THE LIFE AND POLITICAL THOUGHT OF

ʿALI IBN AL-HUSAYN

(d.A.H.94/A.D.712-3)

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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to examine objectively the life and political thought of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn (d. A.H.94/A.D. 712-3), who was highly respected among both Sunnite and Shīᶜite scholars.

Chapter one presents some vital background information concerning the life of our subject or study, including his dates of birth and death, his mother's name, and other matters.

Chapter two deals with the historical background to the stance of the followers of his grandfather, ᶜAlī b. abī Ṭālib, his uncle al-Ḥasan, and his father al-Ḥusayn. This chapter is important in that it helps to explain the effect of these predecessors' attitudes on ᶜAlī's own political stance and thought.

Chapter three presents a general theory of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn's political thought and planning whereby he was able to play his role within society. This theory presents the basics of his political thought and the reasons motivating these thoughts.

Chapter four is particularly concerned with ᶜAlī's political attitude and posture towards the rebellions which broke out in his time against the ruling Umayyads and how his political thought affected his actions during the course of these events. Here we examine specifically ᶜAlī's stance concerning the Medinan revolt, the Tawwābūn's revolt, and al-Mukhtār's rebellion.

Chapter five deals with ᶜAlī's political thought concerning the concept of oppression and his attitudes and thought towards unjust rulers and oppressors.

Finally, in chapter six, we examine ᶜAlī's three ways of practising his thought, playing his role within society, and communicating with the people. These three ways are: his inclination towards piety, his inclination towards social involvement, and his inclination towards spreading Islamic teachings and instruction. Many examples are given with regard to each inclination and a study is made of the effects of these ways upon society.

DECLARATION

No portion of the work in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification in this or any other university or other institution of learning.

DEDICATED TO THE AUTHOR'S PARENTS

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This dissertation has not been prepared without the willing assistance of a number of other people and I therefore wish to place on record my indebtedness to the following. Firstly, I must thank Prof. C.E. Bosworth, who has guided and encouraged my work from start to finish. Mrs E. Mayo, Secretary in the Dept. of Middle Eastern Studies, and the staff of the John Rylands University Library have also been most helpful in providing the practical aid without which this research could not have proceeded. Lastly, but principally, I have to thank my wife, whose patience and love during a period of exile from her native country, has been a constant source of strength in the pursuance of these labours.

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ABBREVIATIONS

B.S.M.E.S.B.	Bulletin of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies
EI 1	Encyclopaedia of Islam, 4 vol. (Leiden, 1913-34)
EI 2	Encyclopaedia of Islam, new ed. (Leiden, 1960-)
J.A.O.S.	Journal of the American Oriental Society
J.R.A.S.	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
S.I.	Studia Islamica

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

The system used is basically that of the Encyclopaedia of Islam, with the exceptions of j for ج (instead of dj) and q for ق (instead of k), and dh, sh, gh, th, kh for the ligatures without secondary underlining.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: IMPORTANT DATA CONCERNING ʿALĪ B. AL-ḤUSAYN'S LIFE

It is important initially to identify the person who is the subject of this study. This introduction will therefore include relevant background information, such as an outline of the earlier years of his life before his father's death, and it will also give details of the various nicknames under which ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn was known in order to avoid confusion with other names mentioned in anecdotes and historical narrations.

The subject of this study is ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. abī Ṭālib. He was born in Medina in A.H.38 (A.D. 658).[1] His mother was reputedly a daughter of the last Sassanid king, Yazdegird.[2] Various names were given to her by the historians. Some said that her name was Shāhzinan,[3] while other historians called her Shāhrabanū,[4] or Sulāfa.[5] It was asserted that during the Islamic

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1. Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt, III, 269; al-Ganjī, Kifāyat, 447; al-Nīsābūri, Rawdat, I, 201; al-Ṭabarī, Dalā'il, 80; al-Zirikli, al-Aʿlam, IV, 276; Wājdī, Da'ira, IV, 795; al-Bustānī, Da'ira, IX, 355; al-Qurashi, ʿUyun al-Akhbār, 143; al-Zamakhsharī, Rabiʿ, 53.
2. Al-Qurashi, loc.cit.; Nasr, Ideals, 164; Muir, The Caliphate, 312; Ibn al-ʿImad, Shadharāt, I, 105.
3. Al-Shafiʿi, loc.cit.; al-Mufid, al-Irshad, 253; al-Ṭabarsī, Iʿlām, 256; al-Nīsābūri, loc.cit.; Sibṭ Ibn Jawzī, Tadhkirat, 324; al-Bustānī, loc.cit.
4. Al-Nīsābūri, loc.cit.; al-Mufid, loc.cit.; al-Ṭabarsī, loc.cit.; Hollister, Shiʿa, 66.
5. Ibn Khallikān, op.cit., II, 267; Ibn al-Jawzī, loc.cit.; al-Bustānī, loc.cit.; al-Mubarrad, al-Kāmil, II, 120.

conquest of Persia, she was imprisoned and sent to Medina during the caliphate of ᶜUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.[1] In another account, it was said that Jābir b. Ḥurayth, ᶜAlī b. abī Ṭālib's governor of certain parts of the eastern region, sent Yazdegird's two daughters to ᶜAlī b. abī Ṭālib. One of them became the wife of al-Ḥusayn, while the other married Muḥammad b. abī Bakr.[2]

ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn was given various nicknames. He was called Zayn al-ᶜĀbidīn ("the ornament of the worshippers"),[3] and Dhū al-Thafināt ("the one with the calluses"),[4] so called because he was so engaged in worship and prostrations that he developed horny parts on his forehead like the hard under-part of a camel's foot.[5] On account of his devoutness, he was also well known by the nickname al-Sajjād ("the worshipper").[6] His son Muḥammad said that his father never received God's grace without bowing down to him in acknowledgment and that he never read a Qur'ānic verse containing sajda

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1. Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya, IX, 104; Ibn Khallikān, op.cit., II, 266; Ibn al-ᶜImad, op.cit., 105.
2. Al-Mufīd, al-Irshād, 253; al-Ṭabarsī, op.cit., 256; al-Qurashī, op.cit., 143.
3. Hollister, op.cit., 65; Donaldson, Shīᶜite Religion, 102; Abū Nuᶜaym, Ḥilyat, III, 133; Ibn Ḥajar, al-Sawa'iq, 198; al-Dhahabi, Tadhkirat, I, 74; Muir, loc.cit.; Ibn al-ᶜImad, op.cit., 104.
4. Al-Ṣaduq, ᶜIlal, 233; Donaldson, op.cit., 104; al-Ṭabarsī, loc.cit.; al-Ṭabari, Dala'il, 80; al-Bustānī, op.cit., IX, 355; al-Ṣaduq, Maᶜani, 62; Hollister, op.cit., 67.
5. Al-Ṭabarsī, loc.cit.; al-Qurashī, op.cit., 150; Donaldson, op.cit., 109.
6. Al-Ṭabari, op.cit., 80; al-Ziriklī, op.cit., IV, 276; Ibn al-Wardī, Ta'rikh, I, 242; al-Bustani, op.cit., IX, 355; al-Ṣaduq, Maᶜani, 62; al-Shablanji, Nur, 139.

(a prostration) without also bowing down to God.[1]

There is not much record of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn's life before his father's death, but there is a record of his non-involvement through illness in the battle of Karbalā in A.H.61 (A.D.680), when ᶜAlī was 23 years old.[2] During the accident which followed his father's death, Shamīr b. Dhī al-Jawshān was going to put an end to ᶜAlī's life, but he was saved by ᶜUmar b. Saᶜd.[3] After this, he was sent, together with the remaining members of his family, to Kufa. There, he met ᶜUbayd Allāh b. Ziyād and a conversation took place between the two of them. This conversation enraged ᶜUbayd Allāh to such an extent that he gave the order to put ᶜAlī to death, but he was saved from this fate by his aunt Zaynab b. ᶜAlī b. abī Ṭālib.[4] Afterwards, they were sent to Yazīd b. Muᶜāwiyā in Damascus. There a discussion concerning the rebellion of Ḥusayn took place between

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1. Al-Ṣadūq, ᶜIlal, 233.
2. Ibn al-ᶜImad, op.cit., 105; Ibn al-Jawzī, Sifat, II, 93; Donaldson, op.cit., 102; Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., 104; Hollister, op.cit., 65; al-Bustanī, loc.cit.; Ibn ᶜAsākir, Tahdhib, IV, 340; Ibn Saᶜd, al-Tabaqāt, V, 212; al-Ṭabari, Ta'rikh, V, 454.
3. Al-Khʷārizmī, Maqtal, II, 38; Ibn Saᶜd, loc.cit.; Donaldson, loc.cit.; al-Dhahabī, op.cit., 74.
4. Al-Khʷārizmī, op.cit., II, 43; al-Muqarram, Maqtal, 393; al-Ṭabari, Ta'rikh, V, 458; Ibn Saᶜd, op.cit., 212.

ᶜAlī and Yazīd.[1] At the conclusion, Yazīd treated ᶜAlī and his family well, giving them money and presents,[2] and he allowed them to return to Medina.[3]

ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn remained in Medina for the rest of his life, except once when he was obliged to go to Damascus to meet the Caliph ᶜAbd al-Malik b. Marwān.[4] Various statements have been given of the year of ᶜAlī's death. Some historians said that he died in A.H.94 (A.D.712-3),[5] while others have cited A.H.95 (A.D.713),[6] or A.H.92 (A.D.710-11).[7] However, it appears that according to the most reliable authorities he lived until A.H.94.[8] He was buried in Medina in the cemetery of Baqīᶜa.[9]

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1. Al-Khᵂārizmī, op.cit., II, 63; Ibn ᶜAbd Rabbih, al-ᶜIqd, IV, 382; al-Muqarram, op.cit., 419; (Pseudo-)Ibn Qutayba, al-Imama, II, 10; al-Dhahabi, Siyar, III, 216; al-Isfahani, Maqatil, 120.
2. Ibn ᶜAbd Rabbih, loc.cit.; Ibn Saᶜd, op.cit., 212; (Pseudo-)Ibn Qutayba, op.cit., 11; al-Dhahabi, loc.cit.
3. Al-Isfahani, op.cit., 105; EI¹, art. "ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn"; Donaldson. op.cit., 102; Ibn Saᶜd, op.cit., 212; Ibn Kathir, op.cit., IX, 104; (Pseudo-)Ibn Qutayba, loc.cit.
4. Hollister, op.cit., 66; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, IX, 104; Abū Nuᶜaym, op.cit., III, 135; Ibn Ḥajar, op.cit., 198.
5. Al-Zirikli, loc.cit.; Ibn al-Wardī, loc.cit.; Wajdi, Da'ira, 795; al-Bustani, op.cit., 357; al-Qurashi, op.cit., 208; al-Birri, al-Jawhara, 94; Donaldson, op.cit., 111; Ibn Khallikan, op.cit., 269; Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., 113; al-Dhahabi, op.cit., 75; Ibn Qutayba, al-Maᶜarif, 215; Ibn al-Jawzi, op.cit., 102; Hollister, op.cit., 67.
6. Al-Ganjī, op.cit., 454; al-Nīsābūrī, Rawdat, I, 201; Donaldson, loc.cit.; Ibn al-Wardī, loc.cit.; al-Ṭabari, Dalā'il, 80; Hollister, loc.cit.
7. Ibn Khallikan, loc.cit.; Wajdi, loc.cit.; Ibn al-Jawzī, op.cit., 102; Hollister, loc.cit.
8. EI¹, art. "ᶜAli b. al-Ḥusayn".
9. Donaldson, loc.cit.; Wajdi, loc.cit.; Ibn al-Wardī, loc.cit.; Ibn Khallikan, op.cit., 269; Ibn Kathir, op.cit., 113; Ibn Ḥajar, op.cit., 198; Hollister, Shiᶜa, 67; Ibn Qutayba, al-Maᶜarif, 215; Ibn al-Jawzi, op.cit., 102.

CHAPTER II

THE ATTITUDES OF THE KUFANS TOWARD THE THREE PRECEDING IMĀMS (ᶜALĪ, ḤASAN AND ḤUSAYN)

This chapter will concentrate on the Kufans' negative reaction towards some of the actions of the three Imāms, ᶜAlī, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn. In other words, what the chapter intends is to give examples of the treachery and disobedience of the Kufans as shown by their behaviour in many events.

Such a study will be very helpful in understanding an important factor inducing ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn later to adopt for himself a different policy and plans to those of his ancestors towards the political events which took place in his time, such as the revolts against the Umayyads. It should be emphasised, however, that a detailed study of the events which took place during the time of the first three Imāms (their causes and results) is not contemplated, but rather it is intended to give some examples proving the treachery and weakness of the Kufans.

We must first clarify one important issue. The

emphasis on the city of Kufa and the Kufans is on account of many reasons, the two most important of which are as follows.

1. Kufa was the capital of the caliphate at the time of Imām ᶜAlī b. abī Ṭālib and he had gone there because he had partisans in this place and also because his chief strength lay in Iraq.[1] After the murder of ᶜUthmān, ᶜAlī managed to keep the Iraqis on his side, as they could have been the most important source of aid and support for those who had rebelled against ᶜUthmān. It is important in passing to explain the difference between the literal meaning of the word shīᶜa and those people who became known as Shīᶜites. Literally, shīᶜa means "followers", "companions", or "party".[2] However, in practice it is used to describe the followers or party specifically of ᶜAlī.[3] The Shīᶜa began as a minority party whose leader was rejected by the other companions of the Prophet Muḥammad.[4] Concerning the stance adopted by the Shīᶜa towards the first three Imāms (ᶜAlī, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn), it is difficult to actually call them Shīᶜa, meaning the

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1. Hodgson, The Venture of Islam, vol. 1, 214; Tritton, Islam, 72; Schacht, Introduction, 16f.; Dawūd, Nash'at, 72.
2. Sell, The Faith, 102; Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān, VIII, 188; Tritton, Islam, 72; Osborn, Islam, 152; Lammens, Islam, 143; Fayzee, "Shiᶜi Legal Theories," in Law in the Middle East, I, 114; Klein, The Religion, 115; Hughes, Dictionary of Islam, art. "Shiᶜa"; ᶜAbd al-Ḥamid, Dirasāt, 9.
3. Sell, loc.cit.; Ibn Manẓūr, op.cit., 189; Fayzee, loc. cit.; Osborn, loc.cit.; Tritton, loc.cit.; EI², art. "Imama"; Nasr, Ideals, 149; Watt, Islamic Philosophy, 3; ᶜAbd al-Ḥamid, loc.cit.
4. Hodgson, "How did the Early Shiᶜa become Sectarian?" J.A.O.S., LXXV (1955) 1-13.

party of ʿAlī.[1] For this reason we cannot use of them the term Shīʿa before the year A.D.874[2] and so it is preferable to describe the followers of the first three Imāms as "proto-Shīʿa".[3] The native Iraqis were then, particularly in Kufa, more or less Shīʿite in character.[4] It is important to note, however, that the Shīʿites, or ʿAlī's followers and partisans[5] in Kufa did not all have the same degree of religious motivation. Some had political aspirations and hoped to throw off the yoke of Syrian domination.[6] Some Kufans also looked to the family of ʿAlī as representing their independence, but several factors conspired to give this sentiment an emotional and moral, and therefore a religious turn.[7] They were not an actual sect during the time of ʿUthmān, but they merely preferred ʿAlī and took their stand in favour of him.[8] More than that, the Kufans discovered that the Umayyads' victory over them meant the victory of the Syrians. As a result of this, they had lost their independence and could no longer be regarded as leaders of the Arabs. It could be said that they were Shīʿites

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1. Dāwūd, Nash'at, 68.
2. Watt, op.cit., 38f.
3. Ibid.
4. Wellhausen, The Religio-Political, 95f.; EI², art. "al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAli b. Abi Ṭalib."
5. Jafrī, Origins, 2; Hodgson, op.cit., 222; Wellhausen, op.cit., 95; EI¹, art. "Shiʿa"; Hughes, Dictionary of Islam, art. "Shiʿah."
6. Jafri, op.cit., 178.
7. Hodgson, "How did the Early Shiʿa become Sectarian?", 1-13; Dawūd, op.cit., 68.
8. Hollister, Shiʿa, 24.

of Iraq rather than Shī^{c}ites of ^{c}Alī. Taking into account their treachery with regard to the revolution of Ḥusayn and al-Mukhtār, their loyalty to Iraq was expressed through supporting the ^{c}Alids.[1]

2. Kufa was the centre of Shī^{c}ite movements and it was in and around Kufa that many events during the time of the first three Imāms took place, such as the mobilization of forces by ^{c}Alī for the battles of al-Jamal and Ṣiffīn, the election and abdication of al-Ḥasan, and the massacre of Karbalā.[2]

I. The Caliphate of ^{c}Alī b. abī Ṭālib (A.H.40-63/A.D. 656-661)

Examples of some of the negative behaviour of the Kufans toward some of ^{c}Alī's actions will be given here to show the degree to which their treachery and disobedience had reached.

A. The Occasion of Raising the Qur'ān in the Battle of Ṣiffīn (A.H.37/A.D.657)

It is said that when it was realised that victory

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1. Al-Dūrī, Muqaddima, 63f.
2. Jafri, op.cit., 101.

was very close for ʿAlī's army in the battle of Ṣiffīn, ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀs advised Muʿāwiyā to fasten copies of the Qur'ān on the spearheads to stop the battle and to let the Qur'ān decide between them.[1] ʿAlī tried to tell his army that this was a trick devised by Muʿāwiyā, but he was so under threat that the versions record how ʿAlī was forced to accept not only the arbitration itself, but also the person of the arbiter, Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī.[2]

This story has been criticised by many Western scholars, including Weil, Dozy, and Brünnow. They suspect that there were traitors on both sides and they speak about the role of al-Ashʿarī and accuse him of treachery.[3] Brünnow said that the sudden change which occurred in ʿAlī's army must have been brought about by more than one circle and he further considered the Khawārij to be Bedouin.[4] However, Wellhausen has criticised most of their comments on Abū Mikhnaf's narration about Ṣiffīn.[5] Watt also suspected some elements in this story and said that it is unlikely that many copies of the Qur'ān existed at this period.[6] One copy, however, would have been sufficient for the exercise.

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1. Al-ʿAshshī, Imām, 23; al-Khaṭīb, ʿAlī b. Abī Tālib, 478; Osborn, op.cit., 117; Sell, op.cit., 104; Watt, Formative, 13; al-Baladhuri, Ansāb, I, 323; Ṭabari, Ta'rikh, V, 48; Hitti, History of Syria, 432; Hollister, op.cit., 11.
2. Jafri, op.cit., 122; Hodgson, op.cit., 214f.; Cambridge History of Islam, I, 70; Muir, The Caliphate, 276-8; Ibn al-Athir, al-Kāmil, III, 316; al-Khaṭib, op.cit., 498.
3. Wellhausen, op.cit., 6.
4. Ibid., 11.
5. Ibid., 5-16.
6. Formative, 13.

As stated at the outset, the detailed study of what exactly happened at Ṣiffīn is not our purpose. What is, however, the important issue is the fact that the armies certainly withdrew and arbitration took place.[1] ᶜAlī was forced to accept the arbitration itself and he was later compelled to appoint Abū Mūsā al-Ashᶜarī as his arbiter in the negotiations.[2] Because of this situation, ᶜAlī was asked,

> "Would you agree to summon Muᶜāwiyā to two arbiters?"

He replied,

> "What can I do? I have been forced to do so."[3]

In order to demonstrate the moral weakness of the Iraqi people at this juncture, a narration must be cited here which was given by ᶜAbd Allāh b. al-ᶜAbbās when he was asked about the reason which induced ᶜAlī to accept the arbitration. He said,

> "The Iraqi people were tired of the sword and they were terrified of it more than the people of Syria. They were divided among themselves, so that when Imām ᶜAlī saw their weakness, he was afraid that they might desert him. Therefore he bowed to the arbitration."[4]

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1. Ibid.
2. Hodgson, op.cit., 214; Jafri, op.cit., 122; Cambridge History, 70; EI², art. "ᶜAlī b. Abi Ṭalib"; Muir, op.cit., 264; Ibn al-Athīr, op.cit., 317; al-Masᶜūdī, Muruj, III, 139.
3. Al-Balādhurī, op.cit, II, 337.
4. Ibid.

To understand this situation better, it is necessary to know something of the internal character of the army and to what extent differences of views had penetrated the ranks of ᶜAlī's army. The army contained, in fact, a number of theological fanatics, who were ready to split hairs in matters of doctrine. They were fighting for their beliefs and not for ᶜAlī, so that when any divergence appeared between those beliefs and the leader they had chosen, their swords would turn against ᶜAlī and in fact that is what actually happened.[1]

B. The Kufans' Refusal to answer his Call to fight with him and their Lack of Incentive to fight

This is one of the important facts indicating the absence of obedience and willingness to follow orders which existed among ᶜAlī's followers, even though they claimed they loved him. When this professed obedience was put to the test on the battlefield, it was found to falter in

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1. Osborn, *op.cit.*, 115f.

the face of cowardice, fear, and laziness. On many occasions, Imām ᶜAlī summoned them to fight with him and to prepare for battle, but they did not respond to his call. So, for example, when Imām ᶜAlī came from the battle of al-Nahrawān, he called them to jihād, but their reply was,

> "O commander of the faithful, we have run out of arrows, our swords are blunt, our spears have lost their heads, and most of them are broken."[1]

He repeated his call to them, but they did not make ready, so he left them for a few days until he was in despair of them. When again he asked them why they were so slow in responding to his call, he discovered that some of them were sick, others hated to go to war, while only a few of them had the health and energy to fight.[2] In one of his sayings, Ibn ᶜAbbās spoke of the reason which led Imām ᶜAlī to accept the arbitration. He said,

> "If there had been anyone with him willing to face the sword, victory would have been near."[3]

Thus they were clearly unwilling to fight and to put themselves to suffering on the battlefield. Because of their lack of faith toward him, ᶜAlī said on one occasion about the Kufans,

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1. Ibn al-Athīr, op.cit., 349; al-Masᶜūdī, op.cit., 158f.
2. Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., 349.
3. Al-Balādhuri, op.cit., 337.

"When I order you to march against them during the summer season, you say, 'This is the season of intense heat. Grant us respite until the heat has abated from us.' And when I command you to proceed toward them in winter, you say, 'This is the season of intense cold. Give us time until the cold is dispelled from us.' With all this fleeing from heat and cold, by God, you will flee even more readily from the sword."[1]

II. The Attitudes of the Kufans during the Caliphate of al-Ḥasan b. ᶜAlī

The lack of obedience and reluctance to accept the call to fight against the Syrians will be examined here, with examples of the coolness of the Kufans toward the actions taken by Ḥasan b. ᶜAlī. It is said that when al-Ḥasan appealed to the Kufans to march with him against Muᶜāwiya, there was a poor response and there was a lack of enthusiasm on the part of his followers.[2] More than that, some of his army rose mutinously upon him. They rushed into his pavilion and plundered his

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1. Jafri, op.cit., 124.
2. Ibid., 142; al-Balādhurī, op.cit., 32; al-Mufīd, al-Irshad, 189; EI², art. "al-Ḥasan b. ᶜAlī."

tents, even taking away his prayer-mat.[1]

The most important example of opposition against him occurred when he was exposed to an attempted murder by a man called al-Jarrāḥ b. Sinān, a Khārijite. Coming up to al-Ḥasan, al-Jarrāḥ stabbed him in the thigh with a sickle and the stab-wound almost reached the bone.[2] It severely affected his health, although it was not fatal.[3]

Again, soon after the abdication of Ḥasan, many of his sincere followers, who were followers of his father, came to him, blaming him for his abdication and saying evil things against him. For instance, Sulaymān b. Ṣurad addressed him,

> "Peace be upon you, O you who humiliated the Muslims."[4]

Further, another man, called Abū ᶜUmayr b. al-Natl, said to him exactly the same as Sulaymān had said.[5]

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1. Al-Iṣfahānī, Maqātil, 41; Muir, Annals, 149; idem, The Caliphate, 290; Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., VIII, 14; al-Baladhuri, op.cit., 35; al-Ṭabari, Taʾrikh, V, 159; Ibn al-Athir, op.cit., 404; Ibn ᶜAsakir, Tahdhīb, IV, 223.
2. Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., 14; al-Balādhurī, op.cit., 35; Ibn ᶜAsakir, loc.cit.
3. Al-Ṭabarī, op.cit., 162.
4. (Pseudo-)Ibn Qutayba, al-Imāma, 1 , 260. For a further example, see EI², loc.cit.
5. Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., 19.

It was also said that one of the reasons for al-Ḥasan's abdication was that the defections had been frequent in the last years of his father's caliphate and had even increased during his own! Thus he could not rely on his soldiers, who had little will or desire to become involved in a fight against the Umayyads.[1]

III. The Actions of the Kufans during Ḥusayn's Revolt

From this revolt, we may see solid evidence of the treachery of the Kufans towards al-Ḥusayn b. ᶜAlī. The Kufans invited Ḥusayn after Muᶜāwiyā's death to lead a revolt against the Umayyads and they wrote him many letters asking him to accept their demands.[2] Many zealous Shīᶜites, like Sulaymān b. Ṣurad al-Khuzāᶜī, went to Ḥusayn and were followed by others.[3] The Kufans wrote in one of their letters,

> "The people are awaiting you and they will not accept anyone beside yourself. So hurry, hurry!"[4]

Thereupon, Ḥusayn sent his cousin Muslim b. ᶜAqīl to

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1. EI^2, loc.cit.; Yaᶜqūbī, II, 256.
2. EI^2, art. "Ḥusayn b. ᶜAlī"; Wellhausen, op.cit., 105; Cambridge History, I, 81; Jafri, op.cit., 177; Ḥodgson, op.cit., 219; al-Birri, al-Jawhara, 42; Ibn ᶜAsākir, op.cit., 338; Watt, Islamic, 20; Hitti, op.cit., 450; Ibn Ṭiqṭaqā, al-Fakhri, 139; Osborn, op.cit., 124.
3. Wellhausen, loc.cit.
4. Al-Ṭabarī, op.cit., 353.

Kufa to prepare the way for him and to test the climate of opinion.[1]

It seems that the treachery of the Kufans had spread among the people, so that many were warning Ḥusayn and adverting him to the danger of their treachery. For example, ᶜAbd Allāh b. al-ᶜAbbās told him,

> "I am afraid for you in this attempt to kill you, because the Iraqi people are deceitful. So do not go near them."[2]

Similarly, the poet al-Farazdaq told him that the hearts of the Iraqis were for him, but their swords were against him.[3]

The first act of treachery occurred when 12,000-18,000 paid allegiance to Muslim b. ᶜAqīl,[4] but when ᶜUbayd Allāh b. Ziyād appeared in Kufa, the Kufans were cowed by the Syrian governor even before he arrived. Nobody remained with Muslim and he was killed, isolated and without any support for those who paid allegiance to him.[5]

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1. Wellhausen, loc.cit.; EI², loc.cit.; al-Ṭabarī, op.cit., 347; Ibn ᶜAsakir, op.cit., 338; Ibn Ṭiqṭaqa, loc.cit.
2. Al-Tabari, op.cit., 383.
3. Ibid., 386; Aḥmad, al-Khilāfa, 160; al-Birrī, op.cit., 42; EI², loc.cit.; Jafri, op.cit., 184.
4. Al-ᶜAqqad, Abu, 55; Aḥmad, op.cit., 159; Jafri, op.cit., 182; al-Ṭabari, op.cit., 375; Ibn ᶜAsakir, op.cit., 338.
5. Al-ᶜAqqad, op.cit., 59; Ibn ᶜAsākir, op.cit., 339; al-Birrī, op.cit., 42; Wellhausen, op.cit., 108; Jafri, op.cit., 183; Muir, The Caliphate, 323; al-Ṭabarī, op.cit., 378; Ibn Ṭiqṭaqa, op.cit., 139.

When Ḥusayn discovered the treachery of the Kufans,[1] he tried to remind the Kufans of the support they had promised and he reminded them of his honourable status as the grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad,[2] but they did nothing and he did not receive the support he expected from them.[3] This was their second act of treachery. After this, he fought with his small band of followers until he was killed on the 10th Muḥarram A.H.61/10th October A.D.680.[4]

IV. Conclusion

In general, the chain of events which took place during the time of the first three Imāms (ᶜAlī, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn) and the way in which the Kufans reacted towards some of the Imāms' actions, shows us clearly that the Kufans reacted negatively on many of these occasions. Treachery, lack of desire to fight, and disobedience to orders were some of their characteristics.

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1. EI^2, loc.cit.
2. Jafri, op.cit., 186-190; al-Ṭabarī, op.cit., 403; EI^2, loc.cit.
3. Sell, op.cit., 106; Cambridge History, I, 81; Watt, "Shi'ism under the Umayyads," J.R.A.S. (1960) 158-172; idem, Formative, 40f.
4. EI^2, loc.cit.; Jafri, op.cit., 192; al-Ṭabarī, op.cit., 453; Ibn ᶜAsakir, op.cit., 340; Watt, Islamic, 20; Tritton, Islam, 72; Ibn Ṭiqṭaqa, op.cit., 140; Osborn, op.cit., 121; Hitti, op.cit., 450; al-Birri, op.cit., 44.

Our aim in adducing these examples is preliminary to our examination later of the question whether ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn benefited from the experience of his ancestors with the Kufans or not. This study will also help us to understand the wisdom behind the political planning of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn and his attitudes towards the political events which took place in his time.

CHAPTER III

GENERAL THEORY CONCERNING ᶜALI B. AL-ḤUSAYN'S POLITICAL STANCE AND PLANNING

After we have studied what happened to the three Imāms who preceded ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn in their relations with the Kūfans, especially those who claimed that they were Shīᶜites, a general theory will be formed to interpret the stance of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn towards the political events of the time. This theory will also be the basis on which to understand his political thoughts and stance.

In view of the stance of the Kūfans toward the three previous Imāms, it was inevitable for ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn, or indeed for any wise person, to take a specific stance towards those people and their behaviour. In other words, those people were not sufficiently capable of engaging in warfare or rebelling against the Umayyads because such a task would require a major force, large numbers, and a high standard of military expertise. As already mentioned, a general theory will be formed in order to explain the reasons why ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn adopted his particular stance and the wisdom which lay behind it. Hence, this theory will be used to understand

ᶜAlī's political attitudes. We may consider it in aspects.

1. Forming a Genuine and Clear Picture of the Status of the Shīᶜites and their Supporters

It is obvious from some of ᶜAlī's sayings that he had a clear picture of the status of the Shīᶜites during his time and studied the situation objectively. He also analysed the situation of the two political powers of his time: the Umayyads and the Zubayrīs.

It is reasonable to suggest that the first stage in implementing a political and planned work through the people is an analysis and determination of the strengths and weaknesses in the society concerned. This evaluation must be free from emotional pressures and should be undertaken logically and objectively. It should not be pursued on a basis of imaginations and unrealistic visions. An examination of some of ᶜAlī's traditions leads us to the conclusion that such an evaluation of the situation was indeed made by him.

One of the important traditions narrated by ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn in which he analysed the situation and the status of his supporters and the standard required

of them to undertake jihād against their enemies is as follows:

> "ᶜAbbād al-Baṣrī saw ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn on the way to Mecca and he said to him: 'O ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn, you have forsaken jihād and its difficulty and you have taken up the ḥajj and its easiness, while God (may he be exalted and magnified) said, "God has bought from the faithful their selves and their money that they might obtain heaven, that they might fight in his way, and that they might kill and be killed" and he concluded, "So proclaim the glad tidings to the believers."' Then ᶜAlī answered him, 'If we see those who have been described in the verse, jihād with them will be better than ḥajj.'"[1]

This saying of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn specified in very clear terms to what extent ᶜAlī had analysed the people of that time and their abilities to stand in jihād. ᶜAlī evidently looked for people with the same characteristics as those described in the Qur'ānic verse cited by ᶜAbbād al-Baṣrī, viz.:

> "...those that turn to God in repentance, that serve him and praise him, that wander in devotion to the cause of God, that bow down and prostrate themselves in prayer, that enjoin good and forbid evil, and observe the limits set by God."[2]

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1. Iḥtijāj, II, 44; Biḥār, XLVI, 116.
2. Sūrat al-Tawba, 111f.

In other words, ᶜAlī is concentrating heavily on the piety of the supporter and not only on his claim that he is ready to deliver himself to the cause of God.

With this consideration, we may understand the reasons for some aspects of ᶜAlī's behaviour, such as his not taking any political part in the events occurring in his time, or leading and participating in any kind of revolutionary movement against the Umayyads, even though such revolutions were pursued against the dynasty which killed his father and his family in Karbalā. Moreover, this attitude caused him sometimes to declare and acknowledge to the Caliph directly that he himself kept apart from such movements and had nothing to do with them. This is exactly what happened when ᶜAlī sent a letter to Yazīd during the Medinan revolution, telling him that he did not enter in or join with what the people had become involved in, i.e. the revolution.[1]

In another tradition, we are able to perceive the lack of supporters of the Ahl al-Bayt who were available during the time of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn. This tradition is as follows:

> "Mālik b. Ismāᶜīl told us: 'Sahl b. Shuᶜayb al-Nahmī narrated...from al-Minhāl, i.e. Ibn ᶜAmr, who said, "I entered into the presence of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn and

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1. Ṭabarī, VI, 484f.; Ibn al-Athīr, IV, 112f.

> I said, 'How are you...?' He answered, 'I haven't seen any old man (shaykh) like you from this area who does not know how we are. Since you do not know, I am going to tell you. We became among our own people like the Israelites (Banū Isrā'īl) among the Egyptians. They were killing their male children and letting their females live. Our Shaykh and Sayyid [ᶜAlī b. abī Ṭālib] was sworn at and abused from the pulpits in order to be friends of our enemies.'"[1]

This narration also shows us ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn's evaluation of the situation in his time and the attitudes held toward the Ahl al-Bayt, like killing the males and keeping the females alive, and cursing ᶜAlī b. abī Ṭālib. The most important fact in this narration is that such an unsavoury situation would not have arisen if there had been many sincere lovers and supporters of the Ahl al-Bayt who were ready to sacrifice themselves in the cause of God and who were ready to continue their fight until the defeat of the Umayyads. If such supporters of the Ahl al-Bayt had been available, the Umayyads would have hesitated to act as they did.

It is important to emphasise here the necessity of continuing the fight until the absolute defeat of the Umayyads, because ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn knew that if this object were not attained, the Umayyads would regard the rebellion as a useful

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1. Ibn Saᶜd, op. cit., V, 219f.; al-Khʷārizmī, op. cit., II, 72.

pretext for killing himself and his small, sincere band of followers, and for changing the situation of the Shīᶜites for the worse.

The preceding discussion has been centred on ᶜAlī's evaluation of the Shīᶜites of his time, but we have to enquire further about his evaluation of the two main political powers which were founded in his time, i.e. the Zubayrīs and the Umayyads. In other words, we need to know what ᶜAlī thought about these powers and whether he esteemed them weak enough to be defeated easily or strong enough to necessitate a well-planned and assiduous campaign.

Such and evaluation would be very helpful in enabling us to understand the political posture and thoughts of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn and his reaction towards the events taking place in his time. For example, if we supposed that ᶜAlī's evaluation of the Zubayrīs' power was that it was very weak and might be defeated easily, this supposition might suggest to us further that he considered the feasibility of leading a revolt against it or at least of sending his followers to revolt while he announced publicly his support for such a revolt.

ᶜAlī's evaluation of the Zubayrīs' strength may in fact be deduced from the following tradition:

"Abū Ḥamza al-Thūmālī said, 'I came to ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn ...bid him salām and prayed for him. He returned my salām, prayed for me, and pointed to a wall belonging to him. He said, "O Abū Ḥamza, do you see this wall?" I answered, "Yes, O son of the Prophet Muḥammad." He said, "One day I leaned against it when I was in sorrow. A well- dressed man with a good countenance looked at my face and said, 'O ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn, why do I see you in sorrow? Is it because of this life [dunyā]? Subsistence is available; the bad and the good eat of it.' I said, 'It is not on account of this life, as you say, that I am in sorrow.' He continued, 'Is it because of the afterlife [ākhira]? It is a truthful promise ordained by the almighty Lord.' I replied. 'It is not on account of this, as you say, that I am in sorrow.' Then he asked, 'Why are you sorrowful, ᶜAlī?' I said, 'I am afraid of the discord [fitna] of Ibn al-Zubayr.'"'"[1]

This tradition demonstrates that ᶜAlī was perturbed by Ibn al-Zubayr's movement in Hejaz. Such anxiety would not appear if the latter's power were weak, but it arose because it was in fact very strong, so that ᶜAlī referred to it as a fitna, meaning that it was a trial and a tribulation for his followers and the Shīᶜites. This understanding of ᶜAlī's evaluation of the power of Ibn al-Zubayr is very important in establishing the reason for the stand taken by ᶜAlī later on when the

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1. Abū Nuᶜaym, op. cit., III, 134; Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., IX, 113f. al-Majlisi, op.cit., 37; Ibn al-Sabbagh, al-Fusul, 189; al-Ganjī, op. cit., 450; al-Qurashī, op.cit., 179; al-Mufīd, Amālī, 127; al-Ṣadūq, al-Tawḥīd, 374.

conflict broke out between his uncle Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya and Ibn al-Zubayr, an occasion when the latter expressed his resentment for Imām ᶜAlī b. abī Ṭālib and the Ahl al-Bayt.

We must also consider ᶜAlī's evaluation of the Umayyads' power, because they represented the most important authority and they were in fact the party who killed his father in Karbalā. In other words, ᶜAlī's estimation of this power would provide him with a firm foundation on which he might proceed to shape his thoughts and attitudes toward the political events concerning the Umayyads which took place in his time. Such an awareness of the abilities of this power and its strength would be of great assistance to him in his future political planning. Would he, for example, decide to rebel against the Umayyads like his father had done before him, or would he espouse for himself a different course far removed from the way of those who favoured revolution?

It is well known that the Umayyads became very strong after they had killed Imām Ḥusayn, who was the centre of opposition on account of the political and

spiritual value he represented as the only remaining son of the Prophet's daughter. In his time the Umayyads pursued a very hard policy against the Shīᶜa,[1] particularly during the reign of al-Ḥajjāj, who was well known for his deep enmity towards the Shīᶜa.[2] From the previously cited tradition transmitted by al-Minhāl b. ᶜAmr, a general impression of ᶜAlī's evaluation of the Umayyads may be deduced. He there said that they killed the men of Ahl al-Bayt, let the women live, and cursed Imām ᶜAlī. This indicates that the Umayyads were very strong at that time and this violence, mentioned in the tradition, was evidently one aspect of their strength. If they had not been strong, they would not have had the courage to act as they did, at least not publicly.

Thus, these three evaluations taken all together formed an important basis for ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn's future planning and played an effective part in governing his particular attitude towards the political events. The inter-connection of each evaluation and the effective part which each played among the others must be emphasised

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1. Dāwūd, Nash'at, 83; Nasr, Ideals, 154.
2. Dāwūd, loc.cit.

here. For example, ᶜAlī could not rebel in the time of the Umayyads' weakness if sufficient opposition of the right calibre were not available.

2. ᶜAlī's Political Methods and Planning

In view of the considerations outlined in the preceding section, it is clear that it was vitally important for ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn to take a different approach to circumstances than was adopted by the previous Imāms. His method adopted may be deduced from a study of his attitudes and sayings. It is necessary here to state the basic concepts involved in ᶜAlī's stance so as to form a theory about his method and way of planning to deal with these events. The details will be discussed in the following chapters.

In this theoretical examination, his method and manner of dealing with events and the authoritative role he played within society will be studied and analysed. It is necessary to divide this study and analysis into two sections, dealing respectively with ᶜAlī's policy

towards revolution and his attitudes towards leading or participating in any political movement, and his inter-reactions with the people so as to play a positive role among them.

A.

A study of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn's life and sayings indicates that he kept himself far away from any political movements and did not allow himself to be made the centre of any such movement,[1] like the rebellions against the Umayyads. Moreover, he did not permit his name to become associated with any revolt,[2] nor did he express publicly any kind of sharp criticism of the Umayyads or the Zubayrīs and their behaviour through which he might have become known as an enemy to them. It should be noted, however, that ᶜAlī's apparent lack of support for the rebellions, or lack of open condemnation of the Umayyads or Zubayrīs does not mean that there were no hints made by him against the Umayyads or others. These hints were made indirectly and expressed in general terms, so that no one could claim for certain that ᶜAlī meant one thing or another. ᶜAlī sought mainly to voice

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1. Watt, Islamic Philosophy, 23f.
2. Hollister, op.cit., 67.

these hints through his ad^{c}iya (supplications) and prayers to God. In this way, he did not give his enemies any opportunity to accuse him of discussing political matters or of ranging himself in opposition, since du^{c}ā' and prayer to God were not prohibited in any way. The most important feature of these hints was, however, that his supporters understood them in a way which inspired hatred for the Umayyads and their behaviour. For instance, ^{c}Alī spoke in one of his ad^{c}iya about oppressions in general and he asked God to deflect their trickery away from him. He also asked God to support him against those who oppressed him and to make it difficult for his enemies to oppress him.[1] In this du^{c}ā', ^{c}Alī did not mention any particular name or political group. Indeed, the matter he spoke of (i.e. oppression) might affect every person throughout human history. In effect, his enemies would consider this as a saying directed against oppressions in general and not themselves, while ^{c}Alī's devotees and supporters would understand it in a different way and would regard the Umayyads as the oppressors under accusation. A study of ^{c}Alī's political thought concerning oppressors will be made later.

In general, ^{c}Alī adopted for himself a different method in reacting with events and people and he abandoned the revolutionary goal.

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1. Al-Ṣaḥīfa, du^{c}ā' no. 14.

B.

ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn sought in three main ways to play a positive role in influencing the people, spreading Islamic concepts, and winning them to his side as sincere followers. These three activities of ᶜAlī are well known and are outlined below.

(i) His first inclination was to spread Islamic beliefs and concepts among the people. He did this in order to make the Islamic society strong (spiritually) and to cultivate sincere believers of true Islam. In other words, he wanted to raise the standard of faith (īmān) of the Muslims and to spread the true Islamic instructions without any kind of deviation. His work was based on the science of jurisprudence (fiqh) and tradition (ḥadīth) and the propagation of the concept of imāma and the Imāms.

ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn was well know for his ability in Islamic learning and he held a study circle in his house to teach Islam. One of his students was Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī, who joined his circle in Medina. Al-Zuhrī himself narrated an important story showing ᶜAlī's aspiration to spread Islamic teachings and also his scholarship in Islamic learning. Al-Zuhrī narrates:

"Once, while we were waiting for the lecture of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn, he came and asked me what we were discussing

among ourselves. I told him that we were talking about fasting (sawm) and informed him that my colleagues and I were of the opinion that the only obligatory fast was during Ramaḍān. [Hearing this,] he said, 'O al-Zuhrī, what you said is not correct. The fast (sawm) is of forty kinds.'"

ᶜAlī then apprised him of all the kinds of fasting.[1]

We find additional evidence of ᶜAlī's learning and desire to spread Islamic concepts among the people in what the scholars (ᶜulamā') said about him and about his knowledge. For instance, Ibn Saᶜd said:

"ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn was confident, well respected, and a great narrator (kathīr al-ḥadīth)."[2]

The term kathīr al-ḥadīth, used to describe the Islamic learning of ᶜAlī, means not only that he spoke profusely, but that he narrated many traditions from the Prophet Muḥammad.

Ibn Ḥajar al-ᶜAsqalānī records another saying: "Al-Ḥakīm said, 'I have heard Bākir b. Dārim narrate from some of his teachers (shuyūkh), from Abū Bakr b. abī Shayba, who said, "The more correct a chain of transmitters (sānid) among others is al-Zuhrī, from ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn, from his father, from ᶜAlī."'"[3]

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1. Abū Nuᶜaym, op.cit., 141f.
2. Ibn Saᶜd, op.cit., 222.
3. Tahdhīb, VII, 305.

This saying demonstrates the degree of confidence which scholars placed in the traditions narrated by ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn, indicating also that these traditions were felt to be narrated accurately without any error or deviation.

(ii) ᶜAlī's second inclination was towards personal piety, as reflected in his own religious devotion and method in Islamic observances (ᶜibādāt). The multiplicity of traditions about his assiduity in prayers, his fasting, his piety, etc. and what scholars said about his devotions, all testify to this general characteristic.

Ibn Saᶜd said of him:

"ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn...a prominent man, honourable, pious."[1]

Al-Zuhrī, who was one of his contemporaries, also said of him:

> "I have not seen any man of the Quraysh more pious and better than he."[2]

One of the most important features of ᶜAlī's piety was his practice of the duᶜā', for which he was well known. Although this is a matter of personal devotion, reflecting the relation between an individual and his God, it is nevertheless mentioned here as one of ᶜAlī's ways of reacting and communicating with the people; this on account of two reasons. Firstly,

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1. Op.cit., 222.
2. Ibn Ḥajar, op.cit., 305; Ibn Khallikān, op.cit., III, 267; Ibn Kathir, op.cit., 109.

we may conclude from what scholars said about his devotion that they admired his character, so that his piety must have had a positive effect upon his contemporaries and others who knew his devotions. The upshot would be that people came to regard ᶜAlī as an ideal character to be imitated in their own lives. By such influence, ᶜAlī sought to increase the standard of faith and to nurture a group of followers through whom he could spread his thoughts. Secondly, the du^{c}ā' was an important channel through which ᶜAlī might spread Islamic beliefs and communicate with the people.

(iii) ᶜAlī's third way of communicating with the people was by means of social involvement. This concerns his role in direct and open relations with the people and his way of communicating with them. This activity is seen most clearly in the great number of narrations recording his aid for the poor in gifts of money and food and in his efforts toward the manumission of slaves.

Generally, ᶜAlī sought to exemplify Islamic manners by his actions and deeds. These acts of social concern were the most important means of communicating with the people and gaining followers; this for two reasons:
(a) It is a practical involvement, so that people may feel

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Generally, ᶜAlī sought to exemplify Islamic manners by his actions and deeds. These acts of social concern were the most important means of communicating with the people and gaining followers; this for two reasons:
(a) It is a practical involvement, so that people may feel

its effect and react to it more than they might to any theoretical claims upon their interest. For example, if someone delivered many lectures on loving the poor, but did nothing to actually relieve their plight, his talks would not be effective and would indeed be counted worthless. By contrast, if such a theoretical stage were followed by a practical programme of aid, people would react favourably toward such a man and would follow him. ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn did indeed practise what he preached on supporting the poor. (b) If ᶜAlī had merely tried to gather a group of followers around himself and to demonstrate openly his opposition to the Umayyads by calling such dissident meetings, such an activity would have been interpreted by the Umayyads as a move directed against themselves and they would consider ᶜAlī to be the leader of this inimical movement. This would be a sufficient pretext for the Umayyads to kill ᶜAlī and his sincere followers. On the other hand, the way that ᶜAlī actually pursued in influencing the people could not in any way be interpreted as an attempt by ᶜAlī to form an opposition party, since the kind of social work that ᶜAlī involved himself in was that which every Muslim was ordered and advised to do. Therefore, the Umayyads had no moral right to prevent ᶜAlī from supporting the poor or manumitting slaves and they would not have been forgiven by the people if they had tried to prevent him from so doing.

In conclusion, from the above considerations relating to ᶜAlī's attitudes towards the political movements and his methods in inter-reacting with the people, a general theory has been formed by which we can understand his stance towards the political events and the reasons for such a stance. Faced with the situation in his time and the strength of the power groups, ᶜAlī kept himself from any revolution and any obvious political role. Instead, he chose for himself three ways of involving himself with the people in order to spread Islamic concepts and gain followers. It has been shown that these three avenues of influence concerned his activity in Islamic learning, piety, and practical social concern. Our aim here has been simply to state the general features of ᶜAlī's way of life, leaving the details for further study.

CHAPTER IV

ʿALĪ B. AL-ḤUSAYN'S POLITICAL ATTITUDES CONCERNING THE REVOLUTIONS AGAINST THE UMAYYADS IN HIS TIME

After having examined the Kufans' attitude towards the three preceding Imāms (ʿAlī, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn) as well as ʿAlī's political thought with regard to the Kufans' attitude, the following chapter will attempt to examine the outworking of ʿAlī's thought with regard to the political movements of his time. These political movements came to expression in the revolts which broke out against the Umayyads in the time of ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn. The revolts with which we are concerned were those of the Medinans, the Tawwābūn, and al-Mukhtār. Some historical background will be given to each movement before tracing ʿAlī's personal attitude towards each of these rebellions.

ʿALĪ B. AL-ḤUSAYN AND THE MEDINAN REVOLT

I. Introduction

The Medinan revolt will be studied in terms of its background, its causes, and the actual events which took place. In conclusion, ʿAlī's attitude towards the revolt and his role in it will be examined in order to verify whether he had any role directly or indirectly in its conduct.

II. The Causes of the Medinan Revolt

A. It is impossible to separate what happened to Imām Ḥusayn in Karbalā (a massacre, with the capture of his household and slaughter of the men) and what happened later in Medina, the city of the Prophet Muḥammad. The ugly murder of Imām Ḥusayn, the son of Fāṭima, and all the events of Karbalā made a great impression on the life of the Muslims, especially the Muslims of Medina, who had heard Muḥammad telling them of his love for Imām Ḥusayn whom he referred to as the master of the youths of paradise.

Moreover, the Muslims of Medina witnessed the affection of Muḥammad shown towards Imām Ḥusayn and the special care he took of him. All of this played a major part in the discontent shown towards Yazīd b. Muᶜāwiya and finally resulted in the rebellion. Thus, al-Masᶜūdī indicated in his discussion of the events of this revolt that one of the reasons for the rebellion against Yazīd b. Muᶜāwiya was the slaughter of the son of the daughter of the Prophet of God.[1]

B. The personality of Yazīd: After the murder of Imām Ḥusayn, Yazīd recognised the seriousness of the situation and how it had a deep effect on the citizens of Medina. He further recognised that Medina was on the point of a major upheaval which could not in any way bring him pleasure. Because of this, he began to take a soft line with the people of Medina and sought to come close to them by answering their demands. So, for example, they asked him to dismiss al-Walīd b. ᶜUqba, Yazīd's governor in Medina, and to send them another one. The letter demanding this was written by ᶜAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr on behalf of Medina's citizens and included these words:

> "You have sent us another man who does not make right decisions and does not listen to a wise man's

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1. Al-Masᶜūdī, Murūj, III, 267.

> advice. If you should send us an amicable and well-behaved man, he would make the difficult matters easy and would gather what has been scattered. So, please consider this matter which affects our relatives and everybody."[1]

Yazīd did not hesitate to accept this demand. He dismissed al-Walīd b. ᶜUqba and replaced him with ᶜUthmān b. Muḥammad b. abī Sufyān.[2] Evidently, by responding to these demands in a benevolent fashion, the authority of the Umayyad throne was not in the least diminished. On the contrary, such actions would strengthen the Umayyads by inducing the people to forget what had happened to Imām Ḥusayn in Karbalā. Moreover, Yazīd warmly welcomed a delegation from Medina, presented them with many gifts, and took good care of them as his guests.[3] Nevertheless, when they returned to Medina, instead of praising Yazīd for his hospitality, they cursed him and said,

> "We have come from a man who has no [respect for] religion. He drinks alcohol, plays the tunbūr [a long-necked, stringed instrument resembling the mandolin], and invites belly-dancers to his court. He also plays with dogs."[4]

To the same effect, the Shīᶜite historian al-Masᶜūdī also

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1. Al-Ṭabarī, Ta'rīkh, VI, 479.
2. Ibid., 479f.
3. M. al-Amīn, Aᶜyān al-Shīᶜa, IV, sect.1, 487; al-Ṭabarī, op.cit., 480.
4. Al-Ṭabarī, op.cit., V, 480. For similar comments on his moral depravity, see al-Amīn, op.cit., loc.cit.; Aḥmad, op.cit., 162.

indicates in his discussion of the revolt, that among the reasons for the rebellion was the fact that Yazīd was openly drinking alcohol.[1] It is important to notice, however, concerning Yazīd's behaviour that many scholars tend to doubt these reports, suggesting that they might be the inventions of later historiographers, or at least exaggerations. The accusation brought against him may perhaps be due to ᶜAbbāsid enmity.[2] We should also notice here that Yazīd was not the frivolous prince and thoughtless ruler depicted by historiographers inspired by the rancour of Shīᶜa or the political fiends of Iraq and the Hejaz.[3]

C. The effect of the lamentation and crying of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn for his father on the citizens of Medina: The crying behaviour of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn for his father Imām Ḥusayn and his family because of what had befallen them in Karbalā, played an indirect role in the disturbance of Medina's citizens. His acts of lamentation were not overt and manifest and he did not bring them obviously to the people's attention, but the crying itself stirred the Muslims' emotions which were simmering beneath the surface and it was this outburst of emotion which would push the people to rebel against Yazīd. The unremitting lamentation of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn would arouse the Medinans' feelings because of the special personality of the murdered Imām Ḥusayn, who was the son of the daughter of the Prophet Muḥammad and who had lived among the people of Medina,

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1. Op.cit., 267; Hitti, History of the Arabs, 227; Sell, op.cit., 106.
2. See Muir, The Caliphate, 316.
3. See EI¹, art. "Yazid b. Muᶜawiya."

being well known among them as the master of the youths of paradise. Even though some people had not been informed directly by the Prophet himself of the special status of Imām Ḥusayn, they would have heard it from their fathers, brothers, or neighbours, especially since the time which had elapsed since the death of Muḥammad in A.H.11 was very short. The death of Imām Ḥusayn occurred just fifty years after that of the Prophet. Hence, the resentment and emotions of the people of Medina were inevitably aroused against the murderers of Imām Ḥusayn.

The action of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn in lamenting, discussing, and narrating the massacre of Karbalā cannot be dismissed as a minor provocation for the uprising of the Medinan people against Yazīd. To emphasize and remind the Medinans that Imām Ḥusayn had been wronged by Yazīd, there was no better way than that adopted by ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn.

If ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn had spoken openly about the wrong done to Imām Ḥusayn, the evils of the Umayyads, and the inevitability of the revolt against Yazīd, it would have given the Umayyads a clear excuse to kill him, especially so, since the massacre of Karbalā was near in time and the Umayyads were in their full strength after the massacre. His open speeches about the massacre would

not have had enough effect on the people and their impact would not have endured long enough to bring about a successful revolt before he in turn had been put to death, but to lament his father and his household's deaths was not forbidden and the Umayyads could not forbid him to do so. It was a basic right and duty for any one to mourn his father's death and nobody could stop it at that time because the people would not accept it. Furthermore, the lamentation itself would not indicate any political activity. Hence, ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn took the greatest advantage in sincerely lamenting his father's death, which was the only outlet available to him. This hidden and disguised opposition did not give any opportunity to the Umayyads to accuse him of playing a part in the revolt. On the contrary, his behaviour led the commander of the Umayyad army, Muslim ibn ᶜUqba, to treat him very well, as will be discussed later.

The traditions narrating the mourning of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn for his father and his family are profuse. Imām Jaᶜfar al-Ṣadīq said that the people who mourned (continuously) were five and he mentioned Imām Zayn al-ᶜĀbidīn as one of them. He said of him:

> "ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn wept over his father for forty years and on every occasion they put food in front of him, he used to cry until his servant said to him,

'Oh, son of the Prophet Muḥammad, I am afraid of you that you might vanish away.' Imām replied, 'I am only complaining and telling my misery to God and I know from him what you do not know.'"[1]

In another tradition, Imām Ṣādiq said that ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn cried until the people began to worry that he might lose his sight.[2] In yet another narration, it is said of Imām Zayn al-ᶜĀbidīn that when he used to take a drink of water, he cried until he filled it with tears. The people asked him about it and he said,

"Why should I not cry, when my father was not allowed to drink water, which was allowed to the lions and the beasts?"[3]

From the above narrations, therefore, it is clear that ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn played a major role in inflaming the emotions of the people of Medina against the Umayyads, a resentment which resulted in the uprising against them.

III. The Events of the Revolt

After the delegation of Medina returned from their visit to Yazīd, they described his moral depravity

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1. M. al-Amīn, al-Majālis al-Sāmiyya, I, 179; al-Majlisī, Biḥār, XLVI, 108 (where it is mentioned that he cried for 20 years); al-Ṣaduq, al-Khiṣāl, 248f.; Abū Nuᶜaym, op.cit., IV, 172; Donaldson, op.cit., 109.
2. Al-Majlisī, loc.cit.
3. Ibid., 109.

as noted above. The Medinan citizens overthrew Yazīd's new governor in Medina, ᶜUthmān ibn Muḥammad ibn abī Sufyān,[1] and replaced him with their own Amīr, ᶜAbd Allāh ibn Ḥanẓala.[2] After this, they surrounded all the houses of the Umayyad families in Medina,[3] and exiled them from the city.[4]

The Umayyads of Medina cried to Yazīd to help and support them,[5] whereupon Yazīd called for a jihād and appointed twelve-thousand men to form an army led by Muslim ibn ᶜUqba.[6] He commanded them in these words:

> "Summon the people [of Medina] in three days. If they respond to you..., otherwise fight against them."[7]

In another narration Yazīd said,

> "Summon the people [of Medina] in three days. If they respond to you..., otherwise fight against them. If you win the battle, ransack Medina for three days."[8]

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1. Ibn al-Athīr, op.cit., IV, 111; al-Ṭabarī, op.cit., V, 480; al-Amin, Aᶜyan al-Shiᶜa, IV, sect.1, 487; al-Masᶜudī, op.cit., 267; idem, al-Tanbih wa al-Ishrāf, 304; Ibn Kathir, op.cit., VIII, 218.
2. Ibn al-Athir, op.cit., 111; (Pseudo-)Ibn Qutayba, al-Imāma, VI, 328; al-Ṭabarī, op.cit., V, 480.
3. Al-Amin, Aᶜyan, loc.cit., al-Tabari, op.cit., 485; Ibn Kathir, op.cit., 218; Ibn al-Athir, op.cit., 111.
4. Ibn Kathir, loc.cit.; al-Ṭabarī, loc.cit.
5. Ibn al-Athir, loc.cit.
6. Ibid., 112; (Pseudo-)Ibn Qutayba, op.cit., 329f.; al-Ṭabarī, op.cit., 484; al-Masᶜudī, Muruj, 267.
7. Al-Ṭabarī, loc.cit.
8. Ibn al-Athir, op.cit., 112.

In another narration, Yazīd said,

> "If you enter Medina, then put to the sword those who try to delay your entry or prepare to fight you. Kill their wounded and those who run away and never leave them alive."[1]

When Muslim came to Medina, he gave the people of the city three days' notice as he was commanded by Yazīd. After the third day, he said to them,

> "The commander of the faithful does not wish to spill your blood and so he orders me to give you three days' notice. What then will you do? Are you going to accept peace [i.e. surrender to Yazīd], or will you fight?"

They answered,

> "We are going to fight."

He said,

> "Don't do that, but accept peace. We will direct our purpose and exert our strength against this infidel [i.e. Ibn al-Zubayr]."

They replied,

> "Oh, enemy of God, if you seek this [i.e. Ibn al-Zubayr], we will not permit you."[2]

When he heard this from them, he realised that they were

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1. (Pseudo-)Ibn Qutayba, op.cit., 330f.
2. Ibn Kathir, op.cit., 219f.

not going to submit to his request, whereupon the Umayyad army, led by Muslim b. ᶜUqba, came against the people of Medina. This happened before the last three days of Dhū al-Ḥijja, A.H.63.[1]

A fierce battle was fought, with the victory ultimately going to the Umayyad army.[2] The army entered Medina and Muslim gave his army permission to kill, ransack, and rape for three days, as he was ordered by Yazīd. Great evil and widespread wickedness were perpetrated in Medina.[3] After these events, Muslim took a pledge from the men and women of Medina to be slaves to Yazīd. Whoever refused the pledge was killed.[4]

IV. The Role of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn in the Events of Medina's Revolt

ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn retired from current political affairs after he returned from Karbalā and Syria to Medina. He did not attempt to play any overt role in the political events occurring during his time, so as not to give any

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1. (Pseudo-)Ibn Qutayba, op.cit., 342; al-Masᶜūdī, al-Tanbīh, 305.
2. (Pseudo-)Ibn Qutayba, op.cit., 334.
3. Ibid., 335; al-Masᶜudi, loc.cit.; idem, Murūj, 267; Ibn al-Athir, op.cit., 117; al-Ṭabari, op.cit., 491; Ibn Kathir, op.cit., 220; Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqa, op.cit., 142.
4. Al-Masᶜudi, al-Tanbih, 305; idem, Murūj, 268.

opportunity to the Umayyad caliph to suspect him even in the mildest way of leading a sedition.

This attitude must be clearly recognised in this study of the role of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn in this revolt and in others which took place during his time against the Umayyads. By adopting a negative posture toward these rebellions and disassociating himself totally from them, ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn demonstrated his foresight in seeking to protect the Holy Sharīᶜa as well as his followers, even though he knew that some of these revolts had an honest and noble aim, like that of avenging Ḥusayn's death.

In considering the current affairs of Medina at that time, we may describe the role of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn toward this revolt as follows.

A. At the beginning of Medina's revolt against the Umayyad dynasty, ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn sent a message to Yazīd declaring in it that he did not join with the revolt and that he disapproved entirely with what the people of Medina had done.[1] As well as declaring directly that he had nothing to do with this revolt, he also

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1. Hollister, op.cit., 66; Donaldson, op.cit., 104.

sought to extract from Yazīd, before the matter spread widely, an acknowledgment that he did not play any part in fanning the flame of rebellion against the caliph. Thus, we find in Yazīd's command to Muslim ibn ᶜUqba a recognition of this stance of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn. More than that, Yazīd commanded Muslim to take good care of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn and to see to his needs. He said to Muslim,

> "Summon the people in three days. If they respond to you..., otherwise fight against them and if you defeat them, whatever you find of money, armaments, or food, give it to the army...And look towards ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn. Do not cause him any harm, take good care of him, and keep him close to you, because he did not join with the people of Medina [in their revolt] and his message has reached me."[1]

This wise posture of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn did not give Yazīd the opportunity to accuse him of joining with the revolt. If ᶜAlī had joined or agreed with the revolt and the revolt had failed (as indeed happened), the result would be the murder of himself, his household, and his followers, the same fate that had befallen his

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1. Al-Ṭabarī, op.cit., 484f.; Ibn al-Athīr, op.cit., 112f.

father, Imām Ḥusayn, in Karbalā. This is what ᶜAlī had planned to avoid.

B. To leave no excuse for Yazīd to say that he had joined with the revolt, ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn also withdrew from the people and stayed on the outskirts of Medina.[1] The underlying policy for this withdrawal is narrated by al-Ṭabarī and al-Amīn. It is reported that when the Medinan people surrounded the houses of the Umayyad families in Medina and deported them from the city, ᶜĀ'isha, the daughter of ᶜUthmān b. ᶜAffān (and wife of Marwān b. al-Ḥakam) was also deported. On her passage from Medina to al-Ṭā'if, she passed by ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn, who was staying in retreat on the outskirts of Medina in order not to witness anything that the people were doing in the rebellion.[2] By this action ᶜAlī emphasised his negative posture toward the revolt against Yazīd. Besides all this, ᶜAlī took four-hundred Umayyad families into his care during the revolt. There they were able to live alife of opulence, so that one woman among them declared that she had never lived in such luxury even when at home with her parents.[3]

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1. Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., 218.
2. Al-Ṭabarī, op.cit., V, 485; al-Amīn, Aᶜyān, IV, sect.1, 488.
3. Al-Zamakhsharī, Rabīᶜ, I, 427.

V. Muslim ibn ᶜUqba's Attitude towards ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn after his Victory in Medina

In order to understand better the degree of wisdom and foresight in what ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn did (his message to Yazīd and retreat to the outskirts of Medina), we must examine the attitude of Muslim b. ᶜUqba towards ᶜAlī after quelling the revolt.

After putting down the rebellion, Muslim came to ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn and the people thought that he wanted to kill him,[1] because they imagined that the Umayyads suspected ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn's involvement in the rebellion. What took place, however, was the opposite of what they feared. Muslim visited ᶜAlī, gave him his needs, and drew him close to himself. He was also generous toward him and told him that Yazīd had commanded him to take good care of ᶜAlī, mentioning the letter which ᶜAlī had sent to Yazīd.[2]

By his careful actions, ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn had repelled any chance of being killed with his family. Furthermore, he took advantage of this approach by Muslim to intercede for some of the Medinan rebels who

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1. Al-Amīn, Aᶜyān, 491.
2. Ibn al-Athīr, op.cit., 119f.; al-Mufīd, op.cit., 260; al-Ṭabarī, op.cit., 493; (Pseudo-)Ibn Qutayba, op.cit., 345. al-Amin, Aᶜyan, 491; Ibn Kathir, op.cit., 220; Hollister, op.cit., 66.

were going to be executed. Ibn al-Athīr narrated that when Muslim b. ᶜUqba met ᶜAlī, he asked him if any of his family were terrified. ᶜAlī confirmed that this was so and Muslim ordered him a saddled mount to take him back to his family.[1] Regarding ᶜAlī's intercession to stop the execution of some Medinans, it is said that Muslim asked ᶜAlī about his needs. With this opening, ᶜAlī interceded for everybody who was going to be put to death by Muslim and Muslim acceded to this request.[2]

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1. Ibn al-Athīr, op.cit., IV, 119f.
2. Masᶜūdī, Murūj, 269.

ᶜALĪ B. AL-ḤUSAYN'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE TAWWĀBŪN'S REVOLT

We must now discuss and attempt to analyse the attitude of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn towards the Tawwābūn's revolt, so that we may arrive at a clear notion which would explain his political stance towards this revolt and the way he thought about it. It is here that the previous assumption of his policy of non-involvement in these rebellions must be demonstrated and we will look at this in three aspects.

1. The Historical Data of this Revolt

After the death of Ḥusayn b. ᶜAlī at Karbalā on the 10th Muḥarram, A.H.61 (Oct. 10th, 680), the Kufans, who had invited Ḥusayn but did not help him on the battle-field, felt the need to seek peace with God and to make good their former renunciation through self-sacrifice. They believed that they could prove their true repentance by rising against the Umayyads in order to avenge Ḥusayn's death and to expose themselves to death in this cause.[1]

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1. Ṭabarī, V, 552; Ibn al-Athīr, IV, 158; Masᶜūdī, Murūj, III, 293; Wellhausen, Religio, 121; EI¹ art. "Sulaimān b. Ṣurad al-Khuzāᶜī," ; Jafri, Origins, 222; Donaldson, Shīᶜite, 105; Watt, Formative Period, 41; idem, Islamic 20f.; Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā, op.cit., 145.

When Ḥusayn was murdered, Ibn Ziyād returned from his camp at Nukhayla and entered Kufa. Soon after Ḥusayn's death, five of the oldest and closest associates of ᶜAlī, with a group of a hundred men, none less than sixty years of age, began this movement.[1] Their leader was Sulaymān b. Ṣurad al-Khuzāᶜī, who was a companion of the Prophet[2] and who narrated many traditions in the Ṣaḥīḥayn.[3] The other four leaders were al-Musayyab b. Najaba al-Fazārī, ᶜAbd Allāh b. Saᶜd b. Nufayl al-Azdī, ᶜAbd Allāh b. Wālin al-Taymī, and Rifāᶜa b. Shaddād al-Bajalī.[4]

As evidence of their motivation to avenge Ḥusayn's murder, we may refer to the speeches of the leaders of this revolt. For example, Sulaymān said:

> "Do as the ancient Israelites did after they had fashioned the golden calf and worshipped it, when Moses said to them, 'You have sinned grievously. Now expiate it through death.' They meekly stretched out their necks and yielded to the knife, because they recognised that only this could free them of their guilt. Therefore, you do likewise. Make yourselves ready for death, sharpen your swords and spears, and prepare your war-gear and horses."[5]

Al-Musayyab b. Najaba also said:

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1. Wellhausen, op.cit., 121; EI[1], Ibid.
2. Donaldson, op.cit., 105.
3. Ibn Kathīr, IX, 255; Dhahabī, ᶜIbar, I, 72; Khʷārizmī, Maqtal, II, 187; al-Bukhārī, al-Taʾrikh al-Saghīr, I, 146.
4. Ibn al-Athir, IV, 158f.; Masᶜūdī, op.cit., 293; Jafri, op.cit., 222f.
5. Ibn al-Athīr, op.cit., 159f.; Ṭabarī, V, 554.

'We invited the son of the Prophet's daughter to come to Kufa to guide us on the right path, but when he responded to our call we became greedy for our own lives until he was killed in our midst. What excuse can we have before our God and before our Prophet when we meet him on the day of judgment, while his most beloved son, family, and progeny were killed in our midst? By God, there is no other way for us to expiate ourselves for the sin except to kill all his murderers and their associates, or be killed ourselves. Perhaps by doing so, our God may forgive our sin."[1]

During the time of Yazīd, the Tawwābūn worked secretly to increase their numbers and strength. Further, Sulaymān wrote letters to Sa^{c}d b. Ḥudhayfa al-Yamān in al-Madā'in and al-Muthannā b. Mukharriba b. al-^{c}Abdī in Basra, asking them to support their movement. The two replied positively.[2]

After the death of Yazīd in Rabī^{c} I, A.H.64 (Nov., 683), the movement began to spread widely among the Kufans. Many people agreed to join and support the revolt. The number of people who joined the Tawwābūn's movement after Yazīd's death was many times more than those who joined it

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1. Ibn al-Athīr, op.cit., 159; Ṭabarī, op.cit., 552f.; Khwārizmī, op.cit., 187.
2. Ṭabarī, op.cit., 555-8; Ibn al-Athīr, op.cit., 161f.

before his death,[1] and their number reached about 16,000.[2] However, when Sulaymān appeared on the 1st Rabī^{c} I, 65 (15th Nov., 684) in al-Nukhayla near Kufa, only 4,000 out of those who had promised to join the rebellion arrived.[3] This disappointment did not, however, change the aim of Sulaymān and his sincere followers in revolt. When he learnt of the treachery of the Kufans, al-Musayyab told Sulaymān,

> "The unwilling are of no benefit to you. Only those whose resolution led them to go with you are fit to fight with you, so do not wait for anybody."[4]

On Friday, the 5th Rabī^{c} II, 65 (19th Nov., 684), they marched towards Karbalā. They spent twenty-four hours in Karbalā near to Ḥusayn's grave, weeping and bemoaning what he had suffered.[5] After this, they continued their march, passing through Qarqisiya, until they reached ^{c}Ayn al-Warda.[6]

The battle between the Tawwābūn and the Syrians commenced on the 22nd Jumādā I, 65 (Jan., 685).[7] The Tawwābūn fought bravely like lions,[8] but finally, Sulaymān

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1. Ṭabarī, op.cit., 559.
2. Ibid., 584; Ibn al-Athīr, op.cit., 175; Kh^{w}ārizmī, op.cit., 189; Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., VIII, 251 (where the number is given as 17,000).
3. Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., 251; Ṭabarī, op.cit., 584; Ibn al-Athīr op.cit., 175; al-Dhahabī, Ta'rīkh, II, 369; Kh^{w}ārizmī, op.cit., 189.
4. Ibn al-Athīr, op.cit., 175.
5. Muir, The Caliphate, 321f.; Dhahabī, Ta'rīkh, II, 370; Kh^{w}ārizmī, op.cit., 190f.; Wellhausen, op.cit., 123; EI^{1}, 52
6. Ṭabarī, op.cit., 596; Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., 253; Mas^{c}ūdī, op.cit., 258.
7. Wellhausen, op.cit., 123; EI^{1}, 522.
8. Ibid.; Muir, op.cit., 321f.

and many of his followers were killed, while Rifā^{c}a b. Shaddād withdrew from the battle-field towards Kufa with the few surviving Tawwābūn.[1]

2. Comments on the Significance of the Revolt

A. The sincerity of the uprising and the rebels:

It has been noted that the motivating force of this revolt was the deep sense of penitence for not supporting Imām Ḥusayn in the hour of trial. This feeling led them to jeopardize their lives in order to avenge Ḥusayn's death, so that their aim was not to acquire any personal gain or to become acknowledged leaders of the Shī^{c}ites. This devotion and sincerity toward the Ahl al-Bayt is clearly expressed in their slogan, "Yā li-thārāt al-Ḥusayn" and in the speeches of the revolt's leaders. In these speeches they declared to what extent they acknowledged their wrong for not supporting Imām Ḥusayn even though they claimed to be Shī^{c}ites.

B. The importance of this revolt:

The uprising represented one round in the struggle

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1. Ṭabarī, op.cit., 604; Ibn al-Athīr, op.cit., 186; Mas^{c}udi, op.cit., 259; Dhahabī, op.cit., 371; Muir, op.cit., 321f.

against the Umayyads, who killed Imām Ḥusayn, his family, and his followers in Karbala. Thus, it seems logical to connect the revolt with ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn in one way or another, since he was the son and the heir of his murdered father.. Therefore, it might be supposed that ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn has a hand in the revolt and supported it. Indeed, we want to know if ᶜAlī's feeling of deep hatred against the Umayyads encouraged him to take a positive and declared stand behind this revolt. This leads us to our third consideration.

3. ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn's Attitude towards the Revolt

The historical sources for the Tawwābūn's revolt do not contain any information about the role of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn in planning or supporting the uprising. It seems that ᶜAlī refused to make any public claims or to allow any claims to be made on his behalf.[1] If ᶜAlī had in fact spoken about this revolt or joined it, the historical sources would not have disregarded such support announced by him, especially since Ḥusayn's case concerned him more than anyone else and the revolt sought to honour the name of Ḥusyan. This must demonstrate that ᶜAlī did not lend any support to this revolt. More than that, the Umayyads

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1. Jafri, op.cit., 229.

themselves did not accuse ᶜAlī of any involvement in it, although if such support had been shown by him, they would certainly have killed him as they had killed his father. From the Tawwābūn's side, it appears that they decided not to connect ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn's name with this revolt until they had succeeded in defeating the Umayyads.[1] This implies that they were thinking of opposing ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn as caliph after their success.[2]

This behaviour of ᶜAlī regarding this revolt, even though the rebellion was a sincere Shīᶜite action and shocked the Umayyad rule, demonstrates his wisdom and perception in assessing the situation. Thus, if ᶜAlī had joined and supported the revolt, with the possibility of the betrayal and treachery of the people, he would have placed himself, his family, and his small band of followers in an adverse situation and in danger of being killed by the Umayyads. This possibility was apparent from the experience of the three former Imāms with the Kufans. Such treachery took place when just 4,000 out of 16,000 who paid allegiance to Sulaymān b. Ṣurad responded to his call to rise against the Umayyads, as mentioned above. What ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn feared came to pass, so that events proved the effectiveness of ᶜAlī's

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1. Ibid.
2. Hollister, op.cit., 67.

policy not to involve himself in any revolt or political movement against Yazīd.[1]

VI. Conclusion

We conclude that ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn's stance in this revolt succeeded in preserving his life, along with those of his family and many other people. More than that, the Imām succeeded in proving his non-involvement in the revolt. This led the Umayyads to drop their watch on him for a while, so that he was able to play his role in the Muslim umma.

AL-MUKHTĀR'S REVOLT IN A.H. 66

We are not concerned here with all the details involved in the revolt of al-Mukhtār ibn abī ᶜUbayda, its causes and its results, since this is not the subject of our study and the historical details are available in specific books written on the uprising. What we must concentrate on here is the analysis of ᶜAlī's attitude towards this revolt and an understanding of the underlying causes and wisdom behind such a stance. We shall treat the topic in three sections.

I. Two Important Aspects of the Revolt

There are two important features of the revolt which must be stated before studying the attitude of ᶜAlī towards the uprising. An appreciation of these two features will help us greatly to understand whether they affected ᶜAlī's personal attitude, either positively or negatively.

1. The main aim of the revolt was to avenge Husayn's death and to kill his slayers. This specific

aim was very clear in the sayings and speeches of al-Mukhtār. His sole purpose was to avenge Ḥusayn's death on those who killed him or participated with the Syrian army, especially the main leaders of the army who had killed Ḥusayn in Karbalā. Thus, al-Mukhtār says in one narrative:

> "It is not correct in our religion to let the people who killed al-Ḥusayn live on in this world in safety...Thank God who made me a sword to strike them with and a spear to spear them with."[1]

He also said,

> "Seek out Ḥusayn's killers, for I cannot eat or drink until I have purged the earth of them and purified the region of their presence."[2]

Al-Mukhtār also said to Rifāᶜa b. Shaddād, who withdrew with the rest of the Tawwābūn, after praising and blessing their work,

> "...Prepare and get ready for them [Ḥusayn's murderers]. Wait for the good news and make yourself ready for this news. I also call you by the book of God and his Prophet's Sunna to seek revenge for their blood."[3]

By invoking the slogan, "Yā li-thārāt al-Ḥusayn,"[4]

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1. Ṭabarī, VI, 57. See also Biḥār, XLV, 356f.
2. Ibid. See also Khʷārizmī, II, 218f.
3. Ṭabarī, V, 606; Ibn al-Athīr, IV, 185f. See also Biḥar, XLV, 363.
4. Biḥar, XLV, 368; Ibn Kathīr, VIII, 266.

al-Mukhtār demonstrated that his aim was to kill Ḥusayn's slayers, for it was the same slogan that had been used by the Tawwābūn. However, the way of achieving this goal differed in al-Mukhtār's revolt. For the Tawwābūn, actual victory and removal of the Ummayad rule was not so important as seeking penitence before God for the sin they had committed in failing to support Ḥusayn in Karbalā. Hence, they were content to fight against the Syrian army in a small band of soldiers dwarfed by that of the Syrians. By contrast, total victory and the overthrow of the Umayyad rule was one of al-Mukhtār's goals, so that he planned and succeeded in conquering Kufa.

Another difference between the two uprisings was that the Tawwābūn went outside Kufa to fight the Syrians, pursuing their chief enemy, ᶜAbd Allāh ibn Ziyād, while al-Mukhtār believed that most of those who murdered Ḥusayn remained within Kufa, so that the uprising must commence in that place. His idea spread among some of Sulaymān's followers, although Sulaymān himself refused it. In a certain tradition, ᶜAbd Allāh b. Saᶜd, one of Sulaymān's supporters, came to Sulaymān and told him,

> "'All Ḥusayn's killers are in Kufa. Among them are ᶜUmar b. Saᶜd and the heads of the tribes; only ᶜUbayd Allāh b. Ziyād is in Syria.' But Sulaymān insisted on continuing the march."[1]

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1. Ibn al-Athīr, IV, 176; al-Ṭabarī, V, 586.

Al-Mukhtār's intention spread fear among the Ashrāf of Kufa, so that it is narrated that ᶜUmar b. Saᶜd and Shabath b. Rubᶜī said to the Kufans,

> "Al-Mukhtār is more dangerous, because while Sulaymān went out to fight your enemy, al-Mukhtār wants to attack you. So, go to him, chain him, and put him in the jail."[1]

This narration proves what has been asserted above, that al-Mukhtār's scheme was to rise against Ḥusayn's killers who were staying in Kufa and not to go out of Kufa as Sulaymān insisted.

2. The revolt actually succeeded in avenging Ḥusayn's death by killing most of his slayers. It is important to recognise that al-Mukhtār did not stop at merely claiming that he wanted to kill Ḥusayn's slayers, but he actually succeeded in his design. He succeeded in killing many people who were implicated in the murder of Ḥusayn and those who had banded together to kill him.[2] He killed many of the leaders in the army who had fought Ḥusayn at Karbalā. These included ᶜUmar b. Saᶜd, the commander of the army who killed Ḥusayn, and some of those who were with him,[3] as well as Shimr b. Dhī al-Jawshān.[4]

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1. Majlisī, Biḥār, XLV, 357; Ibn al-Athīr, IV, 172f.; al-Ṭabarī, V, 580f.
2. Masᶜūdī, Tanbīh, 303; Ibn Khaldūn, Ta'rīkh, II, 1,58; Yaᶜqūbī, II, 309; Ibn ᶜAbd Rabbih, op.cit., IV, 405; Dhahabī, ᶜIbar, I, 73.
3. Ibn ᶜAbd Rabbih, loc.cit.; Ibn Ṭiqṭaqā, op.cit., 145; al-ᶜAshshī, op.cit., 30; al-Ṭabarī, VI, 61; Masᶜūdī, Murūj, III, 272; Ibn Khaldūn, op.cit., 59f.; Khalīfa b. Khayyaṭ, Ta'rīkh, I, 332.
4. Al-Ṭabarī, VI, 53; Majlisī, op.cit., XLVI, 374; Khʷārizmī, op.cit., 237.

He also sent Ibrāhīm b. al-Ashtār with 20,000 men[1] to fight against ᶜUbayd Allāh b. Ziyād, who was governor of Kufa at the time of the Karbalā battle, and Ibrāhīm succeeded in defeating Ibn Ziyād's army and in killing him.[2] More than that, al-Mukhtār slew many of the Syrian leaders, including al-Ḥusayn b. Numayr and Shurḥabīl b. Dhī al-Khilāᶜa. The Kufans pursued the Syrians and brought about a great slaughter, taking the money and horses in their camps as booty. All this took place in A.H.76 (Aug., 680).[3]

Having stated these two important features of the uprising, we may now examine ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn's political attitude to consider whether the two aspects outlined above affected him either positively or negatively. We may also attempt to appreciate the wisdom and the reasoning for his adopting one particular policy and not another.

II. The "Pressure Groups" at the Time of the Revolt

It will be necessary to study the political powers

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1. Ibn Saᶜd, op.cit., V, 99f.
2. Al-Bustānī, Da'ira, XI, 788; Ibn ᶜAbd Rabbih, op.cit., IV, 404; Ibn Saᶜd, loc.cit.; al-Ṭabarī, VI, 90; Ibn Ḥajar, Lisan, VI, 7; Majlisī, op.cit., XLV, 383; al-Amīn, Aᶜyān, IV, sect.1, 487; Ibn Kathir, VIII, 282; Dhahabī, ᶜIbar, I, 75; Ibn Khayyaṭ, I, 332; Ibn Ṭiqṭaqā, op.cit., 145; Watt, Formative Period, 45.
3. Ibn Kathir, VIII, 282; Muir, The Caliphate, 323.

which were in play at the time of the uprising in order to understand ᶜAlī's behaviour more clearly. What we here refer to as "pressure groups" are those powers or groupings which exerted their influence at the time of the revolt. These would have come to the attention of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn, since he took a realistic attitude to events and bore these influences in mind when evaluating the whole situation, so that his attitude would not be formed emotionally but would be built on a logical and objective analysis of events as they were.

As noted above in our study of the general theory of the attitude of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn toward the political events of his time, the two powers exerting their force at the time of the revolt were the Umayyads and the Zubayrīs. We must therefore examine the situation of each power and its attitudes towards the Shīᶜites and the Ahl al-Bayt.

A. The Umayyads

It is common knowledge that the Umayyads killed Imām Ḥusayn, his family, and his followers in Karbala. They became stronger after killing Imām Ḥusayn because of the position he represented as the only remaining grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad and because of his belief that he was the successive Imām after his father

and his brother. Their attitude toward the Ahl al-Bayt was quite obvious in the narration previously cited in which, when ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn was asked how he was, he answered that the Shīᶜites had become like the Israelites among the Egyptians, when they killed their men and let their women live. We also said that the Umayyads were cursing ᶜAlī b. abī Ṭālib, the head of the Shīᶜites and Shīᶜism, from the minarets.

B. The Power of Ibn al-Zubayr in Hejaz

ᶜAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr succeeded in extending his power over Hejaz, especially after the death of Yazid, and the people paid allegiance to him.[1] Hejaz was the land where ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn lived. The relations between ᶜAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr and al-Mukhtār were very poor, so that Ibn al-Zubayr called al-Mukhtār "the liar of Thaqīf,"[2] while from his side, al-Mukhtār had driven into exile Ibn Muṭiᶜa (Ibn al-Zubayr's governor in Kufa)[3] and had refused and cancelled his obedience to Ibn al-Zubayr himself.[4]

With regard to Ibn al-Zubayr's attitude towards the Ahl al-Bayt, it appears that he was very pleased at

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1. Ibn al-Athīr, IV, 247.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 246.
4. Masᶜudī, Murūj, III, 272.

Ḥusayn's decision to go out from Hejaz to rebel against the Umayyads, because he felt that Ḥusayn was the chief obstacle in his way to overall rule in Hejaz. Thus ᶜAbd Allāh b. ᶜAbbās said to Ḥusayn when he decided to go to Iraq, "By doing so, you make Ibn al-Zubayr happy."[1] Ibn ᶜAbbās also said to Ibn al-Zubayr when Ḥusayn left Mecca for Iraq,

> "O Ibn al-Zubayr, your wish has come to pass and you are delighted. So Abū ᶜAbd Allāh [Ḥusayn] is going out and will leave you in Hejaz."[2]

The narration explains that when Ḥusayn came to Mecca, Ibn al-Zubayr kept coming to him with advice, but Ḥusayn was the most unpleasant man for Ibn al-Zubayr because he knew that the people of Hejaz would not pay their allegiance to him as long as Ḥusayn was there.[3] In demonstration of his deep hatred and resentment toward the Ahl al-Bayt generally and ᶜAlī ibn abī Ṭālib in particular, Ibn al-Zubayr would curse and abuse him, denouncing his position and speaking badly of his honour.[4] During the days of his caliphate, for forty Fridays, he avoided praying for the Prophet Muḥammad in order not to make some men proud,[5] or because he felt Muḥammad had an unworthy household who would become very arrogant if he prayed for him.[6] It is narrated that Ibn al-Zubayr also

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1. Ibn Kathīr, VIII, 165.
2. Ibid. See also al-Balādhurī, op.cit., III, 162.
3. Ṭabarī, V, 351; Masᶜūdī, op.cit., 250.
4. Tustarī, Qamūs, V, 449; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Sharḥ, IV, 61f.
5. Ibid.; Masᶜūdī, op.cit., 278; Ibn ᶜAbd Rabbih, IV, 413.
6. Al-Balādhurī, op.cit., 291; Yaᶜqūbī, II, 311; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, op.cit., 62.

once said to Ibn ᶜAbbās,

> "I have been hiding my resentment toward the people of this house [i.e. the Prophet's house] for forty years."[1]

Historical sources contain stories of Ibn al-Zubayr's deep hatred, resentment, and bad behaviour toward the Banū Hāshim in general, in addition to his negative attitude to the Ahl al-Bayt. His hurtful actions toward them increased on account of his greed among other things.[2] He also put Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, his household, and those who were with him of the Companions into jail and prevented their women from visiting them.[3] Then he threatened that he would kill or burn them to death if they did not pay allegiance to him,[4] and he showed his determination when he gathered a huge quantity of wood such that if a spark had fallen into it, not one of the people (Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya and his friends) would have survived.[5]

The anxiety of ᶜAlī toward this movement and his evaluation of it is evident from the narration cited

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1. Al-Balādhurī, op.cit., 291; Tustarī, op.cit., 449; Masᶜūdī, op.cit., 278; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, op.cit., 62.
2. Masᶜūdī, op.cit., 273. See also Yaᶜqūbī, op.cit., 311.
3. Ibid., 275; Ṭabarī, VI, 76; Ibn ᶜAbd Rabbih, IV, 413; al-Baladhuri, op.cit., 282; al-Bukhārī, Ta'rīkh, I, 131; al-Birri, op.cit., 58.
4. Ṭabarī, op.cit., 76; al-Balādhurī, op.cit., 282; Ibn Khaldūn, op.cit., III, 64f.; Yaᶜqūbī, op.cit., 312.
5. Masᶜūdī, op.cit., 275.

earlier about the sorrow of ᶜAlī over this movement and his worry over the oppression of Ibn al-Zubayr.

This was the situation under which ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn was living while the ruling Umayyads looked for any excuse to kill him and Ibn al-Zubayr and his authority in Hejaz maintained a deep animosity toward the Ahl al-Bayt and al-Mukhtār. In a situation like this, it is plain that ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn must be very careful in taking a political posture in defence of al-Mukhtār's revolt.

III. ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn's Posture toward al-Mukhtār's Revolt

Having examined the political situation at the time of this rebellion and the important features of it, a careful study must be made of the attitude of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn towards the revolt. We may consider his attitude in two aspects.

1. If ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn had supported the revolt openly, he would be under two pressures: Ibn al-Zubayr's pressure in Hejaz and the pressure of the Umayyads themselves, against whom the revolt was directed. If he had lent his support, he would have been killed or jailed

either by Ibn al-Zubayr or by the Umayyads. This is what ᶜAlī sought to avoid, because he had no assurance that the revolt had any ability to defeat both the powers of the Umayyads and of Ibn al-Zubayr. On top of this, he knew that a possibility of treachery by the Kufans existed, so that there was no public and clear announcement from ᶜAlī made in support of this rebellion.

As a result of this uninvolved posture on the part of ᶜAlī towards the revolt, Ibn al-Zubayr did not put him in jail or threaten him with killing or death by fire as he had done with Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya and others, while Ibn al-Zubayr left him unmolested in Medina.[1] Furthermore, after their defeat of al-Mukhtār and later of Ibn al-Zubayr, the Umayyads did not treat him in the least way harshly, nor did they even accuse him of having had the least connection with the revolt. Thus, the behaviour of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn was one means of demonstrating to the ruling powers that he had no part in this rebellion.

2. ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn took a step further in demonstrating his non-involvement to the political authorities by cursing al-Mukhtār. In one narration it is said that al-Mukhtār sent a letter to ᶜAlī expressing his personal allegiance to him, acknowledging his imamate, and sending

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1. Donaldson, op.cit., 106.

him a lot of money, but ᶜAlī refused to accept these overtures or even to reply to his letter,[1] and he cursed him before the people in the Prophet's Mosque.[2]

In another narration it is said that al-Mukhtār sent a sum of money as a gift to ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn, but ᶜAlī hesitated to accept it, until the caliphate of ᶜAbd al-Mālik b. Marwān, to whom ᶜAlī sent a letter telling him about al-Mukhtār's gift and asking him for his decision about the money. ᶜAbd al-Mālik gave his permission to accept it.[3]

It is apparent that these two narrations differ in recounting the action that ᶜAlī took with regard to al-Mukhtār's gift, but the result if similar in both cases. They prove our contention that ᶜAlī was trying to show to the authorities his non-involvement in this revolt, even if this stance required him to refuse al-Mukhtār's gift, to hesitate in accepting it, or to curse al-Mukhtār publicly. Although al-Mukhtār's rebellion succeeded in killing Ḥusayn's slayers (which was apparently intended to please ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn), the aim of ᶜAlī was to preserve the future of Shīᶜism. Therefore, his campaign to spread Islamic concepts and strengthen the faith of the Muslims

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1. Masᶜūdī, op.cit., 272f.; al-Ḥā'irī, Jamīᶜ, II, 221.
2. Ibid.; Donaldson, op.cit., 106.
3. Ibn Kathīr, IX, 106; Ibn Saᶜd, V, 213.

was in his view the chief good, beside which all other work was of less importance. In other words, he had one clear objective in representing the immate, as he and some of his followers believed. This attitude of ᶜAlī towards al-Mukhtār's revolt separated him from the circle of suspicion, so that the Umayyads and Ibn al-Zubayr could not and did not take any severe action against him.

It is important here to clarify the policy of cursing someone or not supporting him, even though one may know that the cursed man is a sincere person. In al-Mukhtār's case, we know that he made it his aim to kill Ḥusayn's killers and that he succeeded in slaying many of the murderers, especially the leaders. When he sent ᶜUbayd Allāh b. Ziyād's head to Hejaz, all the Banū Hāshim delivered a speech praising and praying for al-Mukhtār.[1] Ibn ᶜAbbās also used to speak highly of al-Mukhtār to the people, mentioning his generous deeds toward them and how he had taken vengeance.[2] Thus, we must ask the question, if al-Mukhtār had performed so many good deeds for the Ahl al-Bayt, what was the reason for ᶜAlī's cursing him and disowning his rebellion?

After considering the political situation during

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1. Ibn Saᶜd, op.cit., 100.
2. Ibid.

al-Mukhtār's revolt and the actual attitudes of the two main powers at that time (Umayyads and Zubayrīs) towards the Shīᶜites and the Ahl al-Bayt, one aspect of ᶜAlī's behaviour is quite explicable. The other aspect to be taken into account in seeking to understand ᶜAlī's posture in this revolt may be termed "the Islamic interest and its requirement." What is meant here by "the Islamic interest" is the prosperity of Islam at the present time and in the future, and the necessary actions to be adopted. In ᶜAlī's view, it was the interest of Islam in general and Shīᶜism in particular which chiefly concerned him. This interest may demand different behaviour from time to time. Thus, while Imām Ḥusayn recognised that the immediate good for Islam and Shīᶜism was to rise against the Umayyads, he also saw that in the time of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn the situation was different and accordingly adjusted to the requirements of this situation.

In order to understand ᶜAlī's behaviour in this revolt it is further necessary to compare a similar example from the life of Imām Jaᶜfar Ṣādiq. What is called the Islamic interest (al-maṣlaḥat al-Islāmiyya) would be in view. Occasionally, this maṣlaḥa led the Imām to curse someone, even a sincere follower, because of some pressing circumstances, but when the danger of praising the person was passed, the Imām would praise and admire him. This is what happened between Imām al-Ṣādiq and Zurāra b. Aᶜyān.

Zurāra was one of the companions of the three Imāms (Bāqir, Ṣādiq, and al-Kāẓim).[1] Some traditions narrated of some Imāms, especially Jaᶜfar al-Ṣādiq, say that they cursed or denied him. Thus, it is narrated that Jaᶜfar once said of him,

> "By God, he lied in my name. By God, he lied in my name. God curse him! God curse him! God curse him!"[2]

In another narration of Yūnis, from Ibrāhīm al-Mu'min, from ᶜUmrān al-Zaᶜafarānī, it was said,

> "I have heard Abū ᶜAbd Allāh [al-Ṣādiq] saying to Abū Bāṣir, 'O Abū Bāṣir..., nobody has committed innovations in Islam like Zurāra committed. May the curse of God be on him!'"[3]

It is also narrated that Abū al-Ṣabāḥ said,

> "I have heard Abū ᶜAbd Allāh saying, 'Perish those who doubt their religion! Zurāra is one of them."[4]

We have narrated some traditions in which Imām Ṣādiq cursed Zurāra and clearly accused him of lying on his behalf, an action which would cause him to lose faith as a sincere follower of the Imām. On the other

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1. Khū'ī, Muᶜjam, VII, 219f.
2. Tustarī, op.cit., IV, 166; Khū'ī, op.cit., 241f.; Ṭūsī, Rijāl, II, 150.
3. Tustarī, loc.cit.; Khū'ī, loc.cit.; Ṭūsī, Rijāl, II, 149.
4. Tustarī, op.cit., 167; Ṭūsī, op.cit., 147.

hand, there are many trasitions narrated by the Imāms, among them Imām Ṣādiq, which praised Zurāra and his sincerity towards the Imāms and Shī^{c}ism. For example, Imām Ṣādiq said,

> "Mercy be upon Zurāra b. A^{c}yān. Without Zurāra and people like him, my father's traditions would have been lost."[1]

In another tradition, Abū al-^{c}Abbās al-Faḍl b. ^{c}Abd al-Malik said,

> "I have heard Abū ^{c}Abd Allāh say, 'The most beloved people to me, alive and dead, are four:...and Zurāra.'"[2]

It is further narrated that Imām Ṣādiq said to Zurāra's son,

> "Give ~~my~~ your father my best regards (salām) and say to him, 'May God grant you the best (khayr) in this life and the best for you hereafter. By God, I am content with you, so take no notice of what the people say hereafter.'"[3]

These traditions of Imām Ṣādiq praising Zurāra show us clearly that when the Imām faced difficult political circumstances, he regarded it in the best interest of Islam

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1. Khū'ī, op.cit., 226; Ṭūsī, op.cit., 133-6; Tustarī, op.cit., 157-9; Ṭūsi, Fihrist, 142.
2. Khu'i, op.cit., 225; Ṭusi, Rijal, II, 135; idem, Fihrist, 142.
3. Ṭusi, Rijal, II, 135.

not to make known the true position of Zurāra, in order to save his life from his enemies. When this political pressure subsided, however, he regarded it in the interest of Islam to let the people know the true virtue of Zurāra, that they might approach him and hear the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt from him.

Therefore, when Zurāra was regarded as one of the enemies of the ruling body, the Imām would disown him, so as not to give the regime any excuse to put the Imām under pressure. There exists an important tradition from Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq from which one may deduce the real reason behind such an action by the Imām. This evidence may be used to analyse similar actions by other Imāms, like ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn's cursing of al-Mukhtār. In this important narration, Imām Ṣādiq spoke to Zurāra's son[1] or to him personally,[2] explaining the reason for his cursing him:

> "I am only saying bad things about you in your defence, because the people and the enemies rush to harm anyone we love and cherish. They accuse him of being one of our beloved ones and close to us. They seek to harm and kill him. They praise anyone we criticise. I am saying bad things about you because you are a man who, by knowing us and learning from us, have become famous. Because of this, you

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1. Tustarī, op.cit., 156.
2. Khū'ī, op.cit., 227; Ṭūsī, Rijāl, 136.

are disliked and not treated with favour by the people, because you love and lean toward us. I like to criticise you so that they will like you in your religious affairs and by this we will repel any harm which might come to you from them. God (may he be exalted and magnified) has said, ['The ship belongs to poor people who were working in the sea. I wanted to make it look bad by disfiguring it, for there is a king who takes by force every ship (good ones).']...By God, he [al-Khiḍr] did not disfigure it except to save it from the hands of the king who used to take the ships and use them until they became [totally] disfigured. But it [the ship] was in good order and this disfiguration caused the king to dislike the ship. So do understand this example. May the mercy of God be upon you. Indeed, you are the best beloved one to me and you were the most beloved companion to my father, dead and alive. You are the best ship in this vast sea. Indeed, there is behind you an unjust king watching our for any good ship which comes from the sea of guidance (hudā), to take it by force, then to rape it and its owners. May the mercy of God be upon you in this life and may he be satisfied with you after you die."[1]

In this tradition, the interest of Islam according to

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1. Al-Hā'irī, op.cit., I, 325; Ṭūsī, Rijāl, II, 138f.; Khū'ī, op.cit., 227f; and in summary, Ṭusī, Fihrist, 142n.

Imām Ṣādiq, was to curse Zurāra in order to save his life, this on account of the unjust regime of the day who made it their policy to kill the faithful followers of the Imāms.

What was said about Zurāra and Imām Ṣādiq may also be said about the behaviour of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn towards al-Mukhtār's revolt. He regarded it in the best Islamic interest to curse al-Mukhtār and to demonstrate his own non-involvement publicly. Thereby, he would save his life, his family, and his sincere followers from the two main enemies of al-Mukhtār - Ibn al-Zubayr and the Umayyads - especially since al-Mukhtār's revolt was in the name of Ḥusayn and the Ahl al-Bayt.

After due time, the political circumstances, which prevented ᶜAlī from declaring his true attitude towards al-Mukhtār and his rebellion, changed when al-Mukhtār and Ibn al-Zubayr were killed. The Umayyads also became weaker than before, especially after al-Mukhtār and Ibn al-Zubayr's movements. As a result, many traditions have been narrated of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn and the succeeding Imāms in which they praised al-Mukhtār and his revolt. They praised his work in killing Ḥusayn's murderers and his generosity towards the Ahl al-Bayt. We may cite these narrations in two groups.

1. The traditions narrated by other Imāms and not by ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn.

In the first example, al-Kushshī narrated from Ḥamdawa, from Yaᶜqūb, from Ibn Abī ᶜUmayr, from Hishām b. Hishām b. al-Muthannā, from Sādir, that Imām al-Bāqir said,

> "Do not curse al-Mukhtār. He killed our murderers, sought our revenge, made our widows able to marry, and he divided money to use in straitened circumstances."

Al-Kushshī said that this ascription was sound (ḥasan).[1] Al-ᶜAllāma al-Ḥillī also said of this narration that its chain of transmission (isnād) was good (ḥasan).[2]

In another narration, al-Mukhtār's son Abū al-Ḥakam came to Imām al-Bāqir and said to him,

> "The people have spoken evil about my father!"

Imām said to him,

> "What are they saying?"

He said,

> "They said that he is a liar and I will do whatever you order me."

Imām said,

> "God be praised! My father has told me, by God,

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1. Ṭūsī, Rijāl, 125; al-Ḥillī, Rijāl, 168f.; al-Ḥā'irī, op.cit., 220.
2. Al-Ḥillī, op.cit., 168f.; al-Ḥā'irī, op.cit., 220f.

that my mother's dower was from waht al-Mukhtār sent to him. Has he not built our houses and killed our murderers and avenged our blood? So may the mercy of God be upon him. May the mercy of God be upon your father, may the mercy of God be upon your father. There was no justice left for us until he sought it. He killed our murderers and avenged our blood."[1]

In another tradition, Ibn ᶜUqda narrated that Imām al-Ṣādiq asked God to grant mercy to al-Mukhtār (tarahhama ᶜalayh).[2]

From these narrations, it is possible to deduce the real attitudes of the Imāms towards al-Mukhtār and his revolt. If al-Mukhtār were not a sincere follower of the Ahl al-Bayt and if he were a liar, they would not have praised him and his movement, but would have cursed him. Nothing like that happened, proving that it was the political circumstances in their time which allowed them to take such a stand toward him and his rebellion.

2. The traditions narrated by ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn. In this second group of narrations, ᶜAlī did not curse al-Mukhtār, but at the same time he did not support him

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1. Ṭūsī, Rijāl, II, 126; al-Ḥā'irī, II, 220f.
2. Al-Ḥā'irī, loc.cit.; al-Ḥillī, op.cit., 169.

and his revolt. He merely expressed joy and pleasure at what al-Mukhtār had done with Ḥusayn's killers. Although ᶜAlī apparently praised al-Mukhtār in some of these traditions, they may not be interpreted as evidence of a political stance taken up by ᶜAlī in favour of the rebellion. They may only be understood, even by his enemies, as an example of a son's gladness at hearing that al-Mukhtār had killed his father's murderers. There was nothing unnatural or suspicious in this, since ᶜAlī might praise anyone, even Ibn al-Zubayr, if it were he who had succeeded in exacting revenge.

It is reported that Zayn al-ᶜĀbidīn asked God daily to see his father's murderers killed. When al-Mukhtār killed ᶜUbayd Allāh b. Ziyād and ᶜUmar b. Saᶜd, he sent their heads to Zayn al-ᶜĀbidīn and told his messenger to inform ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn that God had taken his revenge. Al-Mukhtār's messenger did what al-Mukhtār told him and when Zayn al-ᶜĀbidīn saw the heads on his table, he bowed down and thanked God for answering his prayer and taking vengeance on his father's slayers. He prayed for al-Mukhtār and asked God to bless him.[1]

So while it is evident that ᶜAlī was pleased at what al-Mukhtār had done, he did not voice any kind of

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1. Majlisī, op.cit. XLVI, 53. See also al-Ḥā'irī, op.cit., 221; Ṭusi, Rijal, II, 127; al-Amīn, op.cit., 486f.; Tustarī, VIII, 149; al-Qurashī, op.cit., 178.

support for this revolt and said nothing which might be understood to imply that he was in favour of the rebellion. By acting accordingly, ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn distanced himself from the uprising, so that his enemies could not find any excuse to put pressure on him or to kill him.

In summary, we see how ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn followed a single policy with regard to the rebellions which broke out in his time against the Umayyads. This policy was to keep clear from these uprisings, even though they were directed against his chief enemy. He demonstrated his personal non-involvement in any revolt in order to keep himself and his sincere followers safe, so that he might proceed to play his role amongst them and amongst the people by spreading the Islamic doctrines and forming a nucleus of sincere Shīᶜite followers. This was his policy in general, with some evident difference of approach from time to time according to changes in the political and social circumstances.

CHAPTER V

ᶜALĪ B. AL-ḤUSAYN'S POLITICAL THOUGHT CONCERNING THE CONCEPT OF OPPRESSION AND OPPRESSORS, OR THE CONCEPT OF UNJUST GOVERNMENT

In addition to our study of the political thought of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn, a careful study must also be made of his thought concerning the concept of "oppression" (zulm) and "oppressors" (ẓālimūn). This study will reveal whether or not ᶜAlī did develop any distinctive political thought regarding oppression. Did his policy of silence regarding the revolts against the Umayyads and his avoidance of direct political involvement in the events of his time prevent him from expressing his opinion in one way or another regarding the Umayyad rulers?

It is important to emphasize that when ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn talked about oppressors and oppression, he did not mention any name, but spoke about this matter in a general way, so that he would not be insulted or executed because of his being involved in the politics of opposition. Meanwhile, the people would echo his sayings regarding every oppressor and certainly they would consider the Umayyads among those oppressors.

Many examples may be given to show to what extent ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn spoke about oppression and oppressors, trying to clarify for the people the sinful deeds of oppressors and

asking God to take revenge upon them. Sometimes he was more specific in his thrust and he besought God to prevent any harm that might come to him from them. On the other hand, he would refer to the oppression of the rulers in general, without mentioning any particular name, time, or place. For a better appreciation of ᶜAlī's range of speaking against oppression, it will be helpful to consider his approaches in different categories.

A. His talk about oppression and oppressors in general

As already noted, it is possible to adduce many examples demonstrating that ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn talked frequently about the concept of oppression and oppressors and tried to show the people the evils and disadvantages of this behaviour. ᶜAlī also tried to warn the oppressors that God was observing them, so that they must put an end to their bad behaviour. The advantage in this way of talking about oppressors was that ᶜAlī spoke in general and his sayings might be applied to every oppressor at any time and anywhere.

ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn once asked God to stop the bitterness of the arbitrary decrees of the sulṭān (ruler).[1] What he meant

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1. ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn, al-Ṣaḥīfa, 27.

by arbitrary decrees was the oppression, power, and vindictiveness of the ruler.[1] While asking God to shield him from the bitterness of oppression, he asked further that God would change this situation to one in which he would feel the sweetness of the secure life.[2] This utterance of ᶜAlī shows clearly the prevalent injustice and oppression exercised by the rulers of his time. His words would mobilize public opinion and raise emotions against every unjust ruler who oppressed his subject people.[3]

In an attempt to warn the people against the deceptive charm of the oppressors, ᶜAlī said,

> "O believers, do not be attracted to this way of life by the oppressors and their followers who are in favour of it. They are inclined towards it and have been seduced by it."[4]

To the same effect, he said,

> "Do not become friends of the disobedient, helping the oppressors and drawing close to the sinners..."[5]

Moreover, he advised the people not to choose obedience to the oppressors and not to leave off obedience to God's orders.[6]

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1. Al-Madanī al-Shīrāzī, al-Riyād, 98; al-Husaynī, Talkhīs, I, 193; Mughniya, Fī Zilal, 66f.; al-Shirāzī, Sharh, 60; al-Jazā'irī, Sharh, 62.
2. Al-Husayni, op.cit., II, 95.
3. Mughniya, loc.cit.
4. Al-Harrānī, Tuhaf, 252; al-Mufīd, Āmālī, 125.
5. Al-Harrānī, op.cit., 254; al-Mufid, op.cit., 126.
6. Ibid.

Besides warning the people against the oppressors, ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn also warned the oppressors themselves, telling them of God's watching over all their deeds and his punishment awaiting them if they did not cease their oppressions. He cried,

> "O (God) from whom the cries of the oppressed are not hidden and whose help is close to the oppressed people, but whose help is far away from the oppressors..."[1]

ᶜAlī meant that the situation of the oppressed and the oppressors is very clear and obvious to God, because he understands fully the appearance and the reality of all matters.[2]

ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn also said, while addressing God, that his way is not to punish the oppressors immediately, but to postpone punishment.[3] ᶜAlī thus asserts that the wisdom of God is not to hurry to punish the oppressors, but rather to give them opportunity to repent and to return to God's obedience.[4] So ᶜAlī is here telling the oppressors that God is observing them, but is not swift to punish them because his wisdom and his way is to give them a chance to stop their oppressions and instead to obey God's orders. In the same

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1. ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn, op.cit., 60.
2. Al-Madani al-Shīrāzī, op.cit., 155 ; al-Shīrāzī, op.cit., 112; Mughniya, op.cit., 134f.; al-Ḥusaynī, op.cit., 316.
3. ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn, op.cit., 234.
4. Al-Ḥusayni, op.cit., III, 185; al-Shīrāzī, op.cit., 385; Mughniya, op.cit., 444.

way, he said that God issued his warning, taught lessons, extended his respite, and postponed judgment in order to make his proof more emphatic and his generosity more perfect.[1] ᶜAlī thus emphasized that God postponed his punishment while still observing clearly what the oppressors were doing.

B. Some of ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn's sayings concerning the relationship between himself and the oopressors

In this category of sayings, ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn would mention himself when talking about the oppressors, as if he were talking about the relationship between himself and them. In these examples, he put himself on the one side and the oppressors on the othe side in a kind of specified antithesis.

Sometimes ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn would ask God to prevent him from being oppressed and to make it difficult for the oppressors to injure him. So, for example, he once said,

"Do not make it easy for him to oppress me."[2]

He also asked God not to put his (ᶜAlī's) oppressor in a situation in which he would no longer feel concern about God's punishment and vengeance.[3]

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1. Al-Ḥusaynī, op.cit., III, 190.
2. ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn, op.cit., 61; al-Ḥusaynī, op.cit., II, 348.
3. Al-Ḥusaynī, op.cit., I, 350; al-Madanī al-Shīrāzī, op.cit., 156.

In the same way, ᶜAlī asked God to prevent his oppressor from harming him by breaking his sword, i.e. by destroying his strength and power, and by keeping him too busy to think of oppressing him.[1] He also asked God to turn the evil intentions of anyone away from him and to humiliate his opponent's strength and power.[2]

Besides asking God to prevent him from being oppressed, ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn also asked God to avenge his sorrow and anger at those who oppressed him. ᶜAlī besought God to help him obtain an immediate victory over his oppressor and so to avenge his great anger.[3] It is possible here that ᶜAlī was actually beseeching God to take revenge on the Umayyads who killed his father and his family, which produced in him a heart full of anger.[4]

ᶜAlī did not stop at merely asking God to take vengeance on the oppressors, but he also asked God to give him the power and strength with which to prevent himself from being oppressed.[5] He also prayed,

> "Make me one of those whom you use to strengthen your religion and kill your enemies in the rank, whose members you have described in your book as if they are as closely knit as a building."[6]

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1. Al-Ḥusaynī, op.cit., I, 348.
2. Ibid., II, 190f.
3. Mughniya, op.cit., 136; al-Shīrāzī, op.cit., 134; al-Ḥusaynī, op.cit., I, 348; al-Madanī al-Shīrāzī, op.cit., 156.
4. Mughniya, loc.cit.
5. Al-Shīrāzī, op.cit., 156; Mughniya, op.cit., 169; al-Ḥusaynī, op.cit., II, 99; ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn, op.cit., 89.
6. Ibn Ṭā'ūs, al-Iqbāl, 193.

Besides telling the people about the bad behaviour of the oppressors, ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn also warned them not to practise any kind of oppression themselves. He did this indirectly by asking God not to make him oppress other people or even help the oppressors. ᶜAlī asked God not to allow him to oppress others while God was capable of preventing him from doing so.[1] Here, ᶜAlī asked God to surround him with his care and guidance in order that he should not practise any oppression.[2] Praying further that God would prevent him from giving a hand to the oppressors, ᶜAlī asked God to guide him to a way in which he would not be a supporter of oppressors and would not help them in changing God's book.[3]

In general, we may summarize from this examination of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn's political thought regarding oppressors, and especially oppressive rulers, that he rejected the concept of injustice and oppression. He warned the people against giving any help to the oppressors; meanwhile, he warned the oppressors themselves that God was observing them, so that they must cease oppressing others. Speaking for himself, ᶜAlī asked God to shield him from the oppressors and to be used by him in avenging his anger on his oppressors.

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1. ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn, op.cit., 93.
2. Mughniya, op.cit., 199; al-Madanī al-Shīrāzī, op.cit., 205.
3. ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn, op.cit., 267.

CHAPTER VI

ʿALĪ'S WAYS OF COMMUNICATING WITH THE COMMUNITY AND PLAYING HIS ROLE WITHIN IT

It was noted when the "general theory" was formed that ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn adopted for himself three different ways in playing his role within the Islamic community. As discussed above, these three ways or inclinations were personal piety, social involvement, and the spreading of Islamic concepts through the sciences of jurisprudence and tradition. In the foregoing chapter, these three activities were mentioned in common and without entering into much detail. What is intended here is to study them in greater detail and to present clear examples of each activity, so as to clarify the picture and make it more understandable. Our method here is to discuss each activity by trying to determine the reasons which motivated it. After this, some examples will be given and classified into many categories to illustrate our study. An analysis of these examples should enable us to determine the effects of ʿAlī's behaviour upon the people and society, so that we may see whether this behaviour succeeded in helping ʿAlī to achieve the

goals he sought within the society.

Study of these three activities of ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn will illustrate in some depth the many characteristics of his personality. So, for example, we may understand his relationships within his family, his relationship with God, his relationships within the society, his morals, and the social status of the community in his time. Thus, our study will be of an analytical and descriptive nature. We shall seek to subject the historical narrations and events to a concentrated examination so as to know ᶜAlī's characteristics and to understand his life better than before.

I. ᶜAlī's Inclination towards Personal Piety

This was such a very clear inclination of ᶜAlī's personality that he became well known by the nickname Zayn al-ᶜĀbidīn ("the ornament of the worshippers"). Many traditions were transmitted about his religious devotion and supplications, etc. In other words, this inclination represents ᶜAlī's relationship with God, "as a slave of him," submitting to the requirement of obeying God's orders and seeking after him. In order to understand the reasons for ᶜAlī's dedication to this

principle of piety, a careful study of the social and economic status of the community in his time is essential. In other words, we must determine whether these social conditions induced ᶜAlī to pursue piety because of what he saw in society around him. For the sake of simplification, we shall discuss this matter in several sections.

A. The social and Economic Position in Hejaz

Hejaz was the place where ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn lived for most of his life. The premise of this study is that the character of the new life had a marked effect upon the people. This is what the great scholar Ibn Khaldūn observed when he studied the effect of luxury. He noticed that the growing wealth of Muslims, resulting from the booties of conquests since the time of ᶜUthmān, brought about an exchange of the hard life for times of affluence and ease.[1] He wrote:

> "Luxury corrupts the character...the soul acquires diverse kinds of evil and sophisticated customs...People lose the good qualities that were a sign and indication of (their qualification for) royal authority. They adopt the contrary bad qualities. This points towar retrogression and ruin, according to the way God has (planned it) for His creatures in this connection."[2]

He also discussed the effect of luxury upon the ways

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1. Rabīᶜ, Political Theory of Ibn Khaldun, 105f.
2. The Muqaddima, tr. F. Rosenthal, I, 341.

and customs of life and its high standards, saying:

> "When people have obtained the royal authority, they no (longer) do the tiresome chores they had been used to undertake while still in search of it. They prefer rest and quiet and tranquillity. Now they seek to enjoy the fruits of royal authority, such as buildings, dwellings, and clothing. They build castles and install running water. They plant gardens and enjoy life. They prefer rest to tiresome chores. They take pride in clothing, food, household goods, and bedding (carpets), as much as possible. They get used to this (attitude) and pass it on to later generations."[1]

From the time of the second caliph, ᶜUmar, conquests came one after another. Khusraw's treasures were possessed and the caravans of gold and silver came line upon line, with the consequential increase in public expenditure.[2] During the later years of the "well-guided caliphs," a limited change took place in the community's way and custom of life and the religious motive slackened gradually.[3] During the reign of ᶜUmar, Persia was conquered and the booties gathered. When Rustum's booties were sold, every cavalryman was given fourteen-thousand dinars, while every foot-soldier was given seventeen-thousand and one-hundred dinars.[4] ᶜUmar also

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1. Ibid., 339.
2. Ibn Tiqtaqa, op. cit., 116.
3. Rabiᶜ, op.cit., 105.
4. Yaᶜqubi, op. cit., II, 165.

acknowledged how money had increased, so that he was advised to initiate the account books of the treasury (dīwān).[1]

In the time of ᶜUthmān b. ᶜAffān, social life had changed radically from its former character.[2] ᶜUthmān himself built a stone house in Medina and he possessed money and wells of water in the city.[3] He also built al-Zawrā and enlarged the Prophet's Mosque.[4] It was said that in his time, Ifrīqiya was conquered and the booty then reached a million and five-hundred-thousand and twenty dinars. ᶜUthmān married his daughter to Marwān b. al-Ḥakam and on this occasion he ordered to be given to Marwān half of the total booty of Ifrīqiya.[5] In ᶜUthmān's time, the companions also began to possess properties and money.[6] One of these was al-Zubayr, whose property after his death was estimated at fifty-thousand dinars, a thousand horses, and a thousand slaves, both men and women.[7]

Saᶜīd b. al-Musayyab noted that when Zayd b. Thābit died, he left behind him amounts of silver and gold which were broken up with axes. This was not

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1. Ibid., 175.
2. Basyuni, Nash'at, 96; al-Khaṭīb, op.cit., 194.
3. Masᶜūdī, Muruj, III, 76.
4. Yaᶜqubi, op.cit., 191.
5. Ibid.
6. Masᶜūdī, op.cit., 76; al-Dūrī, op. cit., 80; al-Khaṭīb, op.cit., 159.
7. Masᶜudi, op.cit., 76; Belyaev, Arab-Islam, 142.

including the money and the gardens, which were estimated at a value of one-hundred-thousand dinars.[1] In addition, ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ᶜAwf, a companion of the Prophet, built his house and enlarged it. He possessed a hundred horses, a thousand camels, and ten-thousand sheep.[2]

During the time of the Umayyads, the social life in Hejaz in general, and in Medina in particular, requires some special mention here, because it is the main period in which ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn lived after returning from Karbala. ᶜAlī lived through the remaining period of Yazīd ibn Muᶜāwiya's rule (access. 60/680) and the rule of Muᶜāwiya ibn Yazīd (access. 64/683), Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam (access. 64/684), ᶜAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān (access. 65/685), and the remainder of al-Walīd ibn ᶜAbd al-Malik's rule (86-96/705-716).[3] In Umayyad times, a new atmosphere of luxury and enjoyment sprang up in Mecca and Medina. This new life-style was the result of the great wealth which the wars of conquest had brought to the people.[4] Life in Medina became more and more luxurious.[5] This was the golden period of Medina's history, the glories of which the poets sang about,

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1. Masᶜūdī, op.cit., 77.
2. Ibid.
3. Bosworth, Islamic Dynasties, 5.
4. EI[1] & EI[2], art. "Medina".
5. Hitti, History of the Arabs, 237.

with its flourishing, well-watered gardens and meadows surrounding the city and the many luxurious palaces that were built there.[1] After playing out their political role, Medina and Mecca became homes of care-free joie de vivre.[2] It seems also that this luxurious life reflected itself in the people's avoidance of Islamic teaching, morals, and conduct.[3]

The new luxurious life of the Medinans in Umayyad times was accompanied by increased leisure time which was to be filled in one way or another. As soon as there was spare time, singing parties sprang up where people attended to listen to music and singing.[4] In order to distract the Medinans from political involvement, the Umayyads distributed large sums of money to some of the Hejazis and this became used in enjoyment, singing, and social gatherings.[5] So, for example, ᶜAbd Allāh ibn Ḥanẓala ibn abī ᶜUmayr with his eight sons came to Yazīd ibn Muᶜāwiya, who gave him a hundred-thousand dirhams and to each of his sons ten-thousand dirhams, in addition to clothes and caravans.[6] Again,

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1. EI[1] & EI[2], art. "Medina".
2. Brockelmann, History of the Islamic Peoples, 99; Hitti, loc.cit.
3. Jabbur, ᶜUmar ibn abi Rabiᶜa, I, 3.
4. Dayf, al-Shiᶜr wa'l-Ghina', 51.
5. Jabbur, op.cit., 2; Hitti, loc.cit.
6. Al-Ṭabari, Ta'rikh, V, 495.

ᶜUthmān ibn Muḥammad ibn abī Sufyān sent ᶜAbd Allāh ibn Ḥanẓala al-Anṣārī and ᶜAbd Allāh ibn abī ᶜAmr ibn Ḥafṣ ibn al-Mughīra al-Makhzūmī with many other of the prominent men among the Medinans as a delegation to Yazīd ibn Muᶜāwiya, who treated them well and generously. He rewarded them with many gifts and much money.[1] Because of all this increased wealth, the styles of food, clothing, and housing which the Hejazis had been accustomed to before Islam altered radically as they were transferred from a life of hardship to one of luxury and plenty.[2]

In order to simplify our discussion, a classification with examples of the effects of the luxurious life on the Medinan community will be found useful.

1. Singing and love-poetry:

The art of love-poetry became so popular that it was enthusiastically welcomed throughout the land.[3] In Medina, the poet al-Aḥwaṣ cultivated the poetry of love and Medina won the reputation of harbouring not only the best, but also the most compliant of singing-girls.[4] Medina and Mecca became well known for their famous singers, including ᶜUbayd Allāh ibn Yaḥyā ibn Surayj

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1. Ibid., 480.
2. Jabbur, op.cit., 29.
3. Brockelmann, op.cit., 99.
4. Ibid., 68. For more details about singing and singers at that time, see H.G. Farmer, A History of Arabian Music, p.59-90.

(born in Mecca in 40/660 and died in 126/744), who was one of the great singers of the early Hejazi school of Arabic music and whose art was appreciated by the elite of Mecca.[1] Another example of the famous singers was Abū Jaᶜfar Muḥammad ibn ᶜĀ'isha, a Medinan of no known father.[2] Isḥāq said of him:

> "Ibn ᶜĀ'isha used to allure everyone to listen to him and there were some of the youth of Medina who were corrupted by talking to him and sitting around him."[3]

In addition to the singing-men, there were also singing-women at that time. Jāmila was one of these. It was said that she intended to retire from music and singing, but one of Medina's shaykhs told her not to retire and advised her to continue singing.[4]

A clear example of the social situation of the community at that time is found in the life of ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbd Allāh ibn abī Rabīᶜa, who was born in 26/644 and died in 95 or 101/712 or 719. His poems reflect the bright social activity of town.[5] Under the caliphate of ᶜAbd al-Malik, ᶜUmar composed his tender, extremely individual and personal songs, all dedicated to flirtation generally with elegant women who joined in the pilgrimage to Mecca.[6]

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1. EI², art. "Ibn Suraydj".
2. EI², art. "Ibn ᶜĀ'isha".
3. Al-Iṣfahānī, al-Aghānī, II, 203.
4. Ibid., VIII, 224f.
5. EI¹, art. "ᶜOmar b. ᶜAbdallāh b. Abī Rabīᶜa".
6. Brockelmann, op.cit., 99.

2. The appearance of effeminates (mukhannathūn) in Medina:

The luxurious life also reflected itself in the appearance of many effeminate people in Medina, many of whom were well known to the public. Some of Medina's governors forced the singers, effeminates, and incompetents to stay in the Prophet's Mosque.[1] It was also well known to the public that some of the singers were effeminates. Among them was Ṭuways, the singer, of whom Ibn Isḥāq said that he was an effeminate and was seeking out people's failings and sins. Marwān tried to arrest him with the other effeminates, but he escaped from him until he died.[2] These examples illustrate to what extent the poor moral situation in Hejaz, and Medina especially, had deteriorated.

3. Changing styles of dress:

As noted above, clothing was one feature which was affected by the new luxurious life in Mecca and Medina. The rough clothing became changed to coloured, silky, and soft garments. So, it is recorded on one occasion that when Sa^{c}d ibn Ibrāhīm was judging between the people in the Prophet's Mosque, Zayd ibn Ismā^{c}īl ibn ^{c}Abd Allāh ibn Ja^{c}far, along with Dā'ūd ibn Salm, entered the mosque wearing coloured garments.[3] Al-Iṣfahānī

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1. Al-Iṣfahānī, op.cit., II, 215.
2. Ibid., III, 28f.; al-Zamakhsharī, op.cit, 541.
3. Al-Iṣfahānī, Ibid, VI, 13.

also reported that al-Ḥūrmī told him, from al-Zubayr from Hārūn ibn Salīm from his father, that they used to give many dirhams to the washer to wash their clothes in the rice perfume (musk) which came from the clothes of ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz, the contemporary governor of Medina.[1]

4. The appearance of new pastimes:

Novel pastimes which had not existed previously arose as a result of this new luxurious life. Thus, for example, wealthy private citizens built the first gaming and reading-rooms in which chess and other board games were available to the visitors.[2] It was said that the first forbidden action (munkar) to appear in Medina was pigeon-fancying.[3]

5. The pursuit of sexual pleasures:

The luxurious life was also accompanied by the pursuit of sexual pleasure and the apeaking openly about sexual matters. Many stories are recorded in al-Iṣfahānī's famous work al-Āghānī, from which we may understand to what extent this kind of sex-seeking had developed. These stories illustrate the widespread corruption at that time. This matter did not stop

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1. Ibid., IX, 9.
2. Brockelmann, op.cit., 68.
3. Al-Ṭabarī, op.cit., IV, 398; Hitti, loc.cit.

merely at sexual relations between men and women, but lesbianism and sodomy were also rampant in Medina.[1]

All of the above exemplifies the social and moral situation in Hejaz. The increased wealth reflected itself in the appearance of new activities, in corrupt customs and ways of life. This led, as already mentioned, to the neglect of Islamic teaching, morality, and conduct and also to a debased devotion to this materialistic world in order to enjoy its passing pleasures.

Therefore, when we come to consider ᶜAlī's emphasis on piety and strengthening of personal relationship with God, this evaluation of the background situation within Hejaz and Medina must be kept in mind so that we may recognise ᶜAlī's pursuit of piety as a rejection of the social tendencies around him.

B. ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn's Inclination towards Personal Piety and the Ways of Practising it

After reviewing the social and economic situation of Hejaz in the time of ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, it becomes clearer why ᶜAlī concentrated on the pursuit of personal

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1. Al-Munajjid, al-Ḥayāt al-Jinsiyya, 58-60.

piety. His main aim was to promote the community's standard of faith and to strengthen their relationship with God by obeying his orders. In other words, his purpose was to raise the Islamic faith to a higher level by encouraging people to practise Islam in their personal lives by revering God and his orders and refusing to give way to such a materialistic way of life.

The question might possibly be asked here how the cultivation of piety could be a means of raising the standard of social morality, seeing that the matter of piety is a personal one and it was one of ᶜAlī's characteristics to devote himself to God and to seek after him as a private individual? Such a question would have some validity if it were possible to separate ᶜAlī's life from the social situation. It is, however, evident from the historical accounts and narrations, which we will discuss later, that ᶜAlī was publicly urging and calling people to follow in these religious devotions and that he actively sought to practise some of the Islamic morals and observance in front of other people. Consequently, if ᶜAlī had no intention of promoting such devotions, he would not have urged the people to strengthen their relations with God and there would have been no purpose in his practising religious observances before the people. So we may indeed regard these actions of ᶜAlī as an open call for others to do

and practise the same. Indeed, on account of his practising his worship and religious observances in the public view, he became well known under the nickname Zayn al-ᶜĀbidīn ("the ornament of the worshippers").[1] On account of his personal piety he was also considered one of the leaders and men of Sufism.[2]

Another important evidence that ᶜAlī was trying to use these observances to raise the community's standard of faith is the fact that his supplications were delivered to be recited by other people and to cover all occasions in the daily life of the individual, so that he would always feel that he is in the presence of God. These observances would then guarantee that the individual would not deviate from God's cause. A further consideration of the use of ᶜAlī's supplications and his exhortation to pray to God at all times will be made at a point further down.

Another important purpose behind ᶜAlī's dedication to piety may have been on the level of "giving the ideal example." Thus, by practising the Islamic teaching, seeking God, and devoting oneself to the cause of God, a person would become an ideal example or model for other people to follow. By doing this, ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn tried to make himself a good representative of Islam.

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1. Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., IX, 103; al-Dhahabī, al-Kāshif, II, 282; idem, al-ᶜIbar, I, 111; Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, op. cit., 324; al-Shablanjī, Nūr al-Abṣār, 139; Ibn Khallikan, op. cit., 266.
2. Al-Shaybī, al-Fikr al-Shiᶜi, 31f.; al-Kalabādhī, al-Taᶜarruf, 27.

The admiration thus aroused would induce people to follow his example and to align their behaviour with their religious devotion. By means of these followers in the admirable way of piety, ᶜAlī would be able to spread Islamic concepts in general and the Shi'ite school of thought in particular.

This characteristic was very obvious in his life and was reflected in his way of practising religious observances such as ablutions, prayers, pilgrimage, as well as the other Islamic teachings such as patience towards God's will and submission to it, seeking at all times after God and in every place, etc.

These two main goals of ᶜAlī's behaviour - spreading Islamic concepts and exemplifying the "ideal person", viewed as methods of raising the standard of faith, require some further study. This we may do by way of presenting clear examples of his practising some of the religious observances and his public witness to other Islamic teachings. These examples will demonstrate to what extent ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn was seeking God and dissolving in the love of him, and how he used his behaviour to achieve his goals in society.

1. His ablutions:

It was said that ᶜAlī turned yellow every time that he performed the ablutions. When his family asked him the reasons for this, he said, "Don't you know in whose presence I am going to stand?"[1] This was ᶜAlī's situation when he went to perform the ablution, because of his intense sensation of standing in the presence of God.

2. His prayers:

ᶜAlī was deeply moved before going to pray, because of his awareness that he was going to stand in God's presence.[2] It was also said that he used to pray in one night and a day a thousand rakᶜas (bendings of the torso from an upright position, followed by two prostrations).[3] As an example showing that he used to obliterate from his mind every matter of this life and think only of God, we have the report that once, while he was praying, a huge fire flamed in his house. His family called him to extinguish the fire, but he took no heed of their call. When he finished his prayer, they asked him about his action and he said, "The great

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1. Al-Ghazālī, Mukāshafāt, 50; al-Tabarsī, Iᶜlām, 260; al-Ṣabbān, Isᶜaf, 218; Ibn Saᶜd, Ṭabaqāt, V, 216; Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, op.cit., 325; Ibn Ḥajar, al-Ṣawā'iq, 198; Ibn al-Jawzī, Ṣifat, ii, 93; al-Irbilī, Kashf al-Ghumma, ii, 286; Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., 9: Abu Nuᶜaym, op.cit., III, 133; al-Qurashī, op.cit., 151; al- Ganji, Kifāyat, 449.
2. Ibn Ḥajar, op.cit., 198; Ibn Saᶜd, op.cit., 216; al-Irbilī, op.cit., 286; al-Dhahabī, Ta'rīkh al-Islām, IV, 36.
3. Al-Ṣaduq, ᶜIlal, I, 232; al-Ṭabarsī, op.cit., 260; al-Ṣabbān, op.cit., 218; Ibn Ḥajar, op.cit., 198; al-Dhahabī, al-ᶜIbar, 111; al-ᶜAshshī, op.cit., 56; al-Nīsābūrī, op.cit, 197; al-Qurashī, op.cit., 151; al-Bustānī, op.cit, IX, 355; Ibn al-ᶜImad, op.cit., 105.

fire [i.e. hell fire] has kept me busy (in thinking of it)."[1]

Because of his long prayers, ᶜAlī also became known as Zayn al-ᶜĀbidīn ("the ornament of the worshippers"), al-Sajjād ("the prostrater"), and Dhū al-Thafināt ("the man with the calluses," because of the marks on his forehead caused by his frequent prostrations).[2]

3. His pilgrimages:

Once when ᶜAlī went to Mecca for the pilgrimage and when he was supposed to recite the talbiya (a word signifying to say "at your service" labbayka Allāhumma),[3] he could not say it. When he was asked by the other pilgrims why he did not say it, he said that he was afraid to say labbayka ("I came because of your call") while God says lā labbayka ("you are not coming because of my call").[4]

4. His patience regarding God's will:

This was one of ᶜAlī's characteristics which proved his close relationship with God, such that he would not become angry with God's will even if this will

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1. Sibt ibn al-Jawzī, op.cit., 325; al-Irbilī, op.cit., 286f.; Ibn al-Jawzi, op.cit., 93f.
2. Al-Ṣaduq, op.cit., 233; Ibn al-Jawzī, Salwat, 140.
3. Hughes, Dictionary, 157.
4. Ibn Kathir, op.cit., 105; al-Dhahabī, Ta'rīkh, 37; Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhib, 306; al-Ganjī, op.cit., 450.

be contrary to his personal wishes and aspirations. This acceptance of God's will demonstrated ᶜAlī's devotion to the cause of God and he thereby gave the people a lesson in how the faithful person must behave towards God's will which might seem unfavourable and difficult to comply with.

It was said that although a son of ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn had died, he himself had not been seen to be anxious or bitter about his bereavement. When he was questioned about this, he said,

> "It was a matter we were expecting, and so it happened. We could not reject it."[1]

In another narration, it was said that ᶜAlī was sitting with some of his friends when they heard the sound of crying in his house. He checked on the matter and returned to his friends. They asked him about this and whether the crying was because somebody had died. This he confirmed and when they were surprised at his patience, he said to them,

> "We are a household that are thankful to God Almighty in things we like, and we obey him in what we do not like."[2]

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1. Al-Mubarrad, op.cit., IV, 37; al-Majlisī, op.cit., XLVI, 101.
2. Abū Nuᶜaym, op.cit., 138; Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., 114.

5. His supplications and secret conversation with God:

It is important to recognise when reading ᶜAlī's supplications that he sought to adopt for himself a method in prayer and talking to God, and that this method may also be adopted by other people. He tried to make of his supplications a programme by which to connect oneself with God, so that every Muslim may talk to God and feel him all the time and everywhere. This means practically that the Muslim will always feel that he is in the presence of God, which in turn will guarantee that the individual will not deviate from God's cause and teachings and will not be tied down with the pleasures and ornaments of this life. Promoting the use of these supplications was one of ᶜAlī's ways of raising the standard of faith among the people, thus producing a "faithful community".

In order to achieve his purpose through these supplications, ᶜAlī adopted the following methods.

a. Urging the people to supplications and piety:

In many traditions, ᶜAlī is noted for urging the people to strengthen their relationship with God at all times through supplications. He tried to explain to them the use of these supplications and their good effects upon the life of the people. In one such tradition, explaining the use of supplications and

prayer to God, ᶜAlī said,

> "Supplication keeps away misfortune and disasters, what has reached you and what has not."[1]

In another tradition, urging people to pray to God, Abū ᶜUbayd, by Thuwayr, said that he heard ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn saying that the angels would praise the faithful when praying for their brethren secretly or in pleasant conversation, and because of this God would reward them with the same things they had asked God to give to their brethren.[2] In this tradition ᶜAlī sought to explain for the people the rewards that God would give to the praying people, so that people would be encouraged to pray.

b. Exhorting people to supplications at all times and in every place:

After urging people to pray to God, ᶜAlī exhorted the worshipper to make supplications his accompaniment whenever and wherever he existed. This meant that people would use these supplications throughout their daily life and would live them always. This would be the means of strengthening an individual's relationship with God and establishing the feeling that God is with him at all times, so that he would have a great guarantee

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1. Al-Kulaynī, al-Kāfī, X, 208.
2. Ibid., 259.

neither to deviate from God's cause, nor to become distracted by worldy enjoyments and pleasures.

To clarify this matter, some of ᶜAlī's supplications which he used to repeat at certain times and in certain situations will be given here. Muḥammad ibn Muslim said that Abū ᶜAbd Allāh (Jaᶜfar al-Ṣadīq) said that ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn used to say in the morning:

> "'I dedicate my day against my oblivion and my rush (in getting the best things), by the name of God and his will.' If the worshipper has said this, God will give him the best of what will happen to him during this day."[1]

In another tradition, Abū Ḥamza al-Thumālī said that he came once to ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn when he was leaving his house, and ᶜAlī said:

> "'By the name of God, I believe in God and I rely on him.' He also said, 'O Abū Ḥamza, Satan comes to the worshipper when he leaves his house. If the worshipper says, "By the name of God," the two angels reply, "You are contented (by God)." If he says, "I believe in God," they say, "You have been guided." If he says, "I rely on God," they say, "You have been protected (by God)."'"[2]

ᶜAlī also had a specific supplication in the case of sadness and troubles.[3] He had a supplication to be read at every noon of the month Shaᶜbān, in which he praised

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1. Ibid., 281f.
2. Ibid., 311.
3. Ibid., 349f.

and prayed for Muḥammad and his household.[1] Furthermore, ᶜAlī also had supplications to be recited at several times during the month of Ramaḍān.[2]

By these devices, ᶜAlī was making his supplications a programmed for the individual to follow and read at several times and in several situations. This was one of his most important ways of raising the standard of fiath of the people and of the community as a whole.

6. Talking about self-judgment, death, the afterlife, reminding people of the mercy of God, and describing the perfect worship:

These were examples of different Islamic concepts which ᶜAlī talked about in order to raise the standard of faith in the community. In fact, talking about these concepts would remind people of God, his paradise, and his hell, and would be a useful way to keep someone in touch with God. One's seeking the ornaments of this life would prevent him from thinking about God, but these concepts would remind him of God and make him remember his heaven and his hell.

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1. Ibid., 687f.
2. Ibn Ṭa'ūs, op.cit, 67-76.

ᶜAlī once said in self-judgment:

> "O God, every time I sinned, you treated me well, so every time I come to you, (please) come back to me."[1]

Ṭā'ūs al-Yamanī said,

> "I saw ᶜAlī prostrating and heard him saying, 'Your slave is in your presence. Your humble one is in your presence. Your beggar is in your presence. Your poor one is in your presence.'"[2]

ᶜAlī also said in one of his secret conversations with God:

> "Our God, our Master, our Lord. If we cried until our ashfar (palpebral margin from which the eyelashes grow) fall down, cry until we lose our voices, stand until our legs wither, bow down until our limbs become dismembered, prostrate ourselves until our eyes come out, eat sand all our lives, and praise you until our tongues become exhausted, we would not deserve that you should forgive a single one of our sins."[3]

With regard to his talking about death and the next world, many poems are cited by Ibn al-Athīr in his famous work al-Kāmil, in which ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn talks about death and the grave and encourages people to consider the bygone nations and the end to which they came. He warned against the vanity of this life and

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1. Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, op.cit., 326.
2. Ibid., 332; al-Irbilī, op.cit., 287; Abū Nuᶜaym, op.cit., 134; al-Nīsābūrī, op.cit., 198.
3. Al-Majlisī, op.cit., XCIV, 133.

its cares which lead men to regret their deeds and to fall into sin which will avail them nothing in the coming judgment.[1] Thus, ᶜAlī said about death, the grave, and this life,

> "I am surprised at the high-handed one who was in the past a clot of blood and tomorrow will be a rotten corpse...It surprised me very greatly that one should work for the vanishing world and neglect the everlasting world."[2]

In this tradition, ᶜAlī urges the people not to forget the world to come and to keep death in mind at all times.

Describing the perfect worship that people must try to achieve, ᶜAlī also said:

> "Some of the people worship God because they are afraid of him. Such is the worship of slaves. Others worship him with desire to obtain (in heaven). Such is the worship of merchants. Others worship him with thankfulness. Such is the worship of free people."[3]

In another tradtion, ᶜAlī reminds someone of God's mercy in order to keep this person attached to God. Al-Madā'inī said that al-Zuhrī sinned and became anxious because of this sin, so he left his family and

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1. Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., 110-112.
2. Al-Sabban, op.cit., 219; al-Hanbalī, Sharh, 648; Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, op.cit., 326; al-Barqī, al-Mahasin, 242.
3. Al-Irbilī, op.cit., 287; Abū Nuᶜaym, op.cit., 139; Ibn al-Jawzī, Sifat, 95.

gave away his money. When ᶜAlī learnt of this, he told al-Zuhrī:

> "O Zuhrī! Your despair of the mercy of God, which is wide enough to contain everything, is worse than your sin!"

Hearing this, al-Zuhrī said:

> "God knows best where to put his messengers."[1]

In this tradition ᶜAlī reminded al-Zuhrī of repentance and God's mercy upon those who have sinned. This recommendation would be very effective in raising the standard of faith within the community.

7. Appointing himself as an "ideal example" for the Muslims:

By endeavouring to present himself as the ideal Muslim, ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn sought to spread Islamic concepts and to raise the standard of faith by encouraging others to adopt the same devotions. In summary, we may see that if someone practises what he is preaching by devoting himself to God's cause and practising the principles of Islamic morality in a perfect way, this person would be admired by other people and will be followed by them. This will form the matter for further discussion below.

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1. Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., 107 ; al-Qurashī, op.cit., 158.

C. The Effectiveness of ᶜAlī's Piety upon the Society and Individuals

As mentioned above, ᶜAlī's main aim in pursuing personal piety in public, besides the personal interest, was to improve the spiritual standard of the community at that time, and to strengthen people's personal relationship with God after the new luxurious life in Medina and other parts of the empire had appeared. His second purpose was to gain followers who would look to him as an "ideal Muslim and perfect worshipper" when they witnessed his practising Islamic observances and assiduously seeking after God. In this part of the present chapter, a study of the effectiveness of this activity of ᶜAlī will be attempted in order to evaluate ᶜAlī's tendence in these practices and to determine whether in fact he succeeded in achieving his goals or not.

1. First, we may note how ᶜAlī's behaviour would provoke the people's enquiries about his way in practising Islamic observances and seeking God. Some of these enquiries arose when ᶜAlī practised some Islamic teachings in a way unfamiliar to the people, so that they would ask him about them and ᶜAlī could explain the reason for such behaviour to his enquirers. By this means many Islamic concepts could be explained to the people,

so that ᶜAlī's provocative behaviour would play a great role in raising up the standard of faith and Islamic knowledge in the community.

A clear illustration of this is found in the pilgrimage event already referred to, when ᶜAlī did not recite the talbiya with the result that other pilgrims asked him about the reason behind this behaviour. He was then able to explain that the pilgrim must feel the real meaning of talbiya when uttering the word and must avoid lying to God, that his talbiya will gain another meaning rather than the mere reciting of it. When those pilgrims practised what ᶜAlī explained about talbiya their devotion would be deepened and they would be brought closer to God.

Another example already referred to again illustrates ᶜAlī's method. When one of his sons died and ᶜAlī did not complain against God's will, he was asked about it and he was able to explain to his visitors that one must accept whatever God wants and not reject what his will brings, even though it be the death of a son. By this means also ᶜAlī was able to increase the people's measure of faith.

2. Secondly, we may see how ᶜAlī was effective in gaining the respect of the people. His religious devotion and assiduity in seeking after God increased his respect and admiration greatly in the eyes of other people. In fact, ᶜAlī's endeavours to present himself as a paragon to be emulated was a sure way of spreading genuine Islamic faith, so that when everyone looked respectfully to ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn and his piety, they became resolved to follow in his way. Thus, ᶜAlī sought to appoint himself and his household as "prime examples of religious devotion" to be followed and loved by others.

This is again illustrated by a tradition previously cited in which it is related that ᶜAlī was sitting with some of his friends when a member of his family died but he showed no anxiety about it. His friends were surprised at his patience and so he told them that his was a household thankful to God Almighty in things they liked and obedient to God when he chose for them soemthing they did not like. Since ᶜAlī here spoke of the Ahl al-Bayt (the Prophet's household) and their piety, it is evident that he presented himself and his household as ideal examples for the other Muslims.

As already noticed, ᶜAlī's piety won him great respect and admiration in the eyes of many people. Some

of these were so influenced by his piety that they became his followers and students. Not only was ᶜAlī admired and praised by his contemporaries, but he was also admired by many later scholars and historians.

Among his contemporaries, al-Zuhrī, who studied for a time in ᶜAlī's circle, said:

> "I have not seen anyone among the Quraysh tribe better than he [i.e. ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn]."[1]

ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān also said that Abū ᶜAbd Allāh al-Ṭihrānī heard from ᶜAbd al-Razzāq from another person that he heard al-Zuhrī saying:

> "I have not seen anyone of the Ahl al-Bayt better than ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn."[2]

Saᶜīd ibn al-Musayyab said of ᶜAlī:

> "I have seen no one more pious than he."[3]

Ibn ᶜAbbās used to say when seeing him:

> "Welcome, the beloved son of the beloved."[4]

Abū Ḥātim al-Aᶜraj said:

> "I have not seen a Hāshimī better than he."[5]

Abū Yaḥyā ibn Saᶜīd al-Anṣārī also said the same of him[6]

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1. Al-Dhahabī, Ta'rīkh, IV, 35; al-Ḥanbalī, op.cit., II, 648; Ibn Khallikān, op.cit., 267; al-Dhahabi, al-Kashif, 282; al-Bustānī, op.cit., IX, 357.
2. Ibn al-Rāzi, al-Jarḥ wa't-Taᶜdil, III, 179; Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., 106.
3. Al-Ḥanbalī, op.cit., 648; Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhīb, VII, 305; al-Dhahabi, al-ᶜIbar, 111.
4. Ibn Saᶜd, op.cit., 213.
5. Al-Dhahabī, al-ᶜIbar, 111; idem, Ta'rīkh, 35; Ibn Taymiyya, Minhaj, IV, 144.
6. Ibn al-Rāzi, op.cit., 178f.

and Ṭā'ūs al-Yamanī also said of him:

"A good man from a good house."[1]

Many of the later scholars and historians were equally impressed by him and praised his piety. We may enumerate the following:

1. al-Dhahabī, who said that he is Zayn al-ᶜĀbidīn ("the ornament of the worshippers") and that he was known by this nickname on account of his worship and piety.[2]

2. Ibn Qutayba, who said:

"He was a pious and honourable man."[3]

3. Ibn Taymiyya, who said that sholars' praise for ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn and his good behaviour is so great.[4]

4. Ibn Kathīr, who said:

"He is the famous under the nickname Zayn al-ᶜĀbidīn."[5]

5. Ibn Saᶜd, who said:

"An exalted, prominent, and pious man."[6]

6. Ibn Ḥajar al-ᶜAsqalānī, who said:

"He was called Zayn al-ᶜĀbidīn because he worshipped (God) so much."[7]

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1. Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān, I, 564.
2. Al-Kāshif, 282.
3. Al-Maᶜarif, 215.
4. Minhaj, IV, 144.
5. Op.cit.,
6. Ibn Saᶜd, op.cit., V, 222.
7. Tahdhīb, 305.

7. Ṣibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, who said of him:

> "He was called Zayn al-ᶜĀbidīn, al-Sajjād, and Dhū al-Thafinat. He was sinless, honest."[1]

8. Imām Malik ibn Anas, who said:

> "He was called Zayn al-ᶜĀbidīn because he worshipped (God) so much."[2]

9. Abū Jaᶜfar al-Manṣūr, who said in his message to Muḥammad ibn ᶜAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan al-Muthannā ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ᶜAlī ibn abī Ṭālib, mentioning ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, that

> "No one from you was born after the death of the Prophet of God (peace be upon him) better than ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn."[3]

10. Ibn Ḥajar al-Haythamī, who said of ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn:

> "Zayn al-ᶜĀbidīn, who inherited his father's knowledge, devotedness, and piety."[4]

11. Abū Nuᶜaym al-Iṣfahānī, who said:

> "He was a worshipper, faithful, generous."[5]

All these examples show clearly the degree of respect that ᶜAlī achieved from some of his contemporaries and from many people who came later. Thus, ᶜAlī was effective in achieving the goals he intended by his manner of life.

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1. Op.cit., 324.
2. Al-Shablanjī, op.cit., 139.
3. Al-Qalqashandī, Subḥ, I, 235; Mubarrad, op.cit., II, 124f.
4. Al-Sawāᶜiq, 198.
5. Abū Nuᶜaym, op.cit., 133.

II. ᶜAlī's Inclination towards Social Involvement

Direct social involvement was ᶜAlī's second method of spreading understanding of religious concepts among the Muslim community. Pursuing this aim in society, ᶜAlī emphasised the moral aspects of Islam and practised them perfectly in his own life, so as to strengthen his relations with the believing community. The important point about this activity is that it had a practical influence, so that the people could feel and live its effects more than if it were a teaching in words or a communication by preaching to the people. As already noticed in our previous examination, the other important point about this activity was that no one could reject this kind of communicating with the people because Islam itself emphasised the importance of this kind of social involvement by helping people and acting decently toward them. In this way, ᶜAlī was able to improve the standard of faith and love within the community and by doing this, he could present himself as a paragon of faith to be followed by all.

The method used above in reviewing ᶜAlī's pursuit of personal piety will again be followed here. We may classify some aspects of his behaviour toward the

community together with some examples, after which the effects of ᶜAlī's social involvement will be studied.

A. A Classified Review of Some Aspects of ᶜAlī's Moral Behaviour and Social Involvement

We may divide this review into several parts, dealing respectively with ᶜAlī's relationships with his mother, the poor people, his slaves and servants, his attitude towards those who behaved badly toward him, his generosity, and other activities of social involvement.

1. His behaviour towards his mother:

ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn demonstrated how the Muslim must behave toward his mother and what are his duties toward her. He was aware that if the relations within a family were strong, the whole community would also be strong. It was said the ᶜAlī was very respectful toward his mother. Once when he was asked about his conduct by those who saw that he was not eating with her from the same dish even though he was on good terms with her, he replied:

> "I am afraid that my hand would at some moment stretch to the portion of food which she is looking at."[1]

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1. Mubarrad, op.cit., I, 238; Ibn Khallikān, op.cit., 268; al-Yafiᶜī, Mir'at al-Janān, I, 191; Ibn al-ᶜImād, op.cit., I, 5.

2. His relationship with the Medinans, especially the poor people:

ᶜAlī tried his best to help the poor people by giving them food or money. Most times he did this secretly, so that they would not know from whom they were obtaining their resources. He also tried to help those who had no money to repay their debts. Shayba b. Naᶜama said that ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn was niggardly, but when he died they discovered that he was secretly helping the people of a hundred houses in Medina.[1] Muḥammad b. Isḥāq said that there were some people living in Medina without even knowing who was helping and providing for them until ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn died.[2]

It was also said that ᶜAlī gave much alms by night and that he said of "the alms of night" that it extinguishes God's wrath.[3] He would also welcome the poor who asked him for alms and would kiss them.[4] As an example of ᶜAlī's helping those who had no money to repay their debts, it was said that he visited Muḥammad b. ᶜUsāma b. Zayd on one occasion when he was sick.

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1. Ibn Saᶜd, op.cit., 222; al-Ṣabbān, op.cit., 219; Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., 105; Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, op.cit., 327; al-Irbili, op.cit., 289; Abū Nuᶜaym, op.cit., 136; Ibn al-Jawzi, Sifat, 96; Ibn Taymiyya, op.cit., IV, 144.
2. Al-Zirikli, op.cit., IV, 276; Ibn al-Jawzi, loc.cit.; Ibn Kathir, loc.cit.; Abu Nuᶜaym, loc.cit.; al-Tabarsi, op.cit., 262; Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, op.cit., 323; Ibn al-Ṣabbagh, al-Fusul al-Muhimma, 188; al-ᶜAshshi, op.cit., 57; al-Bustani, op.cit., IX, 355; Al al-Shaykh, al-Fara'id, III, 122.
3. Al-Irbili, op.cit., 289; Ibn Kathīr, loc.cit.
4. Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, loc.cit.; Abū Nuᶜaym, op.cit., 137; Ibn al-Jawzi, Sifat, 95.

Muḥammad was so worried and anxious because he was not able to repay a loan of fifteen-thousand dinars and when ᶜAlī learnt of this, he said, "I will repay it."[1]

3. His attitudes towards those who wronged him:

ᶜAlī used to forgive those who sometimes said evil things against him or perhaps cursed or abused him. This would impress people so much that they might in consequence become his sincere followers through the example of his behaviour.

Once a man came and abused him, but ᶜAlī said nothing in reply. So the man said, "I am abusing you," but ᶜAlī replied, "And I am not caring about you."[2] On another occasion, a man said evil things about him and ᶜAlī said, "If what you have said about me is true, I ask God for forgiveness, but if it is not true, may God forgive you." On hearing this, the man came to him, kissed his hand, and said, "It is not true what I have said, so forgive me." ᶜAlī said, "May God forgive you." The man replied, "God knows where to put his messages."[3]

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1. Al-Qurashī, op.cit., 156; Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., 105; al-Ṣabbān, op.cit., 219; al-Irbilī, op.cit., 299; al-Dhahabi, Ta'rikh, 36; al-Nisaburi, op.cit., 199.
2. Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhib, 306f.
3. Al-Shablanji, op.cit., 141; al-Yāfiᶜī, op.cit., 191f.; al-Ṣabbān, op.cit., 218f.; Ibn al-Jawzi, Ṣifat, 95; Ibn Kathir, loc.cit.

It was also reported that another man abused him on leaving the mosque. Then ᶜAlī went to the man and said to him, "There are many things hidden from us. Have you any demand that I may help you with?" Then the man became ashamed and ᶜAlī gave him a khamīṣa (a black-bordered cloak) he was wearing and ordered a thousand dirhams to be given to him. As a result, the man used to say to ᶜAlī, "I witness that you are one of the Prophet's (or the prophets') sons."[1]

There is another narration which shows us the mild behaviour of ᶜAlī toward those who behaved badly toward him. It was said that Hishām ibn Ismāᶜīl al-Makhzūmī used to make trouble for ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn and would curse ᶜAlī ibn abī Ṭālib from the pulpit when he was governor of Medina. When Walīd ibn ᶜAbd al-Malik became caliph, Hishām was removed from his office and was ordered to stand trial by the people. Hishām was most concerned that because ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn was a pious man, al-Walīd might respect his words about Hishām, but ᶜAlī recommended to his followers not to harm Hishām. When ᶜAlī found Hishām and said nothing about him, Hishām said, "God knows where to keep his message."[2]

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1. Al-Shablanjī, op.cit., 141; al-Majlisī, op.cit., 99; Ibn al-Jawzi, Sifat, 100; Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzi, op.cit., 328.
2. Al-Majlisī, op.cit., 94; Ibn Saᶜd, op.cit., 220; al-ᶜAshshī, op.cit., 57; al-Qurashi, op.cit., 155.

4. His generosity:

This also was one of ᶜAlī's methods of strengthening his relations with society and of communicating with them. So, in the example already given, ᶜAlī gave a man who cursed him his cloak and a thousand dirhams. It was said that when al-Kumayt, the poet, praised ᶜAlī in one of his poems, ᶜAlī said to him, "We are unable to reward you properly, but God is able to reward you." Then ᶜAlī gave him and his family four-hundred-thousand dirhams.[1] ᶜAlī also gave the poet al-Farazdaq ten-thousand or twelve-thousand dirhams after he also composed a eulogy in praise of ᶜAlī.[2]

5. His relations with his slaves and servants:

Towards his slaves and servants ᶜAlī conducted himself always graciously and freed them on occasions for several reasons. Once, he freed a slave for God's sake alone, because he recited a tradition from Abū Hurayra about the degree of eminence those who freed a slave might have, even though ᶜAlī had bought this slave from ᶜAbd Allāh b. Jaᶜfar for a thousand dinars.[3]

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1. Al-Dhahabī, Ta'rīkh, 126.
2. Jād al-Mawlā, Qusās, II, 260f.; al-Majlisī, op.cit., 127; Ibn Kathir, op.cit., 109; al-Dumayri, Hayāt, I, 9; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haythami, op.cit., 198; al-Murtaḍa, Amālī, I, 69; al-Shablanjī, op.cit., 141; al-Yafi'i, op.cit., I, 239; al-Irbili, op.cit., 292; al-Ḥanbalī, op.cit., 648; Ibn al-Sabbagh, op.cit., 194; Jafri, op.cit., 244; al-Ginji, op.cit., 453; Āl al-Shaykh, op.cit., I, 121; al-Mūsawi, Nazhat, II, 26.
3. Al-Dhahabi, Ta'rīkh, 35; Abū Nuᶜaym, op.cit., 136; Ibn al-Jawzi, Sifat, 97; al-Majlisi, op.cit., 99; Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzi, op.cit., 328.

Again, when a skewer fell from the hands of one of his slaves onto his son's head and the son died, ᶜAlī told the slave that he was free, because he did not intend to kill him.[1] Similarly, ᶜAbd al-Razzāq said that an ewer once fell from the hand of one of his maid-servants onto ᶜAlī's face and wounded him. Then to remove ᶜAlī's anger, she recited some verses from the Qur'ān, on hearing this, he told her, "You are free for God's sake."[2]

In these examples, ᶜAlī was giving other people lessons in how to treat their slaves and servants and how to fill their hearts with happiness. It is further narrated by Hārūn ibn Mūsā al-Talᶜakbārī, from Muḥammad ibn ᶜAjlān, who said that he heard Abū ᶜAbd Allāh (Jaᶜfar al-Ṣadīq) saying that ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn used to gather his slaves together on the last night of Ramaḍān and after reminding them of their sins and mistakes, he would forgive and free them. On the day of the ᶜīd, he would reward them. Al-Ṣadīq also said that the number of slaves he freed on every concluding night of Ramaḍān was about twenty, more or less, and that ᶜAlī did not use to keep a servant or a slave for more than one year.[3]

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1. Al-Irbilī, op.cit., 293; Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., 107; Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzi, op.cit., 331.
2. Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., 107; al-Irbilī, op.cit., 299.
3. Al-Majlisi, op.cit., 105.

B. The Effects of ᶜAlī's Social Behaviour upon the Community

We may now summarise how effective these actions of ᶜAlī were in influencing the community and we shall do this under three heads.

1. Spreading Islamic concepts:

Besides explaining to the people the importance of drawing near to God and strengthening one's personal relationship with God by emulating ᶜAlī's first inclination towards piety, ᶜAlī also demonstrated and exemplified before the people another aspect of Islamic instruction, dealing with social morality and the ethical behaviour of Islam. He thereby sought to make the relationships between the members of the community itself very strong. So we may see from the above examples how many Islamic concepts concerning society and the relationships between its members were explained, including the relationships within the family, the relationships with slaves and poor people, and the forgiveness of those who sought to wrong one. So ᶜAlī achieved an important aim among the people.

2. Success in gaining the love and respect of the people:

On may say that ᶜAlī's second aim of presenting himself as an ideal Muslim was achieved. Because of

ᶜAlī's social involvement, his forgiveness and mercy, many people praised him. In one of our previous examples, Hishām ibn Ismāᶜīl, who was one of ᶜAlī's enemies, praised him and confessed that "God knows where to put his message," mentioning ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn. By ᶜAlī's behaviour towards him, this man was changed from being one of ᶜAlī's enemies to being one who respects ᶜAlī and witnesses to his honour. Again, in another example already cited, another man confessed that ᶜAlī was one of the Prophet's (or prophets') sons. This meant that they recognised his status as a prominent man from the house of the Prophet.

Another important example shows us to what extent ᶜAlī's social involvement extended. It was said that Hishām ibn ᶜAbd al-Malik went on the pilgrimage in the time of the Caliph ᶜAbd al-Malik, or al-Walīd, and he tried to come close to the black stone, but was not able on account of the crowd. At the same time, ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn approached and the people scattered to let him come close to the black stone and touch it. It was with regard to this event that the poet al-Farazdaq composed his eulogy in praise of ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn. From this incident we may deduce that if ᶜAlī had not won the love and respect of the people,

he would not have been able to touch the black stone, but the people, as soon as they saw him walking around the Ka^{c}ba, made a path for him to get near to the black stone and to touch it, while the caliph was not capable of doing so. This demonstrates that his policy of social involvement played a great part in his gaining the respect of all people.

3. Spreading Islamic teaching by manumitting his slaves:

There was evidently great wisdom in ^{c}Alī's conduct toward his slaves and particularly in his not using them for more than one year. Indeed, we may understand that his purpose was to subject these slaves or servants to an intensive course in implanting Islamic concepts and ideals in their hearts and accustoming them to the example of his own Islamic devotions and behaviour. At the end of this course, he would free them and give them rewards, so that these people would become messengers of Islam whenever and wherever they went.

Thus we may appreciate the effects and wisdom behind ^{c}Alī's social actions. Through these activities, he succeeded in achieving his two main goals of spreading Islamic concepts and strengthening relations between members of the community. In every way he showed himself to be the "ideal Muslim," to be followed and respected by all.

III. ᶜAlī's Efforts in Spreading Islamic Teachings and Concepts

ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn's third means of communicating with the people and endeavouring to raise the standard of faith and Islamic knowledge among them was by direct religious instruction. This included the spreading of the Prophet Muḥammad's traditions and teaching people the right way of practising some of the Islamic duties. It also involved the holding of sessions in which he would teach many of his companions the Islamic teachings and beliefs. These various methods by which ᶜAlī commended himself to the people will be discussed in detail below. As in our previous study of ᶜAlī's two other activities, an examination will be made of the various methods adopted by ᶜAlī to further religious knowledge, together with a study of the effects that this activity had upon the society. Thus we shall be able to evaluate whether ᶜAlī succeeded in his aim through this particular activity.

By his efforts expended in this third area of activity, ᶜAlī sought to achieve his main goal of raising the standard of Islamic knowledge and binding the people close to God in

their devotions. Thus, his endeavour was to spread Islamic instructions and the traditions of the Prophet Muḥammad. It was very necessary to strive in this purpose since, as we have mentioned previously, the social situation, especially in Mecca and Medina, had altered from one of religious piety to one in which most of the people had become intent on achieving a considerable realisation of the luxuries of life, with an accompanying neglect of important religious instructions. Hence, the spreading of Islamic doctrine, the Prophet's traditions, and explaining the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth were seen by ᶜAlī to be absolutely essential to the society in which he found himself.

It should be noted that by his activities in this direction, ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn would become highly respected as a scholar, so that people would come to him and recieve their Islamic knowledge and beliefs through him. Thus, he would foster around himself a group of sincere students and followers through whom he could spread Islamic concepts in general and Shīᶜite theories in particular. In this way a nucleus of sincere Shīᶜites would be formed, so that the future Imāms would not start from nothing, but would have a sure foundation on which they could build.

This activity of ᶜAlī may be divided into a number of aspects, according to the instruction he gave in such

matters as Islamic devotions, the Prophet Muḥammad's traditions, Islamic morals, the explanation of Qur'ānic passages, as well as many other subjects. Some examples of ᶜAlī's work in each of these avenues are now presented.

A. Islamic practices

Here we are concerned with ᶜAlī's teaching concerning Islamic devotions, such as prayer, fasting, zakāt al-fitr (obligatory donation of foodstuffs at the end of Ramaḍān), and ḥajj (pilgrimage).

ᶜAlī's main task was to explain the perfect way of practising these devotions and further to instruct the people concerning some other matters relating to these devotions. In addition, his most important object was to explain to people how to experience the benefits of practising these devotions in both personal and social life. In other words, he tried to explain to them that when the individual practises his devotions, he should feel the presence of God with him, so that he will be glad to obey God in all things. By feeling in this way, people would not care any more for the fading luxuries of the new society.

There follow some examples of ᶜAlī's teaching regarding the different Islamic devotions.

1. Prayer

Many narrations are recorded concerning ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn in which he clarifies some details concerning prayer and related matters. Muḥammad ibn ᶜAlī said that ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn used to wear a coat made out of fur, but that he took it off when he wanted to pray.[1] In this way ᶜAlī demonstrated to the people that praying in fur garments was prohibited.

It was also said that ᶜAlī prayed the prayers of zuhr and ᶜasr together and the prayers of maghrib and ᶜishā' also together while travelling, saying that the Prophet Muḥammad had done the same in an unhurried and tranquil situation.[2]

In another tradition, ᶜAlī is said to have told someone to order his seven-year-old boy to pray.[3] ᶜAlī's main object was to remind people that when they prayed they stood before God from whom nothing was hidden, so that under the intense impression of God's presence the individual would be prevented from sinning. As already mentioned, ᶜAlī's own face would turn red and his body would shake in fear of God every time he set himself to ablute or to pray. When he was asked about this, he said that it was

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1. Al-Nuᶜmān, Daᶜā'im al-Islām, 153; Ibn Saᶜd, op.cit., 217.
2. Ibn Saᶜd, op.cit., 219.
3. Ibid.

because he was going to stand in the presence of God.

2. Fasting

ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn explained some of the rules concerning the practice of fasting during the month of Ramaḍān and he narrated many traditions from Muḥammad about fasting. So, for example, ᶜAlī narrated that Muḥammad used to say when breaking his fast, "O God, to you we have fasted and in your beneficence we have broken our fast, so accept it from us."[1]

In another account of an incident which took place between ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn and al-Zuhrī, a great friend and admirer of the Imām, al-Zuhrī narrated,

> "Once, when we were waiting for the lecture of ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, he came and asked me what we were discussing among ourselves. I told him that we were talking about fasting and informed him that my colleagues and I were of the opinion that the only obligatory fast was during Ramaḍān. Hearing this, he said, 'O al-Zuhrī, what you said is not correct. The fast (sawm) is of forty kinds.'"

ᶜAlī then apprised him of all the kinds of fasting.[2]

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1. Al-Baghdādī, Musnad, 183.
2. Abū Nuᶜaym, op.cit., 141; al-Kulaynī, Furūᶜ al-Kāfī, IV, 83-6; Ibn Kathir, op.cit., IX, 115; al-Irbili, Kashf, II, 315-7.

3. Pilgrimage

Many narrations are recorded of ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn in which he talked about pilgrimage and some matters related to it. For example, ᶜAlī narrated from his fathers that the pilgrim in the state of ihrām (ritual consecration of the pilgrim to Mecca) is forbidden from hunting, sexual intercourse, using perfumed, wearing tailored clothes, shaving hair, and cutting his nails.[1]

Abū Jaᶜfar al-Ṣadīq said that ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn said, "The pilgrim is forgiven (by God for his sins), deserving of Paradise...and his family and his money will be protected."[2] Evidently this narration indicates that ᶜAlī, by declaring the reward that the pilgrim would gain from God, urged the people to gon on pilgrimage and to practise this Islamic devotion.

Further, ᶜAlī narrated a tradition in which Muḥammad explained on the day of ᶜArafāt (the name of a mountain and adjacent plain, located four hours' distance east of Mecca, where the Meccan pilgrims spend the ninth day of Dhū al-Ḥijja) the requital that God had reserved for the pilgrims, with the forgiveness of their sins.[3]

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1. Al-Nuᶜmān, op.cit., 358.
2. Al-ᶜĀmilī, Wasa'il, V, 5.
3. Ibid., 65.

The most important incident exemplifying ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn's intentions in inculcating a more sincere approach to the pilgrimage is seen in the occasion when he was supposed to recite the talbiya but was not able to do so. When he was asked about this, he told the other pilgrims that he could not say it while he knew that God would not accept it from him.[1] Thus, ᶜAlī sought to show the people through his own example the necessity of the pilgrim realising that he is in the presence of God who knows his secrets and his motives, so that the pilgrim may not continue in his sins.

4. Marriage

Many traditions were narrated by ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn in which he sought to explain some rules of Islamic marriage and matters connected with it, such as the age of the parties, the dowry, etc. For instance, ᶜAlī ibn al-ᶜAbbās said that Zayd ibn ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn narrated from his father, who narrated it from his fathers, that it is forbidden to be married to young girls unless the permission of their fathers is obtained.[2] Again, Zayd ibn ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn also narrated from his father, who narrated it from his fathers, that a man must not raise a woman's dowry so high

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1. V.sup., p.107.
2. Al-Baghdādī, op.cit., 272.

that it will provoke hatred against him.[1] In these traditions ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn gave the people lessons in how to ask for an appropriate dowry and showed them that if they did not do so, unfortunate consequences would ensue.

B. Explanation of Qur'ānic passages

As an example of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn's activities in this respect, we have the report of Muḥammad b. ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn that ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn said,

> "What gives me no qualms at dying or being killed at present is the saying of God, 'See they not that we gradually reduce the land from its outlying borders?'[2] meaning the death of the scholars (i.e. the allusion here is to the reduction of the land by the death of the scholars)."[3]

On another occasion, ᶜAlī is said to have answered a man's enquiry about the meaning of the invocation, "By the name of God, the most beneficent, the most merciful."[4]

C. Reforming evil customs

By the application of Islamic teaching, ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn played a great part in reforming some of the evil customs which were practised in society and replacing them by true Islamic ordinances. A clear example is seen in ᶜAlī's marrying one of his slave-girls and then setting

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1. Ibid., 270.
2. Surat al-Raᶜd, 41.
3. Al-Majlisi, op.cit, XLVI, 107; al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, al-Mīzān, XI, 421.
4. Al-Ṣadūq, al-Tawḥīd, 231f.

her free. On hearing of this, ᶜAbd al-Malik sent him a letter blaming him for his action, to which ᶜAlī replied, "God has raised by Islam the mean trick and has brought perfection through man's shortcomings...The Apostle of God also married his slave-girl and the divorced wife of his slave." On hearing this, ᶜAbd al-Malik said that ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn had obtained more honour where other people had obtained greater dishonour.[1] This incident shows to what extent ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn endeavoured to change some of the non-Islamic practices common in society. As a result of his example, it was said that although the Medinans were not in favour of marrying slave-girls, when ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad, and Sālim ibn ᶜAbd Allāh lived among them and surpassed the Medinans in their implementation of Islamic laws and piety, the Medinans altered their attitude toward slave-girls.[2]

D. Assisting the caliph by answering the Byzantine Emperor's challenge

ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn greatly assisted the Caliph ᶜAbd al-Malik in replying to the letter which the Byzantine Emperor had sent to him. In this letter, the Emperor said that ᶜAbd al-Malik had eaten meat of the camel on which his father had escaped from Medina, so the Emperor would

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1. Ibn ᶜAbd Rabbih, op.cit., VI, 128; Ibn Qutayba, al-Maᶜārif, 215; Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., IX, 108; Ibn Khallikan, op.cit., III, 269; Ibn Ṭulun, al-A'imma, 78; al-Birrī, op.cit., 51; Wajdi, Dā'ira, IV, 795.
2. Ibn Khallikan, op.cit., III, 268; Wajdī, loc.cit.; Ibn al-ᶜImād, op.cit., 105.

raid him with a hundred-thousand and a hundred-thousand and a hundred-thousand soldiers. Thereupon, ᶜAbd al-Malik wrote to al-Ḥajjāj to send Zayn al-ᶜĀbidīn (i.e. ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn) to sternly charge him to state what should be done. Al-Ḥajjāj did so. ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn replied,

> "God has a preserved tablet at which he glances three-hundred times each day. Not one glance passes without him bringing to life and sending to death, honouring men and humbling others. He does as he wills. I hope he will save you from one of these glances."

Al-Ḥajjāj wrote this to ᶜAbd al-Malik and, after reading it, ᶜAbd al-Malik wrote to the Byzantine Emperor, who, when he had read it, said, "These words come only from a prophet."[1]

E. Advising concerning social relations

ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn paid much attention to the proper conduct between an individual and his relatives or friends. As an example of his advice in these matters, we may take his dictum addressed to one of his sons:

> "O son...you should know that the best parents to their sons are those whose love for them does not lead them into excesses, and the best sons

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1. Al-Majlisī, op.cit., XLVI, 132f.

to their parents are those who recompense their parents."[1]

Thus, ᶜAlī sought to explain to his child the complimentary duties of parents and children.

In another narration, ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn advised his son Muḥammad whom not to take as friends, advising him to keep clear of the godless, the greedy, liars, stupid people, and finally the breaker of relations (who does not visit his relatives), because ᶜAlī found him denounced in the book of God (the Qur'ān) in three verses.[2]

Concerning the relations between members of society and the duties of each member toward others, Zayd ibn ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn narrated from his father, who narrated it from his fathers, that the Prophet Muḥammad said, "Visit your sick people, attend your funerals, and visit your graves, because this will remind you of the hereafter."[3] By repeating this tradition from Muḥammad, ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn sought to promulgate Islamic instructions concerning the relations between members of society and their duties towards one another.

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1. Ibn ᶜAbd Rabbih, op.cit., 154.
2. Al-Irbilī, op.cit, II, 293; al-Ḥarrānī, Tuḥaf, 279; al-Dhahabi, al-Kaba'ir, 38; Ibn al-Jawzī, Ṣifat, II, 101.
3. Al-Baghdādi, op.cit., 159.

Further, al-Ṭabarānī narrated from ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn that on the day of judgment some people will be admitted to Paradise and when the angels ask them for the reason which brought them to this high honour, they will say,

> "We used to visit each other for God's sake, we sat long with each other for God's sake, and we spent generously for God's sake."

On hearing this, the angels will tell them, "Enter Paradise, you who are blessed for your deeds."[1]

F. Narrating the Prophet's traditions

This is one of the most important aspects of ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn's work in Islamic instruction. He narrated many of the Prophet's traditions which he had heard from his fathers or from the Prophet's Companions. His work in publishing these traditions was such that a large number of scholars have taken many of these traditions from him, so that ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn was considered an eminent traditionist within the Medinese circle of scholars.[2]

ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn narrated traditions from his father, his uncle al-Ḥasan ibn ᶜAlī, Jābir, Ibn ᶜAbbās, al-Musawwar ibn Makhrama, Abū Hurayra, Ṣafiyya, ᶜĀ'isha,

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1. Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., 114f.
2. Jafri, op.cit., 245.

Umm Salama,[1] Ibn ᶜUmar,[2] Abū Rafīᶜa, Saᶜīd ibn al-Musayyab, and the daughter of ᶜAbd Allāh ibn Jaᶜfar.[3] Many others have subsequently narrated traditions from ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn. Among the Sunnite transmitters were his sons Muḥammad, Zayd, ᶜAbd Allāh, and ᶜUmar. Other Sunnites who transmitted from him included Abū Salama ibn ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān, Ṭā'ūs ibn Kaysān, al-Zuhrī, Abū Zinād, al-Qaᶜqāᶜ ibn Ḥākim, Yaḥyā ibn Saᶜīd al-Anṣārī,[4] and others also.

Among the Shīᶜite traditionists who narrated from him were Ibrāhīm ibn Bashīr al-Anṣārī, Ibbān ibn Taghlub ibn Rayyaḥ, Ibrāhīm ibn Yazīd al-Nakhaᶜī al-Kūfī, Jābir ibn ᶜAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī, Jābir ibn Muḥammad ibn abī Bakr, al-Ḥusayn ibn ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn (his own son), Ḥāmid ibn Muslim al-Kūfī, Zayd ibn ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn (another of his sons), Saᶜīd ibn al-Musayyab, Saᶜīd ibn Jubayr, Sālim ibn Qays al-Hilālī, Muḥammad ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī, al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad ibn abī Bakr, Muḥammad ibn ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, Kankar (related to Abū Khālid al-Kābulī), al-Minhal ibn ᶜAmr al-Asadī,[5] and others.

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1. Al-Dhahabī, Tadhkirat, I, 75; idem, al-Kāshif, II, 282; Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., 103f.
2. Al-Dhahabī, Tadhkirat, I, 75; Abū Nuᶜaym, op.cit, III, 142.
3. Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhīb, VII, 304f.
4. Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., 103f.; al-Dhahabī, al-Kāshif, 282; idem, Tadhkirat, 75; Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhīb, 304f.
5. Al-Ṭusi, Rijal, 81-102.

G. Examples of ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn's sayings concerning many different Islamic concepts

Here we may consider numerous sayings demonstrating ᶜAlī's extensive knowledge of Islamic concepts in many fields. They include discussion of many Islamic commands, wise proverbs, and other injunctions and may be divided into various categories according to the subjects of narration.

1. Satisfaction

Explaining the deep meaning of being rich, ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn said, "Whoever is satisfied with what God has given him is the richest."[1] Thus ᶜAlī observed that the richest man is not the one who owns the greatest amount of money and property, but the one who is satisfied with what God has given to him.

2. Repentance

In discussing repentance and urging people to it, ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn said, "God loves the sinner, the penitent believer."[2] It was further reported that when al-Zuhrī became conscious of his sin, he left his family and money. When ᶜAlī saw him, he told him, "O al-Zuhrī, to despair of the mercy of God, which engulfs everything, is worse than

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1. Al-Irbilī, op.cit., 314; Abū Nuᶜaym, op.cit., 135.
2. Ibn Saᶜd, op.cit., 219; Ibn Kaṯhīr, op.cit., 115; Ibn Ḥajar, op.cit., 306; Abu Nuᶜaym, op.cit., 140.

your sin." As a result, al-Zuhrī used to say that ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn was one who did him great favour.[1]

3. The public and practical purpose of knowledge

ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn paid great attention to the necessity of teaching others what one has learnt and practising it also, since knowledge remains ineffectual if it is reserved to oneself privately without any performance of it. Learning soemthing without practising it is like the donkey which carries books. In one of his sayings on this matter, ᶜAlī said that the person who keeps secret his knowledge or takes money for it will not get any benefit from his knowledge.[2] On the need to practise one's knowledge, ᶜAlī ibn Hishām ibn al-Barīd reported from his father that a man came to ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn and asked him some questions. ᶜAlī answered his questions. Then the man asked him further some questions similar to the previous ones, so ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn said,

> "It is written in the Bible not to ask about some matters you do not understand before practising what you have already learnt, because if one does not practise what he has learnt he will increase in godlessness and will wander far from God."[3]

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1. Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., 108; Ibn Saᶜd, op.cit., 214.
2. Abū Nuᶜaym, op.cit., 140; al-Irbilī, op.cit., 315.
3. Al-Kulaynī, al-Kafī, "al-Uṣūl," IX, 169.

4. Wisdom concerning personal sickness

ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn said, "The body which does not suffer illness behaves evily and recklessly, and there is no good produced by a person who is evil and reckless."[1]

We have now reviewed ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn's third area of activity, which we have recognized in his endeavours to spread Islamic instructions and the Prophet Muḥammad's traditions among the people. The topics and areas of knowledge which we have mentioned demonstrate the breadth of his knowledge and his deep perception of Islamic concepts.

III. The Effectiveness of ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn's Teaching of Islamic Concepts

After reviewing the methods which ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn adopted and followed in promulgating Islamic concepts among the people, a careful study must be made of the effectiveness or otherwise of these methods, in order to evaluate whether ᶜAlī acutally succeeded in this activity. The effectiveness of ᶜAlī's endeavours to promulgate Islamic teaching may be gauged by an examination of the respect he achieved in three areas: the reliability of his ascriptions in the chain

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1. Al-Irbilī, op.cit., 314; Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., 113; Abū Nuᶜaym, op.cit., 134.

of transmissions, the opinion expressed of him by Islamic schools of thought, and schalarly appreciation of his learning.

A. The reliability of his ascriptions

What is meant by the reliability of ᶜAlī's ascriptions is the degree of truth accorded to the traditions which he narrated from the Prophet Muḥammad. This may be surmised from the sayings of some Islamic scholars. The point is very important because it shows to what extent ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn had obtained competence in his understanding of the Sunna of the Prophet. In its effects it is also to be regarded as one aspect of ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn's degree of respect in the field of Islamic learning, since if the reliability of his ascriptions is very strong, scholars will treat his sayings as of great importance and will depend on them for Islamic instruction and legislation. In consequence, ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn will be regarded as an important authority for Islamic rules and knowledge. The following sayings are worthy of note in this respect.

Abū al-Ḥasan al-Fardī and Abū Yaᶜla al-Bazzāz said, "Sahl ibn Bishr told us that ᶜAlī ibn Munīr ibn Aḥmad told him that al-Ḥasan ibn Rashīq said that Abū ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān al-Nisā'ī told us, 'The best ascriptions narrating from the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) are four. One of them

is al-Zuhrī, from ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, from Ḥusayn ibn ᶜAlī, from ᶜAlī ibn abī Ṭālib, from the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).'"[1]

Again, al-Ḥākim said, "I have heard Abū Bakr ibn Daran, from some of his scholars, from Abū Bakr ibn abī Shayba, say, 'The truest ascription among others is al-Zuhrī, from ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, from his father, from ᶜAlī.'"[2]

B. The opinion expressed of ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn by different Islamic schools of thought

ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn's authority in Islamic teaching was evidently so widely accepted that Muslims and scholars from several schools of thought respected his testimony. ᶜAlī became known as a traditionist from whom many scholars of different persuasions took the traditions of the Prophet Muḥammad.

With regard to the Sunnite school of thought, we have already observed how many of the traditions he narrated became included in Sunnite reference works and the Sunnite scholars described his ascription as among the truest. Moreover, many of his sayings and narratives have been cited in the Sunnite reference works with expressions of esteem

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1. Ibn ᶜAsākir, Ta'rīkh Dimashq, 101.
2. Ibn Ḥajar, op.cit., 305; al-Nawawī, Tahdhīb, pt.1, 343.

and respect. Further, many Sunnite scholars clearly admired him for his knowledge and activity in promulgating Islamic teaching.

For the Zaydīs also, many Islamic rules of jurisprudence and other principles were derived from Zayd ibn ᶜAlī, who narrated them mostly from his father ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn. Many of these traditions have already been referred to.

For the Ismāᶜīlīs also, al-Qāḍī al-Nuᶜmān, who was the greatest Ismāᶜīlī jurist and protagonist of the early Fāṭimids in Egypt,[1] derived many Ismāᶜīlī juristical rules from the narrations of ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn. These rules are recorded in his famous work Daᶜā'im al-Islām.

The Shiᶜites also derived many of their juristical rules from the narrations of ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn. They also depended on ᶜAlī for many of their principles in different fields of Islamic knowledge. Many of his narrations and anecdotes were recorded in their own works of reference, some of which have already been cited.

We may conclude from all this that ᶜAlī's third preoccupation, i.e. the teaching of Islamic concepts, had

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1. See EI[1], art. "al-Nuᶜmān b. Abī ᶜAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Manṣūr b. Aḥmad b. Ḥaiyum al-Tamīmī al-Ismāᶜīlī al-Maghribī Abū Ḥanīfa."

a marked impact upon many Islamic schools of thought, all of which took many of their principles from him.

C. Scholarly appreciation of ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn's depth of learning

ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn's third activity, of promulgating Islamic learning, and his own deep penetration in Islamic subjects came to be admired by later scholars. This evident ability led him to be thought of as an ideal person to be followed, and his sayings and behaviour as true paragons of excellence.

In illustrating the admiration which ᶜAlī achieved, we are here concerned only with the admiration which came to him in respect of his achievements in Islamic knowledge. The admiration he received in respect of other matters has been discussed in previous sections.

Among those who expressed their admiration of him was al-Zuhrī, one of ᶜAlī's companions, who said, "I have not seen anyone more knowledgeable in jurisprudence than ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn."[1] Among later scholars was Ibn Ḥajar al-Haythamī al-Makkī, who said that Zayn al-ᶜĀbidīn was one who inherited his father's knowledge.[2] Ibn Saᶜd also said,

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1. Ibn al-Jawzī, op.cit., 99; al-Dhahabī, al-ᶜIbar, I, 111; idem, Tadhkirat, 75; Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., 106.
2. Al-Ṣawāᶜiq, 122.

"They have said that ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn was a trustworthy narrator of many traditions."[1]

IV. Conclusion

In conclusion, we have noted how ᶜAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn exerted himself in three particular avenues of activity, which we have examined in their several facets. His main object was always to spread understanding of Islam among the people. He clearly succeeded in making a great impact on his companions and on other scholars who relied on him greatly in deriving some of their principles and rules of practice.

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1. Ibn Sa'd, op.cit, 222.

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^{c}Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ^{c}Alī ibn abī Ṭālib. Al-Ṣaḥīfat al-Sajjādiyyat al-Kāmila (Kuwait, n.d.)

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