

The Role of 'A'ishah in the History of Islam

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Volume Two

'A'ishah in the time of
'Ali ibn Abi Talib'



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In the name of God, the almighty

Some individuals who consider themselves men of learning, imagine that they have attained a high degree of knowledge. They take for granted that the history of Islam, especially that part which is related to the early periods of this faith, is altogether correct and wholly free from doubt and ambiguity. Such persons, who should be called unlettered simpletons, imagine that the narrators of Islamic history have been without exception chaste, truthful and trustworthy individuals. They therefore believe everything that is narrated about that period and are fully convinced about all the contents of well known books of tradition and history, whereas these books contain all kinds of subject matter including even superstitious and unacceptable points in such a way that they offer little that is right and true and much that is wrong and untrue.

The assurance of such simple persons concerning the traditions and other topics of those books has reached a point where that they may accuse anyone who expresses doubt about truth of one of these traditions and points of iniquity and excommunicate them.

Although God has granted intelligence and mental power individuals to enable them to reflect and base their judgment on fairness and justice, yet owing to their obstinacy and mental rigidity as well as their undue imitation of their predecessors they make their thought and inactive and useless, so that in being faced with logic and clear reasoning they refuse to surrender to truth and remain obstinate in their prejudice and reject that truth and criticize it.

I hope that you, too, may be secure from their stinging tongue and unmanly attacks, but this is impossible since they

will not remain silent before those who speak the truth. At the time I published my book of "Adwa' `ala as-sunnat al-Muhammadiyah", I was involved with many difficulties by these so-called scholars.

In that book I had made a survey of the Prophet's traditions and showed how and when and by whom these traditions had been quoted, and what lies had found their way into them and how badly they had been mutilated.

In that book I mentioned these and many other illuminating points, but as soon as the book was published they abused and criticized me from every side, from Egypt, Hejaz and ash-Sham. I ignored those futile talks and bravely tolerated those abuses, since I believed in my goal and had no doubt stepped on the path of truth.

Surprisingly enough such persons are like poisonous thorns in the way of learning and knowledge, they accuse and violently attack seekers of truth and true scholars. How negligent they are of the serious and ill-omened consequences of their deeds! For, with this ugly-deed they do not only betray knowledge and truth, but also make educated and enlightened individuals pessimistically about religion and piety. These enlightened individuals wish to weigh everything with the criteria of intellect and investigation, and when they deal with religious research they are faced with the attacks of these dry sectarians and their enmity, and in consequence they become weary of Islam and Muslims.

It is now incumbent upon all scholars and learned individuals to break down the mental letters of dependence, by not following and imitating; our predecessors. We must courageously endeavour to make a careful and profound survey of Islamic history, and cleanse it from the pollution of lies, prejudices, spitefulness and misinterpretations, and bring out the truths from behind the thick clouds of imitation and alteration, and fear no criticism and reproach in this Course.

I am now very glad to express this truth and announce that a great scholar of Iraq, Professor Murtada `Askari has risen to undertake this great scientific and religious responsibility and has published some books on this topic

which are truly the mirror of truth and right thoughts. Anyone can thus study the real and genuine history of Islam which is reflected in those books and discover the truth. This great scholar has already published a book entitled 'Abd Allah ibn Saba'⁽²⁾ in which he has scientifically and convincingly proved that in the history of Islam there never existed such a man as Abd Allah ibn Saba, but, that this figure was created by wicked and mysterious political hands, so that, they may divert the history of Islam from its true course under the cover of this shadowy figure, to their own interests.

This noble scholar has also proved in his book that at-Tabari, the same leader of all historians, is the first person to have mentioned the name of 'Abd Allah ibn Saba', that fabulously false character, in his book, and in quoting that name he had relied only on the words of a story-teller called Sayf ibn 'Umar at-Tamimi, who was a notorious liar and fabricator of stories. Other historians have imitated at-Tabari in this matter.

Now the same exalted scholar, Professor 'Askari, has published another valuable book entitled: "Ahadith of Umm al-Mu'minin 'A'ishah" in which he has described the adventurous life of 'A'ishah. In his book through research, this author has avoided any prejudice and has tried to investigate the angles of history as they really were and to clarify them. This book is written fluently and on the basis of scholarly scrutiny, and with a full respect for both science and religion.

The exalted author has investigated several important subjects and clarified a number of facts:

- 1-He has pointed out that some of the traditions attributed to the Prophet of Islam are contradictory and sometimes inharmonious with Quranic verses. Some of them are even so mean and far removed from the criteria of science and intellect that they have been employed by our enemies as pretexts to attack our dear Islam and its noble prophet. Therefore it is incumbent upon scholars to classify these series of traditions from the viewpoint of evidence and narrators and deal with the evidence of each group in its proper place, so as to clarify the criterion and real value of those traditions and separate right from wrong. In this task

especially, such characters as 'A'ishah Abu Hurayrah, Anas ibn Malik and 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar from whom most of the traditions have been quoted, should be subjected to a closer scrutiny, and their biography, political, social position, and mentality which deeply influenced their traditions, should be studied deeply.

2-The exalted author especially points out that the true meaning of Islamic history until the rule of Yazid is obtainable only if 'A'ishah's traditions and narrations are fully discussed and surveyed, since 'A'ishah had been most active in the first period of Islam, and has assumed a significant role in the creation of historical events. She has narrated many traditions on the correctness or incorrectness of which depends the fate of Islamic history.

For this reason the exalted author has in his book of Ahadith of Umm al-Mu'minin 'A'ishah has discussed her traditions before dealing with other subjects. In this survey, he at first describes the history of her life and divides it into several periods, he speaks of her lineage, birth place, her marriage with the Prophet, and then deals with her spirit, mental and moral qualities her conduct with the Prophet, and he also reveals her inner complexes. Thus it becomes clear that, as Shawqi the famous Egyptian poet says, she is like any other woman who adopts the way of slyness and cunning with her husband, the Prophet.

3-The learned authority of this book employs historical evidence to prove that 'A'ishah was the real killer of 'Uthman. For, after the Prophet she supported the first and second caliphs, and at the beginning of 'Uthman's rule she acted in harmony with him, but later on owing to certain reasons she opposed him and incited the people against him and eventually issued the verdict of his death.

4-After 'Uthman's assassination, 'A'ishah began her opposition to 'Ali sparing no effort in this way and adopting conduct that she would not allow towards anyone else. Her first opposition to 'Ali began on hearing of the: people's allegiance to him, she shouted in a great rage full of hatred:

"This matter will never end even if all the heavens descend upon the earth!" It was not long before she made Talhah and

az-Zubayr turn away from 'Ali, and eventually the three of them prepared a large army to fight 'Ali by starting the battle of al-Jamal. In this battle she mounted a camel to engage personally in the fight.

When 'Ali became victorious in this battle, he respectfully sent her back to Medina without any injury. But she did not appreciate the generous treatment, and did not remove from her heart her rancor for 'Ali. She spent the rest of her days in full hostility to him, making use of every possible means to this end, and employing every pretext to rise against him. The flame of her heart was not extinguished until the day that 'Ali was martyred and it was then that her eyes shone with joy and she sighed with relief.

On hearing the news of 'Ali's assassination, she sang this poem: "*She (herself) attained her long cherished desire, and she felt the peace and tranquility of the hearts in the same way that one is filled with joy and relief at the return of one's traveler.*"

There were two reasons for this hostility, one of which was the well-known incident of Jfk⁽³⁾, and the other was 'Ali's marriage with Fatimah, the daughter of Khadijah. The great Islamic poet, Ahmad Shawqj, in his eloquent poem addresses 'Ali, and describes the unpleasant happenings caused by 'A'ishah against 'Ali.

In a letter written by the Imam during the bitter battle of al-Jamal to 'A'ishah Talhah and az-Zubayr, he had spoken of matters, a careful perusal of which would have made her repentant and caused her to beg God's pardon for her blunders, even though she was not likely to be forgiven.

He writes to her as follows: And you O 'A'ishah, have stepped out of your house and have thus disobeyed God and His prophet 'A'ishah you, are desiring something that has no connection with you! Tell me, what do women have to do with mobilizing an army and engaging in ostentation among fighting men? Tell me, what have you to do with starting a war with the believers in the qibla and causing the shedding of innocent blood? After all these matters, you pretend that you are avenging 'Uthman's blood. What have you to do with avenging 'Uthman's blood? Is it not true that he was of the

Umayyads and you are of the Banu Taym? Moreover, it was only yesterday that you exclaimed in the presence of the Prophet's companions: "Kill this Na'thal ('Uthman) who has become an infidel!" And yet today you rise up to avenge his blood! Fear God and return to your home, and cover yourself with the veil of chastity and self-respect! That is all.

These few pages have presented a brief glance at the contents of present book; for, if we were to explain the contents of the whole book, another big book would be required. Therefore, we bring our comments to an end and state in all sincerity: Anyone who wishes to learn of the facts of Islamic history since its advent till the allegiance to Yazid, should study the two valuable research books of " 'Abd Allah ibn Saba'" and "A-hadith of Umm al-Mu'minin 'A'ishah" and do so with care and reflection, since both of them have been written with the able pen of the great scholar, Mr. 'Askari.

But our expectation from Mr. 'Askari is to persevere in this course with courage and steadfastness. I beg God Almighty to aid him in the attainment' of his goal and success in this course.

Mahmud Abu Rayh
Cairo, 23 February 1962

The Persian translator's preface

The present book which is at the disposal of the reader, is the translation of a part of the book called Ahadith of Umm al-Mu'minin 'A'ishah The text of the book is written by the great traditional scholar, Mr. Sayyid Murtada 'Askari.

The religious, social and cultural services of this author are so many that he is lauded by both enemies and friends, and a description of his services requires an independent pamphlet.

One example of his scientific and cultural service is the book of "Ahadith of Umm al-Mu'minin 'A'ishah" in which he portrays the ideas, beliefs, qualities; characteristics and spiritual peculiarities of 'A'ishah for the reader and familiarizes him with the true visage of this women. This book gives an account of 'A'ishah's life and her role in producing some very important political events. But the main purpose of the author is not to give a full and detailed history and biography. He has a much wider and higher goal, namely to discuss the large and considerable number of traditions narrated by her and show to what extent they are right or wrong, reliable or unreliable.

Before beginning the discussion of this wide subject, it has been considered necessary to describe in an introduction to this book, some of the historical events in the occurrence of which 'A'ishah had played a part, in order to give a true picture of the personality of this narrator of so many traditions, thereby clarifying their value and validity.

Therefore the author has, in his study of A'ishah's adventurous life, divided it into definite parts and periods the most important of which are the following three:

- 1-'A'ishah in the time of 'Uthman's rule.
- 2-'A'ishah in the time of 'Ali's rule.

3-'A'ishah in the time of Mu'awiyah's rule.

The first part as well as the previous periods of 'A'ishah's life has been translated into Persian by the learned scholar Mr. Sardar-Niya, entitled The Role of 'A'ishah in the History of Islam.

The second part, too has been, translated at the request of the exalted author in the form of the present book and placed at the disposal of the reader, and the third part is to be translated in the near future and offered to the public.

In conclusion, it is necessary to mention the following points:

1-As the original text has been written in Arabic, this translation offers a wider opportunity for those who intend to study the book, and wherever necessary explanations have been added about historical terms etc. to; clarify the matter.

2-In view of the above objective, a free translation has been resorted to.

3-While the goal of the author has been adhered to, the topics have been arranged in the form of historical incidents and short stories and some details have been added to prevent boredom.

4-If the reader comes across certain repetitions, he should not consider it as a defect, since the author does not intend to narrate a series of historical events, but wishes to clarify certain facts through some of these events attain this goal it is only possible if a subject or an event is described by reference to all the sources even with a slight change where necessary. That is why some happenings have been repeated with the same differences that had existed in the original source.

Such repetitions, without being a defect, may also be an advantage in giving a greater reliability and clarifying the subject in a better way.

Muhammad Sadiq Najmi
Hashim Hirisi.
Qom, 1383 of the Hijrah

The author's introduction

In the course of this discussion and survey we follow neither a theological goal, nor a historical or jurisprudentially one or such like. In other words we have no intention of criticizing the views and beliefs of a group or supporting and defending another group. Nor do we wish to praise some and slander others.

Moreover, we do not want to bring up a jurisprudentially discussion and survey the verdict of death from the viewpoint of Islamic jurisprudence. Nor is our purpose to write history so as to need to narrate all the historical details.

Our object is rather to take certain historical matters out of reliable historical texts so as to enable the reader to recognize the true visage and personality of 'A'ishah through his study of them, and become familiar with her thoughts, beliefs and spirit, thereby to clarify the true worth and validity of her traditions and narrations which will be discussed later, and to make the path of this survey easier and smoother.

Therefore, we abstain from narrating such events which have no connection with our goal and the subject under discussion, we will describe only those parts of historical events which are related to our objective. For, a description of such matters reveals the strange and mysterious personality, political, and intellectual genius of 'A'ishah. It shows how well-acquainted she was with the way of winning public opinion, and. how she managed to shake the foundation of the rule of two caliphs, resulting in the assassination of one of them, namely 'Uthman whose verdict of death was issued by her, for she, had acted as an effective agent of his death. For, without her verdict he would not have been murdered, since no one would have dared to shed a caliph's blood or to show disrespect to the position of the caliphate.

It shows also with what skill and policy she succeeded, after

'Uthman's assassination, despite her former rancor and hostility with him, so easily and quickly to assume the role, of the avenger of his blood and his supporter. Indeed, she was so dexterous and smart that she managed to exonerate the real assassin and present him as the supporter and avenger of the murdered. It is astonishing how she succeeded in bringing 'Uthman's enemies and murderers into the same military camp as his sons and friends, and create a united army to avenge 'Uthman's blood.

How skilful she was to accuse 'Ali of 'Uthman's murder despite the fact that 'Ali had not taken the slightest part in this event, and to be able to rouse the Muslims against him, despite his clear and brilliant record!

Indeed this amazing and unparalleled political power belongs to 'A'ishah for which she has won fame as an outstanding historical personage.

Unfortunately so far her role and character have not been properly investigated to show her real visage and reveal true facts.

We now beg God's aid in this task to enable us to illuminate some of these dark corners of history and reveal the truth and introduce 'A'ishah's true character, and thereby discover the extent of the validity and reliability of her traditions.

Sayyid Murtada 'Askari

<p style="text-align: center;">Part One After the allegiance to 'Ali's rule</p>

The most critical part of 'Ali's rule

We swear by God that we will not choose anyone but you.

One of the Prophet's Companions

When 'Uthman was killed and the rein of the Muslims' social and political affairs fell into their hands and they were freed from their allegiance which had imposed limitations on them concerning the choice of another caliph, they all turned towards 'Ali and crowded around him to swear allegiance and elect him as caliph.

at-Tabari describes this event as follows: The Prophet's companions came to 'Ali and said: " 'Uthman, caliph of all Muslims, has been killed, and today the Muslims must have a worthy leader and guardian, and we know of no worthier than you for this position since your record in Islam is longer than everyone else's and your kinship to the Prophet of God is closer and stronger."

Imam 'Ali said in answer: "No. Do not make such a proposal and do not choose me as caliph; for, I would prefer to act as a caliph's aid and adviser rather than be a caliph."

They said: "No, by God we will not leave you alone until you accept our proposal."

'Ali said: "Now that there is no alternative but to accept your allegiance, the ceremony should be held publicly in the mosque in the presence of the Muslims and with their full agreement."

at-Tabari narrates again that the Muslims including Talhah and az-Zubayr rushed upon 'Ali and said: "O 'Ali! We have come to swear allegiance and choose you as our caliph and

leader.”

Imam 'Ali answered again: "Leave we alone and let me be as I am for, I have no need of acting as a caliph and ruler, and I am like any other Muslim. You can show allegiance to anyone you consider worthy for that position. I swear to God that I will be pleased with that choice and have no objection to it at all."

But they were not content with 'Ali's answer and said emphatically: "O 'Ali! We swear to God that we will have none but you as our leader and caliph of the Muslims."

at-Tabari says: After 'Uthman's assassination the people assembled in large groups and came several times to 'Ali's presence, begging him to accept the position of caliph and to hold the rein of the Muslims' affairs. But the Imam refused to give a positive answer. When they applied to him for the last time, they said: "O 'Ali! If the question of the caliph's election is postponed any longer, chaos will result in Muslims' affairs. Now we are all in need of a worthy and competent guardian like you to put our affairs in order and guide us in these turbulent times

Now 'Ali gave a somewhat positive answer and said: "You are putting too much pressure upon me, and show too much insistence in accepting none but me. I, too, have a proposal, and if you accept it, I would be willing to accept your allegiance, otherwise I can never do so and will not undertake the heavy task of caliphate.

They said: "O 'Ali! We accept whatever you say with all our hearts and souls." Then they proceeded towards the mosque and assembled there 'Ali too, arrived and, after climbing the pulpit, he said: "O people! I had no desire to take the seat of caliphate and act as your ruler. But what could I do? You would not leave me alone, and forced me to accept this heavy responsibility. I must first remind you of a point and obtain your agreement that during my caliphate these two matters will be adhered to strictly and without the smallest consideration:

- 1-The abolition of class privileges,
- 2-Equality of rights of all Muslims.

Indeed this law must become universal during my caliphate. Even I, as your emir, having control of your wealth and holding the key of the public fund, must not have the right to allot to

myself one drachma and have a share more than others." The Imam then added: "Pull out your tooth of greed, and expect no special social privilege or additional stipend from me. Do you agree with my caliphate on these conditions?"

They all said in one voice: "We do, O 'Ali! We do!" Then 'Ali said: "O God! Be a witness to this pact!" The Muslims took 'Ali's hand and the ceremony of allegiance was performed.⁽⁴⁾

al-Baladhuri says: The Muslims rushed eagerly towards 'Ali and shouted the slogan: "'Ali is the commander of the faithful!, 'Ali is the commander of the faithful!" They entered his house shouting their slogans and said: "O 'Ali! You know well that the Muslims need a leader. We have chosen you as our leader and guardian. Now we have come to swear allegiance to you and entrust you with the rein of Islamic affairs."

'Ali answered: "The choice of a leader and caliph does not depend on you alone. Those who have taken part in the battle of Badr and have a longer record and a greater share in Islam, too, must participate in the election of the caliph. Their vote, too, is necessary in this choice."

When the companions heard of 'Ali's words, they came to him and said: "O 'Ali! We, too, choose you. Indeed we choose you because with your presence no one else is worthy of being caliph, and none is better than you for this position!"

After hearing their opinion, 'Ali climbed the pulpit, and prepared himself to receive the people's allegiance. They raised their arms and the ceremony of allegiance began. Talhah was the first man to swear allegiance to 'Ali. As it happened Talhah's hand was offered loosely and 'Ali is said to have taken it as a bad omen, murmuring: "He will soon break his promise!"⁽⁵⁾

at-Tabari says: When Talhah swore allegiance to 'Ali Habib. ibn Dhu'ayb looked at him, and said: "This allegiance will not last, since that hand which is raised is defective and faulty!"⁽⁶⁾ While the people of Medina regarded this incident as a bad omen, Aishah considered it as a good omen and said: "Now the people will hold that defective hand of Talhah, and elect him as caliph!"

Where the verdict of death turned into the vengeance for blood

*Woe to those who do not restore the caliphate
to Taym's household.*

`A'ishah

At the end of `Uthman's rule `A'ishah was greatly disgusted with the conditions of the caliphate, since she was deprived of the privileges she had enjoyed in the time of the first two caliphs. So she raised the banner of opposition to Uthman and used all her endeavour to send letters to the provinces to make the people cynical about `Uthman's ways and rule, and rouse them to riot and rebel against him. When the flame of sedition was kindled and she found herself successful in her attempts, she departed for Mecca where she stayed, waiting for the assassination of `Uthman and the people's allegiance to Talhah.

at-Tabari says in this connection: One day a man called al-Akhdar arrived in Mecca from Medina, when `A'ishah saw him, she asked about the conditions in Medina.

al-Akhdar said: "`Uthman has killed the Egyptians." She said: "We come from God and return to Him! Has `Uthman really resorted so much to injustice and perversity as to kill even those who seek aid to defend their right and combat oppression? By God, we will not tolerate this tyranny and injustice!"

Then another man came to `A'ishah, she asked him about the conditions in Medina, and he reported that `Uthman was killed by the Egyptians. `A'ishah said: "It is very strange why al-Akhdar has regarded the killers to be the murdered ones!" Since that time this incident has assumed the form of this saying:

"That man is as much of a her as al-Akhdar!"⁽⁷⁾

al-Baladhuri says: "When `A'ishah heard in Mecca of `Uthman's death, she asked to pitch a tent in the mosque of al-Haram, and stood there addressing the people and said: "O people! I make a prediction by `Uthman's deeds and conduct that he will bring misfortune to his kinsmen and Muslim people, in the same way that Abu Sufyan brought misery to his kinsmen in the battle of Badr."⁽⁸⁾

A number of historians have narrated that when `A'ishah heard in Mecca the news of `Uthman's death, she said: "May `Uthman be deprived of God's favour! He met this ill-omened fate because of his evil deeds; for, God is never unjust to anyone."

Sometimes she said: "May God keep him away from His favour! His sins dragged him into the abyss of annihilation, and he was punished for his deeds, O people! Grieve not for `Uthman's death. Ahmar Thamudi killed Salih's camel and thus brought misfortune and destruction upon the people of Thamud. Let not `Uthman like him, cause dispute and mischief among you Muslims. If `Uthman is killed Talhah is present amidst you as the best and ablest person to be chosen caliph. Swear allegiance to him, and abstain from division and dispersion."

After uttering these words `A'ishah left for Medina with all speed, along the way she reflected about the conditions in Medina, and was never in doubt about Talhah's attainment of the position of caliph.⁽⁹⁾

On the way to Medina these thoughts occupied her mind: "May God show no favour to that Jew `Uthman that foolish and stupid man! Forget `Uthman and speak to me of Talhah! Happy is a father who has such a son as you! Praised be a mother who has begotten an offspring like you! How well they have realized that Talhah is the only man worthy of leadership, and are choosing him as caliph! He is, indeed, the only person worthy of this position! I seem to see people from a far offering him the hand of allegiance. Drive my mount faster so that I may join him soon!"

She was occupied with such thoughts on the way, when she came across `Ubayd ibn Umm Kilab ⁽¹⁰⁾ who was coming from Medina, and asked him the news from that city. He answered:-

`Uthman has been killed, and the Muslims were left perplexed and without a guardian for eight days."

`A'ishah asked: "What then?"

`Ubayd said: "Fortunately it ended well, since all the Muslims unanimously elected `Ali ibn Abi -Talib as caliph and guardian and swore allegiance to him." `A'ishah said: "I swear to God that if the question of caliphate ends in favour of `Ali, it would be fitting if all the heavens are demolished. Woe to you,

'Ubayd, do you know what you are saying?"

'Ubayd answered: " 'A'ishah be sure that things have occurred as I said."

'A'ishah cried out in lamentation at these words, and 'Ubayd said: "'A'ishah! Why are you vexed at people's allegiance to 'Ali? Why are you not pleased? 'Ali is a better and worthier caliph than anyone else. There is no one as virtuous as him."

When 'Ubayd finished his remark, 'A'ishah shouted: "take me back! Take me back as quickly as possible!"

Thus she returned to Mecca, but she had changed her former slogan of ordering 'Uthman's assassination, now she exclaimed:

"I swear to God that 'Uthman has been killed innocently. I must rise to avenge his blood."

'Ubayd said: "'A'ishah, I am amazed that yesterday you issued a verdict about 'Uthman's infidelity and ordered his death, calling him Na'thal and an old Jew. But how soon you have gone back on your words! For, today you call him innocent and guiltless!"

'A'ishah said: "Yes, 'Uthman was such a man, but he repented, and these people killed him in his innocence without paying attention to his repentance. Anyhow, what has my word of yesterday to do with you? Accept what I say today, since it is better than my words of yesterday!"

In response to 'A'ishah, 'Ubayd composed a poem, the translation of which is as follows:

*'A'ishah, you are the source of all these differences and riots;
The heavy storms of seditions and tumults have their origin in you;
It was you who issued the verdict of his death;
It was you who called him an infidel.
Though we took part in shedding 'Uthman's blood by your order;
Yet you are his true assassin since you ordered his death.
'A'ishah, neither has the heaven descended upon the earth,
Nor have the sun or the moon eclipsed.
But the Muslims have sworn allegiance to a great man;
To a brave man who puts on chain mail in the fields of battle,
And makes selfish and unruly men object.
Is a cunning and perfidious creature.
The equal of a loyal and steadfast man?"*

'A'ishah returned to Mecca and dismounted in front of Masjid al-Haram, and after covering herself walked towards Hajar al-Aswad (the Black stone in the Ka'bah), she was soon surrounded by the people. When she saw the crowd she addressed them, saying: "O people! Innocent 'Uthman has been killed, and I must lament him for his innocence. I swear to God that I will rise to avenge his blood."

Sometimes she exclaimed: "O Quraysh tribe! 'Ali killed 'Uthman! 'Uthman was a man of whose one night of his life was better than 'Ali's whole life."⁽¹¹⁾

Abu Mikhnaf quotes the same narration and then says: When 'A'ishah heard of the people's allegiance to 'Ali, she cried out, saying: "Woe be to them! Woe upon their life! They do not restore the caliphate ⁽¹²⁾ to the Taym tribe."⁽¹³⁾

Allegiance breakers

Let them alone to act upon their own wish.

Imam 'Ali

All the Muslims sincerely chose 'Ali as caliph and swore allegiance to him except for a few such as 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar, Muhammad ibn Muslamah, Usamah ibn Zayd, Hassan ibn Thabit and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas.

Two of 'Ali's friends, namely 'Ammar and Malik al-Ashtar came to him and discussed the above individuals.

'Ammar said: "O commander of the faithful! All the people swore allegiance to you except these few people. Invite them to swear allegiance to you. They may accept your invitation, and not infringe the way of the Prophet's companions, emigrants and Ansar and not stay away from the Muslim assembly."

'Ali said: "We have no need of anyone who does not welcome us and does not sincerely accept us."

al-Ashtar said: "O Amir al-Mu'minin! Though they have precedence over some of us in Islam, yet this precedence is no excuse for them to refuse to swear allegiance to you and disregard such an important matter as the choice of a caliph. Indeed, they must accept this allegiance like all others, and not

cause a division and disunion among the Muslims.”

‘Ali said: “al-Ashtar! I am more familiar than you with the thoughts of these people. Leave, them alone. It is better not to impose allegiance on them.”

Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqas who was one of the infringers came to the Imam and said: “O ‘Ali! I swear to God that I have no doubt about your merit over others for the position of caliph. But what can I do? I am sure that very soon some of those peoples, who are offering you the caliphate today, will quarrel with you and cause war and bloodshed. I am prepared to swear allegiance to you on the condition that you let me have a tongued sword that can introduce me to anyone who deserves death.”

Imam ‘Ali answered: “Sa’d, the condition imposed on me by the Muslims for their allegiance has been that I should act upon the book of God and the Prophet’s tradition. Has any act been performed by me contrary to them to give you a reason for your opposition to me? You are free to swear allegiance to me under the same conditions and join the Muslim community, or refuse this allegiance and stay away from the Muslim community.”⁽¹⁴⁾

In addition to the above-mentioned people a number of Banu Umayyah refused to swear allegiance to ‘Ali.

al-Ya’qubi, a well-known historian, quotes their own words concerning the infringement of this group as follows: Marwan ibn al-Hakam, Sa’id ibn al-‘As and al-Walid ibn ‘Uqbah came to ‘Ali, and al-Walid said as their spokesman: “ ‘Ali! You have pounded us all and broken our backs. As for me, in the battle of Badr you killed my father in a sorry condition. As for Sa’id, you also killed his father who was a hero of the Quraysh, thereby breaking the back of the Quraysh. As for Marwan, you slandered and criticized his father and thus hurt his feelings. On the day ‘Uthman showed benevolence to him on account of the ties of kinship and added to his stipend, you criticized ‘Uthman for this matter and strongly objected to it. Despite all these complexes and vexations, we are prepared to swear allegiance to you but on condition that you first connive at what we have done in Uthman’s time, and that you disregard our past oppressions to the Muslims, and not seize back from us the wealth we have gathered in Uthman’s time. Secondly, you must punish and kill ‘Uthman’s assassins.

That was a summary of the Umayyad's proposals. But 'Ali was enraged by their words, and said angrily: "As for your claims about your fathers, I did not kill them. It was their opposition and hostility to truth and their support of polytheism and idolatry that brought about their death. As for your proposal that I should not take back the enormous wealth, which you have seized out of the public fund, in this matter justice and equity will govern us and I shall act according to the verdict of justice.

As for your other proposal that I should kill the assassins, if I do so today, a big civil war will ensue tomorrow among the Muslims." Then he added: "Put aside all these pretexts, and listen to my word, which are in your interests. I invite you towards the Book of God, and revive the Prophet's tradition among you. Accept what is right and avoid wrong. For, anyone who considers a life of right and justice to be bitter and narrow, will find a wrong life much narrower and harder. These are my last words, and you are free to accept them or to follow your own thoughts, and proceed towards any direction you wish."

Marwan said: "We will be with you and swear allegiance to you, let it happen what may!"⁽¹⁵⁾

Talhah and az-Zubayr violate their pact

I swear to God that they do not intend to visit the House of God, but to break their promise and be perfidious.

Imam 'Ali'

Both Talhah and az-Zubayr had long cherished the desire to attain the position of caliph and ruler over the realm of Islam. But as the people favored 'Ali and considered only him as worthy of that position, those two men abandoned that desire and swore allegiance to 'Ali, and seemed to have taken the lead over others in this step. For, they intended to win the favour of the caliph, thereby securing a high post and a higher share of privileges.

But contrary to their expectation, 'Ali treated them equally

with other Muslims and did not allow them the smallest privilege over that of others. Thus they foiled in their purpose, and their plan became null and void.

al-Ya'qubi speaks of the improper expectations of Talhah and az-Zubayr as follows:

These two came to 'Ali and said: "O 'Ali! After the Prophet we have been deprived of every position and each of us has Lived in retirement. Now that you are caliph, we expect you to give us a share, of governing, and entrust us with suitable posts."

'Ali answered: "Forget this suggestion; for, what position is higher for you than in being my power and strength, supporting me in difficulties, and acting as the basis of the power and stability of my government? Is a higher position accessible to any other Muslim?"⁽¹⁶⁾

Some historians narrate that 'Ali granted the governorship of Yemen to Talhah and that of al-Yamamah and Bahrain to az-Zubayr, and when he was about to hand over to them the writ of appointment, they said: "O commander of the faithful! You have preserved the ties of kinship with us and granted us that right."

'Ali at once refrained from giving them the writ and said: "I never grant the authority of the Muslims to anyone on the basis of the ties and rights of kinship!"

Talhah and az-Zubayr were enraged at 'Ali's conduct and said: "O 'Ali! You give priority to others over us and humiliate us in their presence!"

'Ali said: "You are too interested in posts and positions, and in my opinion, greedy and ambitious individuals are never worthy to govern the Muslims, and act as their guardian!"⁽¹⁷⁾

In this connection at-Tabari writes: Talhah and az-Zubayr asked 'Ali for the governorship of Kufah and Basra. 'Ali answered: "If you stay with me and give more splendor and order to my government, it is better than your going to remote spots and being separated from me; for, I would feel lonely at this separation."⁽¹⁸⁾

As we said, 'Ali did not grant these two their desired posts, and did not let them share with him his position as caliph. This was the first factor that vexed Talhah and az-Zubayr and made them cynical of the caliph's administration resulting in their violation of allegiance and eventually in the battle of al-Jamal.

The second factor, which drove Talhah and az-Zubayr to violate their pact and lead them to war, was that 'Ali divided public funds equally among the Muslims and gave no extra advantage to anyone. These two men were no exception to this law, but they could not digest this just and equality-seeking spirit of 'Ali's. So they flagrantly gave tongue to their objections and began their opposition against the system of equality.

Ibn Abi al-Hadid says: 'Ali divided public funds among the Muslims, offering each person three dinars, and unlike the custom of 'Umar and 'Uthman's time, he observed an equality between Arabs and non-Arabs.

In protest to this method of 'Ali Talhah and az-Zubayr refused their share of this fair division. 'Ali called them and said: "I ask you in God's name, did you not come to me wishing me to accept the position of caliph, whereas I was reluctant to do so?" They said: "Yes." He asked: "Did you not swear allegiance to me willingly and without any compulsion and reluctance?" They said: "Yes." 'Ali said: "Then what malfeasance did you notice in we to justify your opposition and protest?"

They said: "O 'Ali! You are well aware that we possess a precedence and excellence over other Muslims. We swore allegiance to you hoping that you would not govern without consulting us in the affairs of the realm. But now we see that you take important steps without our advise, and divide public funds without our information."

'Ali said: "Talhah and az-Zubayr! You are finding fault with small matters, and disregard great affairs, you sacrifice social interests and destiny of Islamic ummah for personal profits. Repent to God! May he accept your repentance! Tell me, O Talhah and az-Zubayr, have I deprived you of the right of Muslims and committed any injustice to you?"

They said: "God forbid that you should be unjust!"

'Ali said: "Have I devoted to myself a share of this wealth and public fund?"

They said: "No! By God you have not done so." 'Ali said: "Has a problem ever risen for a Muslim about the solution of which I have been ignorant of or shown weakness and negligence to?"

They said: "No, by God!"

'Ali said: "Then what fault did you observe in my rule to

make you oppose me and stay away from the Muslim community?"

They said: "The only thing that has offended and made us cynical about your government has been your opposition to the method and ways of the second caliph, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, who took into consideration the precedence and superiority of individuals in sharing public funds, and gave each person a share fitting his rank and position. But you consider all Muslims equal and ignore our privileges, whereas all these riches have been secured through our swords, activities and self-sacrifices. How could those who have submitted to our swords through fear and force and thus embraced Islam, be equal to us?"

'Ali said: "Concerning the question of consulting you in governmental matters, I had no attachment for the position of caliphate. It was you' who dragged me into it, and made me take that seat. I feared that dispersion would fall upon the Muslims and so I accepted this responsibility, and in doing so, I referred to the Book of God and the Prophet's ways and traditions and obtained the verdict about each question from them. Therefore, I had no need of consulting you or asking your help in the affairs of the caliphate since the Qur'an and traditions provided everything I needed. But if one day something should happen that the verdict of which can not be found in the Qur'an and in traditions, and I find myself in need of consulting you, then I would indeed seek your aid.

As for the question of dividing public funds equally among Muslims, this was not my own personal method, either, and I am not the first person to have chosen this way. You and I have both lived in the Prophet's time and seen his ways. He divided public fund equally among the Muslims, and did not give the smallest advantage to anyone.

Moreover, the verdict about this matter is mentioned in the Book of God, inviting us to equality and abolishing improper privileges. This Qur'an is always in front of you and its injunctions are eternal, and the smallest wrong words do not find their way into it.

As for your remark that all these riches have been secured through your swords, and thus you deserve certain privileges,

there have been individuals in the past who have aided Islam with their life and property and secured some spoils of war. Nevertheless the Prophet of God did not grant them any special advantage for it, and their precedence and activity could not be the reason for their securing a greater share. Their self-sacrifice and worthy deeds must surely have been taken into consideration at the threshold of God, and they are sure to be rewarded for their good deeds on the day of resurrection. God knows that I do not know of any duty of mine but this towards you and other Muslims. May God guide all of us to the right path and grant us patience and fortitude. May God bestow favour upon him who aids and supports right, and avoids injustice and endeavors for its overthrow."⁽¹⁹⁾

at-Tabari says about this matter: When Talhah was disappointed about obtaining some privilege, he uttered this well-known saying: "Our profit in this matter is equal to the benefit that a dog gets by licking its nose. Thus, we could not fill our belly in 'Ali's caliphate and got no position."⁽²⁰⁾

After their allegiance to 'Ali Talhah and az-Zubayr stayed in Medina for four months waiting to receive some position and distinction, watching 'Ali's conduct and a possible change in his ways. But they saw no sign of lenience and flexibility in him or in his methods, and thus they despaired of securing any privileges. On the other hand they were informed that 'A'ishah had raised the banner of opposition to 'Ali in Mecca. So they decided to seek her aid and departed for Mecca. With this decision they visited 'Ali and begged his permission to leave for pilgrimage to the house of God. 'Ali seemed to agree and gave them leave, and then he said to his friends:

"I swear to God that their purpose of this journey is not a pilgrimage to the house of God, but this is only a pretext, the object of which, is nothing but perfidy, disloyalty and violation of the pact."

Anyhow when 'Ali gave them leave for this journey, they swore allegiance to him for the second time and left Medina for Mecca, and joined 'A'ishah's army and the party opposed to 'Ali there.⁽²¹⁾

Mobilization of the army

What do women have to do with campaigning?

Imam 'Ali

When on her way to Medina the news of the people's allegiance to 'Ali reached 'A'ishah, she decided to oppose him and returned to Mecca where she raised the banner of opposition to him and openly incited and encouraged the people against him. Hostile groups and parties, learning of this scheme, rushed from every side to her and joined the forces of opposition.

Talhah and az-Zubayr who opposed 'Ali's system of equality, as we said in the last chapter, broke their pact with 'Ali and left his side, proceeding to Mecca and joining 'A'ishah's army and opposition party.⁽²²⁾

On the one hand the Umayyads who had long been hostile to 'Ali and were waiting for an opportunity to rise against his rule, on hearing of 'A'ishah's rise and opposition, left Medina for Mecca and placed themselves under 'A'ishah's banner of opposition to 'Ali.

On the other hand the governors of 'Uthman's time who had been dismissed one after another by 'Ali left with their enormous wealth gathered from public funds, from various cities towards 'A'ishah and joined her army. Thus all the groups which had some complaint against 'Ali gathered there.

at-Tabari quotes az-Zuhri as follows: Talhah and az-Zubayr came to Mecca four months after 'Uthman's murder and 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amir⁽²³⁾ too who had been governor of Basra in 'Uthman's time and was dismissed by 'Ali left for Mecca with much wealth.

Ya'la ibn Umayyah⁽²⁴⁾, governor of Yemen who had been dismissed by 'Ali arrived at Mecca with enormous wealth and more than four hundred camels. 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amir placed much wealth and many camels at the disposal of 'A'ishah's army and her warriors. Ya'la ibn Umayyah, too offered az-Zubayr four hundred thousand dinars and provided the equipment of seventy fighters and offered the famous camel called 'Askar to 'A'ishah which he had bought for eighty dinars.

(and according to al-Mas'udi for two hundred dinars), and it was this camel that 'A'ishah rode in the battle of al-Jamal.⁽²⁵⁾ They tied her litter firmly behind this camel and 'A'ishah sat in it.

In this way all those who were opposed to 'Ali assembled in Mecca, and mobilized a huge and well-equipped army ready to fight 'Ali.

'A'ishah's army proceeds toward Iraq

'A'ishah! God has forbidden you from wandering in the desert!

Umm Salamah

at-IabarI says: In Mecca 'A'ishah gathered a round her all the parties that were opposed to 'Ali and thus, she prepared a large and well-equipped army, and then assembled the commanders for a council of war. Some of them said: We should go directly to Medina and fight 'Ali with this army. Others said: We cannot stand up against 'Ali's forces with this weak and small army, or attack the capital of the Islamic realm. We should first proceed to ash-Sham and ask the aid of Mu'awiyah in military forces and equipment and then engage in a war with 'Ali. Another group suggested moving to Iraq first and obtaining reinforcements from the people of the two large cities of Kufah and Basra where Talhah and az-Zubayr had many supporters, and then being better prepared and equipped, proceed to Medina and fight 'Ali there.

All the members of this council approved of this suggestion, and so 'A'ishah ordered the army to be ready and proceeded from Mecca towards Iraq with seven hundred warriors. All along the way volunteers joined them until their number rose to three thousand.⁽²⁶⁾

Umm Salamah speaks with 'A'ishah

Ibn Tayfur says: On the days that 'A'ishah was going to leave for Basra with her army, Umm Salamah met her and said:

'A'ishah! Your God has put limitations upon you. Do not step

beyond His command. In respect for His prophet, God has placed a veil between you and the people. Do not show disrespect to the Prophet by tearing down that veil. God has allotted you the corner of a house. Do not turn it into wandering in the desert. `A'ishah! The Prophet knew you better and was perfectly aware of your position. If it were advisable for you to interfere in such matters, he would surely have given you an instruction, about it and made an arrangement with you, but he has not done so, and on the contrary he has forbidden such acts. `A'ishah! If the Prophet saw you on this route, what would you say? Fear God and be ashamed before the Prophet! For God is watching your deed and conduct, your smallest acts are not hidden from the Prophet either.

`A'ishah! The way you have adopted is so repellent and contrary to human virtue, that, if I were in your place and were ordered to go to heaven, I would feel ashamed to meet the Prophet there, Do not abandon your modesty and humbleness, stay in the corner of your house till death, so as to satisfy the Prophet of God."

According to some historians, Umm Salamah ended her words with this sentence: `A'ishah! If I were to repeat for you what I have heard from the Prophet about this matter, you would twist with pain and cry out!

`A'ishah answered: "Umm Salamah! Though I have always followed your advice, I will not in this case do so. For, there is a fine journey ahead of me, and I intend to establish peace between the two groups of Muslims who are hostile to each other, and put an end to their differences."⁽²⁷⁾

Reports of the route

"O wives of the Prophet! Stay in your houses till death!"

The Qur'an

al-Haw'ab's dogs will bark at he.

The Prophet of Islam

`A'ishah equipped her army, which was composed of various

groups and parties opposed to 'Ali and proceeded towards Iraq, and now we will describe the incidents, which occurred on the way until she reached Basra.

Differences about acting as leader of the congregational prayer

at-Tabari says: When 'A'ishah's army left Mecca, outside that city Marwan recited the call for prayer. Then he went to Talhah and az-Zubayr and said: Which one of you should I consider as Emir and present to the people as congregational leader? As Talhah and az-Zubayr could not explicitly express their opinion in each other's presence and offer their candidacy for that position, their sons took the lead, and each of them supported his father as a nominee. 'Abd Allah spoke in favour of his father az-Zubayr and Muhammad did the same for his father Talhah thus creating differences between them. When 'A'ishah was informed of this matter, fearing that hostility would be created in the army about this question, she summoned Marwan and said: "Marwan what are you doing? Why do you cause disunion in the army with your action? The prayer must be performed with the Imamate of my brother's son, 'Abd Allah ibn az-Zubayr."

According to her order, until reaching Basra, 'Abd Allah kept this position as leader of prayer. When Ma'adh ibn 'Ubayd Allah noticed the disagreement between Talhah and az-Zubayr, he said: "By God! Even if we win victory, violent differences will arise between us on the question of caliphate; for, neither az-Zubayr nor Talhah are ready to forego their claim of this position, and each of the two refuses to grant it to the other."⁽²⁸⁾

Differences in the question of leadership

at-Tabari says that when 'A'ishah's army halted at Dhat 'Iirq, Sa'id ibn al-'As ⁽²⁹⁾ who was a Quraysh aristocrat of the Umayyads and was in 'A'ishah's army, said to Marwan and his friends: "If your object is really avenging 'Uthman's blood, whither are you going since the assassins of 'Uthman are in this very army?⁽³⁰⁾ Kill them and return to your homes. What is the point of fighting 'Ali and getting killed?"

Marwan and his friends answered: "We are going to get

reinforcements in order to kill all the assassins of 'Uthman."

Then Sa'id contacted Talhah and az-Zubayr and said: "Be honest with me, and tell the truth! If you win victory in this war, whom will you entrust with the position of caliph?"

They said: "Either of us who is chosen by the people." Sa'id said: "If you have really risen to avenge 'Uthman's blood, you had better entrust his sons with the position of caliph."

They answered: "Should we put aside old and great Emigrants and give the rein of affairs to their inexperienced young men.

Sa'id said: "I have no intention of seizing the caliphate back from the house of Abd Manaf⁽³¹⁾ and giving it to others." After saying this he returned from there.

'Abd Allah ibn Khalid ibn Usayd, too, who was of the Umayyads, withdrew from the army. al-Mughayrah ibn Shu'bah 'who was of the Thaqif tribe, observing the above scene, gathered the members of his tribe and said to them: "Any member of the Thaqif tribe who is present in this army, should return home."⁽³²⁾ Thus they did so, and the rest of the army continued its way.

The Third difference

at-Tabari continues his narration and says: After the rise of differences on the question of caliphate and withdrawal of some participants from the army, 'A'ishah's forces departed from Dhat 'Irb, having al-Walid and Aban two of 'Uthman's sons amongst them. But for the third time, too, differences arose in the army, some proposing departure to ash-Sham and others to Iraq. In this connection az-Zubayr consulted his son 'Abd Allah and Talhah asked the advice of 'Alqamah whom he preferred to his own son, they reached on agreement to have Iraq as their destination, and thus they put an end to the difference in the army.⁽³³⁾

The incident of al-Haw'ab

The fourth happening which occurred for 'A'ishah's army on the way to Iraq was as follows: Talhah and az-Zubayr were informed on the way that 'Ali had left Medina and had reached the halting place of Dhu Qar, and had blocked their way to

Kufah. So they decided to abandon the plan of going to Kufah; and by choosing a by-way they proceeded towards Basra until they reached a place called al-Haw'ab. When 'A'ishah heard dogs barking she asked the name of the place and they told her it was al-Haw'ab.

Here 'A'ishah remembered the words of the Prophet to his wives about the dogs of al-Haw'ab, warning them about it. The memory of it worried and frightened 'A'ishah, and she said: "We are from God and return to Him. I am the woman whose future he predicted."

Thus 'A'ishah changed her mind about the journey and decided to return back: When 'Abd Allah ibn az-Zubayr learnt of her decision, he went to her discussed the matter, pretending that those who had spoken about the place, had made a mistake about its name, and this was not al-Haw'ab.

After this incident 'Abd Allah ibn az-Zubayr constantly watched 'A'ishah to see that no one would contact her again and dissuade her from that journey. Thus he shadowed her until they reached Basra.⁽³⁴⁾

Interpellations of 'A'ishah's military commanders

*'A'ishah! Tell us what your purpose of this
journey is!*

Abu al-Aswad

at-Tabari narrates that 'A'ishah's army left Mecca and reached the vicinity of Basra and stopped at a place called Hafr Abu Musa.

'Uthman ibn Hunayf al-Ansari who had been appointed governor of Basra by 'Ali, hearing of the matter, ordered Abu al-Aswad ad-Du'ali to go to 'A'ishah's military camp and meet her commanders and investigate their purpose.

Abu al-Aswad went there and got in touch with 'A'ishah first and asked: "'A'ishah! What is your purpose of Coming to Basra?"

'A'ishah said: "We have come here to avenge 'Uthman's blood

and punish his assassins.”

Abu al-Aswad said: “There are none of ‘Uthman’s assassins in Basra to be punished.”

‘A’ishah said: “Abu al-Aswad! You are right. ‘Uthman’s assassins are not in Basra. We have not come to find them here. We have come to ask for people’s aid and with their support to bring vengeance upon ‘Uthman’s assassins who have gathered around ‘Ali in Medina. Abu al-Aswad! On that day when ‘Uthman hurt you with his scourges I felt uneasy, and protested strongly to him. But how can I remain silent when you rushed upon him with your sword and killed him, and did not lament his innocence? No Abu al-Aswad, I shall never remain silent!”

Abu al-Aswad said: “ ‘A’ishah! What have you to do with swords and scourges? You are the veiled and secluded wife of the Prophet, and according to his order your only duty is to retire to your house, recite the Qur’an and worship your God. ‘A’ishah! Islam does not impose jihad on women. Moreover, avenging ‘Uthman’s blood is not your duty, ‘Ali has a better and worthier claim for this vengeance, since he has a closer kinship with ‘Uthman than you have. Both of them belong to the Abd Manaf house, whereas you are of the Taym tribe.”

‘A’ishah said: “Abu al-Aswad! I will not alter my decision, and I will not give up my plan. I will carry on to attain my goal and fulfill the purpose of my uprising. You said that war and jihad are not women’s duty. What war? What jihad? Is there a question of war and jihad? I am in such a position that no one dares to engage in war with me, let alone the actual occurrence of a war!”

Abu al-Aswad said: “‘A’ishah, you are mistaken in this very matter, for you will be fought so strongly that the easiest scene of it will kindle a fire and break the back.”

Here Abu al-Aswad ended his talk with ‘A’ishah. Then he got in touch with az-Zubayr and said: “az-Zubayr! The day is not yet forgotten when the people swore allegiance to Abu Bakr when you held your sword, and uttering slogans, said: ‘None is better and worthier than ‘Ali is for the caliphate, and the fine garment of caliph is fitting for none but ‘Ali. But to day you are holding the same sword and have risen against ‘Ali! az-Zubayr! Where is that sympathy and support, and what is this hostility

and opposition?"

az-Zubayr answered that 'Uthman's blood must be avenged.

Abu al-Aswad said: "We have heard that you people have been the overseers of 'Uthman's murder, and 'Ali did not take the slightest part in it."

az-Zubayr said: "Abu al-Aswad! Go to Talhah to hear what he says!"

Abu al-Aswad narrates that he went to Talhah and found him to be a rough and seditious man seriously desiring war, and there was no use at all of talking to him.⁽³⁵⁾

According to another report, Abu al-Aswad said: " 'Imran ibn al-Hasin and I went to 'A'ishah on behalf of 'Uthman ibn Hunayf, governor of Basra and asked her to explain what motive had brought her there, and said: "Do you hear a decree from the Prophet for this uprising and journey? Or have you taken this step according to your own personal view?"

'A'ishah said: "I do not have a decree from the Prophet about this matter, but have reached a personal decision for avenging 'Uthman's blood since the day he was assassinated.

For, in 'Uthman's time we openly protested to him on why he treated the Muslims unjustly and whipped them, and why he allowed his kith and kin to seize public land and pastures for their flocks and cattle to graze on. We reminded him of that wicked and tyrannical man, al-Walid who was driven away by the Prophet and whom the Qur'an had called an evildoer⁽³⁶⁾ who was appointed as Emir and ruler of Muslims. We told him all this, and he accepted all that we said. He regretted his deeds, and with the water of repentance cleansed himself and made up for his blunders. But you people did not in the least value his repentance, and rushed upon him with your sharp swords and killed him in his house in all his innocence. You smashed the greatness of the Islamic realm, Medina, and the dignity of the caliphate and the respect due to the month of Dhu al-Hijjah, which was greatly revered in Islam. How and why can I remain silent before this injustice and oppression, and keep quiet before this disobedience and transgression?"

Abu al-Aswad said: " 'A'ishah! What have you to do with whips and swords? Had the Prophet not forbidden your interference in such affairs? Had he not recommended you to

remain in the corner of your house? Why have you, done contrary to your exalted husband's order, and emerged from your house, starting riot and sedition among the Muslims?"

'A'ishah answered: "Abu al-Aswad! What riot and sedition? Does there anyone want to fight me, or to speak against me so as to cause riot and sedition? Such a thing will never occur, and no one would dare to engage in such acts against me."

Abu al-Aswad said: "'A'ishah! If this opposition and rebellion of yours continues, the people will fight you and a great sedition will start."

'A'ishah said: "You low fellow of the Banu 'Amir tribe! Cut shorts your wounds! Who is there to dare fight the wife of the Prophet?"⁽³⁷⁾

Here ended the dialog between 'A'ishah and Abu al-Aswad, without her being influenced by his words. She remained firm in her decision and proceeded from Hafr Abu Musa with her army, and on reaching near Basra, she halted there.

Speeches by 'A'ishah's commanders

Indeed 'Uthman altered the just regime of Islam.
'A'ishah

A'ishah's army entered Basra and chose al-Mirbad, one of the large squares of the city, for her camp. 'Uthman ibn Hunayf al-Ansari who was appointed as governor of Basra by the caliph 'Ali, Again sent some deputies to al-Mirbad ⁽³⁸⁾ to talk with the commanders of 'A'ishah's army and find out their purpose.

When 'A'ishah saw that her army and the people of Basra had gathered all in the same spot, she used this opportunity to deliver an exciting oration to them, saying.

"O people! Though 'Uthman emir of the believers, was once diverted from the path of right and justice, and injured the Prophet's companions, and appointed corrupt and inexperienced youths to the affairs, and supported perverse and corrupt individuals who were subjected to God's wrath and rejected by the people, and though he had allotted public pastures to