themselves. For this purpose, they had mapped out a grand strategy and they had gone to work at implementing it even before the death of prophet.

The principal ploy in the strategy of these candidates of power was to put into circulation the canard that neither the Book of God had expressed any views on the subject of the leadership of the Muslim *umma* nor the Messenger of God had designated anyone as his successor. They figured that if the Muslims believed such a claim to be true, then they (the Muslims) would assume that the Prophet left the job of finding future head of his government to the *umma* itself, and in the *umma*, of course, everyone was free to enter the “lists” and to grab power for himself, if he could.

Dr. Hamid-ud-deen:

Al-Qur’an al-Majid has not mentioned anything about the manner of selecting a khalifa. The reliable traditions (Hadith) of the Prophet are also silent in this regard. From this, one can make the deduction that the Shari’ah (Holy Law) left this matter to the discretion of the umma itself so that it may select its leaders according to its own needs, and according to the conditions prevailing at the time.

(History of Islam by Dr. Hamid-ud-Deen, M.A. (Honors), Punjab; M.A. (Delhi); Ph.D. {Harvard University, U.S.A.},

This ploy had had a most astonishing success and it has amazing longevity. It was used then and it is being used today. In the past it was used only in the East; now it is used in both East and West. Few in the East and none in the West have challenged it. Its success is attested by the testimony of the following historians:

1. Marshall G.S. Hodgson- (The Venture of Islam, Vol. 1, 1974)

2. Dr. Mohammad Hammidullah-(Introduction to Islam, Kuwait,1977)
3. Francesco Gabrieli-(The Arabs, A Compact History, New York,1963)
4. G.E .Von Grunebaum-(Classical Islam- A History 600- 1258)
5. John B. Christopher-(The Islamic Tradition, Introduction, New York)
6. Bernard Lewis- (The Legacy of Islam-Politics and War-1974)
7. George Stewart-(The Traditional Near East, N.J.1966)

An overwhelming majority of the historians of Islam have claimed that the Prophet did not specify anyone as the future head of state of Medina after his own death. For them, and for many others, the claim has become a creed now.

But not for the Shia Muslims. They maintain that Mohammad (saws), the Messenger of God, declared repeatedly and unequivocally that Ali (a.s) was his vicegerent and the sovereign of all Muslims.

Mohammad (saws) charted a course for his *Umma*, and warned it not to deviate from it after his death. But the *umma* deviated nevertheless, and this deviation led it, knowingly or unknowingly, into reviving a pagan tradition.

After the death of the Prophet, some of his companions gathered in an outhouse of Medina called Saqifa, and elected Abu Bakar as the leader of the Muslims. There was no precedent in Islam for such an election but there was a precedent for it in the political institutions of the Pre-Islamic times.

Three contemporary Pakistani historians write in their ***History of the Islamic Caliphate*** as follows:

“After the death of Mohammad (S), the most important and the most complex problem which the Muslims had to face, was that of electing a khalifa. Qur’an is silent at this subject, and the Prophet also did not say anything about it. In Pre-Islamic times, the custom of the Arabs was to elect their chief by a majority vote. (unable to find any other precedent), the same principal was adopted in the election of Abu Bakar.” (**History of the Islamic Caliphate** (Urdu) Lahore, Pakistan. Professor M.Iqbal, M.A, LLB; Dr. Peer Mohammad Hasan, M.S., Ph.D. ; professor M. Ikram Butt, M.S.)

According to the three historians quoted above, the most important task before the Muslims at the death of their Prophet was to find a leader, since the later had left them leaderless. Lacking precedent in Islam itself for finding a leader, they were compelled to adopt a pagan tradition, and they elected Abu Bakar as their new leader.

The mode of finding a leader for Muslims was alien to the genius of Islam. It was, therefore, a deviation, as already mentioned. This deviation has been noted by many Orientalists, among them:

R.A .Nicholson:

That Mohammad left no son was perhaps of less moment than his neglect or refusal to nominate a successor. The Arabs were unfamiliar with the hereditary descent of kingly

power, while the idea had not yet dawned of a Divine right resident in the Prophet's family. It was thoroughly in accord with Arabian practice that the Muslim community should elect its own leader, just as in heathen days the tribe chose its own chief. **(A literary History of the Arabs)**

Professor Nicholson says that the Arabs were unfamiliar with the hereditary descent of kingly power. He may be right. The Arabs, however, were unfamiliar with many other things such as belief in the Oneness of God, and they had great familiarity with their idols of stone and wood; they clung to them tenaciously, and many of them died for them.

Nevertheless, the "unfamiliarity" of Arabs with hereditary descent of kingly power did not last long; it proved to be very short-lived. In fact, their "unfamiliarity" lasted less than thirty years (from 632 to 661). After those first thirty years of unfamiliarity with the principle of hereditary descent of kingly power, they become very much familiar with it, and their new familiarity has lasted down to our own times.

Being "unfamiliar" with the principle of hereditary descent of kingly power, the Arabs were groping in darkness, when suddenly they stumbled upon a precedent from their own pre-Islamic past, from the days they were idolaters, and they grabbed it. They were thrilled that they had found "salvation."

Francesco Gabrieli:

With the election of Abu Bakar, the principle was established that the Caliphate had to remain in Meccan clan of the Quraysh from which Mohammad came. But at the same time the elective character of the post was sanctioned, as that of the *chief of the tribe had been in the pagan society*, by rejecting the legitimist claims of the Prophet (Ahl-al-Bayt) personified by Ali. (**The Arabs, A Compact History, 1963**)

Francesco Gabrieli says that with the election of Abu Bakar the principle was established that the Caliphate would remain in Meccan clan of the Quraysh. But he does not say who established this “principle”. Does it have the authority of Qur’an or the traditions of the Prophet to support it? It does not have. Actually, it was an *ad hoc* “principle” invoked by those men who wanted to appropriate the Caliphate for themselves. They found this “principle” very profitable because it enabled them to seize the government of Mohammad (saws), and to hang on to it while precluding his children from it. But as pragmatic as this “principle” is, it has its sanctions, not in Qur’an but in “the pagan society”, as pointed out by the historians himself.

Bernard Lewis:

The first crisis in Islam came at the death of the Prophet in 632. Mohammad had never claimed to be more than a mortal man – distinguished above others because he was God’s messenger and the bearer of God’s words, but

himself neither divine nor immortal. He had, however, left no clear instructions on who was to succeed him as leader of the Islamic community and ruler of the nascent Islamic state, and *the Muslims had only the meager political experience of pre-Islamic Arabia to guide them*. After some arguments and a moment of dangerous tension, they agreed to appoint Abu Bakar, one of the earliest and most respected converts, as Khalifa, deputy, of the Prophet – *thus creating, almost incidentally, the great historical institution of the caliphate*. (**The Assassins,1963**)

As stated earlier, the canard that Mohammad (saws), the Messenger of God, did not leave any instructions on who was to succeed him as leader of Islamic community, has become an Article of Faith with most historians, both ancient and modern, Muslims and non-Muslims. One may perhaps condone the Sunni historians for clinging to this “article of faith” but it is incredible that scholars of such range and distinction as Nicholson and Bernard Lewis have done nothing more in their work on Islam than to recast a stereotype of history which was “handed down” to them by the court historians of Damascus and Baghdad of earlier centuries. Bernard Lewis, however, has conceded, like Nicholson and Francesco Gabrieli, that those Muslims who appointed Abu Bakar as their Khalifa, *had only the meager political experience of pre-Islamic Arabia to guide them*.

Bernard Lewis further says that the great historical institution of the Caliphate was born “almost incidentally”.

The most important political institution of Islam- was thus born “almost incidentally”

George Stewart:

The office of the Caliphate came into being not from deliberate plan or foresight, but almost from accident...the Caliphate was molded by the turbulent accidents of the age that gave it birth. (**The Traditional Near East, 1966**)

Writing about the pre-Islamic Arab society, Professor John Esposito says:

“A grouping of several related families comprised a clan. A cluster of several clans constitute a tribe. *Tribes were led by a chief (shaykh) who was elected by a consensus of his peers-that is, the heads of leading clans or families*”. (**Islam -the straight path,1991. Page 5**)

In the same book (and the same chapter), Professor Esposito further says: “A society based on tribal affiliation and man-made tribal law or custom was replaced by a religiously bonded community (the Muslim umma) governed by God’s law”.

(Abu Bakar was selected chief (shaykh) by “*a consensus of peers- that is, the heads of leading clans or families*”. It was the “*man-made tribal law or custom*” which invested him with power. One thing that was not invoked in his selection, was the “*God’s law.*”)

All the historians quoted above, are unanimous in stating that:

1. Mohammad (saws), the Messenger of God, gave no instructions to his *umma* regarding the character of the future of Islam, and he did not designate any person to be its head after his own death. In the matter of succession, he had no clear line of policy.

2. When Mohammad (saws) died, the Muslims had to find a new leader for the community. Lacking guidance and precedent, they had no choice but to fallback upon the political institutions or traditions of the Times of Ignorance to find a leader, and Abu Bakar was their choice.

If these historians are right, then it was a most egregious omission on the part both of Al-Qur'an al-Majid and its Interpreter and Promulgator, Mohammad (saws), not to enlighten the Muslims in the matter of selecting their leaders.

But there was not and could not be such an egregious omission on the part either of Qur'an or of Mohammad (saws). Qur'an has stated, in luminous and incisive words what are the qualifications of a leader appointed by God, and Mohammad (saws) has told the *umma*, in luminous and incisive words, who possesses those qualifications. (That will be dealt in another chapter)

At the moment, however, Abu Bakar was elected Khalifa of the Muslims. God's law was not invoked in his election. His

election, therefore, raises some fundamental questions, such as:

1. The wishes of God and His Apostle did not figure anywhere in Abu Bakar's election. Since he was elected by some companions of the Apostle, he was their representative or the representative of Muslims. The Apostle alone could select his successor, and he did not select Abu Bakar. Can Abu Bakar still be called the successor of the Apostle of God?
2. The most important role in any social organization is played by the government or rather, by the head of the government. Qur'an asserts that it is comprehensive and has not omitted anything of importance. But the partisans of Abu Bakar say that Qur'an has not told the Muslims how to find the head of their government. If they are right, then can we claim before the non-Muslims that Qur'an is a complete and a perfect code, and has not overlooked any important detail of man's life from consideration?
3. If Mohammad Mustafa (saws) himself did not guide the Muslims in both the theory and the practice of Government, thus can we claim before the non-Muslims that he is the perfect model for all mankind in everything?
4. Were the teachings of Mohammad (saws) so imperfect and inconclusive that as soon as he died, his followers were compelled to invoke pagan

customs, precedents and traditions? Since they did, doesn't he leave his own conduct open to question? The truth is that Al-Qur'an al-Majid is a comprehensive and a perfect code of life. But only those people will find enlightenment in it who will seek it. There is no evidence that enlightenment from Qur'an was sought in the election of Abu Bakar. The "principle" invoked in his election was lifted out of the political experience of pagan Arabia. His leadership rested on a custom grounded in pre-Islamic tribal mandate.

Just as Qur'an is the perfect code of life, Mohammad Mustafa (saws), its bringer and interpreter, is the perfect model for mankind. He knew that he was subject to the same laws of life and death as were the other mortals. He was also endowed with a sense of history, and knew what happened when great leaders died. One thing he could not do, was to let his people become mavericks once again as they were in Times of Ignorance. One thing that could not escape and did not escape his attention, was the principle of succession in the kingdom of Heaven on Earth.

Abu Bakar was elected in the outhouse of Saqifa as the head of the government of the Muslims with the support of Umar bin al-Khattab. Therefore, his government, as well as the government of his two successors- Umar and Usman- all three, were the "product "of Saqifa. I shall identify their

governments as the governments of Saqifa to distinguish them from the government of Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s) which was not a product of Saqifa. Ali's government was the (restored) kingdom of Heaven On Earth.

The Sunni Muslims believe that the Prophet of Islam did not designate anyone as his successor, and he (probably) assumed that after his death, the Muslims would find a leader for themselves. They further say that the Prophet did not even tell his followers how they ought to select leaders or what qualifications those leaders should have. Thus, lacking both precedent and guidance in the matter of finding their leaders, the companions had no choice but to take recourse to improvisation.

But improvisation is not policy, and inevitably, it turned out to be a rather erratic manner of finding leaders of the Muslim Umma (community). In one case the companions found a leader through what was supposed to be an election. In another case, the first incumbent (who was elected), nominated and appointed his own successor. In the third instance, the second incumbent (who was nominated), appointed a committee of six men and charged them with the duty of selecting one out of themselves as the future leader of the Muslim community.

The third leader, so selected, was killed in the midst of anarchy and chaos, and the *Umma* was left

without a head. The companions then turned to the family of their Prophet, and appealed to one of its members to take charge of the government of the Muslims, and thereby to save it from breakdown and dissolution.

The fourth incumbent was still ruling the Muslims when a new candidate for leadership arose in Syria. He brushed aside the hoax of election, challenged the lawful sovereign of the Muslims by invoking the principle of brute force, and succeeded in capturing the government. His action brought the number of “principles” for finding leaders of the Muslim *Umma* to four, viz.

1. Election:

Abu Bakar was elected khalifa by a majority vote in Saqifa. (Ali ibn Abi Talib), the fourth incumbent, was also elected by a majority of Muhajireen and Ansar who were present in Medina at the death of the third khalifa).

2. Nomination:

Umar ibn Khattab was appointed by Abu Bakar as his successor.

3. Selection by plutocrats:

Uthman ibn Afan was selected khalifa by a committee of six men appointed by Umar.

4. Seizure of the government by naked force:

Muawiya bin Abu Sufyan seized the government of Muslims by military action.

The Sunni Muslims consider all these four “principle” as lawful and valid. In this manner, four different “constitutional” modes of finding a leader for the Muslim *Umma* came into being.

Here it should be pointed out that though the Sunni Muslims have given to each of these four different modes of finding leaders for Umma, the “status” of a “principle”, none of them was derived from the Book of God (Qur’an) or from the Book of Prophet (Hadith). All of were derived from the events which took place *after the death of Prophet of Islam*.

In the history of any country, constitution-making is the first step towards nation building. The constitution is the organic law of the land. It is the basic framework of public authority. It determines and defines the responsibilities, duties and powers of the government. All major decisions affecting the interest of the nation, are taken in the light of its principles. Whatever is in agreement with it, is held legal and valid; whatever is not, is discarded as unconstitutional.

As mentioned earlier, the Sunni Muslims believe that the Prophet of Islam did not designate anyone as his successor and did not even tell his

followers how they ought to select their future leaders.

For today's modern Muslim whose thinking is logic based, does not want to follow blindly the historians who were on the "payroll" of the governments of Damascus and Baghdad, and has deep believe that Al-Qur'an al-Majid is a comprehensive but a perfect code of life, (God has mentioned in His Book: *We have not neglected anything in this Book-6:38*), and also have a firm believe that Mohammad Mustafa (saws), the Messenger of God, is the perfect model for mankind in everything for all times, for such a Muslim, we have few fundamental questions regarding the succession of the Prophet of Islam as follows:

Questions:

- 1. If prophet had appointed before his death a successor for himself, did the Muslims accept and obey the appointed successor?**
(The answer would be "yes", if not, the Muslims would no longer be called the believers or followers of the Prophet, if they reject the appointed successor, then they will be in the category of non-believers or *Kuffar*).
- 2. Did Prophet himself had the confidence that Muslims would accept his appointed successor willingly?** (The answer should be

“yes”, because, in the last 23 years of his Prophet-hood, whatever order he delivered it was accepted, obeyed and followed).

3. **Did Prophet consider himself qualified to appoint a suitable successor from his companions?**

No one will suggest, least of all a Muslim, that Mohammad (saws) was not qualified to appoint his own successor. A Muslim cannot imagine that the Apostle lacked the ability to select a successor for himself.

The Arabs were a notoriously arrogant, ignorant, turbulent and lawless breed. Mohammad (saws) promulgated the laws of God among them, and he compelled them to respect and to obey those laws. He created a political organization called the State or, the Government of Medina. In that State his Powers were unlimited. He chose all its functionaries, civil and military. He could appoint an officer or he could dismiss him, and without giving any reason(s) to anyone for doing so. All Muslims knew that he would select and appoint capable men for all key positions, and they also knew that he would do so without consulting them. He did not even delegate authority to any of his companions to appoint officers Mohammad (saws), the Apostle of God, alone was

qualified to select and to appoint his own successor, and no one else could have done it for him.

4. **Did Mohammad (saws) could visualize the danger of not appointing the successor before his death.** (Danger and a setback for Islam, Teachings of Islam, Muslims, Islamic Society, Family of Prophet and their well-wishers).

The main and the most important reason for all the wars, Civil wars, bloodsheds, conflicts, revolutions, anarchy, chaos and differences in “believes and Practices” among the Muslims from last 1400 years is about the succession of the Prophet (saws).

(yes, certainly he could assets the exact danger of not appointing successor).

5. **What could be the possible, hypothetical reason(s) for Mohammad’s (saws) failure to appoint his own successor?**

If Mohammad (saws) died without nominating his heir and successor, he is laid open to the charge of dereliction of duty. Whoever claims that he did not nominate his successor, is suggesting that he launched the frail vessel of Islam on turbulent seas without a compass, without a rudder, without an anchor and without a captain, and left it completely at the mercy of wind

and wave. It is to presuppose that he was unmindful of the most vital interests of the Muslim Umma, and that he was heedless of the welfare of the generations of Muslims yet to come. Such “heedlessness” on his part could have had three possible reasons, viz.,

- a. All members of the Muslim Umma had become intelligent, wise, God-fearing and God-loving and each of them had acquired perfect knowledge of the interpretation of Qur’an. Also, every individual was equal, in every respect, of every other individual. It was impossible for Satan to tempt or to mislead any of them. Therefore, Mohammad (saws) could leave the duty of selecting and appointing his successor to blind chance. He could take comfort in the thought that whoever was made the leader of the community by the drift of events, would be the right man; and the government of Medina and the community of faithful, both could be entrusted to his care.

But such was not the case and could not be the case. It is impossible even for two individuals to be identical in ability, character and temperament. Mohammad (saws) knew that all the Arabs who had accepted Islam, were not necessarily

sincere Muslims. Among them, there was a large number of “hypocrites” or “nominal Muslims”. Their presence in Medina is attested by Qur’an itself. They professed Islam outwardly but at heart they remained pagans. They were the enemies of Mohammad (saws), of Islam, and of the State he had founded. They constituted a “fifth column” of paganism in Medina, ready to seize the first opportunity to subvert Islam. If Mohammad (saws,) were to leave the new State without a head, he would, in effect place in hands of these ideological saboteurs, the very weapons with which they would destroy it.

Mohammad (saws) knew all of this, and he died, not suddenly, but after a protracted illness. He had abundant time to attend to the important affairs of State the most important of which was the selection and nomination of his own successor. One thing he could not do, was to abandon his government, which was the kingdom of Heaven on Earth, to the care of some unknown favorite of fortune or some swashbuckling adventurer.

- b. Mohammad (saws) did not really love Islam. He was animated only by personal ambition. He wanted to bring the Arabian Peninsula

under his control, and Islam was the means through which he succeeded in doing so. But once he realized his ambition, he did not care if after his death, the government which he had founded, held together or went to pieces. He did not care if, after his death, the Arabs remained faithful to Islam or they relapsed into idolatry and barbarism.

What can be more absurd than to imagine that Mohammad (saws) did not love Islam? In Makkah, he endured torture, hunger, thirst, privation, indignity and exile, all for the sake of Islam. Once in Medina, he was called upon to make even greater sacrifices for Islam. Two of his uncles, three of his cousins, two adopted sons and one foster brother, and numerous friends were killed in the defense of Islam. In due course, he became the sovereign of Medina but nothing changed in his lifestyle. Many members of the new community were destitute, and he fed them. He fed them his own food so that quite frequently, he and his children had to go hungry. This went on year after year. He made all these and countless other sacrifices only to make Islam viable and strong.

In Makkah, the Quraysh had offered Mohammad (saws) power, wealth and beauty, if he would abandon his mission as Prophet of Islam. But he spurned them all. In spurning them, he was spurning his “ambition.” Perhaps it did not even occur to him that here was such a thing as ambition. The mainspring of his work for Islam was only his love for it. This love sustained him from beginning to end. He did have one “ambition” in life, and that was to see Islam become everlasting. He realized this “ambition” since we know that Islam is everlasting.,

- c. Mohammad (saws) did not appointed his successor because he was afraid of opposition.

Mohammad (saws) was an absolute stranger to fear. Ha challenged paganism at a time when he was all alone in the whole world, and that whole world was seething with hostility toward him. Paganism spent all its power to break him but it failed. He broke it. By dint of personal courage, he triumphed over a whole world. In two out of the five major campaigns of Islam, the Muslims were defeated, and they fled from the battlefield. But he stood firm and did not flee, and in fact, became the rallying

point of the fugitives. His presence of mind revived the courage of the Muslims, and they returned to the battle.

After the battle of Hunayn, all Arabia was at the feet of Mohammad (saws), and no tribe or even a coalition of tribes could challenge his power. His power, within the peninsula, was supreme. The question of his being afraid of anyone's opposition, therefore, does not arise.

6. Since Mohammad (saws) did not appoint his own successor, did he charge the Muslim Community with the task of electing or selecting its own leader?

The appointment of the Chief Executive of the community of the Faithful was an important matter. Mohammad (saws) realized its importance. But for some unknown reason(s), he refrained from appointing him.

The only possible reason that he did not appoint him can be that he charged the community with this duty.

But neither Abu Bakar and Umar nor the latter-day Sunni historians, ever made such a claim. They never claimed, for example, that Mohammad Mustafa (saws)said:" O Muslims! I do not wish to appoint my own successor" or "I can not appoint my own

successor” or “I lack the ability to appoint my own successor. Since I lack the ability, I charge you with this responsibility. When I die, you elect or select a leader for yourselves.”

No one has ever tried to attribute any such statement to Mohammad (saws). Mohammad Mustafa (saws) did not give his companions the authority to appoint even a petty official much less the future head of the State of Islam!

- 7. Since the Muslim community lacked instructions for the selection of a leader, did the Companions of Mohammad (saws), by their common consent, and before selecting a leader (or even after selecting a leader) prepare a set of rules or guidelines to which they subsequently adhered?**

The companions of Mohammad (saws) did not prepare, at any time, a set of rules to guide them in selecting a leader. In this matter, they adhered to the rule of expediency. First they appointed a leader, and then they formulated a “rule” or a “principle” for his election. The Muslims appointed the first four, the “rightly guided” Caliphs. The appointment of each of them led to the discovery of a new “rule” or a new “principle.” These four” principles” were

duly incorporated in the political thought of the Muslims.

But soon a new caliph came to power in Syria. His rise led to the discovery of a new "Principle" known as "Might is Right." This "principle" made the first four "principles" obsolete. From this time, caliphate was to be the prize of the candidate who could use brute force more brutally than his opponents. This "principle" has found the most universal acceptance among the Muslims throughout their long history.

8. What was the attitude and conduct of the principal companions of Mohammad (saws) toward the leadership of the Muslim Community after his death?

The Sunni Muslims say that Abu Bakar and Umar were the principal companions of Mohammad Mustafa (saws). It were both of them, the principal companions, who seized the government of Medina at a time when Ali (a.s) and all members of Banu Hashim were busy with his obsequies.

As soon as the Prophet died, his principal Companions gathered in the outhouse of Saqifa to claim leadership of Community. This leadership, in their opinion, was so important that they could not pause even to bury their master and benefactor. The naked

struggle for power erupted within minutes of the death of the Prophet. **Zamakhshari**, one of the most authoritative Sunni scholars and historians, writes in this connection: “It was the consensus of all the companions that after the death of the Prophet they had to appoint his successor immediately. They believed that doing so was more important than even to attend the funeral of their master. It was this importance that prompted Abu Bakar and Umar to address the crowd of Muslims. Abu Bakar said: ‘O people, listen to me. Those of you who worshipped Mohammad, let them know that he is dead; but those who worshipped God, let them know He is alive, and will never die. Since Mohammad dead, you should now decide who should be your future leader’. They said: “you are right we must have a new leader.” We Sunnis and Mu’tazilis, believe that the community of the Muslims must at no time be without a leader. Sheer logic dictates this. Also, the Apostle of God had enacted laws, and had promulgated orders about the defense of Islam, the defense of Medina and the defense of Arabia. After his death, there ought to be someone to enforce his laws, and to execute his orders.”

From the foregoing testimony, it is obvious that the companions of the Prophet realized how important it was for his Umma to have a leader. They knew that if there was no one to implement the laws and orders promulgated by him, his Umma would fall into disarray.

The situation reeks with irony. The companions were convinced that it was vitally important for Muslim Umma to have a chief executive but there was one man who was not convinced that it was important, and he was Mohammad (saws)! After all, if he were, he would have given it a chief executive. He was the only man to whom it did not occur that there ought to be someone to implement the laws and orders which he himself had promulgated.

The principal companions did not attend his funeral. For them, much more important than attending the funeral of their master, was to find a new leader. The problem was quite complex but they “solved” it by appointing one out of themselves, i.e., Abu Bakar, as the new leader of the Muslims.

Two years later, Abu Bakar lay dying. On his deathbed, he appointed Umar his successor, and the leader of the Muslims. In appointing Umar as his successor, he not only knew that

he was discharging his most important duty but he was also aware that if he did not, he would be answerable to God for his failure to do so.

“Asma, the wife of Abe Bakar, says that when her husband was on his deathbed, Talha came to see him, and said: ‘O Abu Bakar! You have made Umar the amir of the Muslims, and you know that he was such a tyrant while you were the Khalifa. But now that he will have a free hand, I do not know how he will oppress the Muslims. In a short time you will die, and you will find yourself in the presence of God. At that moment you will have to answer Him for your action. Are you ready with an answer?’ Abu Bakar sat up in the bed, and said: ‘O Talha! Are you trying to frighten me? Now listen that when I meet my Lord, I will say that I have appointed the best man as the amir of the Muslim Umma.”

Abu Bakar added that his knowledge of and long experience with Umar had convinced him that no one in the Muslim Umma could carry the burden of Khilafat as well as he (Umar) could. He was, therefore, confident that his answer would satisfy God.

Abu Bakar knew that he would have to vindicate himself in the Tribunal of God for

appointing Umar the ruler of the Muslims. He was convinced that he could not have chosen anyone better than Umar to be the successor. And Talha's anxiety for Abu Bakar's accountability to God, only points up his own conscientiousness about his duty "to command others to do good and to forbid them to do wrong."

Irony again! All companions were idolaters before Mohammad (saws), the blessed Messenger of God, converted them to Islam. Now, as devote Muslims, they were aware that they were answerable to God regarding their obligation to appoint his successor. But curiously, incredibly, there was one man who apparently had no awareness that, some day, he too might have to stand in the tribunal of God, and be questioned regarding the obligation to appoint his successor. He was Mohammad (saws), God's own Messenger! Muslims believe that Abu Bakar was ready to defend his action in appointing his successor, with an answer which he knew, would satisfy God. Do they also believe that Mohammad (saws) their prophet, was ready to defend his failure to appoint his own successor, with an answer that God would find satisfactory?

After the death of Abu Bakar, his successor, Umar bin al-Khattab, ruled as khalifa for ten years. During the later years of his life, he was often engrossed in deep thought. Whenever questioned by his friends what he was thinking about, he said: "I do not know what to do with the Umma of Mohammad, and how to appoint an amir who would lead it after my death."

Umar obviously considered appointing his successor a matter of great importance since he was devoting so much of his time and attention to it.

Umar's anxiety regarding the leadership of the Umma after his own death, was shared by Ayesha, the widow of the Prophet. Tabari, the historian, reports the following in this connection:

"when Umar was dying, he sent his son to Ayesha seeking her permission to be buried near the Apostle and Abu Bakar. Ayesha said: "with the greatest pleasure, and she added: 'Give my salam to your father, and tell him that he must not abandon the Muslims without a leader otherwise there would be chaos after his death."

Ayesha was showing great solicitude for the welfare of the Muslims just as she should have. When Umar was dying, she counseled

him not to abandon the Muslim Umma without a leader, or else she warned, chaos would follow his death. It is amazing that Ayesha never counseled her own husband to appoint a leader for the Muslims, and she did not warn him that chaos would follow his death if he left them leaderless.

But Ayesha, the daughter of Abu Bakar, had good reason to be “discreet” with her husband, and did not bring up, for discussion with him, the subject of the appointment of a successor, at any time.

9. **What was the practice of Mohammad Mustafa (saws) in regard to the selection and appointment of officers?**

During the last ten years of his life, Mohammad (saws) organized more than eighty expeditions. He sent out many of them under the command of some officer; others he led in person.

Whenever Mohammad (saws) sent out an expedition, he appointed one of his companions as its captain. He ordered the rankers to obey him, and he made him (the captain) answerable to himself. When the expedition returned to Medina, he debriefed the captain. It never so happened that he told the members of an expedition or a

reconnaissance party that they had to elect or select their own captain.

In the event when Mohammad (saws) was himself leading an expedition out of Medina, he appointed a governor for the city, and made him responsible for maintaining law and order during his own absence. He never told the citizens that in his absence, it was their duty to elect or select a governor for themselves.

In 630 A.D., when Mohammad (saws) captured Makkah, and incorporated it into the new State, he appointed an administrator for that city, and he did so without consulting either the Makkans or his own companions.

Montgomery watt:

The extent of Mohammad's autocratic powers in his last two or three years is illustrated by his appointment of 'agents' to act on his behalf in various areas, and indeed by the whole matter of administrative appointments. From the beginning Mohammad had appointed men to perform various functions for which he was responsible. Thus he appointed commanders for the expeditions where he was not present in person. Another regular appointment from the earliest time was that

of a Deputy in Medina when Mohammad was absent from the city. **(Mohammad at Medina,1966)**

Maxime Rodinson:

He (the Prophet) either appointed a leader or took command himself. He seems to have had a gift for military as he had for political strategy. He delegated certain of his functions to individuals who acted as his personal agents. Whenever, for example, he left Medina, he used to leave a representative behind him. **(Mohammad translated by Anne Carter, 1971)**

Such was the policy and practice of Mohammad (saws), the Messenger of God, in selecting and appointing his officers, and there was never a deviation from it at any time.

10. What is Qur'an's verdict on Mohammad's (saws) practice?

According to Qur'an, the actions of Mohammad (saws) are the actions of God Himself. The Muslim reader is invited to reflect on the meaning of the following verses:

You did not throw (the dust) but God did it.

(Chapter 8, verse 17)

Verily those who swear fealty to you indeed swear fealty to God; the hand of God is

above their hands. So whosoever breaks the oath, breaks it only to his own loss; while whosoever fulfills what he has covenanted with God will soon receive a great reward from Him. **(Chapter 48, Verse 10)**

All Muslims believe that whatever Mohammad (saws) said or did, was inspired by Heaven. In other words, he was the instrument through which the commandments of Heaven were executed. As noted before, Mohammad (saws), the Apostle of God, did not share his authority to appoint a governor for a city or a commander for a military expedition, with anyone else. He and he alone exercised it from beginning to end. Much more important than the appointment of a governor or a commander, was selection and appointment of his own successor, and the future sovereign of the Muslim Umma. There was no reason for him to reverse his own policy and practice, and to abandon his whole Umma leaderless. His conduct was consistent, and following is the testimony of Qur'an on it

You will never find any change in God's way of dealing, nor will you find in God's way of dealing an alteration.

(Chapter 35, verse 43)

(such has been) the dispensation of God, effective as before; and you will not find any change in the dispensation of God. **(Chapter 48, Verse 23).**

There was no change in the practice of God's Messenger. He did not abandon the Muslims so they would be like sheep without a shepherd. He selected his cousin, Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s), to be his successor, and the future sovereign of the Muslim Umma. He introduced Ali (a.s) to the Umma as its future sovereign, at the Banquet of Dhu'l -Asheera, just after the first public proclamation of his mission as the Last and the Greatest Messenger of God upon earth.

11. What did Mohammad (saws) actually do about his succession?

Mohammad created a new State- the Islamic State. In creating Islamic State, his purpose was to establish the kingdom of Heaven on Earth. This he did with the support and collaboration of his cousin, Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s). He picked out Ali (a.s) among all his companions, to succeed him, as head of the Islamic State, and as the Sovereign of all Muslims.

To appoint Ali (a.s) as his successor, Mohammad (saws) did not wait until he had

actually created the Islamic State, and had consolidated it as the kingdom of Heaven on Earth. He declared Ali (a.s) to be his successor at a time when the State did not have any existence. He declared Ali (a.s) to be his successor at the time when he declared that God had sent him as his Last Messenger to mankind.

Mohammad (saws) designated Ali (a.s) as the successor at the Banquet of Dhu'l – Asheera, in Makkah when the later was only thirteen year old; and he spent lifetime in grooming him for the tremendous responsibilities ahead of him.

Twenty years later, in the vast plain of Khumm, near Ghadeer, Mohammad gave finishing touches to his work, and invited his Umma, at a mass rally, to meet its future sovereign. In doing so, he complied with a commandment of Heaven enshrined in verse 70 of the fifth chapter of Qur'an; and he fulfilled an obligation toward his Umma. His Umma had a right to know who would lead it after his (Mohammad's) death.

Mohammad Mustafa (saws) did not appoint Ali (a.s) his successor merely to expound or to interpret the laws of Islam. He appointed Ali (a.s) his successor to implement and to enforce those laws. In other words, he

appointed Ali (a.s) to run the government of Islam.

Mohammad (saws) appointed Ali (a.s) to implement the laws of Islam, and to enforce God's ordinances as revealed to him in Qur'an. He appointed Ali (a.s) to exercise executive authority over the Muslims, after his own death.

12. What Actually happened after the death of Mohammad Mustafa (saws)?

After the death of Mohammad Mustafa (saws), the blessed one, the Ansar, gathered in the outhouse of saqifa to select a leader. Abu Bakar, Umar and Abu Obaida – the three Muhajireen – paid them a visit. They told the Ansar since Mohammad (saws) has not designated his own successor, they had to appoint someone to fill that position. Their action, they said, was not only justified but also was absolutely necessary, if only to save the Umma from anarchy and chaos.

The three Muhajireen engaged in an animated debate with the Ansar in Saqifa. The theme of the debate was: 'Should the successor of Mohammad (saws) and the ruler of the Muslims be a Muhajir or an Ansari'. The fiery orators discussed this theme threadbare.

Although there were some other important issues which were not altogether irrelevant to the debate, such as the wishes of God and His Messenger, the qualifications required in the candidate(s) for the vacant throne of Arabia, and the interest of Islam and the Muslim Umma, they were not discussed. These issues were not on the “agenda” of the meeting of Saqifa. The orators, therefore, did not digress from their theme. Eventually, with skill, patience and ingenuity, the three Muhajireen ironed out the problem, or, rather, they “improvised” a solution to it.

Francesco Gabrieli:

At the tumultuous council held in the headquarters of the Banu Saidah in Medina, Umar, almost as a surprise, imposed Abu Bakar as Khalifa or successor of the Envoy of God. Like so many events and institutions, the caliphate was born of an improvisation.

(The Arabs- A Compact History, 1963)

Caliphate or the leadership of the Muslim Umma is the most important political institution in all Islam. In fact, the physical existence of Islam hinges upon the caliph or the leader of the Umma. It's, therefore, incredible that it was left to nothing better than an improvisation! It should occasion no

surprise that the Muslim world has been repeatedly deluged in blood over the question of the succession and leadership. Wars, civil wars, revolutions, conflicts, subversion and anarchy became inevitable when the Umma chose improvisation in saqifa, in preference to the heavenly design and the inspired “blueprint” of Mohammad (saws), for an orderly and peaceful transfer of power from himself to his successor.

The protagonists of Saqifa say that Umar’s action was prompted by his desire to prevent leadership of Umma from forever becoming the monopoly of one family – specifically, the family of Mohammad Mustafa (saws). They say that such a monopoly of power would have been a “disaster” for Islam. This convoluted argument of the Sunni historians has become a regular latter-day Greek chorus intoning doom. But no one among them has never explained how.

If after the death of Mohammad (saws), the leadership of the Muslims had become the “monopoly” of his own family, would the Arabs have abjured Islam, and relapsed into idolatry? Or, would the Persians and / or the Romans, have invaded and overrun Arabia, and exterminated all Muslims?

In the perceptions of Abu Bakar and Umar, there was only one way of “saving” the Umma of Mohammad (saws) from “disaster” And that was by blackballing his family, and by appropriating his government for themselves!

Umar was very anxious that caliphate should not become hereditary in any one family, and that it ought to keep circulating among the Muslims so that “every Arab boy may have the opportunity to become the khalifa. And yet, notwithstanding all the vision and foresight of Umar, caliphate did become hereditary within sixteen years of his own death. But it became hereditary not in the family of Mohammad (saws) but in the family of his arch-enemies – the crypto-pagans of Makkah- the children of Abu Sufyan and Hinda. Thus Umar’s foresight did not extend beyond sixteen years unless it was his purpose that caliphate should become hereditary in the house of Abu Sufyan. If it was, then it must be conceded that he was truly remarkable for his foresight.

Dr. Hamid-ud-Din:

“From the time of Muwawiya, the throne of caliphate became the hereditary right of the Umayyads. Every khalifa appointed his own

son or some other relatives as his successor, and the Muslims meekly acknowledge him as their khalifa, and did not ask any questions.” (**History of Islam, 1971**)

In the Shia theory of government, hereditary is not considered as a basis for succession. According to Shia theory, the right to designate his own successor, belonged exclusively to Mohammad Mustafa (saws), and not to his companions; and he designated Ali (a.s). He did not designate Ali (a.s) because of propinquity, but because it was the command of God to him to do so.

When the Arabs refused to acknowledge the designation by Mohammad Mustafa (saws) of Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s) as his successor, they were not upholding a “principle.” Their refusal was only a gambit to take the locus of power and authority out of the house of Mohammad (saws). Once this “principle” had served its purpose, they -the Arabs- were the first to ditch it.

Laura Veccia Vaglieri:

“Towards the end of his reign, Muwaiya, using all his diplomatic skill, managed to persuade the notables of the empire to recognize his son Yazid as heir to the throne, leaving untouched the rule that homage must be paid at the moment of succession.

In this way he achieved a compromise. Theoretically, the will of the electors was respected, since it was admitted that they could reject the heir appointed by the reigning sovereign (in actual fact, only four or five notables refused to accede to Muawiya's request), but in reality it implied the abolition of the elective system, which had been the cause of so much trouble in the past, and introduced hereditary succession. Muawiya's innovation was followed by all the caliphs who came after him, and enabled the Umayyads to retain power for 90 years, and the Abbasids for five centuries."

(Cambridge History of Islam, 1970)

Muawiya junked the "principle" of election which had never been anything more than a farce anyway.

And yet, in all this crooked business of "electing" or "nominating" or "selecting" a ruler for the Muslims, there was one "principle" at work. It was the "principle" of excluding the members of the family of Mohammad (saws), the blessed Messenger of God, from the locus of power and authority. Saqifa, in fact, was a monolithic, unified and integrated movement of the principal companions and their proxies to

exclude the Banu Hashim from the government of Islam. If there was any consistency either in the deed of the first three khalifas, or, of the majority of companions, or the Umayyads and the Abbasids, it was in the application of this “principle.” On this point there was consensus among them all. They faithfully, almost fanatically, toed the line of “policy” formulated in the outhouse of Saqifa. The centerpiece of that policy was blatant antagonism to Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s), the first cousin of Mohammad (saws), and to the Banu Hashim, the clan of Mohammad (saws).

13. What importance does the succession have in general?

Many modern historians who have studied Islam’s political theory and practicability, and have tried to correlate causes and effects, have attributed the intra-Muslim conflicts and wars to the “failure” of Mohammad Mustafa (saws) to appoint his own successor. There is a veiled hint or equivocal reflection in their works that he was ‘responsible” for them. But some other reflections are not so veiled or equivocal.

Edward Jurji:

The state of war, existing between the Prophet and his kinsmen, was brought to an end in the total victory of Islamic forces climaxed by Mohammad's triumphant entry into the city of his birth to destroy the monuments of idolatry. Prophet, though his career remained, Mohammad had increasingly come to wield the sword of a militant ruler and to head affairs of an aggressive political state, conscious of its role in history. When his death occurred on June 8, 632, he bequeathed to his followers a religio-political heritage ever burdened and harassed for many centuries with the task of finding an acceptable caliph (successor) to fill the highest office in Islam. The caliphate (succession) as an issue, aggravated by the uniform silence of the Prophet on the subject of who was to follow him, became the root of much evil, the chief internal misfortune of Islam, the origin of rifts and schisms, and a sad patrimony of tears and blood. (**The Great Religion of the Modern World, 1953**)

According to this historian, it was the "uniform silence" of the prophet on the subject of who was to follow him, which became "the root of much evil, the chief

internal misfortune of Islam, the origin of rifts and schisms, and a sad patrimony of tears and blood.”

Is this the “legacy” that Mohammad (saws) left for his *Umma*? If the modern Muslims still believe the Saqifa myth that Mohammad (saws) did not appoint his own successor, then they will have to agree with the judgement of this historian. But if they agree with his judgement, they will have to disagree with Al-Qur’an Al-Majid which has called Mohammad (saws) a “mercy for all worlds.”

Sir John Glubb:

The Prophet died without leaving any instructions regarding the successor. No sooner was it known that he was dead than the people of Medina gathered together and decided to elect their own chief. Rival claimants to the khilafat were to give rise to endless Muslim civil wars, which might perhaps have been avoided if Mohammad had laid down rules for the succession.

(A Short History of the Arab Peoples, 1969)

If the modern Muslims, after reading this verdict of a historian, still insist that their Prophet did not appoint his own successor, then they will have to concede that all the bloody civil wars of their history, were a

“gift” to them from him-from him who was the embodiment of mercy, Are wars, especially, civil wars, a curse or a blessing? If they are a curse- and there is no greater cures on the face of earth than wars-would they believe that their Prophet was the Bringer to them of Islam-of peace?

Actually, one of the aims of Mohammad (saws), as God’s Messenger, was to obliterate war, and to restore genuine peace to the world. War is the most unmitigated curse, and peace is one of the God’s greatest blessings. He was Apostle of peace. In fact, the movement which he launched, was itself called *Peace* or Islam. If a Muslim believe that Mohammad (saws) was a catalyst of wars and bloodshed, he will cease to be a Muslim.

Now the choice before a Muslim is simple: either he believes that Mohammad (saws) did *not* (repeat *not*) appoint his own successor, or he believes that he did. If he believes that Mohammad (saws) did not, then it would mean that he brought all the sorrows and tragedies of the past and the future upon the Muslim Umma. Such a belief, would in fact be a tacit “indictment” by a Muslim, of Mohammad (saws) for his “dereliction” of duty. But he should ask

himself if he can “indict” the Last and the Greatest Messenger of God, and still be a Muslim.

If the modern Muslim believes that Mohammad (saws) appointed his own successor, then he will have to concede that the meeting held in Saqifa was “ultra vires” because it was held in defiance of the commandments of God and His Apostle. All the evils, the internal misfortunes of Islam, the rifts of schisms, the sad patrimony of blood and tears, and the endless civil wars of the Muslims, had their origin in Saqifa.

Islam has given freedom of choice to all Muslims. On the one hand they have the inspired judgement of Mohammad (saws); on the other, there is the judgement made in the outhouse of saqifa. They can choose whatever they like.

Mohammad (saws) the Messenger of God and the interpreter of Qur’an, was the most knowledgeable of men. Not only he had knowledge of history, and knowledge of the causes of the rise, decline and fall of nations, he also had knowledge and understanding of human nature. The patterns of history were all familiar to him. Because he was endowed with such knowledge, he did not leave the matter of succession to blind chance. He had

begun the implementation of the program of the reconstruction of human society, and he had established the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. And he knew that he would not live for ever.

Mohammad (saws) knew that he would die but his mission would live His mission called for continuity. Continuity was all important for the success of his mission, and nothing was to interrupt it, not even his own death. To give continuity to his mission, therefore he picked out Ali (a.s) who though young in years, was the personification of all the qualities of leadership in Islam. Mohammad (saws) made an inspired declaration in the Banquet of Dhu'l-Asheera that Ali (a.s) was his vicegerent and his successor. But he had also made a lifelong study and analysis of Ali's (a.s) character and abilities, and had found him incomparable.

Ali (a.s) was unique. He was a transcendent character in Islam!

Even if no historical evidence were available that Mohammad (saws) appointed his own successor, it is still possible to make a few deductions from his disposition and temperament. He was most meticulous, circumspect and punctilious in private and public life. Prudence, vision and thoughtful

planning characterized his work. The allegation that he did not tell his Umma who would lead it in war and in peace, and who guide it in other exigencies of life, is clearly at variance with his character.

Mohammad (saws) was the teacher of the Muslims. He taught them everything they knew. Of the knowledge of Islam, he withheld nothing from them. To claim that he withheld from them the information most vital for them, viz., the name of the person who would steer the vessel of Islam, after his own death, defies all the canons of commonsense and reason.

It will be remembered that when Mohammad Mustafa (saws) was in Makkah, the citizens of Makkah, brought their cash and other valuables to him for safe-keeping- both before and after he began to preach Islam because they trusted him. His truthfulness and fidelity were beyond any question.

In A.D. 622 Mohammad Mustafa (saws) migrated from Makkah, he made Ali (a.s) *responsible* for returning all the deposits to their (pagan) owners- the same owners who were lusting to kill him for preaching Islam. But a trust is something sacred, and must be

honored by everyone, especially by an Apostle of God!

After Mohammad's (saws) departure from Makkah, Ali (a.s) returned all the deposits to their owners.

But for Mohammad (saws), there was no "trust" greater than Islam. God imposed upon him the *duty* delivering this trust to all mankind. Therefore, before his death, he had to make someone responsible to take charge of this" trust."

Mohammad (saws), the Prophet of Islam, made Ali (a.s) responsible to take charge of this "trust," and its political expression- the government of Medina.

The Coronation of Ali (a.s) as the successor of Mohammad (saws) was performed, after the Farewell pilgrimage of the Apostle, at a short distance from Makkah, at the plain called Khumm, near a pool of water (Ghadeer), on 18th of Dhil-Hajj of 10 A.H.

The assumption that Mohammad (saws) did not appoint his own successor, and did not introduced him to the Muslim umma, is supported neither by facts nor by logic. Facts and logic are on his side-perennially and inevitably. It was in the outhouse of Saqifa that the logic of history went awry.

