(.The Caliphate of Imam Hasan (A.S

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During the last year of ‘Ali’s caliphate, Muawiya b. Abi Sufyan, the governor of Syria and the main challenger of ‘Ali, managed to bring a large part of the Muslim empire under his control. He also had the authority vested in him, though under doubtful and ambiguous circumstances, by ‘Amr b. al-As at the arbitration of Adruh after the battle of Siffin. Nevertheless, he could not claim for himself the title of Amir al-Mu’minin while ‘Ali was yet alive. ‘Ali was still the legitimate caliph chosen by the community at large in Medina; this was not publicly repudiated by the community as a whole, nor was the declaration of Abu Musa al-Ash’ari deposing ‘Ali and that of ‘Amr b. al-‘As installing Mu’awiya accepted by the Muhajirun and the Ansar. Thus, despite all his military and political successes, Mu’awiya could do no more than style himself only as Amir.

With ‘Ali’s assassination, the road was finally cleared for the realization of the ultimate goal of Mu’awiya’s ambitions. The very favourable circumstances that prevailed in the form of the impotence of Medina and the remnant of the pious section of the community and the vacillating nature of the Iraqi supporters of ‘Ali’s successor Hasan, coupled with the characteristic shrewdness of Mu’awiya, made it easier for him to complete the task he had initiated after the death of ‘Uthman: the seizure of the caliphate for himself and his clan.

Hasan, the elder son of ‘All and Fatima, was acclaimed as caliph by forty thousand people in Kufa immediately after the death of his father. We are told that at the battle of Siffin (Safar 37/July 657), less than three years before his death, ‘Ali had in his army seventy Companions who fought for the Prophet at Badr, seven hundred of those who renewed their allegiance to Muhammad (bay’at ar-ridwan) at the time of the treaty of Hudaybiya, and another four hundred from other Muhajirun and Ansar. Many of them were still residing in Kufa with ‘Ali as he prepared for a final encounter with Muawiya. They must have participated in the election of Hasan and must have accepted him as the new caliph, otherwise our sources would have recorded their opposition to his succession. To this there is no testimony at all. The people of Medina and Mecca seem to have received the news with satisfaction, or at least with acquiescence. This is evident from the fact that not a single voice of protest or opposition from these cities against Hasan’s accession can be located in the sources.

Two major reasons can be advanced for this attitude. First, at the time of ‘Ali’s death almost all the distinguished Companions of the Prophet from among the Muhajirun were dead. Of the six

members of the Shura appointed by ‘Umar, only Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas was still alive; the other members of the leading elite of the community had also died.

Among the younger nobility such as ‘Abd Allah b. al-‘Abbas, ‘Abd Allah b. az-Zubayr, Muhammad b. Talha, and ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar, none could match Hasan, the elder and dearest grandson of the prophet. The people of Medina still remembered that ardent love and affection which the Prophet had showered upon his grandsons: that he interrupted his sermon and descended from the pulpit to pick up Hasan, who had stumbled over his long tunic and fallen down while entering the mosque ; that he allowed his grandchildren to climb on his back while he was prostrating himself in prayer.

There are numerous accounts describing extraordinary favours being bestowed by Muhammad on his grandsons; these are preserved not only by the Shi’i sources, but are overwhelmingly transmitted by the Sunni works as well. Hasan is also unanimously reported to have resembled the Prophet in appearance. Secondly, the people of Mecca and Medina naturally could not be expected to be pleased to see Mu’awiya, the son of Abu Sufyan, the representative of the clan of Umayya, become their leader. It was Abu Sufyan who had organized the opposition to Muhammad and had led all the campaigns against him.

The Umayyads in general, and the Sufyanids in particular, did not acknowledge Muhammad until the fall of Mecca; their Islam was therefore considered to be of convenience rather than conviction. Mu’awiya, for his part, depended on the support of the Syrians, whom he had consolidated behind himself, and to whom he had been attached for close to twenty years as governor of the province, and on the support of his large and powerful clan and their clients and allies who swarmed around him. It was therefore natural, under the circumstances, that the inhabitants of the holy cities, who formed the nucleus of the Islamic Umma, would not oppose Hasan’s caliphate, especially since the alternative was the son of Abu Sufyan and Hind.

As for the people of Iraq, the eldest son of ‘Ali was the only logical choice, though not all of his supporters were motivated by the same feelings or attachment to the same cause. To a great number of them Hasan’s succession meant the continuation of ‘Ali’s policy against the rule of Mu’awiya and against the domination of Syria over Iraq. To some others, Hasan was now the only person worthy of leading the community on religious grounds.

Whether motivated by merely political or by religious considerations, however, it cannot be denied that the Iraqis acclaimed Hasan as caliph on the grounds that he was the grandson of the Prophet through ‘Ali and Fatima. Hasan’s spontaneous selection after the death of ‘Ali also indicated Iraqi inclinations, though in vague terms, towards the legitimate succession to the leadership of the community in the line of ‘Ali.

It seems that the people of Iraq, even at that early period, were quite clear in distinguishing the line of the Prophet through Fatima from other members of the Hashimite clan, otherwise they would have chosen, for example, ‘Abd Allah b. al-‘Abbas, who was a cousin of the Prophet, was senior in age to Hasan and was experienced in affairs of state, having been ‘Ali’s governor in Basra. Hasan’s close relationship to the Prophet is frequently referred to as the reason for the special consideration of the people for him.

Following the custom established by Abu Bakr, Hasan made a speech on the occasion of his accession to the caliphate. In this speech, reported in many sources with varying lengths and wordings, Hasan praised the merits of his family and the special rights and unmatched qualities of his father. He emphasized his own intimate relations with the Prophet, described his own merits and claims, and quoted the verses of the Qur’an which exalt the special position of the Ahl al-Bayt. Qays b. Sa’d b. ‘Ubada al-Ansari, an ardent supporter of ‘Ali and a trusted commander of his army, was the first to pay homage to him.

The forty thousand troops of Iraq who had sworn allegiance to ‘Ali on the condition to die for him (‘ala’l-mawt) readily hailed Hasan as their new caliph. Apparently expressing his own sentiments as well as those of the Iraqi army, Qays tried to impose the condition that the bay’a should be based, not only on the Qur’an and the Sunna of the Prophet, but also on the condition of the war (qital) against those who declared licit (halal) that which is illicit (haram).

Hasan, however, succeeded in avoiding this commitment by saying that the last condition was implicitly included in the first two. The more militant among the Iraqis, eager to fight against Mu’awiya, were not in favour of exclusion of the third condition from the terms of the bay’a, but they nevertheless paid their allegiance to him.

Later events would demonstrate that Hasan was perhaps from the very beginning quite apprehensive of the fickle-mindedness of the Iraqis and their lack of resolution in time of trials; and thus he wanted to avoid commitment to an extreme stand which might lead to complete disaster.

He was moreover a peace-loving man of mild temper who hated to see the shedding of Muslim blood. However, according to the majority of the sources, the oath of allegiance taken by those present stipulated that: “They should make war on those who were at war with Hasan, and should live in peace with those who were at peace with Hasan.”

Hasan’s acclamation as caliph by the Iraqis, and a tacit approval, at least an absence of protest or opposition, from the Hijaz, Yemen, and Persia, were a great cause of alarm to Mu’awiya, who had been working for the office since the death of ‘Uthman and who, after five years of ceaseless struggle, at last saw a clear path to undisputed authority since ‘Ali was no longer

alive. He lost no time in taking action.

First of all, as soon as the news of Hasan's selection reached Mu'awiya, he denounced the appointment, and both in speeches and in letters announced his firm decision not to recognize Hasan a caliph. secondly, he dispatched many of his agents and spies to arouse the people against Hasan. Such agents had already been quite active in the provinces of Yemen, Persia, and the Hijaz, which were still within 'Air's domain though not fully under his control at the time he was killed.

These agents were active even in the heart of Iraq and Kufa, 'Ali's only solid possession. Of this activity there is no doubt at all. This already organized espionage network was now intensified by Mu'awiya and expanded to a much larger scale.

There are numerous exchanges of letters on the subject of these spies between Hasan and Mu'awiya and between 'Abd Allah b. al-'Abbas and Mu'awiya. Mu'awiya did not even deny these subversive activities. Finally, he began preparations for war and summoned all the commanders of his forces in Syria, Palestine, and Transjordan to join him.

Not long after, the Syrian leader marched against Hasan with an army of sixty thousand men, taking the usual military route through Mesopotamia to Maskin, on the Tigris boundary of Mosul towards the Sawad. When Mu'awiya warlike intentions became clear, Hasan had to prepare for war and was compelled to take the field before he had time either to strengthen himself in his position or to reorganize the administration that had been thrown into chaos by the death of his father.

The purpose of this prompt action by Mu'awiya was two fold: first, by his demonstration of arms and strength, he hoped to force Hasan to come to terms; and secondly, if that course of action failed, he would attack the Iraqi forces before they had time to consolidate their position. It was for the first reason that Mu'awiya intentionally moved towards Iraq at a very slow pace, while sending letter after letter to Hasan asking him not to try to fight and urging him to come to terms.

If Hasan was defeated on the battlefield, this would give Mu'awiya only power and authority; but if Hasan abdicated, this would provide Mu'awiya with a legal base and legitimize his authority as well. This was what was trying to achieve. Moreover, Hasan defeated, or even killed, still represented a serious threat unless he resigned his rights; another member of the Hashimite house could simply claim to be his successor.

Should he resign in favour of Mu'awiya, such claims would have no validity and the Umayyad position would be secured. This strategy proved correct, as will be seen below. Even after the death of Hasan, ten years later, when the people of Iraq approached his younger brother

Husayn concerning an uprising, the latter advised them to wait as long as Mu'awiya was alive because of Hasan's treaty with him.

The correspondence between Hasan and Mu'awiya, which continued throughout this period, makes interesting reading and provides some useful information. Both referred to the old question of the caliphate with polemical arguments. In one of his long letters to Mu'awiya, Hasan argued his rights to the caliphate on the grounds that the authority of the caliphate stems from the Prophet of God, who was the most excellent and the best of men on earth and through whose guidance the Arabs found light while they were deep in darkness and attained honour and glory while they were disgraced, and that Hasan was the nearest to the Prophet in blood and relationship.

Hasan then used his father's argument, which the latter had advanced against Abu Bakr after the death of Muhammad, that if Quraysh could claim the leadership over the Ansar on the grounds that the Prophet belonged to Quraysh, then the members of his family, who were the nearest to him in every respect, were better qualified for the leadership of the community. In the last part of his letter Hasan wrote: "We were shocked to see that some people snatched away our right from us even though they were men of excellence, virtues, and merits, and were the forerunners in Islam [reference to the first three caliphs]. But now what a great astonishment and shock it is to see that you, O Mu'awiya, are attempting to accede to a thing which you do not deserve. You do not possess any known merit in religion (din), nor have you any trace (athar) in Islam which has ever been praised.

On the contrary, you are the son of the leader of the opposition party from among the parties (hizb min al-ahzab) [a reference to the "confederacy" which under Mu'awiya's father, Abu Sufyan, made the last united effort to crush Medina]; and you are the son of the greatest enemy of the Prophet from among Quraysh… so give up your persistence in falsehood (batil) and enter into my homage as other people have done, for you are certainly aware of the fact that I am far more entitled to the caliphate than you in the eyes of God and all worthy people.

Fear God, restrain yourself from rebellion and from shedding the blood of the Muslims; for, by God, there would be no good for you to meet your Lord with the responsibility of the blood of the Muslims."

Mu'awiya's detailed reply to Hasan is even more interesting, especially since he used the argument used by 'Umar b. al-Khattab against 'Ali. Writing to Hasan, Mu'awiya argued: "Whatever you said about the excellence and merits of the Prophet, he was indeed the most excellent among all men before and after him, past or present, young or old. Indeed God had chosen Muhammad for His message, and through him we received guidance, were saved from

destruction, and came out from darkness and error.

"You have mentioned the death of the Prophet and the dispute which took place among the Muslims at that time. In this you are clearly making accusations against Abu Bakr, 'Umar, and Abu 'Ubayda, and against those virtuous men among the Muhajirun and Ansar. I hate this accusation against the people whose actions, according to us and other people, were beyond doubt and reproach.

"When this community had some disagreements after the Prophet concerning the leadership, it was not ignorant of your family's merits, your priority, and your close relationship to the Prophet; and the community was also not unaware of your exalted place in Islam and your qualifications in it. But the community saw that this thing [the caliphate] would be better placed among Quraysh in general and they therefore selected Abu Bakr.

This is what the people thought best in the interest of the community. You are asking me to settle the matter peacefully and surrender, but the situation concerning you and me today is like the one between you [your family] and Abu Bakr after the death of the Prophet. Had I believed that you had a better grasp over the subject people than I do, that you could protect the community better than I, and you were stronger in safeguarding the properties of the Muslims and in outwitting the enemy than I, then I would have done what you have asked me. But I have a longer period of reign [probably referring to his governorship], and am more experienced, better in policies, and older in age than you. It would therefore be better for you not to insist on what you have asked me; if you enter into obedience to me now, you will accede to the caliphate after me."

Mu'awiya's letter is significant in that it gives a clear idea of the direction Muslim polity was henceforth opting to adopt openly. Mu'awiya's arguments for his claims to the caliphate manifest those guidelines and the principles by which the question of the caliphate had been previously decided in the case of the first three caliphs, and he claimed that the same considerations must remain the deciding factors now and in the future.

To him it was the interest of the state and the profane aspects of the community which must decide the question of the leadership. Mu'awiya did not deny Hasan's exalted position in relation to the Prophet and his superior place in Islam, but claimed that this was not the criterion for the leadership of the community. The qualifications for the office, according to Mu'awiya's arguments, were personal power and strength, ability in political affairs and administration, expansion of the empire, and ability to defend the Muslims and rule the subject effectively.

In this way, Mu'awiya made explicit what had been so far implicit: the separation between

political and religious principles, which was henceforth permanently established. Thus, in due course, the majority of the Muslims placed the religious leadership in the totality of the community (Jama'a), represented by the 'ulama', as the custodian of religion and the exponent of the Qur'an and the Sunna of the Prophet, while accepting state authority as binding. They came to be known as the Sunnis. A minority of the Muslims, on the other hand, could not find satisfaction for their religious aspirations except in the charismatic leadership from among the people of the house of the Prophet, the Ahl al-Bayt, as the sole exponents of the Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunna, although this minority too had to accept the state's authority. This group was called the Shi'a.

Before proceeding further in an attempt to reconstruct the events which ultimately led to the abdication of Hasan, a word seems necessary regarding the sources of our information on the subject. The struggle between Hasan and Mu'awiya has not yet been thoroughly and critically studied and remains one of the most obscure chapters of early Islamic history. Well hausen, giving only a short and sketchy account of Hasan's abdication, complains that the events are recorded with confusion and fragmentation and that it is, therefore, difficult to place certain critical details of the episode in precise chronological order.

Indeed, chronology is always a serious problem in early Muslim histories. But in his brief description of the subject it seems that Wellhausen depended solely on Ya'qubi, Dinawari, 'and Tabari. Both Yaqubi and Dinawari usually gloss over details in their short and compact histories, and it would therefore be futile to expect from them a comprehensive account of the abdication of Hasan.

Tabari provides more information than the first two but does not cover the subject with his usual thoroughness and he leaves the reader unsatisfied on many important questions. Moreover, all three of these sources suffer from a common weakness in that their renderings lack the exact sequence of events, a problem which makes it difficult to determine whether Hasan abdicated of his own free will or was forced by the circumstances to do so.

There are, however, three other early and important sources which were not' used by or were unavailable to Wellhausen. These works, already referred to above, were authored by Ibn A'tham al-Kufi (died ca. 314/926), Abu'l-Faraj al-Isfahani (died 356/967), and Ibn Abi'l-Hadid (died 655/1257). Abi'l-Faraj records the whole event from Abu Mikhnaf with verifications and additions from five other chains of transmitters, commenting that "these narratives are mixed one with the other, but are near in meaning to each other."

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, though a late author, is one of the best informed. He takes his material primarily from the famous early historian Mada'ini and completes the account from Abu

Mikhnaf. The second part of Ibn Abi'l-Hadid's account thus is similar to the corresponding portion of Abu'l-Faraj; the fact that both Abo Mikhnaf and Mada'ini wrote on the subject is confirmed by the lists of their works recorded by Ibn Nadim.

Abu Muhammad Ahmad b. A'tham al-Kufi al-Kindi must be given a place of special importance, for his Kitab al-Futuh is perhaps one of the earliest comprehensive and systematic works on the early conquests of Islam and the civil strife in the community. According to Doctor Sha'ban, a modern scholar, this work was composed in 204/819; this mean: his date of death must be placed some time in the middle of the 3rd/9th century and not in 314/926 as has so far been assumed. In any case, his history has proved to be a major source for the early history of the Arabs, particularly for events in Iraq.

Ibn A'tham was fortunate enough to have access to the works of Zuhri, Abu Mikhnaf, Ibn al-Kalbi, and some other lesser traditionists in their original and unadulterated forms. According to his methodology, as is evident in the Futuh, he combines the traditions of these early writers into a connected and coherent historical narrative without interruptions and without citing his sources for each individual tradition.

Nevertheless, whenever he records some significant tradition, he does mention the name of his source; in this respect Mada'ini is the most frequently cited authority. According to Sha'ban, Ibn A'tham, being a contemporary of Mada'ini, had the pronounced advantage of quoting this great master in his lifetime. Comparison of the narratives of Ibn A'tham with the tradition of Mada'ini recorded by Tabari show that Ibn A'tham not only provides a useful check for the material recorded by Tabari, but also adds important details which Tabari has ignored and which are preserved in the Kitab al-Futuh.

In the episode of Hasan it is through Ibn A'tham that the complete narrative of Mada'ini has come down to us. This is confirmed by a comparison of Ibn A'tham's account with that of Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, who cites Mada'ini as well; the latter gives only an abridged version of Hasan's abdication, but Ibn A'tham has recorded a complete description of the course of events from Mada'ini.

From these three sources we receive the complete texts of the lengthy correspondence between Hasan and Mu'awiya, of which only two letters have been quoted above. There seems to be no reason for doubting the authenticity of these texts. There is a rich literature of correspondence exchanged between important personalities during the classical period of Islam, and this material is frequently quoted in the Arabic sources.

The correspondence between Hasan and Mu'awiya must be considered in this light and must be given its due importance. Together with the other sources mentioned above, such literature

enables us to form a clearer picture of the episode than has so far been available. Tabari narrates the events in two independent versions from Zuhri and ‘Awana. Zuhri’s account seems somewhat to favour the case of Mu’awiya at the expense of Hasan, or at least glosses over those details which might weaken the position of the founder of the Umayyad caliphate. This is understandable, for Zuhri was closely attached to the Umayyad court and was writing under the successors of Mu’awiya.

His account is an unclear isolated report not recorded by other authorities; and in contrast to this, ‘Awana’s account appears to have been more balanced in describing the circumstances under which Hasan abdicated. Unlike Zuhri’s version, ‘Awana’s bears considerable historical merit in that it very largely conforms with the accounts reported by other authorities such as Ya’qubi and Dinawari.

According to Zuhri, Hasan was from the very beginning inclined to hand over the caliphate to Mu’awiya in return for the most favourable terms he could secure for himself from his rival. Before his death ‘Ali had entrusted the leadership of his forty-thousand-man Iraqi army to Qays b. Sa’d, one of his trusted and zealous supporters, for the campaign against Mu’awiya. Qays was a great enemy of Mu’awiya and the Syrians, and had sworn allegiance to ‘Ali to the death. Hasan knew that Qays would never agree to his plans for abdicating in favour of Mu’awiya, and therefore he deposed Qays from the command of the army and appointed ‘Abd Allah b. al-‘Abbas in his place.

The Kufans were already suspicious of Hasan’s intentions because he had not clearly committed himself to fight against Mu’awiya at the time when homage was paid to the former. Soon they came to the conclusion that Hasan was not the person to lead them against their Syrian enemies, and they became increasingly restless. Not long after Hasan came to be aware of their ill-feelings towards him, he was attacked by a Kufan and sustained a lance wound in his thigh. Unlike all the other accounts, Zuhri specifies neither the place nor the timing of this attack on Hasan, which renders the whole account still more ambiguous and unclear.

After having been attacked, Hasan hastily wrote toMu’awiya that he was renouncing the caliphate on the condition of receiving from him a certain sum of money. As Hasan sent his envoy to Mu’awiya with his letter, the latter simultaneously dispatched his own envoy to Hasan with a blank sheet of paper, signed and sealed by Mu’awiya, on which Hasan was to inscribe whatever terms for abdication he wanted.

The letters crossed. When Mu’awiya received Hasan’s letter he was overjoyed to see that the latter had decided to abdicate without much difficulty; he kept Hasan’s letter as evidence of this and informed him that he had accepted Hasan’s terms. When Hasan received Mu’awiya’s

carte blanche letter, he added further financial demands on it. Upon meeting Mu'awiya, perhaps on the occasion of the official transfer of power, he asked the Syrian leader to discard his previous letter and replace it with the carte blanche on which Hasan had written new terms regarding financial arrangements.

Mu'awiya now refused to grant anything further, saying: "Everything you first requested I agreed to and granted to you; my open offer to you cannot any more be binding on me since you have already committed yourself." Hasan therefore could get nothing more from Mu'awiya and was sorry for his hasty action in writing his terms of abdication.

Zuhri also tells us that as soon as 'Abd Allah b. al-'Abbas noticed that Hasan was negotiating terms of abdication with Mu'awiya, he himself secretly began treating with Mu'awiya for safe conduct and a grant of money for himself. Mu'awiya readily agreed to Ibn 'Abbas' terms, whereupon the latter abandoned the army and moved to Mu'awiya's camp in the darkness of night.

Hasan's army, finding itself without a leader, again chose Qays as commander on the condition that he carry on the war until the adherents of 'Ali were granted amnesty and security for their lives and property. Qays easily gained these concessions from Mu'awiya, who himself was quite willing to grant such concessions if it would enable him to reach a peaceful settlement and avoid a confrontation with Qays' strong army. He made direct offers to Qays himself, but the latter refused the money that was offered to him by Mu'awiya and, without making any deal for himself, he gave up resistance on condition of amnesty and security for the Iraqi army.

Zuhri's pragmatism in reporting the events of the abdication of Hasan raises more questions than it answers. This account, which clearly shows minimal resistance on the part of Hasan, must have been circulated by the Umayyads themselves, who, in the absence of the three principles of ijma', nass, and shura by which the previous four caliphs had been nominated, were anxious to find a legal basis for their rule.

Hasan's voluntary abdication in favour of Mu'awiya, as Zuhri would have us believe, provides such a legal ground. It was natural that Zuhri in the environment of Umayyad Damascus, should adopt the tradition which must have been most popular and in widest circulation in that city. The events that led to Hasan's abdication do not seem, however, to have been as simple as Zuhri describes.

'Awana's account in Tabari and in the other sources named above gives a somewhat different impression of the events and stands in sharp contrast to that of Zuhri. According to 'Awana, Qays did not have command of the whole army during the lifetime of 'Ali, but rather only of the vanguard of 12,000 men, over which he continued to retain command when Hasan succeeded

his father. At the news of Mu'awiya's advance towards Iraq, Hasan sent Qays with his 12,000 troops as an advance guard to check the enemy until Hasan himself could follow with the main force. According to Ya'qubi, Abu'l-Faraj, and Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, the vanguard of 12,000 men was sent by Hasan under the command of 'Ubayd Allah b. al-'Abbas, and along with him were sent

Qays b. Sa'd and Sa'id b. Qays as advisors by whose counsel 'Ubayd Allah was to be guided. The reason for Hasan's delay in departure seems to have been some lack of enthusiasm on the part of his supporters. This is evident from a report that when he appealed to the Kufans to march with him against Mu'awiya, there was a poor response. It was only when 'Adi b. Hatim, an old and devoted follower of 'Ali and the chief of the tribe of Tayyi, addressed the Iraqis, urging them to respond to the call of "their Imam, the son of the daughter of their Prophet", that they came out to participate in the war.

Soon after, Hasan left Kufa with his main army and reached Al-Mada'in, where he encamped in the outskirts of the city. Qays and his vanguard had already reached Maskin, facing Muawiya's army. The Syrian governor tried to bribe Qays by offering him a million dirhams if he would defect from the ranks of Hasan and join him. Qays rejected the offer with contempt, saying: "You want to deceive me in my religion."

Mu'awiya then made a similar offer to 'Ubayd Allah b. al-'Abbas (or his elder brother 'Abd Allah, as Zuhri reports), who accepted it and went over to him with 8,000 men. Qays was thus left with 4,000 soldiers, waiting for the arrival of Hasan.'O We may note here in passing that though 'Ubayd Allah did go over to Mu'awiya before Hasan announced his abdication, the timing of 'Ubayd Allah's defection as given by Ya'qubi does not seem correct. 'Ubayd Allah's defecti6n must have occurred only shortly before Hasan's abdication, as will be discussed below.

However, while Hasan's vanguard was waiting for his arrival at Maskin, Hasan himself was facing a serious situation at Al-Mada'in. Some of his troops rebelled against him, plundered his tent, and fell upon him. Five different versions of this rebellion are given in the sources. According to 'Awana, someone suddenly spread the news in the army of Hasan that Qays had been defeated and slain and that the troops should flee. Hasan's tent was then plundered, and he himself was attacked. If this version is correct, the spreading of the rumour must have been a well-calculated ruse and an act of espionage by the spies of Mu'awiya, who had, without any doubt, infiltrated the rank and file of Hasan's army.

A second version is given by Ya'qubi, who reports that as soon as Hasan reached Al-Mada'in, Mu'awiya sent Al-Mughira b. Shu'ba, 'Abd Allah b. 'Amir, and 'Abd ar-Rahman b. Umm al-Hakam to Hasan as his mediators. After they talked to Hasan confidentially, and while leaving

his camp, they spread the news that Hasan had agreed to abdicate in favour of Muawiya, whereupon Hasan's soldiers fell upon him and plundered his tent.

Ya'qubi also records that Mu'awiya sent his men to Hasan's camp to spread the news that Qays had made peace with Mu'awiya and had come over to his side, while simultaneously he spread the word in the army of Qays that Hasan had made peace with Mu'awiya.' In this case, again, Mu'awiya's machinations are responsible for the mutiny in Hasan's army.

The third version is given by Dinawari. According to his report, i;1asan left Kufa for Al-Mada'in, and by the time he reached Sabat, in the outskirts of Al-Mada'in, he had discerned that some of his troops were showing fickleness, lack of purpose, and an indifferent or withdrawn attitude to the war. Hasan therefore halted at Sabat, encamped his army there, and made a speech, saying: "O people, I do not entertain any feeling of rancour against a Muslim. I am as much an overseer over yourselves [of your interests] as I am over my own self. Now, I am considering a plan; do not oppose me in it. Reconciliation, disliked by some of you, is better [under the circumstances] than the split that some of you prefer, especially when I see that most of you are shrinking from the war and are hesitant to fight. I do not, therefore, consider it wise to impose upon you something which you do not like."

When his people heard this, they looked at each other, reflecting their suspicions. Those among them who were of Kharijite persuasion said: "Hasan has become an infidel (Kafir) as had become his father before him." They suddenly rushed upon him, pulled the carpet from under his feet, and tore his clothes from his shoulder. He called for help from among his faithful followers from the tribes of Rabi'a and Hamdan, who rushed to his assistance and pushed the assailants away from him.

The fourth version is given by Mada'ini in Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, who says that while Hasan was on his way to Al-Mada'in he was wounded by a lance at Sabat and his belongings were looted. When word of this reached Mu'awiya, he spread the news far and wide, whereupon the nobles and leaders from among the 12,000-man vanguard of Hasan egan defecting to Mu'awiya. 'Abd Allah b. al-'Abbas informed Hasan of the grave situation, and it was at this point that Hasan called the Iraqi leaders of his main army and, with great disappointment, told them of his intention to terminate the struggle and abdicate. Before proceeding to the fifth version, it would be appropriate to point out here in passing that according to all four of these versions, Hasan's decision to abdicate was forced upon him by the circumstances and was not of his own free desire.

The fifth version is given by Ibn A'tham and Abu-'l-Faraj, whose sources are not clear. Ibn A'tham, as noted above, does not often cite his source. At the beginning of his narrative Abu'l-

Faraj quotes Abu Mikhnaf along with five other informants; thus it is not clear whether this particular account is taken from Abu Mikhnaf himself or from any one of the other five narrators. According to this version, when Hasan arrived at Al-Mada'in he suddenly halted his army there and made a speech in which he declared his intention to abdicate. Wordings of the speech, with few variations, are almost the same as that quoted above from Dinawari. After hearing Hasan's speech some of his troops fell upon him, plundered his tent, and tore his clothes. This version, unlike the other four described above, gives no reason for Hasan's decision to deliver his speech at that particular moment at Al-Mada'in and thus renders it rather ambiguous.

It also presents serious contradictions and raises many unsolved questions. One would ask, for example, why did Hasan encourage the people and make speeches asking them to join his army for the war against Mu'awiya, as has been quoted earlier from Abu'l-Faraj himself. Why would he go all the way from Kufa to Al-Mada'in with all the necessary preparations for battle, and yet suddenly change his mind and make a declaration of peace at Al-Mada'in? We should therefore accept one of the four previous explanations, of which the most probable is Dinawari's that Hasan's speech and his announcement of his resignation from the office were prompted by the Iraqis' treacherous attitude and finalized by Mu'awiya's successful use of espionage and diplomacy.

After such treatment at the hands of his own troops, the disheartened and shaken Hasan found it impossible to stay in the army camp; he took to his horse and, escorted by his close associates and faithful followers, rode to the safety of the White Castle of Al-Mada'in, the residence of his governor. It was on this road, just before reaching the castle, that a die hard Kharijite, Al-Jarrah b. Sinan al-Asadi, managed to ambush Hasan and wounded him in the thigh with a dagger, shouting: "You have become an infidel (Kafir) like your father before you." Al-Jarrah was overpowered and killed; Hasan, bleeding profusely, was carried to the castle, where he was cared for by his governor, Sa'd b. Mas'ud ath-Thaqafi. The news of the attack on Hasan, having been spread by Muawiya was soon in wide circulation. This further demoralized the already disheartened troops of Hasan and led to large-scale desertion from his army.

After describing this, Ya'qubi, Dinawari, and Tabari fail to give a detailed account of further events and hurriedly describe Hasan's abdication, although the first two sources do contain a few fragmentary sentences in passing which are of limited value. Keeping in view their method and style, this brevity is understandable. Ibn A'tham and Abu'l-Faraj, however, record for us in detail the events which took place between the incident of the attack on Hasan and his abdication. The accounts of these two, however, vary in certain points and must be treated

separately.

According to Ibn A'tham, at the time when Hasan was having these difficulties at Al-Mada'in, Qays b. Sa'd with his 12,000-man vanguard was already at Maskin, facing Mu'awiya's army and awaiting Hasan's arrival. When he heard of the attack on Hasan, Qays thought it wise to engage his army in battle with the Syrians so that they should not have a chance to brood over the situation and become further demoralized. An encounter between the two armies took place, resulting in some losses on both sides.

Mu'awiya's envoys then came forward and addressed Qays, saying: "For what [cause) are you now fighting with us and killing yourself? We have received unquestionable word that your leader has been deserted by his people and has been stabbed with a dagger and is on the verge of death. You should therefore refrain from fighting until you get the exact information about the situation." Qays was thus forced to stop fighting and had to wait for the official news about the incident from Hasan himself. But by this time troops had begun defecting to Mu'awiya in large numbers. When Qays noticed this large-scale desertion, he wrote to Hasan about the gravity of the situation.

After receiving Qays' letter, Hasan lost heart and immediately called in the Iraqi leaders and nobles and addressed them in dejection and disgust: "O people of Iraq, what should I do with your people who are with me? Here is the letter of Qays b. Sa'd informing me that even the nobles (ashraf) from among you have gone over to Mu'awiya. By God, what shocking and abominable behaviour on your part! You were the people who forced my father to accept arbitration at Siffin ; and when the arbitration to which he yielded [because of your demand) took place, you turned against him.

And when he called upon you to fight Mu'awiya once again, then you showed your slackness and lassitude. After the death of my father, you yourself came to me and paid me homage out of your own desire and wish. I accepted your homage and came out against Mu'awiya; only God knows how much I meant to do [i.e how full of zeal and spirit I was in facing Mu'awiya's challenge). Now you are behaving in the same manner as before [with my father). O People of Iraq, it would be enough for me from you if you would not defame me in my religion, because now I am going to hand over this affair [the caliphate] to Mu'awiya."

Ya'qubi gives the same reason for Hasan's decision, though, as mentioned above, he covers the matter very briefly.

If this statement is accepted, it sufficiently explains the whole situation and the circumstances which made Hasan decide in favour of abdication. The statement clearly reflects that Hasan, from the very beginning, even from the time of was suspicious of the unreliable character of

the Iraqis. In his judgement they were impulsive people who talked with emotion, but when the time came for action and trial they never stood firm.

This fact is not directly mentioned by the sources for the event of Hasan's abdication, but it appears at the time when his brother Husayn was going to Iraq in response to the Kufan appeal to lead them in rebellion. All those who advised Husayn against responding positively to the Ku fan appeal clearly reminded him how the Iraqis had deserted (khadhalu) his father and brother at the critical moment. Hasan's feelings are an echo of 'Ali's attitude towards the majority of his Iraqi supporters, a sentiment which he expressed time and again in his speeches preserved in the Nahj al-Balagha and in many other early sources.

After his speech before the leaders of the Iraqis, Hasan immediately sent word to Mu'awiya informing him of his readiness to abdicate. When the news of Hasan's decision reached Qays, he told his associates: "Now you must choose between the two, either to fight without a leader (Imam) or to pay homage to the misled (dalal) [Mu'awiya]." They replied: "Paying homage is easier for us than bloodshed." Thus Qays, along with those who were still with him, left the battlefield at Maskin for Kufa. Surprisingly enough, the name of 'Ubayd Allah b. al-'Abbas does not appear at all in this account.

Turning to Abu'l-Faraj, we are told, as has already been quoted above from Ya'qubi, that the leader of the 12,000 man vanguard was 'Ubayd Allah b. al-'Abbas and not Qays b. Sa'd. Both Mu'awiya and 'Ubayd Allah reached Maskin with their armies on the evening of the same day that Hasan reached Al-Mada'in.

On the second day, after the morning prayer, while Hasan was confronted with the mutiny of his troops and was wounded, there was at Maskin a brief encounter between Mu'awiya and 'Ubayd Allah. When night fell, Mu'awiya sent a message to 'Ubayd Allah, saying: "Hasan has informed me of his decision to make peace and hand over the caliphate to me. If you come under my authority at once, you will be treated as a leader (matbu'); otherwise I will penetrate [into your forces] and then you will be made only a subject (tabi). If you join me now I will pay you one million dirhams, half of which will be paid immediately, and the second half when I enter Ku fa."

During the night, 'Ubayd Allah secretly slipped through to Mu'awiya's side. In the morning the people assembled, waiting for him to come and lead them in the morning prayer. When, after a search, he was not found, Qays came forward, led the prayer, and then made a fiery speech attacking 'Ubayd Allah, his father 'Abbas, and his brother 'Abd Allah for their wavering character and time-serving policies. Hearing Qays' words, people shouted: "Thanks be to God that he ['Ubayd Allah] has left our ranks; now we will rise and pounce on our enemy," and set

off to make an attack.

Busr b. Abi Artat, a confidant of Mu'awiya, came forward with 20,000 troops and shouted: "Here is your leader ['Ubayd Allah], who has already paid homage [to Mu'awiya], and Hasan has also agreed to make peace. For what, then, are you killing yourselves?" Qays then addressed his people again and asked: "Choose one of the two, either fighting without an Imam or pay a strayed and misled homage [to Mu'awiya]." The people said that they would continue to fight even without an Imam, made a brief attack on the Syrians, and then returned to their bases.

When, however, it became clear that Hasan had agreed to abdicate, they returned to Kufa. Abu'l-Faraj's rendering of the events between the attack on Hasan and his abdication is important in that it gives a more logical and understandable timing of the defection of 'Ubayd Allah, which was confusingly recorded by other sources. From his account it also becomes clear that of the two brothers, the one who defected was 'Ubayd Allah and not his elder brother 'Abd Allah, whose name appears only in Zuhri's account. However, Abu'l-Faraj's report that the Iraqis replied to Qays that they would continue to fight even without an Imam must be rejected on the simple grounds that it is contrary to all other sources, who unanimously report that the troops replied in favour of accepting Mu'awiya.

The terms and conditions on which Hasan abdicated are reported by the sources not of only with major variations, but also with confusion and ambiguity. Ya'qubi and Mas'udi do not mention the terms of peace at all. Tabari mentions three conditions directly, and the fourth indirectly in a different context. The first three conditions were:

1: that Hasan would retain the five million dirhams then in the treasury of Kufa;

2: that Hasan would be allowed the annual revenue from the Persian district of Darabjird;

3: that 'Ali would not be reviled and cursed, as had been the practice of Mu'awiya since the beginning of 'Ali's caliphate at least not in Hasan's presence.

The first condition, that Hasan would retain five million dirhams from the treasury of Kufa, makes no sense for two obvious reasons. Firstly, Hasan, until his abdication, was the sole caliph in Kufa, and thus the treasury was already in his possession. Secondly, our sources agree that it was 'Ali's strict practice to empty the treasury at the end of every week.

It is thus difficult to believe that within a few months of Hasan's accession, especially considering the heavy expenditure for war and the unorganized state of the administration (and therefore of tax collection as well) due to 'Ali's sudden death, the treasury of Kufa had become gorged with five million dirhams. It is interesting to note that after a long gap in which Tabari describes the brutalities of Busr b. Abi Artat in administering Basra, he mentions a fourth condition of abdication. This tells us that "Hasan made peace with Mu'awiya on the condition

that all the friends and followers of ‘Ali, wherever they might be, would be given amnesty and safe conduct.” As will be seen below, this condition is recorded by other sources in its appropriate place.

In his account of the abdication, Dinawari records for us the following conditions:

1: that no one from among the people of Iraq will be treated with contempt, and that every one of them will be guaranteed peace and safety no matter what charge or offences might be pending against them;

2: that Hasan will be entitled to the annual revenue of the district of Ahwaz (instead of Tabari’s Darabjird);

3: that preference should be given to the Hashimites (the ‘Alids and the ‘Abbasids) over the Banu ‘Abd Shams (Umayyads) in the granting of pensions (‘ata) and awards.

Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr and Ibn al-Athir, two judicious writers on the lives of the Companions of the Prophet, and some other sources, record yet another two conditions:

1: that no one from among the people of Medina, the Hijaz, and Iraq will be deprived or dispossessed of anything which they possessed during the caliphate of ‘Ali;

2: that the caliphate would be restored to Hasan after the death of Mu’awiya.

Abu’l-Faraj, like others, does not seem to be interested in recording the conditions in detail. According to him, Mu’awiya sent ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amir and ‘Abd ar-Rahman b. Samra as his envoys to Hasan to discuss the terms of peace.

On behalf of Mu’awiya “they granted the terms of peace to Hasan to which Mu’awiya had agreed: that no one from among the Shi’at ‘Ali would be molested, that the name of ‘Ali would not be mentioned except in good terms, and some other things which Hasan wanted.'

The most comprehensive account, however, is given by Ibn A’tham, which must have been taken from Mada’ini, since Ibn Abi’l-Hadid describes almost the same conditions, quoting Mada’ini as his authority. According to Ibn A’tham, after the incidents at Al-Mada’in and after the statement which

Hasan made before the nobles of Iraq, as quoted above, he sent ‘Abd Allah b. Nawfal b. al-Harith to Mu’awiya to inform him of Hasan’s willingness to abdicate and to discuss the terms of abdication with the Syrian leader on his behalf. The only condition which Hasan stipulated to ‘Abd Allah was a general amnesty for the people. ‘Abd Allah reached Maskin and told Mu’awiya that Hasan had authorised him to negotiate the conditions of peace on his behalf, laying down the following terms:

1: that the caliphate will be restored to Hasan after the death of Mu’awiya;

2: that Hasan will receive five million dirhams annually from the state treasury;

3: that Hasan will receive the annual revenue of Darabjird; 4: that the people will be guaranteed peace with one another.

Hearing this, Mu'awiya took a blank sheet of paper, affixed his signature and seal, and said to 'Abd Allah: "Take this carte blanche to Hasan and ask him to write on it whatever he wants." Mu'awiya asked his associates around him to stand witness to his signature and promise. 'Abd Allah, with the carte blanche and accompanied by some of the nobles of Quraysh, among them 'Abd Allah b. 'Amir, 'Abd ar-Rahman b. Samra, along with some other nobles from among the Syrians, returned to Hasan and told him: "Mu'awiya has agreed to all the conditions I have asked of him for you and which you yourself can write on this blank paper."

Hasan replied: "As far as the caliphate is concerned, I am no more interested in it; had I wanted it I would not hand it over to Mu'awiya. As for the money, Mu'awiya cannot make it a condition for me when the [real] issue in question is a matter of concern for the Muslim [community]."

Hasan then called his secretary and asked him to write: "These are the terms on which Hasan b. 'Ali b. 'Abi Talib is making peace with Mu'awiya b. Abi Sufyan and handing over to him the state or government of Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali:

1: that Mu'awiya should rule according to the Book of God, the Sunna of the Prophet, and the conduct of the righteous caliphs;

2: that Mu'awiya will not appoint or nominate anyone to the caliphate after him, but the choice will be left to the shura of the Muslims;

3: that the people will be left in peace wherever they are in the land of God;

4: that the companions and the followers of 'Ali, their lives, properties, their women, and their children, will be guaranteed safe conduct and peace. This is a solemn agreement and covenant in the name of God, binding Mu'awiya b. Abi Sufyan to keep it and fulfil it;

5: that no harm or dangerous act, secretly or openly, will be done to Hasan b. 'Ali, his brother Husayn, or to anyone from the family of the Prophet (Ahl Bay: an-Nabi; this agreement is witnessed by 'Abd Allah b. Nawfal, 'Umar b. Abi Salama, and so and so." Ibn A'tham's rendering of the terms of peace as dictated by Hasan solves many problems and explains the different ambiguous accounts of other sources. The timing of the carte blanche sent by Mu'awiya to Hasan was confusing in Tabari, whereas Ibn A'tham's timing of it makes it understandable.

Tabari, Abu'l-Faraj, and some other sources cite the names of 'Abd Allah b. 'Amir and 'Abd ar-Rahman b. Samra as being sent by Mu'awiya as his envoys to Hasan to discuss the terms of peace; Ibn A'tham, while confirming this report, gives the proper and logical occasion of their commission. Ibn A'tham records the conditions in two parts: one laid down by Hasan's envoy

‘Abd Allah b. Nawfal, and the other dictated by Hasan himself, as enumerated above. If both sets of conditions are combined together, these, with the exception of the first two conditions mentioned immediately above, are the same as those found scattered in an unorganized way in other sources.

The first of these conditions, that Mu’awiya should rule according to the Qur’an, prophetic Sunna, and the conduct of the righteous caliphs, strongly reflects the tendency and spirit of the epoch which was still predominant in the function and character of the office of the caliphate. In all probability, the immediate successor of ‘Ali and the Rashidun caliphs would not have handed over the office without expressing this traditional condition, at least outwardly, if we must be so sceptical in accepting such reports.

It should be noted, however, that from the time of the Shura, ‘Ali, his house, and his supporters always emphasized following only the Sunna of the Prophet and refusing to acknowledge the validity of the Sunna of the first three caliphs. It therefore seems likely that reference to the conduct of the righteous caliphs was added later on in an attempt at reconciliation of the Jama’a as has been seen above. Naturally Hasan could not contradict his own father’s stand at the Shura, where the latter refused to accept the Sunna of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar.

The second condition–that Mu’awiya would not nominate anyone to the caliphate and would leave the choice to the Shura of the Muslims–should not be difficult for us to accept. The precedent of nominating the successor, only to be endorsed by a few leading personalities, had already been set by Abu Bakr when he appointed ‘Umar as his successor.

The decision of Abu Bakr was, however, dominated by his sincere concern for the interests of the Muslim community in general, and he did not appoint his son or even a relative to public office. It was not to be so with Mu’awiya and the Umayyads. Thus the imposition of this condition on Mu’awiya by Hasan was a natural corollary of the situation. The condition that the caliphate be restored to Hasan after Mu’awiya’s death, reported by many sources, must have been at least discussed.

From the letter of Mu’awiya quoted above, we may safely deduce that Mu’awiya referred to Hasan’s succession after himself as a strong possibility, but without giving any clear undertaking on his own part. Some time later, the Shi’a, gathering together, showed their disapproval of the fact that Hasan had not asked for sufficient guarantees and had not secured an undertaking in writing from Mu’awiya that the latter would leave him the caliphate after his death.

Finally, the most interesting point seems to be Mu’awiya’s acceptance of the complete amnesty to all the followers and companions of ‘Ali. The acceptance of this particular term

proves the falseness of Mu’awiya’s stated reason for fighting, which was to avenge the blood of ‘Uthman and punish those responsible for his murder.

Among the Shi’at ‘Ali who were given complete amnesty by Mu’awiya in the terms with Hasan there were men such as ‘Amr b. al-Hamiq al-Khuza’I who was said to have been involved in the murder, and Malik b. al-Ashtar, who was the leader of the rebel contingent of Ku fa. It becomes therefore clear that the reason for the revenge of the blood of ‘Uthman was, as has been pointed out elsewhere, a pretext which Mu’awiya used to realize his ambition to seize the caliphate for himself.

The agreement having been concluded, Hasan returned to Kufa, where Qays joined him. Soon afterwards, Mu’awiya entered the city with the full force of his army. A general assembly was held, and different groups of people, one after the other, paid him homage. Our sources give a detailed description of the mixed feelings of the people in accepting as their new ruler. Many of them adopted a timeserving attitude to safeguard their interests; others could not hide their dislike, and even hatred, for the Umayyad ruler, but nevertheless had to reconcile themselves with the situation.

The heated remarks, bitter speeches, and resentful dialogues exchanged among the antagonists from both sides make interesting and informative reading which cannot be dealt with in detail here. The speech of Hasan delivered at the insistence of ‘Amr b. al-‘As and Mu’awiya is worth noting, however. Though quoted by all the sources, the speech is recorded with different wordings and content.

The shortest version is given by Tabari from Zuhri and reads: “O people, God has guided you through our elders [Muhammad and ‘Ali] and spared you from the bloodshed through those who followed [referring to himself). Indeed this [the caliphate] is nothing but an ephemeral thing; these worldly possessionskeep shifting and changing hands. God said to His Prophet: ‘And I do not know if this may be a trial for you and a grant of [worldly] livelihood to you for a [limited) time.”’ (Qur’an, xxI, 111).

At this point, Mu’awiya became alarmed and asked Hasan to sit down, reproachfully asking ‘Amr b. al-‘As: “Is this what you advised me?”

Mada’in!, quoted by Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, gives a much longer version of the speech, in which Hasan explains the reasons for his abdication as, besides Mu’awiya’s ambitions and rebellion, the unreliable and treacherous attitude of his supporters. Hasan even referred to the time of ‘Ali and how the people failed him then. Another source, Abu’l-Faraj, quotes only one sentence from Hasan’s speech, which reads: “The khalifa [successor of the Prophet) is one who dedicates himself to the way of God and the Sunna of His Prophet, and not the one who is an

oppressor and aggressor; the latter is only a king (malik) who rules a kingdom (mulk), whose enjoyment is little, and whose pleasure is short-lived, leaving behind only a trace of it. I do not know if this is a trial for you and a grant of [worldly] livelihood to you for a [limited] period."

It is interesting to note that if this quotation Is historically correct, it might be the origin of the use of the word mulk (king) instead of khilafa (caliph) for Mu'awiya and his successors, used by Muslim historians from the earliest times. However, there are numerous instances where Mu'awiya is recorded as saying, in reference to himself, "I am the first king in Islam."

The historical accounts of the circumstances facing Hasan from the beginning of his caliphate indicate that his abdication was not motivated by the lure of a life of ease and luxury, as some modern writers would have us believe. The source specify the causes of Hasan's abdication as love of peace, distaste for politics and its dissensions, and the desire to avoid widespread bloodshed among the Muslims.

Moreover, he realistically assessed the situation and was fully aware of the disastrous consequences for himself, his family, and his handful of trustworthy followers should he insist on settling the issue by force of arms. He thus accepted the political realities then prevailing while gaining time for the Shi'i trend of thinking to consolidate its own following on ideological grounds. This is evident from any one of the versions of his speech quoted above on the occasion of the transfer of the caliphate to Mu'awiya.

In spite of his abdication of the caliphate, Hasan continued to be regarded as the leader, or Imam, of the Shi'a after the death of 'Ali. Even those of the Shi'a who criticized his action of abdication never ceased to affirm that he had been designated by his father to succeed him as the Commander of the Faithful. The details of the theory of the imamate were no doubt worked out later on, but the fact remains that as long as Hasan was alive he was considered by both the Shi'a and by all the family members as the head of the house of 'Ali and of the Prophet, and that was enough for the Shi'a throughout its history to consider him as the second Imam after 'Ali.

Hasan's abdication was extremely distasteful to those of the Iraqis who had supported him and his father before him, mainly because of their hatred of Syrian domination. It was equally disturbing to those of the Kharijites who had gathered around Hasan in order to fight against Mu'awiya; it was a Kharijite who furiously attacked Hasan when he heard of his intention to abdicate.

There was yet another group, represented by men like Hujr b. 'Adi al-Kindi, which was perturbed by Hasan's decision, but for other reasons. It was this last group that represented the true Shi'at 'Ali at this stage. They were the people who believed that 'Ali and his house were

entitled to the caliphate on religious grounds, as opposed to those who supported the cause of ‘Ali and then of Hasan for political or economic considerations.

Thus the Shi’at ‘Ali, from the time of the Umayyad domination of the provinces under ‘Uthman, must be divided into two distinct groups, political and religious. In the civil war between ‘Ali and Mu’awiya, these two groups temporarily found themelves united against a common enemy. But when Mu’awiya’s overwhelming political and military power put the outcome of the conflict beyond doubt, the political group of Hasan’s supporters crumbled and scattered, defecting in swarms to Mu’awiya’s side, while the religious supporters remained firm in their belief.

They were disappointed by Hasan’s action of abdication, but they still remained persistent in their ideals regarding the leadership of the community. They did not lose their identity as an opposition group to the rivals of the house of the Prophet, even after political support for the family of Muhammad had collapsed; and they refused to accept what the majority had willingly or unwillingly accepted, as will be seen below.

Later on, when the early events of Islam were committed to systematic writing, both Sunni and Shi’i historians and traditionists explained Hasan’s action in terms of a meritorious deed” by which he reconciled the opposing parties.

The year of his abdication became known as the ‘Am al-Jama’a, the year of the community, and a tradition attributed to the Prophet was reported as saying: “This son of mine is a lord (Sayyid), and he will unite two branches of the Muslims.” This tradition reflects the efforts of the second half of the first and early second centuries when a “central body”, or Jama’a, was emerging from a confused situation and thus clearly reflects the tendency by which this “central body” was being formed.

The Shi’is thus defended Hasan’s action against those extremists who were blaming him for abdication; on the other hand, the Sunnis accepted such an explanation as it conformed to their needs for a reconciliation between the two opposing groups: the party of ‘Uthman, now represented by Mu’awiya, and that of ‘Ali, now led by his son Hasan. This “central body” later on received the title of the Jama’a (commonly rendered in English as the “orthodox” branch) in Islam, leaving behind and branding as sectarian a body of those who could not and did not agree to reconcile themselves to this synthesis.

Though Hasan prevented a bloody military solution of the conflict by abdicating in favour of Mu’awiya, he did not thereby heal the split in the community. In fact, his abdication had far-reaching consequences for the later development of Shi’ism. Previously he had been, at least nominally, the head of the central body of believers.

But now events were developing in the opposite direction, and the ‘Uthmaniya branch, with

Mu'awiya at its head, became the central body, while the Shi'at 'Ali was reduced to the role of a small opposition party and thus was thrust into a sectarian position. The spokesman for this opposition, however, was not Hasan himself, but rather Hujr b. 'Adi al-Kindi and his party. Supported by a number of diehard Shi'is of Kufa, he never ceased to protest against Mu'awiya and the official cursing of 'Ali from the pulpits-a policy imposed by Mu'awiya as a propaganda measure.

The nine-year period between Hasan's abdication in 41 /600 and his death in 49/669 is one in which Shi'i feelings and tendencies were passing through a stage of, so to speak, fire underground, with no conspicuous activities visible above the surface. An historical survey of this period for the development of Shi'i deals is very difficult, as our sources are almost silent. Nevertheless, it is not totally free from the occasional voices raised here and there in support of the house of the Prophet and against the rule of Mu'awiya. Now and then we hear of individuals or small groups, mainly from Ku fa, visiting Hasan and Husayn and asking them to rise in rebellion-a request to which they declined to respond.

The silence of the Shi'is during this period might have been due to two factors. Firstly, the tight grip which Mu'awiya maintained over the empire through his trained and loyal Syrian forces was too strong to allow any rising; and secondly, the Shi'i movement was yet not organized enough to take action against such a formidable power. But it was passing through a natural process of evolution until it could register a widespread support and then translate itself into action.

Mu'awiya was, however, fully aware of strong She sentiments among certain parts of the population of Kufa, and he took various measures to prevent insurrections. Soon after taking control of Kufa, he transferred some of the tribes that were devoted to the house of 'Ali from the city, replaced them with others from Syria, Basra, and Al-Jazira who were loyal to him.

After his abdication, Hasan left Kufa and settled in Medina, leading a quiet retired life without engaging in politics. His attitude could be understood from the fact that during the journey back to Medina, at Al-Qadisiya, he received a letter from Mu'awiya asking him to take part in a campaign against a Kharijite revolt which had just erupted. Hasan replied that he had given up fighting against Mu'awiya in order to bring peace to the people, and that he would not take part in a campaign at his side. This passive and withdrawn attitude towards Mu'awiya he maintained while pacifying those of the Shi'is who occasionally visited him and expressed their bitter feelings against the Umayyad ruler.

Hasan did not live long, however. He died in 49/669, long before his rival. Mu'awiya took the caliphate from Hasan at the age of 58 and died in 60/680 at the age of 77, while Hasan at the

time of his abdication was only 38 and died at the age of 45 or 46. This difference in age is very important to note, especially when we read of Mu'awiya's ambitious plans to perpetuate the caliphate in his own house and nominate his son Yazid as his heir-apparent. This was not possible, because of the terms on which Hasan had abdicated to nor, considering the vast difference in age, could Mu'awiya have hoped that Hasan would die before him. To carry out his plan and fulfil his desire, Mu'awiya had to remove Hasan from the scene. The majority of our sources, both Sunni and Shi'i, historians and traditionists, report that the cause of Hasan's death was poison administered by one of his wives, Ju'da bint al-Ash'ath. Mu'awiya is reported to have suborned her with the promise of a large sum of money and of marrying her to his son Yazid. After she had completed the task, Mu'awiya paid her the promised sum of money but refused to marry her to Yazid, saying that he valued the life of his son.

The overwhelming historical testimony, Mu'awiya's desire to nominate his son as his successor, which he did immediately after Hasan's death, combined with many other clues found in the sources, make it likely that Mu'awiya must have been the instigator of the poisoning, though this will probably never be clearly established. Nevertheless, the fact that the cause of Hasan's death was poison, administered by his wife Ju'da, is beyond any doubt an historical truth.

According to Hasan's own statement, this was the third time he had been poisoned, and this time it proved fatal. Our sources also tell us that upon receiving the news of Hasan's death, Mu'awiya could not hide his feelings of relief and even joy and passed taunting remarks to Ibn 'Abbas. Another fact which the sources unanimously record is that soon after Hasan's death, Mu'awiya initiated the process of nominating Yazid as his successor, as will be seen below. While Mu'awiya took the opportunity of Hasan's death to go ahead with his plans to secure Yazid's nomination to the caliphate, the Shi'is of Kufa, on the other hand, found the occasion appropriate for making another bid to restore the caliphate to the house of 'Ali.

As soon as the Shi'is of Kufa heard the news of Hasan's death, they held a meeting in the house of Sulayman b. Surad al-Khuza'i and wrote a long letter to Husayn. In it, after expressing their grief and condolences on the death of "the son of the Wasi, the son of the daughter of the Prophet, and the banner of the guidance", they invited Husayn to rise against Mu'awiya and assured him that they would be ready to sacrifice their lives in his cause. Husayn, however, honouring his brother's treaty with Mu'awiya, refused to respond and advised them to refrain from agitation and to stay calm in their houses as long as Muawiya was alive.

The most enthusiastic among the Shi'is, however, could no longer remain idle. Hujr b. 'Adi al-

Kindi and his associates, who had never compromised their Shi'i ideals, now came out in open revolt against Mu'awiya and his lieutenant Ziyad b. Abi Sufyan, who governed both Kufa and Basra after the death of the governor of Kufa, Al-Mughira b. Shu'ba, in 51/671. The revolt is reported in great detail by the early sources and demonstrates the strong Shi'i feelings of the movement as it re-emerged at this stage. Even though it was of hardly any consequence or significance militarily, the fact that many early works devote long chapters to Hujr indicates that the episode was of not insignificant proportions in the revolutionary events of early Islam. We are told that these die-hard Shi'is had been consistently protesting not only against the cursing of 'Ali, but also against the rule of Mu'awiya, whom they considered a usurper of the rights of the house of 'Ali to the caliphate. Their slogan was that "the caliphate is not valid and permissible except in the family of Abu Turab." While Ziyad himself was in Basra, and Kufa was being administered by his deputy 'Amr b. Hurayth, they repeatedly went to the mosque and publicly denounced Mu'awiya and Ziyad.

When 'Amr tried to warn them, during one of the Friday sermons, of the consequences of this open rebellion, they stoned him and forced him to take refuge in the governor's palace. The numerical strength of those who thus demonstrated their support for the Shi'i cause can be judged from the report that "they used to occupy half of the mosque of Kufa." It may be noted that the mosque of Kufa had the capacity of accommodating as many as 40,000 people. Informed by his deputy of the alarming situation, Ziyad rushed back to Kufa. The governor first sent some Yemeni tribal leaders of Shi'i inclination, with whom he had managed to establish a modus vivendi, to warn Hujr of the dangerous path he was following. The sources bear enough testimony that from the time Ziyad took over the governorship of Kufa in 51/671 he tried his best to win over Hujr. Ziyad had already offered him a seat in his administrative council and was willing to enhance Hujr's position in the tribe of Kinda.

Nothing could change the latter's attitude, however. Indeed, if the problem is regarded as one of a political nature, then it must be pointed out that almost all political concessions and material rewards had already been offered by the governor to satisfy Hujr. Furthermore, his refusal to accept any of the concessions which the governor was rather generously offering him could not possibly have involved an aspiration for further personal power on Hujr's part. He was simply too old. Even if he had succeeded in bringing the Shi'a to power by making Husayn caliph, his position would not have been any better than it had been during 'Ali's time. Such personal gains had already been offered to him by Ziyad, but he totally refused them. In the final analysis, we are left with no choice but to accept that Hujr's only motive was his religious conviction and his unshakable faith in the leadership of the Ahl al-Bayt.

The tribal leaders, some of them old friends of Hujr, who were sent to him to mediate and seek a compromise, failed in their efforts, but nevertheless asked the governor to treat him leniently. This indicates the deep respect and high regard in which Hujr was held by them. One could hardly expect tribal leaders to defend a power-thirsty politically motivated self-seeker and troublemaker who might challenge or undermine their own leadership. They would, on the other hand, defend a man whose deeper religious convictions agreed with their own and who had greater moral courage to stand by his principles.

Ziyad, however, refused to listen to their pleas for Hujr and sent out his police to arrest him, but Hujr's active supporters were numerous enough to repulse them. Realizing the seriousness of the situation, Ziyad immediately summoned the nobles and leaders, especially those of the Yemeni tribes, and addressed them, saying that it was their people who 'were helping Hujr, and if they did not withdraw their support from him Ziyad would call in the Syrian forces for a complete crackdown. A phrase of Ziyad's address quoted by the sources is most illustrative of the character and attitude of these tribal leaders of Ku fa. According to Tabari, Ziyad said: "Your bodies are with me, but your affection and passions are with Hujr."

Abu'l-Faraj quotes a rather elaborate statement which reads: "Your bodies are with me, but your passions are with this foolish man surrounded by flies [i.e., by people who, like flies, gather around any object]; you are with me, but your brothers, sons, and your clansmen are with Hujr."

Afraid of losing their positions, the tribal leaders of Kufa once again demonstrated their characteristic weakness and persuaded their respective clansmen not to expose themselves to Syrian arms. While the majority of those who had gathered around Hujr finally deserted him, there was still a sizeable group who refused to leave and resisted Hujr's arrest. Ziyad had to call in the regular army, specifically choosing troops from the Yemeni contingent in Kufa, to deal with the situation.

The task was not so easy, however, not only because of the personal prestige and the widespread support Hujr enjoyed among the Ku fan masses, but also because of the fear of tribal complications. A skilled politician with extraordinary abilities in dealing with rebellions, Ziyad tactfully managed to involve in the operations the Yemeni tribes to whom Hujr himself belonged. In this way Ziyad avoided the greater danger of a serious conflict between the Nizari and the Yemeni groups of the tribes.

Among the Yemeni tribes themselves, he played one off against the other and terrorized the members and nobles of Kinda, Hujr's own tribe, threatening them with death and the destruction of their property if they did not hand over Hujr to him. The lengthy account of the episode given by Abu Mikhnaf and other early authorities, as recorded by Tabari and Abu'l-

Faraj, is interesting in many ways. It reveals how the personal interests of the tribal leaders were exploited to make them act against their own religious aspirations, how tribal rivalries were played off against each other, how the supporters of Hujr were coerced, and how ultimately Ziyad succeeded in arresting one of the most respected leaders of the Shi'is of Kufa and in suppressing a deep-rooted movement.

Besides Hujr, thirteen other prominent Shi'is were rounded up and arrested. The tribal affiliations of the fourteen men arrested break down as follows: Kinda, two; Hadramawt, one; 'Abs, two; Khath'am, one; Bajila, two; Rabi'a, one; Hamdan, one; Tamim, three; and Hawazin, one. It is interesting to note that of these fourteen, eight were from various Yemeni tribes Kinda, Hadramawt, Khath'am, Bajila, and Hamdan-and six were from the Nizari tribes of the North-'Abs, Rabi'a, Tamim, and Hawazin. This shows the dimension of the movement and indicates that the Shi'I feelings in Kufa were not strictly confined to the Yemenis.

Ziyad decided to dispatch his captives to Syria to he dealt with by Mu'awiya. Along with them he had to send an indictment duly attested to by the people. He therefore called in the four heads of the four administrative divisions of the Kufan population. These leaders spelled out the charges against Hujr as follows:

1: "Hujr gathers the crowds around himself and openly reviles and curses the caliph;

2: He exhorts people to fight against the Amir al-Mu'minin;

3: He caused disturbances in the city and ousted the caliph's governor;

4: He believes in and propagates the claim that the caliphate is not valid except in the family of Abu Talib;

5: He preaches that Abu Turab ('Ali) was completely free of all blame, he praises him, and he urges people to love and respect him;

6: He calls for secession from and denunciation of the enemies of 'Ali and all those who fought against him;

7: And those of the persons who are with him are the leaders of his followers and are of a similar opinion."

The charges spelled out in this document against Hujr by the four chiefs of Kufa were no doubt accurate and representative of the thinking, feelings, and activities of Hujr and his associates. This document, which appears to have been preserved without any attempts to falsify or suppress its content, gives us perhaps the clearest picture of the Shi'I religious position at the time of Hujr, their feelings and aspirations, their love for the house of 'Ali, and their resentment against Mu'awiya as a usurper.

Ziyad did not like the indictment, however. The reason, so clearly recorded by the sources, is

very important to note as it sheds light on the real situation. As Ziyad said after examining the document: “I do not think this indictment is conclusive enough; I want the attestations of more witnesses than just these four chieftains to be affixed to it.”

The charges laid down in the original document dealt almost exclusively with Hujr’s Shi’i cause and his love for the house of ‘Ali. Ziyad considered that not very many Yemenis, whom he particularly wanted to bear witness to the charges, would be willing to sign, on the grounds of Hujr’s activities in the cause of Shi’I ideals. Most of the Yemenis were of Shi’i inclination, with of course varying degrees of practical commitment. Moreover, it seems, Ziyad was hesitant to inform Mu’awiya officially that Shi’i feelings and activities were so strong and were being so openly demonstrated in Kufa while Ziyad was the governor of the province. It was indeed a unique privilege for him to hold the governorships of both Kufa and Basra simultaneously, an honour no official had ever before enjoyed.

Consequently, another indictment was prepared, laying down the following charges:

1: “Hujr b. ‘Adi has cast off his allegiance to the Caliph;

2: He has caused a schism in the community;

3: He curses the Caliph;

4: He calls for war and has created discord;

5: He gathers the people around him and exhorts them to break off allegiance to the Amir al-Mu’minin and remove him from office;

6: He disbelieves in God.”

The marked difference between the two documents is clear enough. While the charges laid down in the first indictment centred on Hujr’s activities and open rebellion for the Shi’I cause, the second stressed his rebellion against the state and the authority of Mu’awiya, with no reference to the Shi’I movement. The first document places much emphasis on Hujr’s unshakable love for ‘Ali and devotion to his family on religious grounds; the second replaces this charge with an accusation that Hujr disbelieved in God, which according to the precedent set by Abu Bakr provided firm grounds for execution. All the evidence at our disposal leaves us in no doubt that the charges listed in the first document are authentic, whereas the second indictment is a revision fabricated for the reasons elaborated above.

This explains the reports that Mu’awiya was hesitant to accept the indictment and reluctant to take drastic action against Hujr. Moreover, as will be seen below, the only condition given by Mu’awiya for the Shi’i leaders to save their lives was that they must curse and denounce ‘Ali. This also indicates that their main offence was their pro-Shi’i activity and not crimes against the state and Caliph as presented in the second indictment.

It hardly need be said that Hujr was unmistakably held by the Kufans as a die-hard and uncompromising Shi'i leader. Re was also considered an extremely pious Muslim. To this fact even those who did not share his Shi'i views bore testimony. The Qadi Shurayh b. Harith wrote to Mu'awiya, saying: "I bear witness that Hujr is a pious Muslim, steadfast in prayer; he gives alms, observes the fast in the month of Ramadan, and always performs the hajj and 'Umra… and he indeed commands a high place in Islam."

Nevertheless, Ziyad called the people to attest to the authenticity of the indictment. Seventy people, of whose names forty-five are specifically recorded, are reported to have signed the document. Some of these signatures were certainly forged, as is commonly indicated by the sources listing these names. Qadi Shurayh protested in his letter to Mu'awiya that he never signed the document and that his name had been added without his knowledge. Some others apologized later for signing, indicating that Ziyad had put pressure on them to attest to the charges.

When the prisoners reached Mu'awiya, there was strong pressure on him from the various tribes to release their respective clansmen. Seven of the fourteen prisoners were freed through the efforts and influence of their relatives. Hujr and the other six were given a chance to save their lives if they would publicly curse and denounce 'Ali. Mu'awiya's executioners told them: "We are commanded to give you a chance to save yourselves by denouncing 'Ali and cursing him; if you refuse to do this we will kill you." Hujr and the other six with him steadfastly replied : "By God, we will never do this." They were thereupon beheaded.

That these men would sacrifice their lives rather than denounce 'Ali is a matter that cannot be taken lightly: there must have been a meaning to it much deeper than the level of political interests. The history of religion is full of men who have died rather than compromise their faith, and the history of man cannot be explained only in political and economic terms. To read history only in material terms is indeed a regrettable phenomenon of modern historiography. On the other hand, to accept religious consciousness in one case and deny it in another, though the circumstances are similar, is an equally regrettable example of prejudice.

No doubt, in most cases popular movements in human society are dominated by political or economic factors, yet there is no dearth of instances where individual conscience has gone far beyond these considerations. Hujr was certainly one of these examples. Not only was he given the opportunity to save his life, but he was also offered by Ziyad both political power and economic advantages. He refused. To him, achieving these through denouncing and cursing 'Ali meant the denunciation of the faith itself.

There are political implications to this episode only insofar as political considerations were

ancillary to religious objectives. Thus Hujr's concern with who should be the caliph was not a political or economic question: he believed in and was prepared to die for, as he did, the idea of special qualities being granted by God to the family of the Prophet, making them specially suited to rule.

Hujr and his companions must therefore be considered as representative of those first Shi'is who voiced their religious opinion in support of 'Ali immediately after the death of the Prophet, and they were the forerunners of a progressively developing movement soon to be crystallized as a full-fledged section of the Muslim community.

He was a distinguished companion of the Prophet, widely respected for his piety and devotion to religious practices, even though a great partisan of 'Ali. His tragic fate sent a wave of grief and shock through the holy cities. Even the Prophet's widow 'A'isha and 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar vehemently protested against his execution. It is interesting to note that the tragedy of Hujr initiated the martyrology of the Shi'a, and his death was lamented in numerous elegies that developed into a rich literature in Shi'i Islam.

Naturally, the tragedy affected the Kufans most Their sentiments were stirred up with a deep sense of calamity and produced serious reactions. They sent a delegation to Husayn at Medina and urged him to lead an armed revolt against Mu'awiya. Husayn turned down the request with the same advice as before.

Mu'awiya was not unaware of these overtures to Husayn and was alarmed by such activities, especially when he received a letter from his governor in Medina, Marwan b. al-Hakam, warning that the delegation sent from Kufa was staying in Medina and having frequent meetings with Husayn. The Caliph wrote a threatening letter to Husayn as a warning, but the latter maintained in his reply the same indifferent attitude towards the existing order and assured Mu'awiya that he would continue to honour the treaty of his brother.

Except for the revolt of Hujr, suppressed by rather severe measures, the period between the deaths of Hasan and of Mu'awiya is again a quiet and subdued one in the history of the Shi'i movement. The general impression which we get from the sources is of an atmosphere of fear and caution on both sides. Mu'awiya's apprehensive attitude towards the potential of a Shi'i uprising is demonstrated by his extreme measures against Hujr and his limited, but quite serious, revolt. The fact that Mu'awiya, well known for his shrewd diplomacy in achieving his goals, should act in such a violent manner against Hujr indicates his uncompromising attitude towards Shi'i sympathies, an attitude perhaps resulting from fear of the deep-rooted Shi'i movement, especially in Kufa where the group was strongest.

On the other hand, Husayn's repeated refusal to lead the Kufan enthusiasts in open revolt

reveals his own cautious attitude and desire to avoid giving Mu'awiya any excuse to completely annihilate the supporters of the house of 'Ali. Throughout this period, Mu'awiya seems to have been trying to destroy, at the slightest pretext, those of 'Ali's followers who could not be bought or intimidated into submission; until this could be accomplished, the Umayyad hold on the caliphate would remain insecure.

It is not unlikely that one of the reasons for the imposition of cursing 'Ali from the pulpits was to provoke the Shi'I sympathizers into open revolt and thus subject them to attack and destruction at the hands of the Umayyad forces. When Al-Mughira b. Shu'ba was appointed governor of Kufa in 41/661, one of the duties specified to him by Mu'awiya was that he should vigorously carry out the cursing of 'All, propagandize against him and his followers, increase the intensity of the campaign to disgrace, dishonour, and impugn the character of 'Ali and his followers, and finally popularize and propagate the virtues of 'Uthman and his supporters.

The same instructions were given to Ziyad b. Abi Sufyan when he was entrusted with the governorship of Kufa after the death of Mughira in 50/670. Both of these governors carried out these duties to the satisfaction of Mu'awiya. Hujr and a few others could not tolerate this continuous provocation and fell into the trap, while others remained cautious and careful. Husayn, on his part, fully understanding the situation, wisely avoided any provocation against Mu'awiya and waited for an appropriate opportunity to move into action. In this way, he saved himself and his party from severe repression on the one hand, and honoured his brother's treaty, which indirectly involved Husayn as well, on the other.

Perhaps the most important event in the history of the development of the Shi'i "Passion" was Mu'awiya's nomination of his son Yazid to succeed him. The Caliph could not act in this direction as long as Hasan lived, and it is significant that immediately after the news of Hasan's death, Mu'awiya began actively working on the project that would fulfil his desire of perpetuating the rule of his family.

This was no easy task, and the Caliph had to move with great caution and use all those devices characteristic of his rule: diplomacy, generous gifts, bribes, and finally threats and oppression. It is not our intention here to go into the details of how Mu'awiya succeeded in buying off the leaders of the tribes and silencing the more resolute with severe repression. These details are preserved in the sources with hardly any serious differences. It will suffice for our purpose here to note that after careful arrangements through his governors, Mu'awiya managed to bring together from most of the provinces deputations which, as planned, declared their allegiance to Yazid as heir-apparent.

It was different with the Hijaz, where there lived the elite of Islamic nobility and the sons of the

most prominent Companions of the Prophet, most important among them being Husayn b. ‘Ali, ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar, ‘Abd Allah b. az-Zubayr, and ‘Abd ar-Rahman b. Abi Bakr. Any delegation from Medina without them would have been meaningless, thus their refusal to co-operate was of the utmost gravity. Mu’awiya therefore went to Medina in person with 1,000 selected horsemen to deal with the recalcitrants.

According to one version, Mu’awiya, reaching Medina and calling these four to meet him in the outskirts, treated them in such a harsh manner that they fled to Mecca. This worked as planned, and in their absence Mu’awiya declared the nomination of Yazid; this was approved by his supporters, while others had not the courage to resist. The problem of Medina solved, Mu’awiya proceeded to Mecca. There he changed his attitude and first tried to win over these four by treating them with exceptional friendliness. After spending quite some time with them and showing his great affection and regard for them, just before he was about to set out on his return home, he expressed his desire for their support for Yazid.

Re explained that he was not demanding much from them, that Yazid would be ruler only in name, and that, under Yazid’s name, it would in fact be they who would have real control of the government. After a spell of silence, Ibn az-Zubayr spoke and, in the name of all, he rejected the Caliph’s suggestion. The enraged Mu’awiya said: “On other occasions, when I speak in the pulpit, I allow anyone to object to my speech if he so wishes; but he who contradicts me today, a sword will silence him.”

Then he entered the mosque of Mecca, taking his four opponents with him, and declared: “These four men, without whom no decision concerning the succession can be made, have agreed to Yazid’s nomination; so now none of you people should have any difficulty in doing the same.” Thereupon people did homage to Yazid, while the four remained silent out of fear.

Even if this version is cautiously regarded as a later elaboration, Mu’awiya’s going to the Hijaz for the purpose of trying to compel these persons not to oppose Yazid cannot be denied.