The successor of the Prophet.
– A historical analysis of the early political differences between the Sunni and Shi’a Islamic school of thoughts.
Abstract

The early split of Islam is regarded as one of the most profound and complex events in Islamic history, not only would it lay the foundation of two predominant branches of Islam, but it would also be one of the oldest arguments in Islamic history. Who is the rightful successor to the Prophet Muhammad? This essay aims to explore the deep root behind the initial schism of Islam and understand the arguments both schools use to legitimize their position. What do the Sunnis and Shi’as say about the event of Ghadir, the hadith of the two weighty things and the incident of Saqifa, and how do each school of Islam interpret these events? The source material consists of Hadiths and scholastic literatures from both Sunni Islam, Shi’a Islam, as well as literatures from Secular sources. By basing the analysis on Wilfred Madelung and Ali Asghar’s theory of disserting Orientalist understanding of a monolith perspective on Islamic history, the essay aims to understand and broaden the reality of the schism of Islam and to bring emphasis on the events that often goes ignored throughout history. Finally, the results prove that both Sunnis and Shi’as differ regarding the caliphate, and the assertions for these lay in their respective interpretations. The Shi’as maintain that Ali should’ve been the successor, while the Sunnis believe Abu Bakr was the caliph.

Keywords: Saqifa, Ghadir Khumm, Orientalism, Thaqalayn, Ahlul Bayt, Mawla, Wali, Caliphate, Hadith, Sunni, Shi’a, Sahih sittahs, Bukhari, Muslim, Nahjul Balagha.
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Chapter 1. Introduction

1. Introduction

No doubt the split of Islam is one of the most complex and profound historical events in Islamic history. With the split of Islam during its early history, the right to succeed the Islamic Prophet Mohammed as the head of state had such an impact on history that it led to the division of the Islamic nation, also known as the Ummah. For the Sunnis, Abu Bakr – a companion to the Prophet – was considered the rightful caliph who succeeded the Prophet, with Umar and Uthman succeeding in succession, while for the Shi’as, Ali – the cousin and son in law of the Prophet – was the rightful successor all along, so the Shi’as held that Abu Bakr and the succeeding caliphs’ position as a head of state was nothing but a usurpation of the Islamic nation. However, despite there not being any explicit indication of who had been appointed by the Prophet, both schools, even to this day, debate the succession through various source materials. In this essay, I will present early Islamic opinions regarding the interpretations of different events that took place in early Islamic history. The essay will give a comprehensive insight into the early Islamic history to dissect and analyse the factors behind the political split in Islam and how the Sunni and Shi’a branches of Islam interpret these various accounts and narrations to determine their positions.

I have been interested in Islamic history and has always been fascinated by how it forms much of today’s world through their influence and benefit. But one must also understand how Islam came to be the religion it is today. As ISIS declines in the middle east, other powers have grown significant influence in the region, one stunning example is Iran, a predominately Shi’a nation that has usually been pitted against the vastly Sunni dominated world. It has, therefore, come to the
attention of many scholars to understand the bitter rivalry between both schools of Islam.

In this thesis I will analyse three different events in Islamic history that is imperative to both branches of Islam, they are considered important as they determined the outcome of the Islamic nation after the Prophet’s death.

1.1. Purpose and goal

The main purpose of this thesis is to understand the complex issue in regards to who should’ve succeeded the Prophet Muhammed after his passing that would result in the early Islamic division, and the convoluted and profound argument that set both Shi’as and Sunnis in disagreement regarding the successorship of the Prophet Muhammed, to understand this issue, this thesis will dissect and analyse the political and historical events that laid the political foundation of the split between the respective schools of Islam and so three historical events will be analysed to understand the decisiveness for such a split in Islamic history to take place and how they determined the initial disagreements over the successorship and the 1400-year-old argument about who should’ve been considered the righteous successor to the Prophet Muhammed.

As previously mentioned, the thesis will emphasize three important events in Islamic history that are fundamental to understanding the foundation of the Shi’a-Sunni schism and how they determined the differences regarding the opinion of who was designated the successor of the Prophet Muhammed. I will touch upon each respective event and will at the end provide a comprehensive insight of the events that lead to the eventual split provided with interpretations of scholars from each respective school of thought and how they justify their claims regarding who the Prophet designated as the true successor.
1.2. Issues

- What is the main position for the Sunni and Shi’a branches of Islam regarding the successorship of the Prophet Muhammed, which personality do they consider having been designated as the righteous successor of the Islamic nation?
  - What are the mainline Sunni and Twelver Shi’a positions regarding the event of Ghadir, The hadith of the two weighty things and the Incident at Saqifa?
  - What arguments and interpretations do the Sunni-Shi’a school of thoughts apply to these events to justify their position of who would’ve succeeded the Prophet Muhammed after his passing?

1.3. Limitations

This research text will be limited to only the three events as I mentioned in the previous point, there are, indeed, many events in Islamic history that is fundamental to understanding the schism of Islam, however, due to how these events take place one after the other and how they’re, as a result, relevant to each other, it is only appropriate to emphasize the events that would lay the foundation to a 1400-year-old argument. I will also limit myself to these events due to the size of this thesis. Materials used in this thesis are strictly limited to the Sunni school of thought and the Twelver Shi’a school of thought, with secondary sources used as interpretations and commentaries.

The Qur’an as a scripture have gone through historical criticism, however, such a discussion would fall outside the topic of this thesis, but I postulate it as a historical source.
1.4. Definitions

It should be expected that a lot of terms can be difficult to understand; the whole thesis tries to define some terms that are imperative to define and contextualize, the Arabic language is vast and intricate and gives room for interpretation. Definitions can also vary depending on the denominations and how it suits their interests, as we will later, it should be noted that few of the definitions that are fundamental to the narrations mentioned is that the schools of Islam aren’t unanimous in their contextualized definition, for example, the definition of the term *Mawla* is a widely disputed term with over 40 definitions, we cannot conclude that *Mawla* is defined as, let’s say, Master – one of the definitions of the term. Indeed, one could fit it into one’s narration, but these are merely theories and speculations pertaining to a specific dimension of religious interpretations, how they resonate with the Sunni and Shi’a schools of thoughts are different matters. The thesis will, however, provide their definition as they are, at best, resonated in each respective school of thought.

Another definition that should be brought to awareness is the term *Ahlul Bayt* – the Prophet’s household. One should keep in mind that the definition of Ahlul Bayt differs in each respective school as to who is or who are considered included in it, the Shi’as believe that the Ahlul Bayt were referring exclusively to the personalities described in the *Hadith of Mubahilla*, an event where the Prophet declared that he, Ali, al-Hassan, al-Hussain and Fatimah were part of his *Ahlul Bayt* and were, therefore, purified. Some Sunni scholars do not limit it exclusively to them, but considers the Ahlul Bayt to include the Prophet Muhammed, Ali, al-Hassan, al-Hussain, Fatimah and the wives of the Prophet, using the “Verse of purification” as their justification to refer to the wives as being included in the purification. It is important to understand how the term Ahlul Bayt is defined differently.

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Other definitions are simple and unanimously agreed by both schools and do not need further speculation, however, it is worth mentioning their definition regardless of the contextualization of the events, however, to provide an exact definition of these terms are not essential to this thesis and the essay will rather provide a concise interpretation of their definition adapted to the English language with the definitions laid out in the materials.

1.5. Material

Most of the materials that are made use of in this thesis are Hadiths and historical chronicles made by classic Islamic scholars. Sunni hadiths will be used and compared to Shi’a hadiths where the events are related. Hadith compilations such as Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Musnad ibn Hanbal, Muwatta by Imam Malik and Sunan Tirmidhi will be used to relate to the events. It should be noted that I will not make use of Shi’a hadiths as the narrations I will use from the Primary Sunni sources are considered authentic and part of the Shi’a collection of narrations, indeed, many of these events recorded in the sahih sittahs are also written down in Al Ghadir by the Iranian Shia scholar Abd Al Husayn Amini, a 20-volume book recording many events that are mentioned in the six sahih sittahs – the six main authentic hadith compilations. Instead, one of the most reputable literatures in Twelver Shi’a Islamic school of thought, is the Nahjul Balagha. The Nahjul Balagha is claimed to consist of letters and sayings of Ali and addresses many points regarding the succession of the Prophet and the incidents that took place shortly after the Prophet’s death and during Ali’s tenure as the caliph.

Secondary literatures, such as, A restatement of Islam and Muslims by the Shi’a scholar, Sayyed Ali Asghar Razwy will provide me with analysis of these events from a Shi’a perspective while also comparing it with other historical views, and Tabari’s historiography will provide me with the Sunni perspective. One of the secondary literatures I believe will contribute to this essay in magnitude is the Succession to Muhammed, by Wilhem Madelung, this book is a best seller and has been awarded the Best book of the Year by the Islamic republic of Iran for its re-interpretation and insight of early Islamic history, especially for its emphasize on
the early Islamic split. Madelung’s book provides a glimpse into the intra-religious affairs from the first caliph to the fourth and mainly discusses the foundation of the political opinions of the Shi’as.
Chapter 2. Earlier research and theoretical outsets

Madelung introduces and purports a theoretical outset for his studies which involves dissecting Islamic history through breaking the Orientalist lens of early Islamic history. I have taken the opportunity to make use of this theory to be able to understand the unabridged understanding of early Islamic history.

In the course of Islamic history, the history of the religion of Islam has been mostly viewed from an entirely one-sided perspective; the historical views of religion has mostly been pertained objectively and did not reveal the true picture of Islam’s historical and theological development, it is indeed fundamental to understand that the dissection of early Western or Orientalist interpretations of Islamic history must come with an interest to broaden the picture of early Islamic history to reveal a profound, yet perplexing intra-religious affair that had not been in the mind of many early Historians. Wilhelm Madelung states in his book *The succession of the Prophet* that there has been no attempt by the majority of Historians into unravelling the history of Early Islam, especially in relation to the early schism of Islam. The lack of interest is grounded on the fact that the issue only grew in a later age, especially with the predominately Sunni Historians that had disseminated their objective perspectives on early Islamic history and pertained to a very closed perspective, this must’ve mostly been done to avoid division in the so-called Ummah.\(^3\) It was only till much later that many Historians would accept the concocted idea of a Jewish convert to Islam who would be considered the founder of early Shi’a Islam as he was assumed to have extolled Ali to a divine position, giving a concocted idea of Shi’a Islam in a very superstitious and erroneous way, mostly with an interest to disseminate an opinion about Shi’as as rebels who threatened order and security in the early caliphates and that even the disputes of the rightful succession was a forgery made up by the Alids (=partisans of Ali who rejected the caliphates), these Western Historians believed that the Shi’as were not seen as a reliable group of

people. There was no interest in trying to broaden the image of the early Islamic caliphates due to the popularity of Abu Bakr and Umar who, at their time, had to deal with unrest in their respective tenancy, so early Historians were more interested in the early caliphs suppression of early Islamic dissidents formed by the Arabic tribes that had converted to Islam, along with the rise of False Prophets and the Kharijites. It should also be noted that early Islamic Historians were also interested in how Islam expanded, especially with how the expansion of Islam dilated even to the western horns of Africa. Historians have been more interested in how Islam competed with the early Sassanids and Byzantines. As such, Shi’a Islam would only gain attention much later in History due to its influence, especially in modern time, as a result more modern Historians have begun to take the initiative to trace Shi’a Islam back to its fundamental and historical roots. Ali Asghar explains in his book *A restatement of the history of Islam and Muslims* that Islam has been viewed mainly through a one-sided and monolith perspective, even though there were intra-religious divisions, Islam was viewed very homogenously. He continuous to say that the theory laid down by Orientalists have led to a very erroneously presumption over Islamic history as empirical facts told from a very Sunni-centred objective view despite the Orientalists claiming to have the position of a non-partisan. Unfortunately, they fell victims to the predominately disseminated opinions by Sunni Historians and were, thus, gullible to a one-sided aspect of history. Ali Asghar provides an in-depth perspective on Islamic History through a Shi’a perspective, however, he is even generous enough to provide different narrations by different historians as he compares them with each other and even his own, this is to dissect each narration and complement them with his own studies.

Wilhelm makes a comparative and historical critical analysis in his book to understand the broader picture of Islam by casting aside the objective perspective of Islamic history made by many Islamic historians such as W. Montgomery Watt, for example, W. Montgomery Watt states that Abu Bakr was the obvious choice for the caliphate due to his loyalty to the Prophet and his high-ranking position in the Ummah, however, the critical observer may view this in a different lens, was Abu Bakr

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4 Ibid. p. 2
5 Ibid. p. 2-3
really fit for the job? It’s obvious that one might’ve preferred someone who is more competent, but other critiques would question the character and intention of such a man and why the Prophet would’ve preferred him over Ali, a man known for his loyalty to the Prophet who also married the latter’s daughter, Fatimah. Wilhelm attempts to put gravity into the dispute in relation to the topic of succession in the caliphate, especially by bringing forward intra-religious opinions even among the early Muslims before the split and their contribution to the crystallisation of early Shi’i political thoughts.

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Chapter 3. Method

I will make use of a content analysis: the analysis of this thesis must be understood as involving bias from each respective school of thought, the purpose of this method is to understand the bias or one-sided perspective that the historiographies may have in their texts, one cannot determine both events as substantiated proof, a primarily example is Tabari who is a Sunni scholar who interpreted Islamic history through a one-sided perspective, this is because some of these scholars lived under social circumstances where history was written from a perspective that became normalized as facts in the Islamic world, especially with Sunni opinions disseminated throughout early Islamic caliphates, especially that of the Umayyads and Abbasids who often made sure to undermine the Shi’as. Ibn Ishaq contributed to the *Si’rat of the Prophet Muhammed* – a biography of the prophet, a well-known literature that is often debated amongst respective school of thoughts for its lack of details pertaining to certain events.\(^8\)

The point is to make out the differences and make comparative studies and understand where the political differences crystalized, likewise, it is important to understand the interpretations provided by both school of thoughts, therefore, I will also make use of a comparative method to understand some of the terms that each school of thoughts differs about. Understanding the interpretations of these words contribute to answering my question as they are fundamental to understanding each differences of opinions.

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Chapter 4. Analysis

4.1. Background

Long after the Prophet’s death, there were disagreements regarding whom would succeed the prophet. With Islam as an established religion, no longer did the Muslims of this new faith have to worry about further persecution and oppression at the hands of the defeated Idol worshippers of the Hejaz region (Arabia). However, the Prophet had limited time left in this world and eventually had to leave his people. With no successor to claim the position of a caliph, the adherents of this newly revealed religion were lost in thought, having no one to lead them. Taking matters into their hands, Abu Bakr and Umar ibn Khattab – two companions of the prophet – had no choice but to arrange a secret meeting with the Ansars (=helpers), members of a clan who had converted to the religion, together they discussed the issue about whom would succeed the prophet. Eventually, they reached a conclusion choosing Abu Bakr to be the leader of the Ummah (=Islamic nation). While a solution was met, some of the Muslims were not satisfied with the outcome and were, in fact, not aware of this election; Ali ibn Abu Talib – the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet – and his household were busy washing the Prophet’s body before burying him, with no one allowed to enter the house where the procession took place.9 As the events took place, Ali was not aware of this election and fell into a dispute with the Abu Bakr and Umar.10 Tabari also narrates that the Muhajiroon (=those who migrated to Yathrib) were not told about this event and that only a selected few were chosen.11 Historical narrations refer to this event as Saqifa – referring to the actual location where the election took place. This controversial event is believed to have caused the initial schism in Islam in

10 Ibid. p. 685
its political aspect. It is important to understand that this event is especially im-
portant to the Shi’a school of thought as the foundation for the tragedy that would befall in the future for the Ahlul Bayt (=the Prophet’s household). What makes this event unique and imperative is the disagreement regarding whether the Prophet had already appointed a successor or not. According to the Sunni school of thought, the Prophet had not appointed a successor, while the Shi’a school of thought claim that there had already been an established successor to the Prophet on several occasions during his life. According to Sayyid Ali Asghar, he alleges that there has not been enough research by Orientalists to determine the exact outcome of this event due to the lack of interest, but rather, that they have historically concurred with the Sunni religious perspective regarding the event at Saqifah in most historical literatures rather than to view it from different angles.\textsuperscript{12}

4.2. Hadith at-Thaqalayn – The hadith of the two weighty things.

This section will deal with one of the narrations dealing with the event that took place shortly before the Prophet’s death – the event of the two weighty things. When the Prophet and his companions had finished the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, the Prophet had ordered his followers to stop at a pond known as Ghadir.\textsuperscript{13} The prophet had announced to his believers that his time was soon to come to an end and that he would leave two “weighty things” behind that would keep his believers on the straight path.\textsuperscript{14} Both schools agree that this event took place in the life of the Prophet, however, we shall soon deal with the different interpretations regarding this event and how they would later have an important connection to the event of Saqifa.

When the Prophet had stopped his followers during their return from their pil-
grimage, he ordered his followers to put saddles on a pile to make it look like a mountain. According to Sunni-Shi’a scholars the Qur’anic verse was then re-
vealed\textsuperscript{15}:

\begin{flushright}
\texttt{Asghar, A. (2015) A restatement of the history of Islam and Muslims p. 5}
\texttt{Siddiqui, A. (2009) Sahih Muslim, Book 31, Number 5920-23.}
\texttt{Ibid.}
\texttt{Muhammed, H. (1995) Tafsir ibn Abi Hatim Vol. 4 Pg. 1172 Hadith no. 6609}
\end{flushright}
O Messenger! proclaim the (message) which hath been sent to thee from thy Lord. If thou didst not, thou wouldst not have fulfilled and proclaimed His mission. And Allah will defend thee from men (who mean mischief). For Allah guideth not those who reject Faith (5:67).  

However, both branches differ on where exactly this verse was revealed. Sunni narrations claim that it was revealed during the Day of Arafah in the final pilgrimage, while Shi’a scholars claim that it was revealed during the event of Ghadir, a location that lies between Mecca and Medina.

The revelation reveals that God had commanded the Prophet Muhammed to preach what God ordered him to proclaim to his followers. The Prophet was revealed with another verse:

This day have those who reject faith given up all hope of your religion: yet fear them not but fear Me. This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion (5:3)

As with the previous verse, both schools differ on where this verse was revealed. Sunni narrations claim it was revealed in the day of Arafah, while Shi’a narrations claim that it was revealed in Ghadir. Nevertheless, the event is significant because it is considered the location where the verse of perfection had been revealed. Both Shi’as and Sunnis believe the Prophet to have said:

I am leaving among you two weighty things: the one being the Book of Allah in which there is right guidance and light, so hold fast to the Book of Allah and adhere to it. He exhorted (us) (to hold fast) to the Book of Allah and then said: The second are the members of my household I remind you (of your duties) to the members of my family.

One of the companions asked “Who are they? Thereupon he said: 'Ali and the offspring of 'Ali.”

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23 Ibid.
However, there is one narration in Imam Malik ibn Anas’s Muwatta that is considered an authentic hadith by some Sunni scholars, such as Ibn Abi Uways\textsuperscript{24}. The Prophet said:

I have left behind two things, you will never go astray as long as you hold fast onto them i.e. the Quran and Sunnah.\textsuperscript{25}

The difference comes as an issue regarding these narrations, while some Sunnis may accept Muslim’s narration, some have also mentioned Malik’s narration as reliable, this could be the result of the relevance of each school to this hadith, as how Sunnis put more emphasize into the Prophetic traditions (=Sunnah) while Shi’as emphasizes more with the Prophetic household (=Ahlul Bayt). Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani in his commentary reported that Muwatta’s version of Thaqalayn had a weak Isnad (=chain of narration) since the narrator, although being truthful in his words, suffered from memory loss and so the Sittah versions should take precedence over the Muwatta version.\textsuperscript{26}

Regardless, there is a stark difference regarding how both Shi’as and Sunnis view this event. Shi’as make this hadith clear and considers it a confirmation by the Prophet that he had indeed left a successor behind. Sunnis do not necessarily disagree with the Shi’a perspective on its literal meaning, but rather, the Prophet’s household could be understood as a source of emulation, but not necessarily rejecting the term Sunnah. In fact, while the six Sittahs never mention Malik’s narration about the “Sunnah”, but rather it says “Prophet’s household”, the same hadith is mentioned in Sahih Bukhari but with the title “Holding to the Qur’an and the Sunnah”\textsuperscript{27} despite there being no hadiths in the six Sittahs that ever mention the term Sunnah as being narrated by the Prophet rather than the Ahlul Bayt. It is interesting to note that the Shi’as not only use their Hadith books to make this argument, but

\textsuperscript{24} Al-Nishapuri, H. (n.d) Al-Mustadark ‘ala sahihayn vol. 1 p.171
\textsuperscript{26} Williams. K (2017) Fath al-Bari: Victory of the creator – Commentary on Sahih al-Bukhari, pp 388
\textsuperscript{27} Muhsin, K. (2009) Sahih Al-Bukhari, Vol. 8, Pp. 137
rather use the Sunnis Hadiths in the Sittahs to make their case as it is more relevant to the Sunnis than to use their own hadiths which they reject.

4.3. The event of Ghadir Khumm

The event of the two weighty things was an important event in the history of Islam, it dealt with the finalization of the Qur’anic revelation and the final command of God to His Prophet. While the previous hadiths gave a general background to events that would transpire, another event took place subsequently, the event of Ghadir Khumm. This event lays the political foundation for the succession in Islam, most particularly for the Shi’as. This event is heavily disputed between both schools due to the Arabic definition of the term “Mawla” which we will come to. In this narration the Prophet said:

O Muslims! I am a mortal like any of you, and I may soon be summoned into the presence of my Lord. My most precious legacy to you is the Book of Allah and the members of my family, as I have told you before. Now listen to this with attention that I am the Master of all of you - of all Believers. All those men and women who acknowledge me as their Master, I want them to acknowledge (at this point he held Ali’s hand and lifted it high over his head) Ali also as their Mawla. Ali is the Mawla of all those men and women whose Mawla I am. 28

The hadith is also mentioned in the Al-Tibyar. As the Prophet delivered the message, he also raised his hand, and said:

O Allah! Be Thou a Friend of him who is a friend of Ali, and be Thou an Enemy of him who is his enemy. Help him whoever helps Ali, and forsake him whoever forsakes him (Ali). 29

Both speeches are preserved in Tawhid e-Dal’el by Allama Shahab ud-Deen Ahmed. A condensed version of this speech can be found in the Musnad of Ibn Hanbal. 30

Sunni scholars claim from Hadith literatures that the event took place because of affairs that transpired between Ali and one of the companions of Prophet Muhammad, Khalid ibn Walid. According to At-Tirmithi, Muhammed had sent two

29 Ibid.
30 Al-Khattab, N (2012) English translation of Musnad Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal #950
armies and had appointed Ali for one and Khalid ibn Walid for the other. The hadith narrates that Ali had conquered a fort and taken a slave-girl captive for himself, much to the dismay of Khalid ibn Walid who complained to the Prophet that Ali had not split the war booty evenly.\textsuperscript{31} In another narration by Ibn Hanbal, a companion of the Prophet had seen the events that took place and took a letter to the Prophet to complain about what had transpired, however, the Prophet interrupted him and commanded him to love Ali.\textsuperscript{32} As a result, al-Nasai narrates that the Prophet had said “Whosoever I am his Mawla, Ali is his Mawla.” as a response to the allegations brought upon his cousin, Ali.

Shia scholars such as Sayyed Ammar Nakshawani refutes this hadith as being taken out of context; both two events took place in separate locations at a different time. Note that Ali and Khalid ibn Walid were on an expedition in Yemen, while the Farewell Sermon took place after the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. Nakshawani claims that it is an outrageous attempt at trivializing the event of Ghadir and an attempt at derailing the actual context of the event of Ghadir because the Prophet had been in Medina while Ali was in Yemen when the incident of the war bounties had taken place.\textsuperscript{33} Nevertheless, the event of Ghadir is understood as being related to the incident in Yemen by Sunni scholars.

While the incident in Yemen is not rejected by any means, it is in fact regarded as a very important event since the Prophet had recommended Ali for his grandiose contributions. Ali Asghar claims that Ali had won so many followers in Yemen, while Khalid ibn Walid’s personality contrasted that of Ali; the people of Yemen were not persuaded by Khalid’s hard and crude nature and preferred the soft and magnanimous nature of Ali. Ali was a preacher while Khalid was a conqueror. Jealousy must’ve aroused for Khalid to accuse Ali of hoarding all the war bounties.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{31} Khallyl, A. (2007) \textit{Jami' at-Tirmidhi Volume 6} #3725
\textsuperscript{32} Al-Khattab, N (2012) \textit{English translation of Musnad Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal} #22967
\textsuperscript{33} https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sSd2nGnKUa8\&t=3101s
\textsuperscript{34} Razwy, A (1996) \textit{A restatement of history of Islam and Muslims}. Pp.191
Shia scholars are unanimous in the Hadith of the two weighty things to have taken place after the farewell pilgrimage. Further north to Mecca there was the plain of Khumm, and the pond of Ghadir. The Prophet had stopped there with his followers and the aforementioned verses were revealed. God had commanded the Prophet to preach. And the Prophet coronated Ali as his successor. The Prophet said, “Of whomever I am their Mawla, Ali is also their Mawla.”

The dispute among Sunnis and Shi’as rose from the linguistic interpretation of the term Mawla. According to Elias’ Modern Dictionary, the term Mawla has a minimum of twenty definitions for the Arabic word “Wali.” Sunni scholars seem to interpret this word through various ways, one of the most common definitions being friend and brother, although they seem to be synonymous rather than separate definitions. Sunni scholars interpret through several hadith narrations that the Prophet was simply exalting Ali for his loyalty to the Prophet, rather than coronating him as a successor. Sunni tend to connect this incident regarding the incident of Yemen, so the Prophet had to publicly address the position of Ali as to relieve him of accusations by reminding them that Ali was, indeed, a friend or partner to him, and so the murmuring had ceased. Shi’as aren’t in agreement with this interpretation; in the book Peshawar nights, the Well-wisher claims that it is inconceivable for the Prophet to stop in the middle of the scorching heat just to deliver a message about Ali’s relationship to the Prophet, couldn’t such an issue be, at best, delivered after they had arrived at Medina than to stop thousands of his followers in the middle of such adverse weather conditions? Sibt ibn al-Jauzi, a Sunni scholar, in his Tadhikra-e-Khawas acknowledged that the meaning of such a term was to indicate the full obedience of Muhammed’s followers to Ali, and it means “master over others.” Hence, the hadith means of whomever I am the master, Ali is also his master. Moreover, the Prophet had asked the people, “Do I not have greater right claim on the faithful than on you have on yourself?” , note that this is referencing the Qur’anic verse. They [the believers] responded with an

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35 Al-Khattab, N (2012) *English translation of Musnad Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal #22967*
39 Sibt ibn al-Jauzi, Tadhkira-e-khawasm ch.2, pp. 20
affirmation. The Prophet could’ve meant that he had authority over the people and, so the believers must, thereby, affirm their loyalty to Ali as well.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{41} Al-Khattab, N (2012) \textit{English translation of Musnad Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal} #22967
4.4. The meeting at Saqifah

The climactic point of which would lead to the political separation between both Sunni and Shi’a Islam would be culminated in the meeting of Saqifah. It is important to understand that while both branches did not crystalize until much later, since no established school of thought had yet been established and the Muslim nation were virtually united, there would be a political disputation amongst the Muslims. The term Shi’a simply refers to “followers of Ali”, which has its root in the Qur’anic verse: “Indeed Abraham was among his followers {شيعته=Shi‘ah}”⁴², indeed, the later followers of Ali would adopt this term as a political gesture. With the Prophet’s passing some questions remained unanswered for the nation – who would be the new head of state, what will happen to the state of Medina, what is the status of the Ansar, would they appear to be as impartial and fair as Muhammed was during his ruling and would the Ansars still be the masters?

When the Prophet had passed away, the Ummah (=Islamic nation) were left in disarray with no one to lead the Muslims, Abu Bakr and Umar arranged an emergency meeting while Ali and some of the companions were in the house of Fati-mah to prepare the body of the Prophet for burial.⁴³ A man had told Umar that they had gathered the Ansar and that they’re at the hall of Bani Sai’da – a Jewish clan that had been allowed to retain their religion. As both companions arrived at the hall, they met with the Ansar leader, Saad ibn Ubada, to discuss the matters regarding the leaderless nation as the Prophet had just passed away. Abu Bakr honoured the Qurayish and brought forward Umar and one of his companions, Abu Ubaiydah, choosing them as competent candidates to succeed the Prophet as they were superior to that of the Ansars, however, the companion declined and preferred the rulership of Abu Bakr than for the companion to lead him and Umar showed distaste. Umar had also accused the Ansars for trying to seize the caliphate for themselves and to deprive the Muhajiroons from their rights. Wilfred

Madelung questions this act as it has generally been understood throughout history that Umar had tried to stop an evil from manifesting, Wilfred states that there had not yet been any prophetic traditions born that gave any sort of authority to the Muhajiroon and the Ansars and that the Ansars had merely acted out of their own interest and considered their allegiance to Muhammed as lapsing until his death and awaited his passing for them to make the decisive actions.\textsuperscript{44} The Ansars, however, either preferred one ruler from their side or two rulers from each respective tribe as a form of compromise rather than a devious ploy to usurp the caliphate – the Muhajiroon and the Ansars -- and offered one of their members to rule together with the Qurayish. However, many of the Ansars swore their allegiance to Qurayish, while others did not. It was not in the interest of the Qurayish to submit themselves to any other Arabic tribe.\textsuperscript{45} As the situation got unruly and there seemed to be no end to the dispute, Umar took hold of the arm of Abu Bakr and declared his allegiance to him.\textsuperscript{46} As the situation calmed, the Muhajiroon, followed by the Ansars, swore their allegiance to Abu Bakr, thus becoming the caliphate and successor of the Ummah.\textsuperscript{47} The whole event is recorded in Bukhari.\textsuperscript{48} Ibn Abbas narrates:

“Umar said: I have been informed that a speaker amongst you says, "By God, if 'Umar should die, I will give the pledge of allegiance to such-and-such person." One should not deceive oneself by saying that the pledge of allegiance given to Abu Bakr was given suddenly and it was successful. No doubt, it was like that, but God saved (the people) from its evil, and there is none among you who has the qualities of Abu Bakr. Remember that whoever gives the pledge of allegiance to anybody among you without consulting the other Muslims, neither that person, nor the person to whom the pledge of allegiance was given, are to be supported, lest they both should be killed.”\textsuperscript{49}

As the dispute appeared to have come to an end, most weren’t satisfied with the outcome, while Ibn Ishaq didn’t mention Ali’s dissatisfaction with Abu Bakr’s succession, it is stated in numerous hadiths that Ali, among other companions, had

\textsuperscript{44} Madelung, W (1997) \textit{The Succession to Muhammed: A study of the early caliphate}. p. 31
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid. p. 685–686
\textsuperscript{46} Muhsin, K. (2009) \textit{Sahih Al-Bukhari} Vol 8, Ch. 82 Hadith #817
\textsuperscript{47} Madelung, W (1997) \textit{The Succession to Muhammed: A study of the early caliphate}. p. 687
\textsuperscript{48} Muhsin, K. (2009) \textit{Sahih Al-Bukhari} Vol 8, Ch. 82 Hadith #817
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
expressed their dissatisfaction with the outcome and refrained from swearing their oath of allegiance (Bay'ah) to the newly elected caliph. However, once again, this narration was not mentioned in Ibn Ishaq’s Sir’at. Ibn Abbas narrates:

And no doubt after the death of the Prophet, we were informed that the Ansar disagreed with us and gathered in the shed of Bani Sa’d. ‘Ali and Zabayir and whoever was with them, opposed us, while the emigrants gathered with Abu Bakr.50

What appeared to have led to a peaceful ending to the dispute would lead to a greater dispute that would lead to one of the oldest split in the history of Islam. Shi’as and Sunnis disagree regarding Ali’s pledge of allegiance to Abu Bakr, Sunnis attest that while Ali did initially refuse to pledge his allegiance to Abu Bakr, he had shown to pledge his allegiance, although much later. This narration seems to be supported by Muslim and Bukhari:

Abu Bakr said: ‘Then ’Ali b. Abu Talib recited the Tashahhud. extolled the merits of Abu Bakr and (said that) his action was not prompted by any jealousy of Abu Bakr on his part or his refusal to accept the high position which Allah had conferred upon him, (adding: ) But we were of the opinion that we should have a share in the government, but the matter had been decided without taking us into confidence, and this displeased us.’51

The dispute seemed to have been conceived due to the absence of Ali from knowing what had taken place at Saqifa, that Ali was unaware of the coronation of Abu Bakr as the caliph of this new nation. The above hadith assumes that the issue was simply a disagreement between two companions which later led to the reconciliation of both parties.

Shi’a scholars do agree that this event is historical and, in fact, one of the greatest turning points in Islamic history, but rather than for the event to have a positive outcome, it had a negative implication for the followers of Ali. Indeed, the Ansars had made claims that they were aware of the Muhajiroon’s intent on “seizing” the government for their own interests and so, Saad nominated himself to lead the Muslims rather than to have Abu Bakr, Umar and Abu Ubaiydah rule the Ummah.

50 Ibid.
51 Muhsin, K. (2009) Sahih Al-Bukhrai Book 19, Hadith #4352
to benefit their own interests.\textsuperscript{52} Even some of the Ansars refused to pledge allegiance and preferred Ali over Abu Bakr, Umar, and Abu Ubaiydah and asserted that they would not pledge allegiance to anyone but Ali.\textsuperscript{53} Madelung characterize this narration as possessing Shi’ite tendencies, however, he clarifies that the narrator was not known as a Shi’ite sympathizer and that the tenor of the narration is distinctly Sunni.\textsuperscript{54}

In what would result in the most controversial event in Islamic history is the confrontation of Umar at Ali’s house who threatened the companion when Umar learned about the Ansar’s reluctance. Umar cried out to Ali, “\textit{By God, either you come out to render the oath of allegiance [to Abu Bakr] or I will set the house on fire}”\textsuperscript{55} As Umar threatened Ali to come out and pledge his allegiance, a companion of the Prophet by the name of Al-Zubair came out from the house with his sword unsheathed, threatening Umar to retreat as he and Ali would not pledge their allegiance to Abu Bakr. As Al-Zubair was ready to strike Umar, he stumbled upon an object and dropped his sword which rendered him defenseless. Umar’s followers took this opportunity, seized Al-Zubair and took him away.\textsuperscript{56} It should be noted that it remains uncertain when Umar confronted Ali at the latter’s home, however, Abu Bakr and Umar had demanded for Ali to swear his allegiance at the Prophet’s Mosque. According to Tabari it is stated that Umar had forcefully caused Ali and Zubair to render their allegiance to Abu Bakr.\textsuperscript{57} According to Madelung, there is one narration that states that if Ali had forty men at his side, he would’ve resisted against Umar, to what extent remains unknown.\textsuperscript{58}

The narration which involves the demand of Umar seems to resonate with letter 28 of Nahjul Balagha – a collection of sermons and letters attributed to Ali -- where Ali had replied to Mu’awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan that he had refused to accept

\textsuperscript{52} Asghar, Ali (2015) p.191  
\textsuperscript{53} Poonawala, I. (1990). \textit{The history of Al-Tabari -- Volume IX: The last years of the Prophet}. p. 187  
\textsuperscript{54} Madelung, W (1997) \textit{The Succession to Muhammed: A study of the early caliphate}. pp. 35  
\textsuperscript{55} Poonawala, I. (1990). \textit{The history of Al-Tabari -- Volume IX: The last years of the Prophet}. p. 187-188  
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid. p. 188  
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid. p. 189  
\textsuperscript{58} Madelung, W (1997) \textit{The Succession to Muhammed: A study of the early caliphate}. p. 43
the oath of allegiance to the first caliph [Abu Bakr] and suffered disgrace as a result:

You also want to taunt me by saying that when I refused to accept the caliphate of the First Caliph, I was dragged like a camel with a rope round my neck, and every kind of cruelty and humiliation was leveled against me.  

While Shi’as do not reject the fact that Ali had accepted the pledge of allegiance, it was merely a ruse as Ali had no power and could not bear to see the Ummah fight among themselves or, let alone, divide. Ali was assumed to have been forced to swear his allegiance to Abu Bakr. In a famous sermon, Ali had allegedly made such a statement, the sermon is known as the Sermon of the roar of the camel (=Ash shiqshaqiya). Ali said:

Beware! By Allah, the son of Abu Quhafah (Abu Bakr) dressed himself with it (the caliphate) and he certainly knew that my position in relation to it was the same as the position of the axis in relation to the hand-mill. The flood water flows down from me and the bird cannot fly up to me. I put a curtain against the caliphate and kept myself detached from it. Then I began to think whether I should assault or endure calmly the blinding darkness of tribulations wherein the grown up are made feeble and the young grow old and the true believer acts under strain till he meets Allah (on his death).

I found that endurance thereon was wiser. So, I adopted patience although there was pricking in the eye and suffocation (of mortification) in the throat…

It is strange that during his lifetime he (Umar) wished to be released from the caliphate, but he confirmed it for the other one after his death. No doubt these two shared its udders strictly among themselves. This one put the Caliphate in a tough enclosure where the utterance was haughty and the touch was rough. Mistakes were in plenty and so also the excuses therefore. One in contact with it was like the rider of an unruly camel. If he pulled up its rein the very nostril would be slit, but if he let it loose he would be thrown.

The Shi’as assert the fact that Ali had no choice but to swear his allegiance and keep himself patient, describing Abu Bakr and Umar as engaging in hypocrisy, it seems to resonate with Umar’s reluctance to accept the caliphate while he later chose to accept the caliphate despite his self-depreciation, and thus Ali, bitterly and harshly, commented on this incident as only serving their interests as sharing the udders.

The Sunnis, however, reject the Nahjul Balagha as an inauthentic book with no interest to them but rather, this is a concoction made by the Shi’as in an attempt to

serve their interests. Several Sunni scholars, such as Ibn Abi’l-Hamid devoted their time into making a commentary of the Nahjul Balagha with the aim to dispel the supposed bias the Shi’as had for Ali.61

In Ibn Hisham’s *Sirat sayyidina*, the son of Ali, al-Hassan, had made an elegy attacking Abu Bakr for depriving Banu Hashim of the Prophet’s inheritance of succession.62

“This booty (=fay’) has been divided up to the exclusion of all the people and they have openly and wantonly squandered it among themselves.”

However, Narrations say that al-Hassan had resigned himself from these matters stating that the usurpation was the will of God.63 The question of Ali’s succession could be speculated as being fueled by Abu Sufyan as an attempt to overthrow Banu Hashim, as Abu Sufyan was known to have been the Prophet’s staunchest opponent during the latter’s life, it would only make sense that Abu Sufyan would come to Ali to complain about Abu Bakr’s coronation as he could not bear to see his clan – the Banu ‘abd Shams -- being overshadowed by a clan, like Banu Hashim, which he saw as inferior to that of his own clan.64 According to Madelung, in a letter, Ali had claimed not to have accepted the caliphate from the very start; Abu Sufyan and his people were recently disbelievers and their involvement could’ve sparked a division in the Islamic community and so Ali tried to divert himself from what would only create a greater disaster, however, Madelung also states that Western scholars have rejected this narration as simply characterizing anti-Umayyad sympathies and should be taken as a mere concoction.65

One question remains unanswered, when and why did the Prophet choose Abu Bakr as the successor? While the Shi’as are firm in their position that the Prophet had already established a successor at Ghadir, we have yet not understood why Abu Bakr had been the most qualified of the companions to lead the Islamic nation. According to ibn Ishaq’s biography, the prophet had fallen ill and was in no condition to pray, as the prophet grew weaker and weaker and was nearing his

61 See: *Sharh Nahjul Balagha* by Ibn Abi’l-Hamid.
64 Ibid. p. 40
65 Ibid. p. 41
end, his followers started to worry over his condition, however, the prophet left his home and the Muslims were in joy, with the Prophet in no condition to lead the prayer, he saw Umar commence it, however, the Prophet forbade him and wished for Abu Bakr to lead it. During the morning prayer, as the Prophet had come out from the house, Abu Bakr was leading the prayer, however, the people became unruly, so unless the Prophet led the prayer, there was no way that he could control the masses. The Prophet, however, pushed Abu Bakr back to his position and told him to continue leading the prayer. Indeed, the prophet had appointed Abu Bakr to lead the prayer, and even when Abu Bakr was absent from the prayer, the Prophet had prohibited Umar from leading the prayer, insisting on Abu Bakr to lead the prayer.\textsuperscript{66} Ali Asghar comments that Ibn Hajar Makki, a Sunni Historian, had said regarding the incident in his book \textit{Tatheer al-Janah} that because the Prophet insisted on Abu Bakr leading the prayer, there is no doubt that the Prophet had appointed Abu Bakr, in fact, it is the consensus of all scholars that the Prophet had formally declared the caliphate to Abu Bakr.\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{66} Guillaume, A. (2004). \textit{The life of Muhammed: A translation of Ibn Ishaq’s Sirat Rasull ulah} p. 680-681
\textsuperscript{67} Razwy. A (1996) \textit{A restatement of history of Islam and Muslims.} p.215
Chapter 5. Conclusion

The issue about the successor to the Prophet Muhammed is convoluted and profound, filled with mysteries and proof substantiated from both sides. It would be naïve to conclude and believe that one side has more substantiated proof than the other. Starting at the Hadith of the two heavy things, we can at least understand that Muhammed emphasized the importance of holding onto the Qur’an, the Sunnah and the Ahlul Bayt, however, from the perspective of the Sunnis we found out that the Sunnah complement the Ahlul Bayt and that they’re both vital for a believer to hold on to, while as for the Shi’as being firmed in their belief that the Prophet had only mentioned the Qur’an and the Ahlul Bayt, claiming that the Hadith of the Qur’an and Sunnah were weak and dismissible. It is vital to understand the Shi’a perspective as it provides us with a reason for the Shi’as to believe that Ali had indeed been chosen to lead the Ummah. Furthermore, the event of Ghadir is famously known for being one of the most important events in Shi’a Islamic history, especially with the coronation of Ali as the “Mawla”. Sunnis, however, do not define the term Mawla as “Master”, but rather believe that the event took place in context to the incident in Yemen when Ali had been accused by the Prophet’s companion for sharing the war bounties uneven, and so the Sunnis do not view this event as substantial proof for Ali to have been declared the successor, but rather, they believe that the Prophet had made a statement to eliminate all grudges, hoping for reconciliation, the Shi’as, however, declare this point as being inconsistent and that the Prophet had indeed declared Ali as the successor, especially in tandem to the Prophet’s departure. Saqifa is climactic point of this whole thesis as it would determine the whole schism of Islam in its political aspect, it is without doubt that there had been a dispute that culminated in a disagreement between the first caliph Abu Bakr and Ali, there doesn’t seem to be any disagreements so far, however, what’s interesting is that Ali had sworn his allegiance to Abu Bakr, but the point of difference lays on Ali’s genuineness; did Ali really swear his oath of allegiance to Abu Bakr? The Sunnis make their claim from the Sahih literatures that Ali had surely reconciled with Abu Bakr and that he had declared his oath of allegiance many months later,
hence ending the dispute. For the Shi’as, this was considered a façade, even from the Sahih literatures there seem to be contradicting narrations that claim that Ali had been forced, and that the matters were simply the results of him having no choice as he was under intense pressure. Furthermore, the Shi’a even include this in their scriptures, particularly the Nahjul Balagha, which is rejected by the Sunnis, however, it is interesting to note that scholars such as Tabari had recorded the event where Ali had been forced to swear his oath of allegiance and so there seems to be quite the contradiction. We can determine through the selection of sources that the Sunnis believe that Ali had initially refused to swear his allegiance, however, he had come to reconcile with Abu Bakr many months later, while the Shi’as are adamant in their belief that it was only a façade and that Ali was simply doing that to prevent further disunity, despite the harshness of tribulation that the Nahjul Balagha seems to narrate. Sunni scholars believe that Abu Bakr had been chosen by the Prophet fiat, despite there being no indication to it, it is, however, assumed that the Prophet had given enough authority to Abu Bakr to be deemed the successor, Umar had told the Ansars about Abu Bakr’s virtue and his great loyalty to the Prophet, especially as one of the two in the cave, as such, Umar might’ve felt obligated to pass the caliphate to someone he believed to have been more virtues than himself.
Chapter 6. Discussion

Through this analysis we could see that the whole dispute regarding the succession of the Prophet have a complex and historical implication, we cannot determine whether the materials have given us a concise conclusion to whether Abu Bakr or Ali should’ve been coronated, however, we can observe that both schools have strong assertions that are backed up by their respective schools. It would be naïve to dismiss the materials both schools use to back their argument. To lean towards one position as more convincing than the other would be bias and would not serve the purpose of this thesis. We can, however, determine the interpretations that serve the differences in both schools and how they are fundamental to their arguments. In regards to the Hadith of the two weighty things, both schools are unanimous over such an event taking place, both even go to the length to determine that it was referring to the Prophet and his household, however, we stumble upon a problem and that is how to define the Prophetic household, while Shi’as dismiss the Muwatta hadiths about the Qur’an and the Sunnah, some Sunni scholars do not exactly dismiss the Qur’an and the Sunnah version, but rather, it is seen as a complementary addition to the Qur’an and the Ahlul Bayt version. Pertaining to the methods used to determine the results, there are a share differences on the interpretations of certain hadiths, however, provided that the Hadiths chosen for this thesis are either determined as Hasan (=good) and Sahih (=authentic) one would have to be impartial and determine the authenticity in the chains of narrations, Shi’i scholars are unanimous over the authenticity of the Qur’an and Sunnah narration as being broken into three abandoned chains and thus cannot be determined as authentic, Shi’as determine the authenticity of the Sunni literatures based on how they’re connected to Shi’i literatures, on the contrary, Sunni scholars do not value Shi’a literature as authentic and render them all as either forgeries, propaganda or as unreliable narrations as they only serve political interests, indeed, that is why the Sunni scholar Ibn Abi’l-Hamid made an attempt at refuting the supposed letters and sermons allegedly written and held by Ali in the Nahjul Balagha in his commentary. To even it out and avoid any assumptions regarding

68 See: Sharh Nahj-ul Balagha
the strength of a hadith, I mostly made use of the six sahih sittahs as they are unanimously considered authentic per Sunni scholars, and that the hadiths relating to Thaqalayin, Ghadeer and Saqifa were all accepted, regardless of the school of thought, however, interpretations are the only matters they differ on, and so the selection of sources were mostly Sunni in essence since the debate regarding the aforementioned events are all agreed by the schools as historical facts. In fact, the event of Ghadir as accounted in the Sittahs are recorded in a Shi’a literature called *al-Ghadir* by Iranian Shia scholar Abd Al Husayn Amini. It should be noted that Tabari’s Tarikh is a historiography with multitude of sources, and as such, even Tabari’s book could be considered mixed with both validated and invalidated historical accounts; the Ansars’ oath of allegiance to Ali, or Umar’s confrontation at Fatimah’s home are two occurrences with inconsistencies if we compare them to the Sittahs, in fact, even Tabari made use of the Nahjul Balagha, a Shi’ite scripture, as a source of information, which renders his Tarikh open for criticism from a Sunni aspect.  

Content analysis were mainly used in both Tabari and Ibn Ishaq’s scriptures, on one hand, Ibn Ishaq doesn’t seem to cover all of the important events regarding the Prophet’s final pilgrimage and doesn’t relate to the dispute between Ali, Abu Bakr and Umar at Saqifah, and so ibn Ishaq seems to have either been unaware of Ghadir and the Hadith of the two weighty things, or must’ve omitted the events altogether due to their strong sensitivity and his fear of division. In fact, Ibn Ishaq seems to prefer Abu Bakr’s succession as the final outcome and show bias, even going as far as to declare Abu Bakr as a caliph, while ignoring the episodes after regarding Umar and his dispute with Ali.  

What’s interesting is that the Sahih books do indeed lift forward the controversial issues regarding Ali’s dissatisfaction with the caliphs; it is not the first time, since Ali does indeed criticize them at several occasions, however, the context of these issues is not relevant to this thesis. In fact, it is for those reasons that I found myself having more use of the Sahih books as they became a source of ammunition even for the Shi’as to refute the legitimacy of Abu Bakr, while in this thesis, I

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made use of it as a source pertaining to both schools. However, the most difficult part to determine is the chronology of certain events that took place, e.g. Umar’s confrontation at Fatimah’s house, although it is not mentioned when it took place, the sources seem to agree that it did happen, so I could not provide a concise chronological set up for the Saqifa as the sources do not provide it. Dealing with these issues only broaden it further, while there are substantial proofs from each side.

In Abu Bakr’s case, Sunni historians seem to be in agreement that the Prophet had formally declared the caliphate to belong to Abu Bakr as he was shown to be preferred before anyone else during the Prophet’s illness, although there are clear indications that the Prophet did prefer him over many others, the Prophet, did not give any indication for Abu Bakr to become his successor, while there was preference, the Prophet had not provided any instructions and so it should be taken with a grain of salt. However, it is not just the consensus that determined the outcome, even Umar preferred Abu Bakr due to these preferences. Umar then proposed to the Ansars at Saqifa that it would be much better for Abu Bakr to lead the Muslims as he was one of the two in the cave (relating to an incident when Mohammed and Abu Bakr hid in a cave to avoid getting killed by Quraiysh) and so the Ansar should pledge their allegiance, which in the end, they did.71

Summary

This thesis had in goal to determine the interpretations of both the Sunni and Shi’ā Islamic corpuses as to what caused the early Islamic schism after the Prophet’s death, with the use of both Sunni, Shi’ā and Secular sources, I could analyse the differences in interpretation by both school as to how they reaches their respective conclusion regarding which of the companions would succeed the Prophet through analysing the event of Ghadir and the Hadith of the two weighty things, by understanding the full-picture of these events we could easily understand how it would later have an important role in the event of Saqīfah. By applying Madelung’s theory to disseminate the events through a very non-partisan view, we could find out a more profound understanding of what had really happened in the event of Saqīfah, as well as apply Ali Asghar’s theory of Orientalist and Sunni bias; the complete overshadowing of Shi’ā Islamic history, by applying these theories we could achieve greater insight into how these events were vital for the initial split of Islam and how these would, later, lay the foundation for both the Shi’ā and Sunni branches of Islam. By applying Content analysis, we could find out that some sources that were applied either had some historical inconsistencies or had omitted crucial information, my theory is that there had to be an agenda to avoid disunity among the Muslims or that it would cause an encouragement of early rebellious groups of Islam, particularly the Shi’as and the Kharajites who were suppressed at that time, to revolt against the established order. I believe that this thesis managed to cover the issues I had initially brought to attention, with the use of Hadiths and historiographies I was able to understand that there was a greater and profound picture to this split, not only did I learn new things that I had previously not known in my studies, but it eliminates my oversimplified assumption of the early Islamic schism, especially in its political aspect and, thus, provided me with great information about one of the most convoluted events in the history of mankind.
References

Primary literature:


Secondary literature:


Note: text is in Arabic.


Note: Text in Arabic.


