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Kunyahs Of Imam Ali

Imam Ali (‘a) was given many kunyahs (i.e. an agnomen given as an honor, usually starting with abu; the father of) some of which are as follows:

[Abu’l-Rayhanatayn \(The Father Of The Two Basils\)](#)

The two basils whose father is Imam Ali (‘a) were Imam Al-Hasan and Imam Al-Husayn, the two chiefs of the youths of Paradise. This *kunyah* was given to him by the Holy Prophet (S) who said to him,

O Father of the two basils! Soon will your two supports depart. It is Allah Who is my successor on you.

When the Holy Prophet (S) departed life, Imam Ali (‘a) said, ‘This is one of the two supports.’ When Lady Fatimah (‘a) departed life, he (‘a) expressed,

‘This is the other support.’^{[1](#)}

[Abu’l-Sibtayn \(The Father Of The Two Grandsons\)](#)

Imam Al-Hasan and Imam Al-Husayn, the two grandsons of the Holy Prophet (S), are the sons of Imam Ali (‘a) who was thus given this *kunyah*, which was also one of his most famous *kunyahs*.

[Abu’l-Hasan \(The Father Of Al-Hasan\)](#)

Imam Ali (‘a) was given this *kunyah*, because Imam Al-Hasan (‘a) was his eldest son and the most beloved of the Holy Prophet’s descendants.^{[2](#)}

[Abu’l-Husayn \(The Father Of Al-Husayn\)](#)

Imam Ali (‘a) was given this *kunyah*, because Imam Al-Husayn (‘a) was his second son. He was actually

the pride of Islam and the reviver of this religion. He sacrificed his soul for keeping Islam alive and for confronting its enemies all over ages.

Abu-Turab (The Father Of Dust)

Imam Ali (‘a) loved this *kunyah* very much because it was given to him by the Holy Prophet (S) on many occasions.

Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas has reported that when the Holy Prophet (S) brought into fraternal association between each couple of Muslim individuals one from the Muslims of Makkah who emigrated to Yathrib (i.e. *Muhajirun*) and another from Yathrib whose people supported and received the Holy Prophet (S) and the Muslims of Makkah (i.e. *Ansar*), he left Imam Ali (‘a) without appointing for him a brother.

Imam Ali (‘a) therefore felt so angry that he left the crowds and came to sleep at the bank of a stream. The Holy Prophet (S) then came out looking for him. When he found him, he kicked him with his foot and said,

Stand up! Nothing befits you more than being Abu-Turab (the father of dust). You have been angry with me because I held fraternity ties between each couple of *Muhajirun and Ansar* and I did not hold fraternity ties between you and anyone else. Does it not please you that your standing to me is the same as (Prophet) Aaron’s standing to (Prophet) Moses except that there will not be any prophet to come after me?

Behold! He that loves you shall be surrounded by security and true faith, but he that hates you shall die the death of the infidels who did not accept Islam and shall be interrogated for the deeds he has done in Islam.[3](#)

Imam Ali, the Leader of the Believers, has reported the following:

One day, the Messenger of Allah (S), having sought me out, found me sleeping on a bank of a stream. ‘What is this sleeping for?’ he said. ‘The people are calling you Abu-Turab (the father of dust).’ As he noticed that this word of him upset me, he said, ‘Stand up. By Allah, I will please you. You are my brother and the father of my sons. You will fight following my traditions and you will release me from my financial obligations’

He who dies in my lifetime will receive the compassion of Almighty Allah. He who dies in your lifetime will have accomplished his vow. Whoever dies loving you after your death, Almighty Allah will decide for him security and true faith everlastingly. Whoever dies hating you will die the death of those who did not accept Islam.[4](#)

It is reported that the Holy Prophet (S), once, found Imam Ali (‘a) and ‘Ammar sleeping on a soft ground. He moved Imam Ali (‘a) and said to him,

Get up, Abu–Turab! May I inform you of the most wretched of all people?

They are two:

(1) The red–faced killer of the she–camel of Prophet Salih, and

(2) The one who will strike you on your head, dying your beard with the blood of your head.[5](#)

Abu'l–Fasl Al–tufayl has reported that the Holy Prophet (S) came toward Ali, who was sleeping on the ground, and said to him,

Verily, the most appropriate of your names to you is *Abu–Turab* (the father of dust). You are truly the father of dust.[6](#)

Abd Al–'Aziz ibn Abi–kazim has reported on the authority of his father that he informed Sahl ibn Sa'd, one of the Sahabah (i.e. companions of the Holy Prophet), that the governor of Al–Madinah ordered him to revile at (Imam) Ali during the ritual sermon (*khutbah*). Answering him, Sahl said confusedly, 'What should I say? Should I say 'May Allah curse Abu–Turab?'

By Allah I swear this: this name was given to him by the Messenger of Allah' One day, Ali left his house and laid down in the shadow of the Mosque. Then, the Messenger of Allah (S) visited Ali's house and asked Fatimah ('a) about him. 'He is lying down in the shadow of the Mosque,' she answered. When the Messenger of Allah (S) came towards Ali, he found his garment falling from his back, causing the dust to cover his entire body.

He sat down sweeping the dust from Ali's body and then said, 'Sit down, Abu–Turab!' Hence, this nickname was given to him by none except Allah's Messenger, and it was the dearest of all of his names to him.'[7](#)

Bodily Features Of Imam Ali

Imam Ali ('a) was the best–looking and the most well–mannered of all people. The lineaments of light were shining on his face. The following are some bodily features of Imam Ali ('a).

The Holy Prophet Describes Imam Ali

Imparting wonderful features to Imam Ali ('a), the Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said,

He who wants to see the forbearance of Abraham, the wisdom of Noah, and the beauty of Joseph must look at Ali ibn Abi Talib.[8](#)

Dirar Describes Imam Ali

Dirar ibn Damarah reported: Following the martyrdom of Imam Ali ('a), I headed for Syria to see Mu'awiyah. Knowing that I was a devotee of Imam Ali, Mu'awiyah asked, 'Describe Ali for me.'

'Please,' I answered, 'accept my excuse, for my tongue cannot possibly describe him.'

Mu'awiyah insisted, 'Your excuse is not accepted. You have to describe him to me.'

I therefore said,

'Now that you refuse to accept my excuse, listen carefully! Ali was sharp-sighted, prudent, powerful, and strong in the way of Allah. What he said was a criterion to distinguish between what was just and unjust. His judgments were fair. He was abounding in knowledge. Wisdom was evident in all dimensions of his character.'

His intuition satiated those who had a thirst for it. He feared the ornaments of the world. He was devoted to the nocturnal supplications. Pondering over the tumultuous future made him cry ceaselessly. Wearing coarse garment was pleasure for him. He loved plain food. He was not pretentious but was like one of us.

If we had any question, we would pose it to him and he would immediately answer it. If we asked for any help, he would immediately help us. Although he was very intimate, he was so awesome that we would never dare to say anything in vain. He was so dignified that we would never open our eyes on his face. He honored the people of religion and pleased the poor by fondling them.

No man of authority dared to misuse his power in his presence so as to get his approval for the unjust act he had done. No common person was made disappointed by his justice, thinking that since he had no power, he would be deprived of his justice. I take God as witness that in the middle of night and also when the stars were about to disappear, I saw him holding his beard in his hands, and like one bitten by a snake, he wept bitterly, saying,

'O world, go and deceive someone else, for I am not fond of you. Nevertheless, if you are offering yourself to me, you are quite mistaken, for I have divorced you three times, giving you no chance of recourse. O world, know that your life is short, your worth little and your pleasure transient.' Then, he heaved a sigh, saying, 'Oh for little provision, long journey, and a path full of horror.'⁹

Muhammad Ibn Al-Hanafiyyah Describes His Father

Describing the physical features of his father, Muhammad ibn Al-Hanafiyyah is reported to have said,

He (i.e. Imam Ali) was of medium height. His eyebrows were thin and long. His eyes were big and beautiful. His face was as shiny as full moon. His skin was little bit brown. He was hairless except on the

backside of his head, which was covered with a line of hair like a wreath. His neck was as white as a silver vessel. His neck and abdomen were great.

His back was high. His chest was wide. His body was even. The places of his bones were big. It could not be possible to distinguish between his upper arm and forearm, because they were intermixed. His arms and shoulders were huge. The soft ends of his bones were as great as the bones of a predatory beast. He had a beard that decorated his chest. His muscles were viscous and his legs were fleshy. [10](#)

Al-Mughirah Describes Imam Ali

In short words, Al-Mughirah, one of Imam Ali's enemies, described him as saying,

He was like a lion; whatever part of his body that should be huge was huge and whatever part that should be soft was soft. [11](#)

Contemporaries Describe Imam Ali

Describing Imam Ali's some physical features, one of his contemporaries said,

He was medium sized. His eyes were big and very black. His face was as good-looking as full moon. He had great body. He was broad-shouldered. The soft ends of his bones were as great as the bones of a predatory beast. His upper arm cannot be distinguished from his forearm as if they were merged together. His hands were fleshy and the flesh on his bones was massive.

His neck was delicate and as white as a silver vessel. He was bald and there was no hair on his scalp except on the backside. His beard was heavily haired. He did not need dyeing. In his walking, he was leaning to the front side. His arm and hand were tough. When he walked to a battlefield, he would trot. He was rigid-hearted. He would always be the winner in wrestling. He was courageous and venerable in the eyes of whoever faces him. [12](#)

The Early Life Of Imam 'Ali

In his childhood, Imam Ali ('a) grew up under the protection of his father, Abu Talib, who brought him up on all virtues and elements of honor and fed him on chivalry, nobility, and deep faith in Almighty Allah. Having played a remarkable role in Imam Ali's rearing, his mother, who was the pioneer of chastity and decency, fed him on nobilities of character, well-mannerism, and gallant instincts.

In the first years of Imam Ali's boyhood, his tribe was afflicted by a financial crisis because of which Abu Talib suffered much. He therefore went to the Holy Prophet (S) and his two uncles, Hamzah and Al-'Abbas, asking them for help. They offered to take upon themselves the custody of his four sons on behalf of him.

Answering them, Abu Talib said, 'Leave 'Aqil to me and take whomever you want.' Al-'Abbas then took

Talibb, Hamzah took Ja'far, and the Holy Prophet (S) decided on Ali, saying to his two uncles, 'I have chosen the one whom God has chosen for me.' Since that day, Imam Ali was under the custody of the Holy Prophet (S) who covered him with high affection and tenderness.

About this golden stage of his lifetime under the custody of the Holy Prophet, Imam Ali ('a) said,

Certainly, you know my position of close kinship and special relationship with the Prophet of Allah peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants. When I was only a child, he took charge of me. He used to press me to his chest and lay me beside him in his bed, bring his body close to mine and make me smell his smell. He used to chew something and then feed me with it.

He found no lie in my speaking, nor weakness in any act. I used to follow him like a young camel following in the footprints of its mother. Every day he would show me in the form of a banner some of his high traits and commanded me to follow it. [13](#)

Among the elements of self-promotion and highness the Holy Prophet (S) implanted in the menTalibty of Imam Ali ('a) was self-denial. About this characteristic, it is related that Imam Ali ('a), once, knocked the door of the Holy Prophet's house and when the Prophet (S) asked who the knocker was, Imam Ali ('a) answered, 'It is I.'

Teaching the Imam a moral principle in a very polite manner, the Holy Prophet (S) said unpleasantly, 'It is I! It is I!' Immediately, Imam Ali ('a) understood the Holy Prophet's point and learned the lesson completely. Since that day, Imam Ali ('a) had never repeated the word 'I' when it would signify any sort of haughtiness or pride. [14](#)

This lesson continued to the last moment of the lifetime of Imam Ali ('a). Historians report that during his reign, Imam Ali ('a), leading his army, passed by Al-Mada'in, a province in Iraq, and the people of this province, showing honor and respect for him, prepared for a big banquet for his army and him, slaughtering many animals.

This situation did not please him; he therefore talked to the people to prove that he is just like any one of them, no more. He then ordered his army not to eat from that banquet before they would pay for it. [15](#)

O Ali!

The following instructions of the Holy Prophet (S) to Imam Ali ('a) reveal some aspects of this education:

O Ali, three characters are the highest moral standards: to regard him who ruptured his relations with you, to give him who deprived you (of his bestowals), and to pardon him who wronged you.

O Ali, three characters are the masters of deeds: to treat people fairly, to equalize your brothers-in-faith with yourself, and to praise God under any condition.

O Ali, three characters are within the expressions of true faith: to spend in times of misery, to treat the others justly with regard to personal issues, and to give knowledge to its seekers.

O Ali, I will convey to you a commandment that you should retain. You will keep up yourself in goodness as long as you follow my commandment:

O Ali, as for those who suppress their anger while they are able to punish, Almighty Allah will endow them with security and tasteful faith on the Resurrection Day.

O Ali, he who meets Almighty Allah while he enjoys these three favorable deeds is indeed the best of all people: the best worshipper of all people is he who fulfills the obligatory duties of God properly. The most pious of all people is he who abstains from the forbidden matters. The wealthiest of all people is he who satisfies himself with that which God has given to him.

O Ali, Allah the Blessed and Exalted has indeed removed by Islam the baseless zeal of the people of the pre-Islamic era and their taking pride in their ancestors. Verily, all people belong to Adam equally and Adam was created from dust. The noblest of all people is actually the most pious to God.

O Ali, three men will be stood under the shade of the (Divine) Throne on the Resurrection Day: a man who likes for his brother-in-faith whatever he likes for himself, a man who stops doing any thing before he realizes whether it pleases or displeases God, and a man who does not find fault with his friends before he himself gets rid of that fault. A man will find a new fault with himself whenever he gets rid of one. It is quite sufficient for a man to be engaged with mending his own defects.

O Ali, I warn you against three things: envy, avarice, and arrogance.

O Ali, he is indeed one of the inhabitants of Hellfire that learns a branch of knowledge with the intention of disputing with the foolish, arguing with the scholars, or showing off.

O Ali, may I inform you of the evilest people?' They are those who never forgive and never overlook. May I inform of those who are worse than those people?' They are those whose evil is not secured and good is not expected from them.

O Ali, no poverty is harsher than ignorance, no fortune better than good reason, no loneliness drearier than pride, no work better than management, no asceticism like refraining from violating God's prohibitions, and no lineage like good manners. Telling lies is the epidemic of speaking, oblivion the epidemic of knowledgeability, and reminding others of one's favors to them the epidemic of generosity.

O Ali, beware of telling untruths, for it blackens the face then the teller of lies will be recorded with God as liar. Honesty whitens the face and the honest will be recorded with God as truthful.

You should know that honesty is blessed and lie is ill-omened.

O Ali, beware of backbiting (i.e. speaking ill of someone behind his/her back) and talebearing (i.e. informing against people).

O Ali, do not be angry (under any circumstances). If you are enraged, you should sit down and think of the Lord's power over His servants; yet, He treats them leniently. If someone says to you, 'Fear God,' you should try to relinquish your rage and cling to your (feeling of) clemency.

O Ali, I warn you against breaking your word and against helping others break their words. I also warn you against planning for evil, for evil plans shall beset none save their authors. I then warn you against rebellion, for Allah shall most certainly give victory to whomever is rebelled against (unjustly).

O Ali, to avoid pleasing anyone and discontenting God, thanking anyone for a favor that God has given to you, and reproaching anyone for something that God has not given to you—these are parts of true conviction. The sustenance cannot be obtained through (any sort of) niggardliness and will not be ceased when someone hates it. Out of His wisdom and grace, God has made relief and delight lie in conviction and satisfaction, and made care and grief lie in suspect and malice.[16](#)

The First Male To Accept Islam

Historians have unanimously agreed that Imam Ali (‘a) was the first male to believe in and respond to the invitation of the Holy Prophet (S) to the new religion with full awareness and faith.[17](#)

In this respect, Imam Ali (‘a) has declared,

Verily, I worshipped Allah the Exalted before any one of this nation did.[18](#)

On another occasion, he said,

For seven whole years, I used to hear the voice of the Divine Revelation and see the light, while the Messenger of Allah was silent because he had not been yet allowed to warn and promulgate for the religion.[19](#)

Likewise, it is unanimously agreed that the idols of the pre-Islamic era had never defiled him, for he had never prostrated for any idol, while all the others did.[20](#)

In his book of Imta' Al-Asma', Al-Maqrizi says,

As for Ali ibn Abi Talib the Hashemite, he had never set any god with Almighty Allah. This is because Allah the Exalted intended good for him when He made him grow up under the custody of his cousin the

Master of the Messengers of Allah.[21](#)

Relating the belief of Lady Khadijah and him, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

On those days, Islam did not exist in any house except that of the Prophet of Allah peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants and Khadijah, while I was the third after these two. I used to see and watch the effulgence of divine revelation and message, and breathed the scent of Prophethood.[22](#)

Although historicists agree that Imam Ali (‘a) embraced Islam in the age of seven or nine years,[23](#) a deep look into his childhood involves that he had embraced Islam before that, since he spent his childhood under the custody of the Holy Prophet (S).

On many occasions, Imam Ali (‘a) used to take pride in this peculiarity. Declaring this fact, the Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said,

The foremost of you all to join me at the Divine Pond is the foremost of you all to embrace Islam; namely, Ali ibn Abi Talib.[24](#)

Imam Ali’s Love For The Holy Prophet

Imam Ali’s love for the Holy Prophet (S) encompassed his entire soul; he therefore kept faith to him so sincerely. When he was asked to describe the scope of his love for the Holy Prophet (S), Imam Ali (‘a) answered,

By Allah I swear this; the Prophet is dearer to us than our fortunes, sons, and mothers. He is even dearer to us than cold water to the thirsty.[25](#)

Unquestionably, none of the members of the Prophet’s household and none of his companions could ever match Imam Ali (‘a) in his love for the Holy Prophet (S). Historicists relate that one day, an owner of a date-palm orchard offered Imam Ali (‘a) to give him one date for each bucket he would use in irrigating that ranch. Imam Ali (‘a) accepted the offer and the owner of the orchard fulfilled his promise to him. As soon as he received the dates, Imam Ali (‘a) hurried towards the Holy Prophet (S) and offered him these dates.[26](#)

Imam Ali (‘a) used to work for the Holy Prophet (S) and undertake all his works. Whenever the Holy Prophet (S) wanted to stand up, Imam Ali (‘a) used to help him do so, and whenever he wanted to sit down, he would lean on Imam Ali (‘a).[27](#)

It is reported that one day, a man came to the Holy Prophet (S) asking, yet insistently, for forgiveness and for a donation. The Holy Prophet (S) said to Imam Ali (‘a), ‘Cut off this man’s tongue against me!’ Controlled by panic, the man went with Imam Ali (‘a) and asked if he would really cut off his tongue.

'I am going to carry out what I have been ordered to do,' answered the Imam ('a). The man was led to the place where the camels dedicated to almsgiving were positioned and asked the man to choose whatever he would like. Only then, the man's panic disappeared and he could understand the Holy Prophet's point.

Commenting on the Holy Prophet's word, Imam Ali ('a) expressed, 'This is the most eloquent periphrasis [28](#) I have ever heard from an Arabic-speaking person.'[29](#)

Sincerely, Imam Ali ('a) used to undertake all the Holy Prophet's missions; he used to ride on the Holy Prophet's mule, named Al-Shahba', drive it in the quarters of the city, and carry out the Holy Prophet's instructions.[30](#)

Expressing his love for the Holy Prophet (S) and admitting of his unparalleled standing that none else could realize as he did, Imam Ali ('a) used to demonstrate some points of his standing in the form of supplicatory prayers. In one of these, he used to say,

All praise be to Allah the Lord of the Worlds. May Allah bless the purest of the Messengers, Muhammad the son of Abdullah, the well-chosen, the splitter, and the mender. O Allah, please give Muhammad—May Allah bless him and his Household—exclusively the praiseworthy mention and the Pond that will be joined.

O Allah, please furnish Muhammad, may Your blessings be upon him and his Household, with (right of) mediation, superiority, and virtue; and make love for him common to the ones chosen by You, make his rank the highest, and make him enjoy a special honor among the ones drawn near to You.

O Allah, please decide the best share of every item of honor to be his, decide the most expansive of every bliss to be his, decide the most abundant of every donation to be his, decide the most blooming of every easiness to be him, and decide the most profuse of every portion (of goodness) to be his, so that none of Your creatures will ever be nearer to You than him, higher in standing and rank with You than him, greater in claim with You than him, or more effective in mediation with You than him.

May Your blessings be upon him and his Household. He is surely the guide and leader to uprightness, the caller to all decencies, the blessing invoked upon all the servants (of You), and (Your) mercy to all of the worlds.

O Allah, please make us join Muhammad, may Your blessings be upon him and his Household, in felicity of living, taste of comfort, stability in bliss, enjoyment of personal desires, gaining of the appetites, winning of the pleasures, hoping for virtue, experiencing of tranquility, attainment of the climax of honoring, arriving at the delight of the eye, realizing of the brightness of happiness, and feeling the delights that are unlike those of the worldly life.

We bear witness that he did convey the Message, pass on the advice, exert all efforts for the good of his

community, undergo harm for Your sake, struggle in Your way, and worship You until death came upon him. So, may Allah bless him and his Immaculate Household.

O Allah, Lord of the Sacred City; Lord of the Corner (of the Holy Ka'bah) and the Standing-place (of Abraham); Lord of the Sacred Monument; and Lord of the consecration (for Hajj) and the release (for the state of consecration for Hajj); please convey our salutations to the soul of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his Household.

O Allah, please pour blessings upon your Favorite Angels, Prophets, and Messengers—all of them. O Allah, please pour blessings upon the honorable, honest recording angels and upon all the beings who are obedient to You from the inhabitants of the Seven Skies and the inhabitants of the Seven Layers of the earth who believe in You.[31](#)

The following supplicatory prayer composed by Imam Ali ('a) demonstrates some aspects of the honor and respect he used to show to the Holy Prophet (S):

O Allah, O Spreader of the surfaces (of earth) and Keeper (intact) of all skies, and Creator of hearts on good and evil nature; please send Your most pleasing blessings and growing favors on Muhammad, Your servant and Prophet, who is the last of those who preceded (him; i.e. the prophets), an opener for what is closed, proclaimer of truth with truth, repulser of the forces of wrong, and crusher of the onslaughts of misguidance.

As he was burdened (with responsibility of Prophethood), he bore it standing by Your commands, advancing towards Your will, without shrinking of steps, or weakness of determination, listening to Your revelations, preserving Your testament, proceeding forward in the spreading of Your commands until he lit fire for its seeker and lighted the path for the groper in the dark.

Hearts achieved guidance through him after having been ridden with troubles. He introduced clearly guiding signs and shining injunctions. He is Your honest trustee, the treasurer of Your treasured knowledge, Your witness on the Judgment Day, Your envoy of truth, and Your Messenger to the people. O Allah, please prepare large place for him under Your shade and award him multiplying goodness by Your bounty.

O Allah, please give height to his construction above all other constructions, heighten his position with You, grant perfection to his effulgence, and perfect for him his light. In reward for his discharging Your sending him as Your Prophet, please grant him what will make his testimony admitted, his speech just, and his judgments clear-cut. O Allah, please put us and him together in the pleasures of life, continuance of bounty, satisfaction of desires, enjoyment of pleasures, ease of living, peace of mind, and gifts of honor.[32](#)

On many occasions, Imam Ali ('a) invested the Holy Prophet (S) with the most expressive words of glorification and extolment. On one occasion, he ('a) said,

His (i.e. the Holy Prophet) place of stay is the best of all places and his origin the noblest of all origins in the mines of honor and the cradles of safety. Hearts of virtuous persons have been inclined towards him and the reins of eyes have been turned towards him. Through him, Allah buried mutual rancor and put off the flames of revolt.

Through him, He gave them affection like brothers and separated those who were together (through unbelief). Through him, He gave honor to the low and degraded honor (of unbelief). His speaking is clear and his silence is (indicative) like tongue.[33](#)

On another occasion, he described the Holy Prophet (S) as follows:

Allah deputed the Prophet with a sparkling light, a clear argument, an open path, and a guiding book. His tribe is the best tribe and his lineal tree the best lineal tree whose branches are in good proportion and fruits hanging (in plenty). His birthplace was Makkah and the place of his immigration taybah (Madinah), from where his name rose high and his voice spread far and wide.

Allah sent him with a sufficing plea, a convincing discourse, and a rectifying announcement. Through him, Allah disclosed the ways that had been forsaken, and destroyed the innovations that had been introduced. Through him, He explained the detailed commands. Now, whoever adopts a religion other than Islam, his misery is definite, his stick (of support) will be cracked, his fate will be serious, his end will be long grief and distressing punishment.[34](#)

Imam Ali; The Scribe Of The Divine Revelation

According to authentic reports, Imam Ali (‘a) used to write down the divine revelations that were received by the Holy Prophet (S) from Almighty Allah. He thus wrote a great number of the revelations and chapters of the Holy Quran.[35](#) Imam Ali (‘a), who learned writing in his childhood,[36](#) was the first to dot the copies of the Holy Quran.[37](#)

Not only did Imam Ali (‘a) write the divine revelations but he also used to document the truces, treaties, and agreements that the Holy Prophet (S) would conclude with other parties, such as those concluded with the people of Najran and with others.[38](#) In the Pact of Al-Hudaybiyah that was concluded between the Holy Prophet (S) and the polytheists of Quraysh, Imam Ali (‘a) documented the articles of this pact.

In this document, he wrote down ‘*Muhammad Rasulullah ‘Muhammad*; the Messenger of Allah’, but the polytheists objected to this statement claiming that had they recognized the Holy Prophet (S) as a messenger from God, they would have never fought against him!

Therefore, the Holy Prophet (S) ordered Imam Ali (‘a) to erase this statement. However, the Imam (‘a) said, ‘It is too difficult for me to erase it!’ The Holy Prophet himself then erased it.[39](#) It is worth mentioning that the Holy Prophet (S) used to check so carefully every letter Imam Ali (‘a) would write down.[40](#)

The Destroyer Of The Idols

Since his early life, Imam Ali (‘a) had feelings of strong antipathy against the idols and had had the desire to destroy them before the shining of Islam. Accompanied by Usamah, Imam Ali (‘a) used to gather sweepings and throw them at the idols at night. The next morning, the idol-worshippers would spend their whole day cleaning these idols.[41](#)

On other occasions, the Holy Prophet (S) himself would participate with Imam Ali (‘a) in destroying such idols. About this incident, Imam Ali (‘a) said, One day, the Holy Prophet (S) and I advanced towards the Ka’bah. When we were there, he asked me to sit down so that he would climb on my shoulders. I tried my best to stand up carrying him, but he felt that I had shown some inability.

He therefore sat down and I climbed on his shoulders. Once he raised me up, I felt as if I had the ability to touch even the sky. I then went up the Sacred House on the surface of which there was a copper statue. I began to move from its right, left, and fore sides until I could displace it. The Holy Prophet (S) asked me to drop it down.

Once I did, the statue broke up just like the breaking up of flasks. I then went down. Immediately, the Holy Prophet (S) and I ran quickly to hide so that none would see us.[42](#)

Imam Ali (‘a) destroyed a major idol called Manat that was held sacred by the Arabs of the pre-Islamic times.[43](#) He also destroyed two more idols that were worshipped by the Tay Arab tribe and found two swords under them. He took these two swords to the Holy Prophet (S) who, in return, gave them to him as gift.[44](#)

When the Holy Prophet (S) led the conquest of Makkah, there were more than three hundred idols positioned on the roof of Holy Ka’bah. Imam Ali (‘a) climbed on the shoulders of the Holy Prophet (S), uprooted all these idols, and threw them to the ground, including Hubal, a major idol that was worshipped by Abu-Sufyan.[45](#)

More Features

The inscription that Imam Ali (‘a) chose for the stone of his ring was *allah almalik* (Allah is the King), which expresses his great attachment to the Lord.[46](#) He never dyed his beard, because the Holy Prophet (S) foretold him that his beard would be dyed with the blood of his head.[47](#)

Imam Ali’s House

When he was in Makkah, Imam Ali (‘a) lived with his father in his house, a place well-known among the places of Makkah. When he emigrated to Al- Madinah, the Holy Prophet (S) built a house adjacent to the Prophet’s Mosque for Imam Ali (‘a) and made its door open to the Mosque. When he ordered to close completely all the doors that were open to the Mosque, the door of Imam Ali’s house was excluded

according to a divine command.

When he moved to Al-Kufah and made it the capital of his state, Imam Ali (‘a) refused to reside in the famous palace known as *Qasr Al-Imarah*, which was built in the reign of ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab as the headquarter of the governor. Hence, Imam Ali (‘a) said, ‘I will never reside in this palace of the insane ones.’ He therefore lived for a short time in his nephew’s house. He then left it after he had built for himself a mud house in Al-Kufah surrounded by reed chambers.

Mental Characteristics

Imam Ali (‘a) held the most excellent elements of self-perfection and his virtues encompassed all fields of life. He is indeed the gift of Almighty Allah to humankind, since he played the role of the guide of humanity after the Holy Prophet Muhammad–peace be upon him and his Household.

Let us now cite, yet briefly, the most eminent of these elements of perfection.

Strong Faith In Allah

The most incomparable quality of Imam Ali (‘a) is that he was the most faithful to Almighty Allah and the most knowledgeable of Him. He is thus reported to have said,

Even if the covering (that veils the facts of faith) is revealed before me, this will by no means increase my current conviction.

Expressing his deep faith in Almighty Allah, he (‘a) also said,

O my God, I worship You on account of neither fear of Your chastisement nor desire for Your reward; rather, I found You the worthiest of being worshipped; therefore, I do.[48](#)

This is the very worship of those who turn to God only and recognize Him with thorough recognition.

Imam Ali (‘a) has dedicated his entire life to Almighty Allah, inviting to Him and striving for His sake with sincerity as is due to Him.

Historians relate that when Imam Ali (‘a) could knock ‘Amr ibn Abd-Wudd down after they had combated, he waited for a while before he gave the finishing stroke to him, because ‘Amr had cursed and sworn at the Imam (‘a) violently. This made the Imam (‘a) angry; he therefore waited until his rage faded away. Only then did he kill ‘Amr. When he was then asked about the reason, the Imam (‘a) answered,

I did not want to kill him in revenge for his cursing and swearing at me; lest I would have missed the reward of the Lord. Hence, when my rage calmed down, I put him to death so that my deed would be purely for the sake of Almighty Allah.

Frequent Turning To Allah

Imam Ali (‘a) was the person who most frequently turned to God and feared Him. About this feature, Abu’l-Darda', a companion of the Holy Prophet (S), reported the following incident:

One day, I met Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) in a date-palm tree orchard where he hid himself from the views behind a tree. When I could no longer catch sight of him, I thought that he might have returned home. At once, I heard a sad voice and a grieved tone, saying,

O my God, too many have been the astounding offenses of me, which You have been too Forbearing to make me encounter Your punishment for them. Too many have been the wrongdoings that You have been too Noble to disclose, out of Your Nobility. O my God, if my days of disobedience to You have become long and if my sins that are recorded in the Scroll have become gross, then I am still hoping for nothing other than Your forgiveness and I desire for nothing other than Your pleasure.

As I hid myself in the nearby bushes to hear what he was saying, I saw Ali offering many units of prayer. Upon accomplishment, Ali (‘a) became engrossed in supplications, weeping and wailing. He thus said,

O my God, when I think of Your pardon, the consequences of my evildoings are alleviated; but when I, after that, think of Your unbearable chastisement, my ordeal becomes greater and greater. Ah! If I see in the Scroll of my deeds an evildoing, which I have forgotten, but You have recorded; then, You will order them to take me away! Then, what a helpless one I shall be when my clan shall not be able to save me and my tribe shall be of no avail! Ah! For the fire that cooks well all livers and kidneys! Ah! For the fire that plucks out the head! Ah! For the flames of hell!

Then, Ali (‘a) burst in weeping bitterly and his voice faded away. I hurried towards him and found him as still as a piece of wood. As I tried to move him, he did not show any sign of life. I thus repeated a statement of sorrow and ran towards his house to declare his death.

Lady Fatimah (‘a) asked me to describe the manner in which I had found him. When I did, she said, ‘O Abu’L-Darda! This very frequently happens to Ali (‘a) because of fear of Allah.’ I returned there, took some water with me, and sprinkled some on his face. He gained consciousness and looked at me while I was weeping. He asked me as to why I was weeping, to which I narrated the whole incident. Then, Ali (‘a) said,

O Abu’L-Darda! If you see me being called to interrogation on the Judgment Day, when the evildoers realize for sure that they shall be chastised, when harsh and short-tempered angles will surround me from all sides, when I shall be stood up before the Omnipotent King-Lord, when all my friends will desert me, and when all the inhabitants of this world will feel pity for me, then you will most certainly be more merciful to me (than this situation) while I will be stood up before the One from Whom nothing can ever be concealed.

Astounded by this unparalleled God-fearing, Abu'L-Darda' confessed that he had never seen such piety with any of the Holy Prophet's companions.

Dirar ibn Damrah Al-Dibabi was a companion of Imam Ali ('a). When, after the martyrdom of Imam Ali ('a), he went to Damascus, Mu'awiyah called him and asked him to say something about Imam Ali ('a). Dirar, knowing that Mu'awiyah hated Imam Ali ('a) intensely, tried to avoid this topic, but Mu'awiyah forced him to speak. Thereupon, Dirar said:

I had often seen Imam Ali in the depth of nights, when people were either sleeping or engrossed in amusements; he would be standing in the niche of the Mosque, with tears in his eyes or he would beseech Almighty Allah to help him maintain a pious, a virtuous, and a noble character and to forsake the world.

He would then address the world, saying: 'O vicious world! Be away from me! Why do you come in front of me like this? Do you want to allure me? Allah forbid that I should be allured and tempted by you and your pleasures. It is not possible. Go and try your allurements on somebody else. I do not desire to own you and do not want to have you. I have forsaken you thrice.

It is like divorcing a woman thrice after which act she cannot be taken back as a wife. The life of pleasures that you offer is of a very little duration. There is no real importance in what you offer and the desire of holding you is an insult and humiliation to sober minds. Sad is the plight of those who want to acquire you. They do not provide for the Hereafter. They have to pass through a long journey over a very difficult road towards a sad destination.'

When Dirar stopped, there were tears in the eyes of Mu'awiyah who said,

'May peace of Allah be upon Abu'L-Hasan Ali ibn Abi Talib! He was undoubtedly like that.[49](#)

Relating Imam Ali's intense fear of Almighty Allah, Nawf, a famous scholar of the early Islamic days and one of Imam Ali's companions, says:

One night, I was with Imam Ali ('a). He spent the whole night with prayers. After each prayer, he would go out, look at the stars, and recite parts of the Holy Quran. After a while, he passed by me and asked, 'Are you asleep or awake, Nawf?' 'I am awake,' I answered, 'I am watching you.'

The Imam ('a) turned his face towards me and said in a low tone:

O Nawf! Blessed are those who abstain from the pleasures of this world and have great desire for the Hereafter. These are they who accept bare ground as the most comfortable bed, water as the most pleasant drink, the Quran as their gown, and supplicatory prayers as their motto. They forsake the world with thorough forsaking, just like Prophet Jesus the son of Mary. Indeed, Allah the Honorable and Exalted revealed to Jesus the son of Mary:

Tell the elders from the Children of Israel, 'Do not enter any of My houses without having a pure heart, humble eyes, and clean hands.' Also tell them, 'Know that I will not answer the prayers of anyone amongst you. Neither will I answer the prayers of anyone who is indebted to any of my creatures.' [50](#)

Historians have reported marvelous depictions of Imam Ali's turning to Almighty Allah even in the most horrible situations. During the Battle of Siffin, he would perform the prayers while the arrows of the enemies were targeted at him from all sides. Nevertheless, he paid no attention at all, because his feelings and attention were completely directed towards the Almighty. [51](#)

It is also reported that whenever Imam Ali ibn Al-Husayn Al-Sajjad ('a) browsed the book of Imam Ali ('a) and read the paragraphs about his worship in general and his prayers in particular during which his color would change in fear of Almighty Allah, he would say, 'Who can do this?' [52](#)

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir ('a) reported that he, one day, came to his father (Imam Al-Sajjad) who had carried out in worship what no one had ever carried out. He saw that his father's color had gone yellow from weeping all night, his eyes used up all their water from being awake all night, his forehead bruised, his nose squashed from prostrating, and his legs and feet swallowed from standing in prayer.

Imam Al-Baqir ('a) reported: I could not prevent myself from weeping when I saw him in that state as sign of showing mercy to him. He then turned to me and said, 'My son, give me some of those parchments in which there is the (practice of) worship of Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a).' As I did, he read something from them for a while. Then he let them go from his hand in exasperation and said, 'Who is strong enough to perform the worship of Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a)?' [53](#)

Infallibility

Historians have unanimously agreed on the fact that Imam Ali ('a) had never erred, blundered, or committed any sin or wrongdoing throughout his lifetime and had never strayed off the Holy Prophet's traditions and instructions.

After the assassination of 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab, Abd Al-Rahman ibn 'Awf accepted to charge Imam Ali ('a) with the position of the leadership of the Muslim nation under the condition that Imam Ali ('a) would rule according to the course of Abu-Bakr and 'Umar. Yet, Imam Ali ('a) refused and insisted on ruling according to the Book of God and the Holy Prophet's traditions. Thus, he would never be seduced by any position that would lead him to commit any wrong.

Demonstrating his infallibility, Imam Ali ('a) is reported to have said a number of words indicating so. Some of these words are as follows:

By Allah, even if I am given all the domains of the seven (stars) with all that exists under the skies in order that I may disobey Allah to the extent of snatching one grain of barley from an ant, I would not do it. [54](#)

In the field of purity from filth and faculty of decency, he has said,

By Allah, I would rather pass a night in wakefulness on the thorns of Al- Sa 'dan (a plant having sharp prickles) or be driven in chains as a prisoner than meet Allah and His Messenger on the Judgment Day as an oppressor over any person or a usurper of anything out of worldly wealth.[55](#)

In the field of self-denial, he has said,

My attention is concentrated on one thing, that is, with the help of the fear of Allah and piety, I keep my desires under control so that in this world I may not commit sins and errors and on the Judgment Day when fear will be the lot of everybody I may feel safe and satisfied. If I had so wanted, I could have very easily found ways and means to provide for myself the purest honey, the best variety of wheat and the finest silk clothes that could be woven.

But it is not possible for inordinate cravings to overcome me and it is not possible that greediness persuades me to acquire the best provisions when in Al-Hijaz and Yemen there may be people who have no hope of obtaining a piece of bread and who have never satisfied their hunger fully. It is not possible for me to satiate myself when there are around me people whom hunger and thirst keeps restless and agonized.

Do you want me to be like that person about whom somebody has very aptly said, "Is this disease not enough for you that you keep on sleeping with your stomach full, and around you there are such starving mouths that will greedily eat even dried goat-skin?" Shall I be satisfied simply because people call me Amir Al-Mu'minin (Leader of the faithful Muslims)?

Shall I not sympathize with the faithful Muslims in their calamities? Shall I not be their partner in their adversities? Shall I not be their fellow-sufferer? Shall I not set an example for them to patiently, courageously, and virtuously bear privation?"[56](#)

In the field of the reasons for which he would never commit a single sin, Imam Ali ('a) has said,

By Allah, this world of you is certainly more worthless to me than a sweat of a peg in the hand of a leper.[57](#)

In the field of his adherence to the right path from which he would never slip, Imam Ali ('a) has declared,

I am certainly on clear guidance from my Lord (Allah) and on the path of my Prophet and I am on the right path, which I adhere to regularly.[58](#)

I have never spoken a lie and the things revealed to me were not a lie. I have never deviated nor have I been made to deviate.

Those companions of Muhammad—peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants—who

were the custodians (of divine messages) know that I never disobeyed Allah or His Messenger at all, and by virtue of the courage with which Allah honored me I supported him with my life on occasions when even the brave turned away and feet remained behind (instead of proceeding forward)' I swear by Him who is such that there is no god but He, that I am on the path of truth and that they (the enemy) are on the misleading path of wrong.[59](#)

Asceticism

One of the most prominent characteristics of Imam Ali's personality is his practice of abstinence from luxury and worldly pleasures. He had full control over himself; he was therefore inured to living in a state of simplicity and abstention from all pleasures of life. He was thus described [60](#) as the most ascetic of all people.

When the position of caliphate was given to him, he divorced the worldly pleasures irrevocably and lived in the poor quarters of Al-Madinah and Al-Kufah the very way the poor and miserable lived. He chose neither a palace to live in nor the best of clothes to put on. He used to eat the very food the poor used to eat. When he was asked about that, he answered,

Certainly, Allah the Sublime has made it obligatory on true leaders that they should maintain themselves at the level of low people so that the poor do not cry over their poverty.[61](#)

Imam Ali ('a) did not pay any attention to the kind of clothes he would put on; therefore, he used to dress in the toughest clothes.

'Umar ibn Qays reported that some people blamed Imam Ali ('a) for he had dressed a patched wrapper. He yet answered,

This wrapper will be an example (of modesty) to the faithful believers and a reason for feelings of fear of God and self-humility.[62](#)

Abu-Ishaq Al-Subay'i has reported that he was carried on his father's shoulder while Imam Ali ('a) was delivering a speech and fanning himself with his sleeve. 'Father,' Abu-Ishaq asked, 'he is doing so because he feels hot, is he not?' His father answered, 'No, son. He feels neither hot nor cold; rather, his shirt is wet because he has just washed it and he does not have any other one to put on instead.'[63](#)

Abu-Hayyan Al-Tamimi has reported his father to have said that he saw Imam Ali ('a) declaring from the minbar,

Is there anyone to purchase this sword of mine? Had I had the price of a wrapper, I would have never offered it to selling.[64](#)

Ali ibn Al-Aqmar has reported that he saw Imam Ali ('a) in the marketplace offering one of his swords and saying,

Who will purchase this sword from me? I swear by Him Who split the grain that I, on many occasions, removed agony from the Messenger of Allah (S) by this sword. Had I had the price of a wrapper, I would have never offered it to selling.[65](#)

One day, Imam Ali (‘a) went to the marketplace to purchase a garment. When a cloth merchant recognized him, he tried to make a big discount as a sign of flattering to the ruler. The Imam (‘a), upon recognizing the aim of the merchant, left him without buying anything. He then went to another store whose owner could not recognize him. He bought two pieces of clothing; one with three dirhams and the other with two.

The Imam (‘a) gave the three– dirham piece to his servant Qambar, and kept the other for himself. Qambar said, ‘You deserve this one more than I do, because you usually climb the minbar and deliver speeches.’ In reply, the Imam (‘a) said,

You are young and you enjoy the enthusiasm of youth, while I am too shy of my Lord to prefer myself to you.[66](#)

One day, Imam Ali (‘a) purchased a shirt with three dirhams and said,

All praise be to Allah. This is some of His covering.[67](#)

Harun ibn ‘Antarah has reported that he, once, visited Imam Ali (‘a) who was putting a worn garment and trembling of cold. The reporter said, ‘O Leader of the Believers, Almighty Allah has decided a portion of this public treasure for yourself and your family. Why are you in such a state?’

In reply, the Imam (‘a) said,

By Allah, I will never prejudice any amount of your money. This is in fact the very garment of mine which I left my homeland Al-Madinah wearing it.[68](#)

One day, Imam Ali (‘a) purchased a piece of clothing. When he felt that he had liked this piece, he decided to give it as alms at once.[69](#)

Imam Ali (‘a) said in a speech he addressed to the people of Al-Kufah,

I have entered this city of yours with these very clothes and with this riding–animal. If I leave it with anything more, then I am of the traitors.[70](#)

Historicists have reported that Imam Ali (‘a), during his caliphate, did not possess even three dirhams to buy a wrapper or the like. He used to enter the building of the public treasure and distribute whatever therein on the people. He would then offer a prayer therein and say,

All praise be to Allah Who has taken me out of this building as same as I had entered.[71](#)

When he departed life, Imam Ali (‘a) did not possess anything except his patched wrapper.

As for his food, Imam Ali (‘a) accustomed himself to abstaining from having various kinds of food; rather, he ate only what would keep his body and soul together, like salt and bread. Sometime, he would have milk or vinegar. During the days of the Holy Prophet (S), Imam Ali (‘a) very often tied a rock on his stomach because of hunger.[72](#)

He rarely ate meat; rather, he used to say,

Do not make your stomachs graveyards of animals.[73](#)

One day, a sort of sweets was presented to Imam Ali (‘a) who commented,

This food is of good smell, nice color, and sweet taste, but I do not like to familiarize myself with something I am not accustomed to.[74](#)

Imam Al-Baqir (‘a) has reported that Imam Ali (‘a) used to eat from the worst kind of dates. He would then drink water, beat his stomach with his hand, and say,

Away with him whose stomach leads him to Hellfire.[75](#)

About his asceticism and abandonment of worldly pleasures, Imam Ali (‘a) has said,

By Allah, I have not treasured any gold out of your world nor amassed plentiful wealth nor collected any clothes other than the two shabby sheets.[76](#)

On the last day of his noble lifetime, Imam Ali (‘a) broke his fast with a piece of bread and salt. He ordered his daughter Lady Ummu-Kulthum to take back the milk she had served him along with the bread and salt.[77](#)

At the same time, he used to invite the orphans and serve them with honey. Seeing this, one of his companions commented, ‘I wish I were orphan!’[78](#)

Abdullah ibn Razin has reported that he, along with others, visited Imam Ali (‘a) on the ‘‘Id Al-Adha Day (the Greater Bairam) and he served them with a harirah (a dish of flour cooked with milk). Abdullah said, ‘May Allah lead you to more success! Should you have served us with the meat of these swans’’

The Imam (‘a) answered,

O son of Razin, I have heard the Messenger of Allah saying, ‘It is illicit for an Imam (i.e. leader of the Muslim community) to take anything of the fortune of Allah except two bowls: one for his family and him and the other for the people.’[79](#)

The following incident is about Imam Ali’s protest against ‘Asim ibn Ziyad who had confined himself with

a cloak away from the people. His brother, Al- Rabi' ibn Ziyad, complained before Imam Ali ('a) that 'Asim's family had become depressed and his sons had been saddened because of his behavior. Imam Ali ('a) had summoned 'Asim ibn Ziyad and he was brought before him. When Imam Ali ('a) saw him, he frowned at him and asked,

*Why did you not feel ashamed before your wife? Why did you not show kindness to your sons? Do you think Almighty Allah had made good things lawful to you and then He disliked if you used them? You are less significant to Him than such a thing. Is it not Allah Who has said, '**He spread out the earth for the people (55: 10)? There exist all kinds of fruits, palm-trees with sheathed blossoms, (55: 11) grain with its husk and aromatic herbs.**' (55: 12)*

*Is it not Allah Who has said, '**He has made the two oceans meet each other, (55: 19) but has created a barrier between them so that they will not merge totally. (55:20) (Jinn and mankind), which of the favors of your Lord do you, then deny? (55:21) From the two oceans come pearls and coral.**' (55:22)*

I swear by Allah, the use of the bounties of Him in deed is more preferred by Him than in mere words (thanking Allah for His bounties merely in words without the use of practical benefits). Allah, the Most Majestic, the Most Gracious, has said, '**... and proclaim the bounties of your Lord.**' (93: 11)

'Asim asked, 'O Amir Al-Mu'minin, why have you confined yourself to tasteless food and harsh garments?' He said,

How inconsiderate of you! Allah, the Most Majestic, the Most Gracious, has made obligatory for the Imams (Leaders with Divine Authority) of justice to measure themselves with the people of lowest standard of living so that the poverty of the poor does not plunge them into despair.

'Asim then abandoned the gown and began to live a normal life.[80](#)

Salih ibn Al-Aswad has reported that he, once, saw Imam Ali ('a) riding on a donkey, putting his two legs on one side, and repeating this sentence:

Indeed, I have disgraced this world.[81](#)

Unmatched Heroism

Another feature of Imam Ali's distinctive personality was his great courage, valor, and bravery, which covered the entire globe and became proverbial. He is indeed the one and only hero of Islam, and Muslims have never known any sword like his. This sword harvested the heads of polytheism, humiliated the tyrants of Quraysh, smashed their arrogance, and shattered their vigor.

His honorable situations in the battles of Badr, Uhud, Al-Ahzab, and the other combats of Islam clearly indicate that Islam could endure due to the efforts of this hero.

Before the Holy Prophet (S), someone said that ‘Amr ibn Ma’dyakrib is the greatest horseman of the Arabs. Correcting his information, the Holy Prophet (S) said,

It is Ali who is the greatest horseman of the Arabs.[82](#)

Describing Imam Ali’s bravery, Ibn Abi’l-Hadid says,

In the field of courage, Imam Ali made people forget any name of courageous people who existed before him and erased the name of any courageous one who would come after him. His situations in battles are too famous to be forgotten, since they have become proverbial and will remain so up to the Resurrection Day. He is indeed the brave one who has never absconded or feared a detachment.

He could kill any one who combated with him and none of his strikes needed another (to finish off his rivals). According to a tradition, Imam Ali’s strikes were single. During the Battle of Siffin, Imam Ali (‘a) called Mu’awiyah to face him in a face-to-face combat so that the others would get rid of war when one of these two would kill the other. ‘Amr ibn Al-’As, Mu’awiyah’s consultant, said, ‘This is indeed fair request!’

Answering him, Mu’awiyah said, ‘You have never cheated me before this moment! Do you really want me to duel with Abu’L-Hasan while you know for sure that he is the unbeatable hero? It seems that you have aspired to lay hold of the rulership of Sham (Syria) after me!’

The Arab heroes used to take pride in facing Imam Ali in battles. Likewise, the folks of his victims took more pride. The sister of ‘Amr ibn Abd-Wudd, one of Imam Ali’s victims, took pride in the fact that her brother’s killer was Ali, the matchless hero and the son of the matchless chief.[83](#)

Admitting Imam Ali’s remarkable courage, Al-Shi’bi says that Ali ibn Abi-Talibb is the most courageous of all people. All Arabs admit this fact.[84](#)

During the days of the Battle of Siffin, Imam Ali (‘a) used to go out at night alone. Some of his companions said to him, ‘How come you kill the people of Sham in days and go out alone in front of them at night wearing nothing more than a shirt and a wrapper?’

Answering them, the Imam said,

Do you frighten me of death? By Allah, I do not care whether I fall on death or death falls on me.[85](#)

Enormous Strength

The Almighty has endued Imam Ali (‘a) with enormous strength and bodily vigor in addition to his great physical power. Due to these physical and mental powers, Imam Ali (‘a) could defeat the polytheists of Quraysh and the Jews whose attempts to extinguish the light of Islam had not stopped until he brought them to an end. As a sign of his physical power, whenever Imam Ali (‘a) grasped a man from the arm,

this would be as if he grasped his soul, because the Imam's grasp would block even his breath.[86](#)

In his early days, he used to wrestle with his elder brothers and cousins and he was always the winner. When he grew up, he used to bring to the ground the strongest men, and take the giant ones up and knock them down.

Sometimes, he grasped others from the belly and raised them in the air. Moreover, he used to follow a running horse, hit it, and stop it from running.[87](#) This is not strange, because it is he who pulled out the great gate of Khaybar and used it as a bridge on which his troops crossed to the other side of the ditch. He then threw the gate for an amazing distance. This incident became the topic of the people's discourse up to the present day. Unfortunately, this great power was misunderstood by some extremists who claimed Imam Ali's godhead.

Forbearance

Patterning after his cousin and educator; i.e. the Holy Prophet (S), Imam Ali ('a) was the most forbearing and the most self-possessed. He had never revenged himself against his enemies or those who maltreated him; rather, he used to reward them with lenience and pardon.

One day, Imam Ali ('a) called upon a servant of him, but the servant refused to answer. The Imam ('a) then called him twice and thrice, but no answer was shown. The Imam ('a) then came to the servant and asked, 'What for have you refused to answer me?' The servant answered, 'Well, I am too lazy to answer you. Besides, I was sure that you would not punish me; therefore, I refused to answer.' Upon this reply, the Imam ('a) felt glad and said,

All praise be to Allah Who has made me one of those whose vengeance is secured by His creatures.

The Imam ('a) then manumitted the servant for the sake of Almighty Allah.[88](#)

Abu-Hurayrah, who is well-known for his deviation from the Imam's line and open enmity towards him, visited the Imam ('a) once and asked for something. Immediately, the Imam ('a) responded to him. Upon this situation, some of the Imam's companions blamed him. He yet answered,

I am too noble to make his (i.e. Abu-Hurayrah's) foolishness overcome my forbearance, his sinfulness overcome my pardon, and his begging overcome my magnanimity.[89](#)

Ibn Al-Kawwa¹, one of the Khawarij (or Kharijites; a deviant sect who mutinied against Imam Ali's authority due to a political background), used to revile at Imam Ali ('a) openly in his presence. Nevertheless, the Imam ('a) neither treated him like for like nor took any procedure against him although he was the ruler of the state.

One day, this infidel recited the following Quranic verse in the face of Imam Ali ('a): ***'Certainly, it has been revealed to you and to those before you: Surely, if you associate (with Allah), your work***

would certainly come to naught. (39:65)'

In return, Imam Ali (‘a) answered with the following holy verse:

'Be patient; surely, the promise of Allah is true and let not those who have no certainty hold you in light estimation. (30:60)'

A remarkable sign of Imam Ali's forbearance is that when he got 'A'ishah after she had lost the Battle of the Camel (Al-Jamal), while it was she who rallied people and waged this war against him, he pardoned her, allowed her to depart in a handsome manner, and furnished her with all the provision she would need in her journey.

Similarly, Imam Ali (‘a) got his bitterest enemy, Marwan ibn Al-Hakam, but he pardoned and released him.

Abdullah ibn Al-Zubayr, who used to revile at Imam Ali (‘a) openly and attribute wicked descriptions to him, was also gotten by Imam Ali (‘a) during the battle. Nevertheless, Imam Ali (‘a) pardoned him and said no more than the following few words: *'Go away! Do not let me see you ever again.'*

After the Battle of the Camel, Imam Ali (‘a) got Sa'id ibn Al-'As, one of his bitterest enemies, in Makkah, but he neither blamed nor said any word to him.[90](#)

Another situation that reveals Imam Ali's forbearance is that when Mu'awiyah's troops seized the sources of water during the Battle of Siffin, they prevented the Imam's troops from having from that water. When the Imam (‘a) asked for water, Mu'awiyah's troops refrained and declared that they would make him die thirsty. Therefore, the Imam (‘a) ordered his troops to occupy the banks of the River Euphrates.

They did and possessed the water sources. Hence, Mu'awiyah's troops wandered in the desert without having a drop of water with them. The Imam's companions asked him to return like for like and prevent Mu'awiyah's troops from water, but he refused and said, 'No, by Allah. I never return like for like.' He then ordered his troops to give them a space to reach water because 'the edges of swords will suffice,' as he said.[91](#)

On one of the days of the Battle of Siffin, Imam Ali (‘a) chased 'Amr ibn Al-'As, the deviser of Mu'awiyah's government, who, having seen that he would be under the mercy of Imam Ali's sword, he revealed his anus in the face of the Imam (‘a). Immediately, the Imam (‘a) blushed and went back!

Patience

Imam Ali (‘a) faced all the ordeals and misfortunes that inflicted him with full patience and serenity. The most horrible of these ordeals was the passing away of the Holy Prophet (S). Immediately after that, the Imam (‘a) was exposed to the most catastrophic conspiracy in the history of Islam, when the heads of

Quraysh held a secret meeting and insisted on violating the Holy Prophet's will of appointing Imam Ali ('a) as the next leader of the Muslim nation.

When Imam Ali ('a) refused to swear allegiance to the fake leader, the conspirers attacked him in his house, surrounded the house with fire, and took him out tied with the chain of his sword to swear allegiance to Abu-Bakr.

Another ordeal that Imam Ali ('a) had to suffer was the passing away of his wife, Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra' ('a), a few days after the departure of her father, the Holy Prophet (S). He felt burning anxiety for her and confined himself to his house away from the community.

Nevertheless, the usurpers of his position of leadership could not do without him; they therefore had to refer to him in every political, religious, and social dilemma, because they were too ignorant to run the affairs of the Muslim nation. In this regard, 'Umar ibn Al- Khattab declared on more than one occasion, 'Had it not been for Ali, 'Umar would have perished.'

When the next leadership was given to 'Uthman, he ruled tyrannically, committed the most horrific crimes, and transferred the fortunes of the Muslim nation to his relatives, the bitterest enemies of Islam. Having been fed up by the terrible ruling of 'Uthman, Muslims had no other option than putting him to death and insisting on Imam Ali ('a) to hold the position of leadership.

The Imam ('a) refused, because he understood the great damage 'Uthman's government had done to the political and social structure of the Muslim community, but people insisted and even threatened him if he would refuse. He therefore held the position in spite of the many crises and troubles he would face in amending what 'Uthman had ruined.

The masses hence swore allegiance to him and, in turn, he spread justice among them and everybody was delighted in his government except the families of Quraysh who had known for sure that Imam Ali ('a) would divest them of their properties they had usurped from the public treasury.

They therefore spared no single effort in overthrowing the Imam ('a). Thus did they wage two wars against him; namely, the Battle of the Camel and the Battle of Siffin. After that, more ordeals attacked the Imam ('a) until he was martyred in a mosque.

Modesty

Imam Ali ('a) behaved modestly towards the poor and the simple people, but not the rich and the arrogant.

One day, he ('a) hosted a man and his son. When they had a meal together, the Imam ('a) took the pitcher and poured water on the man's hands to wash them. Panicked, the man said, 'How will the Almighty see me while you are pouring water on my hands?'

Gently, the Imam (‘a) answered,

Indeed, the Almighty sees me as your brother without any distinction or preference over you. This raises my rank in Paradise.

When the Imam (‘a) finished, he handed the pitcher over to his son Muhammad and ordered him to pour water on the hands of the man’s son, saying,

O son, if this son had come to me alone, I would have poured water on his hands, but Almighty Allah does not accept to equalize a son to his father.[92](#)

When Imam Ali (‘a), marching at the head of his army towards Syria, reached Al-Anbar, the landlords of the place came out to meet him in zeal of their love, faithfulness, and respect. No sooner had they seen Imam Ali (‘a), they rode off their horses and started running in front of him. Imam Ali (‘a) asked the reason of their strange actions. They replied that it was their custom to show their love and respect to their chiefs. He thus replied,

By Allah (I swear this), by your action you do no good whatsoever to your rulers but you tire yourself and put yourself in toils in this world and in trouble in the next. How unfortunate is that exertion, which brings harm here and in the Hereafter, and how useful is that ease which keeps you in comfort in this world and away from the Hell in the next.[93](#)

One day, when Imam Ali (‘a) went out along with his companions, he was riding his horse, but noticed that his companions were walking. He asked them if they had a request to be granted by him. They replied in the negative and said that they just wanted to be with him. He then asked them to return, since accompanying one who is riding on foot will corrupt the hearts of the foolish.[94](#)

Visiting The Sick

Imam Ali (‘a) used to visit the sick and encourage his companions to do so. Once, he said to them, whoever visits his ailed brother-in-faith is as if he is walking under the fruitful trees of Paradise. If he sits with him, mercy will cover him totally.[95](#)

One day, Imam Ali (‘a) visited one of his sick companions and said to him,

May Allah make this illness a thing to atone your sins, because a disease in itself has nothing to bring reward to anyone, but it erases one's sins and makes them fall like (dried) leaves; so far as reward is concerned, one has to earn it with his good words and good deeds. The Almighty Lord grants Paradise to whomever he wishes from among his creatures, on account of their piety and noble thoughts.[96](#)

On another occasion, Imam Ali (‘a) visited his friend Sa’sa’ah ibn Sawhan in his illness and said to him,

By Allah, you have always been of very light expenses and of valuable assistance.

Answering him, Sa'sa'ah said, 'So are you, Leader of the Believers. Allah the Almighty is great in your sight, you are merciful to the believers, and you are well-versed in the Book of Allah.'

When the Imam ('a) was about to leave, he said to Sa'sa'ah,

Do not take pride in my visit to you over your people, for Allah the Almighty does not love him who is proud and boastful. [97](#)

Detestation Of Praise

Imam Ali ('a) always detested any word of praise or commendation that was said to him. Whenever he was praised, he would say,

I am less than what you have said about me and greater than what you think of me. [98](#)

Whenever he was commended, he ('a) would say in a form of supplicatory prayer, *O Allah, I know myself more than he (i.e. the commending person) does; therefore, (please) forgive me that which he does not know about me.* [99](#)

Response To Invitations

Imam Ali ('a) would respond to the invitation to a meal that was offered by any person, especially the poor. One day, he said to a man who invited him,

I will come to you on condition that you will not serve us with things that are beyond your ability and do not deprive us of things that you are able to offer! [100](#)

Generosity

Imam Ali ('a) was the most generous of all people and the most charitable to the needy. He did not pay any attention to funds unless they would feed a hungry or clothe a naked. He also used to prefer the needy to himself even if he himself was in need. He and his household gave their food to a poor, an orphan, and a prisoner for three consecutive days and spent these three days having nothing but water.

Appreciating this situation, Almighty Allah revealed a whole Surah (chapter of the Holy Quran); namely, Surah Al-Insan (No. 76).

Likewise, it is Imam Ali ('a) who gave his ring as alms to a beggar while he was offering a prayer. In this respect, the Almighty revealed a holy Quranic verse (namely; 5/55).

Al-Asbagh ibn Nubatah has reported that someone came to Imam Ali ('a) and said, 'O Leader of the Believers, I need something which I had provided before Almighty Allah and then came asking it from you. If you grant me my need, I will praise the Almighty and thank you. If you do not, I will praise the

Almighty and excuse you.'

Answering him, the Imam ('a) said,

You may write down your need on the ground, because I do not like to see the humility of begging on your face.

As the man did, Imam Ali ('a) gave him a garment and the man immediately wore it. Then, the Imam ('a) ordered one hundred dinars (i.e. golden coins) to be given to him. Upon this situation, Al-Asbagh was astonished, saying, 'Do you give him such an amount, too?'

The Imam ('a) answered,

I have heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying, 'Treat people according to their standings.' This is the standing of this man in my sight. [101](#)

When Imam Ali ('a) distributed the spoils of the war of Al-Basrah (i.e. the Battle of the Camel) among the individuals of his army, each one gained five hundred dirhams (i.e. silver coins), the same amount that the Imam ('a) took for himself. Immediately after that, a man who had not participated in that battle came to him and said, 'Although I did not participate in that campaign, I was there in my heart; therefore, please give me something.'

The Imam ('a) then gave him his share and returned empty-handed. [102](#)

Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) has reported that Imam Ali ('a), carrying a sack full of bread, stood under the shed of Banu-Sa'idah because it was raining. Once he noticed that there were poor people sleeping there, he began putting one or more loaves of bread under the bed of each of them. [103](#)

One day, Imam Ali ('a) went out, carrying a skin on his shoulder and a bowl in his hand, and supplicating his Lord, saying:

O Allah! O Guardian of the believers, God of the believers, and Protector of the believers; please, accept my offering this night, for I do not possess anything this evening except what is in my bowl and what covers my body. You do know that I have deprived myself of this although I feel terribly hungry, seeking nearness to You, which is the true gain. O Allah, please do not deform my face and do not reject my supplication.

Then, he went on feeding the poor. [104](#)

On another occasion, the Imam ('a) possessed only four dirhams. He gave one as alms at night, the other in day, the third secretly, and the fourth openly. Appreciating this situation, this holy verse was revealed:

'As for those who spend their property by night and by day, secretly and openly, they shall have

their reward from their Lord and they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve. (2:274)' [105](#)

In the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (S), there was a poor man who lived in a small house neighboring an orchard of a rich man. The date-palm trees of that orchard hanged down in the poor man's house and his children hurried to pick up the falling dates, but their father would prevent them. The poor man complained about this situation to the Holy Prophet (S) who went to the owner of the orchard and asked him to sell it in return for a garden in the upper Paradise.

The man however refused. The Holy Prophet (S) returned disappointed. In his way back, he met Imam Ali ('a) and told him about the matter. Immediately, Imam Ali ('a) went to the owner of the orchard and offered to purchase it from him. The man accepted on condition that he would take Imam Ali's best garden in return. The Imam ('a) accepted and hurried to the poor man to give him that orchard for free. [106](#)

Describing Imam Ali's generosity, Al-Shi'bi says,

Ali was the most generous of all people. He was characterized by the very disposition that Almighty Allah loves; namely, generosity and liberality. He has never answered a beggar in the negative. [107](#)

Kindness To The Poor

Imam Ali ('a) showed perfect kindness to the poor; he behaved as if he were their father. He showed them clemency and equalized himself to them in the vicissitudes of time, starvation, and harshness. In his reign, he declared,

Is it possible for me to satiate myself when there are around me people whom hunger and thirst keeps restless and agonized? Do you want me to be like that person about whom somebody has very aptly said, 'Is this disease not enough for you that you keep on sleeping with your stomach full, and around you there are such starving mouths that will greedily eat even dried goat-skin?' [108](#)

During his time in power, the first priority that Imam Ali ('a) took was eradication of misery and deprivation, distribution of the fortunes among the subjects equally and fairly, and paying very much attention to the manners and circumstances of the poor and needy. This is the reason that incited the animosity of the rich capiTalibsts of Quraysh towards him and made them stand against him, try their best to frustrate his plans, and wage wars against him so as to prevent him from achieving social justice on the globe.

One day, Imam Ali ('a) was out when he saw a lady fatigued by the water skin she was carrying on her shoulders. Immediately, he hurried towards her and took the skin from her to the door of her house. When he ('a) asked her about her manners, she, who could not recognize him, complained, "Ali sent my husband to one of the borders where he was martyred, leaving his children orphans and me without having anything to nourish them. I therefore had to serve people.'

Shocked by her saying, Imam Ali (‘a) left her burdened with heavy sadness. He spent that night restless. The next morning, he carried a basket full of food and directed towards the woman’s house to feed her orphans. On his way, one of his companions saw him and offered to help him carry that basket. The Imam (‘a) answered, *‘If you do it now, who will burden off my sin on the Resurrection Day?’*

When he reached the woman’s house, he knocked the door. ‘Who is it?’ she asked. ‘I am the slave who helped you carry the water skin yesterday,’ he answered. ‘Please open the door, for I have something for the children.’ The woman prayed for him and said, ‘May Allah be pleased with you, and May He judge between Ali ibn Abi Talib and me.’

The Imam (‘a) then said to her, ‘I just seek divine reward. You may now choose either to knead and make bread, or to entertain the children while I will make bread.’ The woman answered, ‘I am more experienced in kneading and making bread than you are; therefore, you may entertain the children while I bake.’

While the woman was baking, Imam Ali (‘a) cooked meat and began serving the children with it and with dates. Whenever he passed a bite to one of them, he said, *‘O son, please release Ali ibn Abi Talib from the ordeals you have seen.’* When the dough fermented, the woman said to the Imam (‘a), ‘O servant of Allah, go and fire up the oven.’

The Imam (‘a) hurried and fired up the oven. Whenever fire burned his face, he said, *‘O Ali, this is the penalty of him who has neglected the widows and the orphans!’* In the meantime, a neighboring woman entered that house and could recognize Imam Ali (‘a). She thus shouted at the orphans’ mother, ‘Woe to you!

This is Ali ibn Abi Talib!’ Astounded by this news, the woman was about to fall down. She said to the Imam (‘a), ‘How abashed I am from you, Leader of the Believers!’ Answering her, the Imam (‘a) said, *‘How abashed I am from you, she-servant of Allah, for I have neglected you.’* [109](#)

Justice

Indeed, Imam Ali (‘a) was the voice of human justice. He preferred the establishment of justice over all things, canceled all kinds of favoritism, and worked towards the pleasure of the Almighty and the public interest.

Historians have reported that ‘Aqil, once, visited him in Al-Kufah, the capital of his state and the Imam (‘a) welcomed him hospitably and ordered his son Al-Hasan to give him a shirt and a garment as present. When it was time for dinner, the Imam (‘a) served his brother with bread and salt. Resentfully, ‘Aqil said, ‘Is that all?’

Gently, the Imam (‘a) answered, *‘Is this not part of the grace of Allah?’* Very much praise be to Him for this.’ ‘Aqil then asked the Imam (‘a) to give him an amount of money enough to settle his debt so that he

would leave as soon as possible. *'How much is your debt?'* asked the Imam ('a). *'It is one hundred thousand dirhams,'* answered 'Aqil. The Imam ('a) said, *'In fact, I do not have such an amount right now and I do not possess it. However, you may wait until I receive my salary and halve it with you. I will give it to you entirely, but I have children to feed.'*

Violently, 'Aqil said, *'You have the public treasury in your hands and you want me to wait until you receive your salary? How much is your salary? What will it be even if you give me all of it?'* Restlessly, the Imam ('a) said, *'you and I are exactly equal to any other Muslim individual with regard to the salary I take from the public treasury.'*

The Imam ('a) was prospecting some chests of merchants; he therefore pointed to them and said to 'Aqil, *'If you refuse my offer, you may go down to these chests, break their locks, and take whatever therein.'* 'What are there in these chests?' asked 'Aqil. *'There are funds of the merchants,'* answered Imam Ali ('a).

Surprisingly, 'Aqil said, *'Do you want me to break the chests of people who had depended upon the Almighty and put their funds therein?'* Answering him, the Imam ('a) said, *'Do you want me to open the funds of the Muslims and give you their shares? They have also depended upon the Almighty and locked on them. If you wish, you and I will unsheathe our swords and leave for Al-Hirah where there are rich merchants! We may attack them and take their money!'* 'Aqil answered, *'Have I come to you to steal?'* The Imam ('a) answered, *'To steal from one person is better than stealing all Muslims!'*

'Aqil did not have any further excuse to make; he therefore asked the Imam's permission to go to Mu'awiyah. The Imam ('a) permitted him and asked his son Al-Hasan to give him the expense of this journey. [110](#)

Thus did Imam Ali ('a) refuse any sort of favoritism, because all people were alike in his view.

Another picture of his amazing justice is that a guest was hosted by Imam Al-Hasan ('a) who borrowed a rotl (a unit of weight) of honey from Qambar, the keeper of the public treasury. When Imam Ali ('a) distributed the public treasury, he discovered that a rotl of honey was missing. When he asked Qambar about it, the latter explained the situation. Immediately, Imam Ali ('a) summoned his son and asked him bitterly,

'What for have you taken from the public treasury before distribution?' Imam Al-Hasan ('a) answered, *'We do have a share in this. If we take some, we will definitely return it.'* When Imam Ali's rage calmed down, he said gently, *'May your father be ransom for you! Even if we have a share in this, it is not permissible for us to utilize our share before all other Muslims do.'*

The Imam ('a) then gave Qambar one dirham and asked him to buy the best kind of honey. When Qambar did, the Imam ('a) put it in the sac and tied it. [111](#)

One day, an amount of money was brought to Imam Ali (‘a) from Isfahan (a city of western Iran). He divided it into seven parts and distributed it on the people of Al-Kufah. In the middle of the money, he found a loaf of bread; he therefore divided it into seven parts and distributed it equally. [112](#)

One day, Qambar, the Imam’s servant, came to his master and took him from the arm, ‘O Leader of the Believers, you do not keep any thing of the treasury for yourself or for your household who definitely have a share in this. I therefore have hidden something for you.’

‘What is it?’ asked the Imam (‘a). ‘You may come with me and see,’ answered Qambar, who led the Imam (‘a) to a chamber full of golden plates and gilded silver. Once his eyes fell of these, the Imam (‘a) flamed up with rage and rebuked Qambar, saying, *‘May your mother weep for you! You wanted to lead a great flame of fire to my house!’* The Imam (‘a) then weighed these things and distributed them among the people. [113](#)

Knowledgeability

Despite their divergence in trends, historians have unanimously agreed that Imam Ali (‘a) was the most knowledgeable of all Muslims and the most versed in religious sciences and all fields of knowledge. His scientific faculties cannot be found with any other person, including all the companions of the Holy Prophet.

Talking about this knowledgeability, Imam Ali (‘a) has said,

I have hidden knowledge; if I disclose it, you will start trembling like ropes in deep wells. [114](#)

On another occasion, he (‘a) has said,

Ask me before you miss me! Because, by Allah, who has my life in His hands, if you ask me anything between now and the Judgment Day or about the group who would guide a hundred people and also misguide a hundred people I would tell you who is announcing its march, who is driving it in the front and who is driving it at the rear, the stages where its riding animals would stop for rest and the final place of stay, and who among them would be killed and who would die a natural death. [115](#)

On a third occasion, he (‘a) has said,

By Allah, if I wish, I can tell every one of you from where he has come, where he has to go, and all his affairs, but I fear lest you abandon the Messenger of Allah – peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his progeny – in my favor. I shall certainly convey these things to the selected ones who will remain safe from that fear. [116](#)

Quick-Wittedness

Imam Ali (‘a) was known for his quick-wittedness. He used to solve the most complicated problems

instantaneously, especially in the field of the laws of inheritance. Therefore, some of his questions are called *'the instantaneous questions'* or *'the minbar questions'*, because he answered them without need to make a single move.

One day, Imam Ali (‘a) was asked about a jurisprudential issue, but he hurried to his house and then came out with a smile. Having found it strange, some of the attendants asked, ‘O Leader of the Believers, whenever you were asked a question, you would answer as swift as a heated die!’ The Imam (‘a) answered, *‘I was suffering strangury, and a stangurious cannot give a wise answer.’*^{[117](#)}

Imam ‘Ali With The Advent Of Islam

As he came with the new religion, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S) convulsed Makkah with a new ideology, social system, and economic system. He devastated the unfounded beliefs of the chiefs of this community and eliminated their habits and traditions.

First, he destroyed the idols they used to worship. The first call of the Holy Prophet (S) was to abandon worshipping such lifeless statutes and idols and to worship the Creator of all beings and the only One Who can grant benefit and repel harm.

The Holy Prophet (S) also called for liberating the slaves and the enfeebled ones whom had been disgraced and belittled in the community of the pre- Islamic era. Thus, the Holy Prophet (S) adopted the issues of these people, deemed them equal to the other social classes, and conveyed to them the good news that they would be the chiefs of the new community that believes in Islam.

The Holy Prophet (S) also raised the slogan of woman liberation. In the pre- Islamic era, women were subjected to various sorts of brutality, inequality, and belittlement. For instance, some people used to bury the female newborns alive, believing that they bring nothing but shame and disgrace to their fathers.

Other people deprived women of receiving any amount of their legal inheritances. Others would marry their fathers’ widows automatically. Another aspect was that the marriage of any woman was controlled by her father or brother who would seize her dower if he wished, or prevent her from marrying her entire lifetime.

When Islam came, all such inhumane traditions and behaviors were deemed forbidden and illegal. Thus, Islam has liberated women and granted them their dues.

Another principle for which the Holy Prophet (S) called was social equality and classlessness. Islam has thus declared all human beings as equal to each other apart from their nationalities, races, and colors. Hence, in Islam there is no difference before law between a ruler and a subject.

The Holy Prophet (S) also raised the slogan of protecting the human rights and helping the weak against

the persecuting strong.

The Holy Prophet (S) also forbade usury, which was prevalent in the economical relationships before Islam. He (S) declared that such usurious transactions bring about poverty and create a certain class of people who have sway over the other classes.

Consuming intoxicants was so common in the pre-Islamic community; therefore, the Holy Prophet (S) shocked these people when he declared all intoxicating beverages illegal to consume.

The other most manifest aspects that the Holy Prophet (S) carried with him when he first promulgated for Islam were the forbiddingness of exploitation, the elimination of poverty, and the spread of science and knowledge.

Describing the religion of Islam, Imam Ali (‘a) says,

This Islam is the religion that Allah has chosen for Himself, developed before His eyes, preferred as the best among His creations, and established its pillars on His love. He has disgraced other religions by giving honor to it. He has humiliated all communities before its sublimity; He has humbled its enemies with His kindness and made its opponents lonely by according it His support. He has smashed the pillars of misguidance with its columns. He has quenched the thirst of the thirsty from its cisterns, and filled the cisterns through those who draw its water.

He made Islam such that its constituent parts cannot break, its links cannot separate, its construction cannot fall, its columns cannot decay, its plant cannot be uprooted, its time does not end, its laws do not expire, its twigs cannot be cut, its parts do not become narrow, its ease does not change into difficulty, its clarity is not affected by gloom, its straightness does not acquire curvature, its wood has no crookedness, its vast paths have no narrowness, its lamp knows no putting off and its sweetness has no bitterness.

It consists of columns whose bases Allah has fixed in truthfulness and whose foundation He has strengthened, and of sources whose streams are ever full of water and of lamps, whose flames are full of light, and of beacons with whose help travelers get guidance, and of signs through which a way is found to its highways and of watering places which provide water to those who come to them.

Allah has placed in Islam the height of His pleasure, the pinnacle of His pillars and the prominence of His obedience. Before Allah, therefore, its columns are strong, its construction is lofty, its proofs are bright, its fires are aflame, its authority is strong, its beacons are high and its destruction is difficult. You should therefore honor it, follow it, fulfill its obligations and accord the position due to it. [118](#)

On another occasion, Imam Ali (‘a), thanking Almighty Allah for enduing His servants with the religion of Islam, says,

Praise be to Allah Who established Islam, made it easy for those who approach it, and gave strength to

its columns against any one who tries to overpower it. So, Allah made it (a source of) peace for him who clings to it, safety for him who enters it, argument for him who speaks about it, witness for him who fights with its help, light for him who seeks light from it, understanding for him who provides it, sagacity for him who exerts, a sign (of guidance) for him who perceives, sight for him who resolves, lesson for him who seeks advice, salvation for him who testifies, confidence for him who trusts, pleasure for him who entrusts, and shield for him who endures.

It is the brightest of all paths and the clearest of all passages. It has dignified minarets, bright highways, burning laps, prestigious field of activity, and high objective. It has a collection of racehorses. It is approached eagerly. Its riders are honorable. Testimony (of Allah, the Prophet, etc.) is its way, good deeds are its minarets, death is its extremity, this world is its race-course, the Judgment Day is its horses and Paradise is its point of approach. [119](#)

It goes without saying that Imam Ali (‘a) would not have described the religion of Islam so highly unless he had certainly had full acquaintance with it and believed in its principles and goals.

Imam Ali; The First To Pray With The Holy Prophet

All traditionists and historians agree unanimously on the fact that Imam Ali (‘a) was the first to perform a prayer with the Holy Prophet (S) in the Sacred House of God. [120](#) Revealing this fact, historians have mentioned the names of those who witnessed this incident.

‘Afif Al-Kindi has reported the following:

Before the victory of Islam, I once came to Makkah to purchase some clothes and perfumes for my wife. I thus came to Al-‘Abbas ibn Abd Al- Muttalib, who was a merchant, and sat with him while my eyes were focused on the Ka’bah. It was midday when a young man came, raised his sight towards the sky, and stood up facing the Ka’bah. Before long, a boy came and stood to the young man’s right side.

Then, a woman came and stood behind them. When the young man bowed, the boy and the woman bowed. When he raised his head, the boy and the woman did. When he prostrated, they also prostrated. Surprisingly, I said, ‘Abbas, this is a marvelous thing. Is it not?’ Al-‘Abbas agreeing to my opinion said, ‘Yes, it is. It is indeed a marvelous thing. Do you know this young man?’ As I answered negatively, Al-‘Abbas said, ‘This is Muhammad the son of Abdullah. He is my nephew. Do you know the boy? He is Ali my nephew.

Do you know the woman. She is Khadijah the daughter of Khuwaylid, the young man’s wife.’ Referring to Muhammad, Al-‘Abbas continued, ‘This young man who is my nephew has told me that his lord, the Lord of the Heavens and the Earth, has ordered him to follow this religion. I swear by God that none on this earth is following this religion except these three persons.’ [121](#)

Proving this fact, Abdullah ibn Mas’ud is reported to have recounted this incident:

The first time I knew about the Holy Prophet (S) was when I, accompanied by some of my relatives, came to Makkah. As we were advised to meet Al- 'Abbas ibn Abd Al-Muttalib, we went to him to find him sitting near the Zamzam Spring. We thus sat with him. Meanwhile, we saw a white-faced young man' coming to the Ka'bah from the gate known as Bab Al-Safa.

We also saw a teenage beardless boy walking to his right side. They were followed by a veiled woman. The young man went towards the Black Stone and kissed it. The boy and the woman did the same after him. The young man then circumambulated the Holy House seven times, and so did the boy and the woman.

Upon seeing this, we asked Al-'Abbas, 'We do not have any idea about the advent of such a religion amongst you. Has any thing new happened?' Answering us, Al-'Abbas said, 'This young man is my nephew Muhammad, the boy Ali the son of Abu Talib, and the lady Khadijah'

I swear this by Allah: as much as we knew, no one on this globe worshipped God through this religion except these three persons. [122](#)

This virtue is peculiarly Ali ibn Abi Talib's. None of the other Companions or any other person had ever won its like.

Despite his deviation from the line of Imam Ali ('a), Sa'd ibn Abi-Waqqas confessed of this fact. One day, he passed by a group of people who were encompassing a rider who went on reviling at Imam Ali ('a). Without delay, Sa'd said to the rider:

'O man! On which basis are you reviling at Ali ibn Abi Talib? Was he not the first to accept Islam? Was he not the first to perform prayers with the Messenger of Allah? Was he not the most ascetic of all people? Was he not the most knowledgeable of all people? Was he not the Holy Prophet's son- in-law; that is the husband of the Prophet's daughter? Was he not the standard-bearer in all of the Prophet's campaigns?'

Then, Sa'd faced the Kiblah direction, raised his hands towards the sky, and prayed to Almighty Allah saying, 'O Allah! This man is swearing at one of Your saints. So, please, do not allow this group to separate from one another before You show them Your omnipotence.'

In a little while, the animal of that rider threw him to his head on some rocks, causing his head to split. [123](#)

Imam Ali ('a) accompanied the Holy Prophet (S) since the first spark of his promulgation for Islam. Adolescent and youthful, Imam Ali ('a) believed with full awareness in the mission of Islam that was impressed in his inner self.

Imam Ali And The 'Warning Of The Relatives'

When Almighty Allah ordered His Prophet (S) to call his near relatives to this religion by revealing to him this holy verse:

'And warn your nearest relations (26:214),'

The Holy Prophet (S) told Imam Ali ('a) about this divine command.

Let us read the whole story as reported by Imam Ali ('a):

When the verse: 'And warn your nearest relations,' was revealed, the Holy Prophet (S) summoned me and said, 'O Ali, Almighty Allah ordered me to warn my nearest relations, but I was depressed since I had realized that they would answer me disgracefully whenever I would call them to this matter. Hence, I tried to evade it until Archangel Gabriel came and threatened my Lord's chastisement if I would not carry out.

Now, I ask you to prepare some food on which you should cook a leg of a sheep and make us a skin of milk. Then, you should invite the sons of Abd Al-Muttalib so that I will speak to them and convey this mission.' I carried out the Holy Prophet's orders completely and invited the sons of Abd Al-Muttalib who were about forty men.

Abu Talib, Hamzah, Al-'Abbas, and Abu-Lahab were also invited. As they all were present, the Holy Prophet asked me to serve them the food that I had prepared. With his teeth, he incised that piece of meat, threw its parts on the edges of that trencher, and said, 'Here you are, by the Name of Allah.' They all ate to excess. By Allah I swear, each one ate as much as I had cooked for all of them.

Then, the Holy Prophet asked me to serve them with that milk. They all drank from that skin. I swear by Allah, each one drank full skin of milk. As soon as the Holy Prophet tried to speak, Abu-Lahab interrupted and said, 'See how your man cast witchcraft on you.' Therefore, they left before he could speak to them.

The next day, the Holy Prophet said to me, 'You saw how that man interrupted me. Today, you should prepare food as same as you did yesterday and invite them again.' I did the same and invited them, and they came, ate and drank. The Holy Prophet then spoke, 'O sons of Abd Al-Muttalib!

By Allah, I do not know an Arab man who can bring to his people a matter better than what I am bearing to you. I am conveying to you the welfare of this world as well as the Hereafter. Almighty Allah has ordered me to invite you to this matter. Who will support me in this affair and he will be my brother, successor, and next-in-line amongst you?' I was the youngest among them when I shouted, 'O Messenger of Allah, I will be your supporter in this affair.'

Hence, the Holy Prophet grasped me from the neck and said, 'This is truly my brother, successor, and next-in-line amongst you. So, you must listen to and obey him.'

But they began to laugh at me, left the place, and said to my father, 'He has ordered you to listen to and obey your son!'^{[124](#)}

At the least, these words prove that Imam Ali ('a) is the true successor to the Holy Prophet (S) and the true leader of the Muslim community after him.

Cruel Procedures Against The Holy Prophet

The polytheists of Quraysh agreed unanimously on resisting the Holy Prophet (S) through all means possible. They therefore tortured physically the youths, women, and slaves who followed the Holy Prophet (S).

They then ordered their boys to throw stones, dust, and ash on the Holy Prophet (S). In order to release themselves from the responsibility of these acts, they used to apologize to Abu Talib, the Holy Prophet's protector and defender that they had nothing to do with these acts; rather, their boys and children did so, and such categories of people are not responsible for their acts!

Opposing these boys and children, Imam Ali ('a), who was a boy too, used to attack these boys violently and assail them with blows and kicks. Hence, whenever the Holy Prophet (S) walked, Imam Ali ('a) would be behind him. When these boys saw Imam Ali ('a), they would run away to their parents in order to avoid his strikes.

The polytheists of Quraysh then accused the Holy Prophet (S) of insanity in order to intervene people from contacting with him. When this accusation was proven false, due to the great menTalibty and the shrewdness of the Holy Prophet (S) that everyone had to confess, the polytheists of Makkah accused him of sorcery. Once again, nobody believed this false accusation.

They then turned to the youths, women, and slaves who believed in the Holy Prophet (S) and wreaked their wrath on them. This act forced a group of Muslims to immigrate to Abyssinia (currently Ethiopia) under the instruction of the Holy Prophet (S). Among these Muslims was Ja'far ibn Abi Talib, Imam Ali's brother. However, the attempts of the polytheists of Quraysh to convince the king of Abyssinia to give these Muslims up failed.

The polytheists then agreed upon detaining the Holy Prophet (S) and his family members in an area outside Makkah between two summits. This area is called the Col of Abu Talib. In this area, the Holy Prophet (S) and his household were put under arrest in order to prevent them from associating with the other people.

They also decided not to give any person in marriage to any male or female from the Holy Prophet's

tribe, Banu-Hashim. They also imposed on people not to deal with them at all. These decisions were then hanged to the inside of the Holy Ka'bah.

Suffering the most brutal sorts of persecution and suppression, the Holy Prophet (S) and his household had to live in that col for two or more years. During this period, Lady Khadijah the Holy Prophet's wife spent whatever she had in possession on them until all her possessions ran out.

How great this lady is and how great benefits she did for Islam and Muslims!

Almighty Allah then revealed to termites to consume that vicious document. When the Holy Prophet (S) told his uncle and defender, Abu Talib, about this matter, he hurried to the chiefs of Quraysh and conveyed this news to them. Hurriedly, they went to see the document. They found it as exactly as what Abu Talib had told them.

Some of them therefore demanded the others to raise the siege on the Hashimites, but Abu-Jahl opposed. However, the Hashimites were set free and they left that area after they had suffered very much.

Abu Talib and his sons protected the Holy Prophet (S) and helped him go on inviting people to the new religion. As for Abu Talib, he always encouraged the Holy Prophet (S) to continue in carrying out his divine mission. As for Abu Talib's sons, they did not stop protecting and defending the Holy Prophet (S) with all means possible.

The incident that saddened the Holy Prophet (S) very much was the passing away of Abu Talib and Lady Khadijah in a period of three days. [125](#) Due to this great misfortune, the Holy Prophet (S) called that year as the year of sadness. Thus, the Holy Prophet (S) lost the man who used to defend and protect him and the woman who used to cover all his financial needs.

Due to the passing away of Abu Talib, the polytheists of Quraysh agreed unanimously on assassinating the Holy Prophet (S). He therefore decided to flee from Makkah and migrate to Yathrib where he had many supporters who had believed in his religion and been ready to sacrifice their souls for him.

Having held a meeting in their headquarters, the chiefs of Quraysh decided to gather forty persons from the various tribes of Quraysh and commission them to attack the Holy Prophet (S) and assassinate him in his bed. By doing so, they thought that the relatives of the Holy Prophet (S) would not be able to avenge him, because all the tribes would have a share in this assassination.

Almighty Allah then informed His Prophet about this plot and ordered him to leave to Yathrib. [126](#)

The polytheists had appointed a certain night on which their plot should be put into action. At that night, they stealthily surrounded the Holy Prophet's house, waiting for dawn in order to attack the house and tear the Holy Prophet's body with their swords.

Imam Ali Sacrifices His Life For The Holy Prophet

The Holy Prophet (S) ordered Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) to replace him, spend that night on his bed, [127](#) and cover himself with the Holy Prophet’s green garment so that the assassins would think that the Holy Prophet (S) was still there. By doing so, the Holy Prophet (S) would survive that assassination and leave safely.

Imam Ali (‘a) not only obeyed the Holy Prophet’s order but he also was full of joy because he would sacrifice his life to save him.

The Holy Prophet (S) left his house while they were encompassing it, took a handful of dust and threw it on their filthy faces while repeating this holy verse:

‘And We have made before them a barrier and a barrier behind them, then We have covered them over so that they do not see. (36:9)’

Actually, the act of Imam Ali (‘a) when he replaced the Holy Prophet (S) and spent that night in his bed in order to give the false impression to the assassins that the Holy Prophet (S) was still there is considered one of the brightest pages in the book of his sacrifices for Islam and one of his unmatched virtues. About Imam Ali’s protecting the Holy Prophet (S) with his soul, Almighty Allah has revealed in His oft-repeated Quran a verse that immortalizes this situation. Hence, the Holy Quran reads:

And among men is he who sells himself to seek the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is Affectionate to the servants. (2:207)

Al-Ghazzali writes in his book entitled Ihya’ ‘Ulum Al-Din:

At the night when Ali (‘a) replaced the Holy Prophet (S) and spent that night on his bed, Almighty Allah revealed to Archangels Gabriel and Michael, saying, ‘Today, I have established brotherhood between you two and I have extended your lives, one longer than the other. Of the two of you, which one will sacrifice his life for the sake of the other?’

Both of them said that they loved their lives and refused to part with their life for the sake of the other. Then, Almighty Allah revealed, ‘Will you both not be like Ali whom I made Muhammad’s brother and he preferred the Prophet’s life to his own and slept on the Prophet’s bed exposing himself to the risk of being mistaken to be the Prophet and thus slain?’

Go down on earth and protect him from the mischief of his enemies.’ Archangel Gabriel stood at the head and Archangel Michael stood at the foot of the bed, even as Ali (‘a) slept on the Prophet’s bed. They said, ‘Congratulations, Ali! Almighty Allah joins His angels in praising you.’ At that time, this verse was revealed:

And among men is he who sells himself to seek the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is Affectionate to the servants. (2:207) [128](#)

This incident also reveals that Imam Ali (‘a) is the second personality in the mission of Islam. He replaces the Holy Prophet (S), represents him, and takes his place in all affairs. Finally, this virtue has played a major role in the promulgation for Islam and no one could ever gain its like.

Back to the incident, Imam Ali (‘a) spent that night sleeplessly, praying to Almighty Allah to save the Holy Prophet (S) from this ordeal. His supplication at this night was the following:

O He beside Whom there is no god to be prayed! O He above Whom there is no creator to be feared! O He below Whom there is no deity to be revered! O He Who has no viceroy that can be bribed! O He Who has no companion that can be intermediated! O He Who has no doorkeeper to be called! O He Who gives not but generously and liberally no matter how many the demands are! O He Who deals not with numerous sins but mercifully and kindly! [129](#)

It is also reported that Imam Ali (‘a) said the following supplicatory prayer at that night:

O Allah, I have begun this evening seeking refuge with Your invulnerable security, that is neither touched nor caught, against the evil of all oppressive and domineering ones from among all of Your animate and inanimate creatures both the silent and the speaking; and being in protection against all terrifying things; and being in the complete garb of my loyalty to the Household of Your Prophet; and veiling myself against all those who intend harm to me, behind an impervious wall, which is my sincerity in the profession of their (Divinely commissioned) right (of leadership) and my adherence to their Rope, and bearing with certainty that the Right is theirs, with them, in them, and amid them.

I thus accede to those whom they accept and depart those whom they depart. O Allah, protect me, in the names of them, against the evil of all that which I fear, O All-great. I am restraining the enemies against me through the Originator of the heavens and the earth; ‘And We have set a bar before them and a bar behind them, and (thus) have covered them so that they see not. ‘O Most Merciful of all those who show mercy! [130](#)

Imam Ali (‘a) remained in that place. When it dawned, the assassins attacked the Holy Prophet’s bed (where Imam Ali slept) unsheathing their swords. Like a lion, Imam Ali (‘a) got up from the bed, unsheathing his sword. When they saw him, they were astounded. Out of their cowardice, they shouted at him, ‘Where is Muhammad?’ Violently, Imam Ali (‘a) replied, ‘Have you appointed me as his guard?’

Thus, the criminals, defeated and followed by disgrace and shame, went back to their houses.

In the meantime, the Holy Prophet (S) was on his way to Yathrib. He headed for a mountain and entered a cave therein. He was accompanied by Abu-Bakr who was encompassed by terror and fear from the tyrants of Quraysh. Having noticed so, the Holy Prophet (S) tried to calm him down by saying, ‘Do not

panic. Allah the All-exalted is with us.'

About this incident, this holy verse was revealed:

If you will not aid him, Allah certainly aided him when those who disbelieved expelled him, he being the second of the two, when they were both in the cave, when he said to his companion, 'Grieve not! Surely, Allah is with us.' So Allah sent down His tranquility upon him and strengthened him with hosts which you did not see, and made lowest the word of those who disbelieved; and the word of Allah, that is the highest; and Allah is Mighty, Wise. (9:40)

Paying no heed to anyone, the Holy Prophet (S) moved along towards Yathrib. When he reached there, he was received so warmly that all the inhabitants of this city went out to welcome him with cheerful exclamations and pleasant faces. In Yathrib, the Holy Prophet (S) could find protection, security, thorough response to his call, and strong faith. These factors delighted him very much.

Imam Ali Migrates To Yathrib

When the Holy Prophet (S) left Makkah to Yathrib, he ordered Imam Ali ('a), who was still in Makkah, to give back the trusts of people to them and to settle his debts. In the square of Makkah, Imam Ali ('a) stood up courageously and shouted, 'Whoever has a trust with the Messenger of Allah may now come to me and receive it.'

After carrying out this duty, he gathered the women of the Holy Prophet's household and led them to Yathrib. Seven persons from the tyrants of Quraysh followed him to prevent him from traveling. Bravely and determinedly, Imam Ali ('a) faced them and could kill one of them. Having seen this, the others ran away. [131](#)

Imam Ali ('a) thus led the women to Yathrib. It is also said that he had reached Quba before the Holy Prophet (S) arrived in Yathrib. [132](#)

When the Holy Prophet (S) was informed about the arrival of Imam Ali ('a), he ordered to lead Imam Ali to him. However, the Holy Prophet (S) was told that Imam Ali ('a) was too tired to walk.

Therefore, the Holy Prophet (S) came to him and wept for him because his feet were swollen because of covering all the distance between Makkah and Yathrib walking. The Holy Prophet (S) then took some of his saliva and put it on Imam Ali's feet. Since then, Imam Ali ('a) had never seen any fatigue in his feet. [133](#)

Establishment Of A Mosque

In Yathrib (lately called Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah), the Holy Prophet (S) started establishing his great state that adopted positively and applicably the human rights, dignity, security, luxury, and teaching.

First, he (S) founded a mosque to be the center of his government. From this mosque, all decisions were taken, all laws were enforced, and all treaties and truces were concluded.

Imam Ali (‘a) was one of those who participated in building the Prophet’s Mosque.

Islamic Brotherhood

As soon as he resided in Al-Madinah, the Holy Prophet (S) declared the principle of Islamic brotherhood. Practically, he brought into fraternal association between each couple of Muslim individuals; one from the Muslims of Makkah who had emigrated to Yathrib and another from the inhabitants of Yathrib who supported and received his companions and him.

In other words, he fraternized a member of the tribe of Al-Aws with another from the tribe of Al-Khazraj; the two major tribes that lived in Yathrib. He also fraternized a member of the emigrants of Makkah (Muhajirun) with a member of the citizens of Yathrib (Ansar).

In fact, this fraternity is considered closer and firmer than family and blood ties.

No one remained except the Holy Prophet (S) who fraternized with Imam Ali (‘a) and said to him,

You are my brother in this world and the Next World. [134](#)

[1.](#) Ahmad ibn Abdullah At-Tabari, Dhakha’ir Al-’Uqba fi Manaqib Dhawi’l-Qurba, pp. 56; Al-Diyarbakri, Tarikh Al-Khamis 2:375.

[2.](#) Shaykh At-Tabrisi, l’lam Al-Wara bi-A’lam Al-Huda, pp. 194.

[3.](#) Al-Haythami, Majma’ Al-Zawa’id 9: 111; Ibn Al-Sabbagh, Al-Fusul Al-Muhimmah, pp. 22.

[4.](#) Al-Suyuti, Al-Jami’ Al-Kabir 6:404.

[5.](#) Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak ‘Ala’l-Sahihayn 3: 104; Tarikh At-Tabari 2:261; Al-Maqrizi, Imta’ Al-Asma’ 1:50.

[6.](#) Al-Haythami, Majma’ Al-Zawa’id 9: 100.

[7.](#) Tarikh At-Tabari 2:363; Al-Diyarbakri, Tarikh Al-Khamis 2:375.

[8.](#) Ahmad ibn Abdullah At-Tabari, Dhakha’ir Al-’Uqba fi Manaqib Dhawi’l-Qurba, pp. 24.

[9.](#) ‘Allamah Al-killi, Kashf Al-Yaqin, pp. 105 (The English Version).

[10.](#) Ibn Shahr’ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib 3:91.

[11.](#) Ibn Shahr’ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib 3:92.

[12.](#) Ahmad ibn Abdullah At-Tabari, Dhakha’ir Al-’Uqba fi Manaqib Dhawi’l-Qurba, pp. 57. Ibn kajar in Tahdhib Al-Tahdhib 7:338, and Ibn Sa’d in Al-tabaqat Al-Kubra 2:26 have mentioned some physical features of Imam Ali (‘a).

[13.](#) Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 192.

[14.](#) Al-Jahis, Hayat Al-Hayawan 1:337.

[15.](#) Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 77:45.

[16.](#) All these educational instructions and more can be found in Tuhaf Al-’Uqul (The Masterpieces of the Intellects) by Ibn Shu’bah Al-karrani; translated into English by Badr Shahin; published by Ansariyan Publications.

[17.](#) See, for instance, Sahih Al-Tirmidhi 2: 103; Ibn Sa’d, Al-tabaqat Al-Kubra 3: 14; Al- Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-’Ummal 6:400; Tarikh At-Tabari 2:500’ etc.

[18.](#) Ibn Al-Jawzi, Sifat Al-Safwah 1: 162.

[19.](#) Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 34:255.

- [20.](#) Ibn 'Asakir, Tarikh Madinat Dimashq 1:33.
- [21.](#) Al-Maqrizi, Imta' Al-Asma' 1: 16.
- [22.](#) Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 192.
- [23.](#) Al-Tha'alibi, Lata'if Al-Ma'arif, pp. 12.
- [24.](#) Al-Amini, Al-Ghadir 3:21.
- [25.](#) Al-Baghdadi, Khuzanat Al-Adab 3:213.
- [26.](#) Ahmad ibn kanbal, Al-Musnad 2: 102.
- [27.](#) Shaykh At-Tabrisi, l'lam Al-Wara bi-A'lam Al-Huda, pp. 187.
- [28.](#) Periphrasis is an expression of meaning indirectly or in more words than necessary.
- [29.](#) Al-Baghdadi, Khuzanat Al-Adab 1: 154.
- [30.](#) Al-Jahis, Al-Rasa'il 2:222.
- [31.](#) Shaykh Al-tusi, Tahdhib Al-Ahkam 3:83; Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 20:263.
- [32.](#) Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 71.
- [33.](#) Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 96
- [34.](#) Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 161
- [35.](#) Ibn Abd Al-Barr, Al-Istiab 1:30.
- [36.](#) Sharif Al-Murtadha, Al-Fusul Al-Mukhtarah 2:66.
- [37.](#) Tash Kubri Zadah, Miftah Al-Sa'adah 1:89.
- [38.](#) Al-Qalqashandi, Subh Al-A'sha 1:65.
- [39.](#) Sahih Al-Bukhari, Kitab Al-Sulh 3: 168; Sahih Muslim, Kitab Al-Jihad 3: 1410.
- [40.](#) Al-'Askari, Al-Sina'atayn, pp. 431; Ibn Al-'Anbari, 'sah Al-Waqf wa'l-Ibtida', pp. 231.
- [41.](#) Ibn Al-Dimashqi, Jawahir Al-MaTalibb 1:267.
- [42.](#) Ibn Al-Jawzi, Sifat Al-Safwah 1: 163; Ahmad ibn kanbal, Al-Musnad 1:84.
- [43.](#) Al-Baghdadi, Khuzanat Al-Adab 7:224.
- [44.](#) Al-kimyari, Al-Raws Al-Mi'tar, pp. 467; Jawad Ali, Al-Mufa●Al fi Tarikh Al-'Arab Qabl Al-Islam 4:454.
- [45.](#) Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al-Sahihayn 2:366.
- [46.](#) Ibn Al-Dimashqi, Jawahir Al-MaTalibb 1:295.
- [47.](#) Al-Hurr Al-'Amili, Wasa'il Al-Shi'ah 1:499.
- [48.](#) 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 41:14.
- [49.](#) 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 41:14; Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Amali, pp. 371.
- [50.](#) Shaykh Al-Saduq, Al-Khi●al, pp. 546.
- [51.](#) Nasr ibn Muzahim, Waq'at Siffin, pp. 133.
- [52.](#) Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi (Al-Rawsah), pp. 195.
- [53.](#) Shaykh Al-Mufid, Kitab Al-Irshad, pp. 271.
- [54.](#) Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 221.
- [55.](#) Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 221.
- [56.](#) Nahj Al-Balaghah, Letter No. 45.
- [57.](#) Nahj Al-Balaghah, Maxim No. 236.
- [58.](#) Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 97.
- [59.](#) Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 196.
- [60.](#) By 'Umar ibn Abd Al-'Aziz; see Ibn 'Asakir, Tarikh Madinat Dimashq 3:252 and Ibn Al- Dimashqi, Jawahir Al-MaTalibb 1:276.
- [61.](#) Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 208.
- [62.](#) Ibn Al-Jawzi, Sifat Al-Safwah 1:198.
- [63.](#) Ibrahim ibn Muhammad Al-Thaqafi, Al-Gharat 1:99.
- [64.](#) Ibn Abd Al-Barr, Al-Istiab 2:49.
- [65.](#) Ibn Al-Jawzi, Sifat Al-Safwah 1:168.
- [66.](#) Ibrahim ibn Muhammad Al-Thaqafi, Al-Gharat 1:106.

- [67.](#) Sharif Al-Murtadha, Al-Amali 1:353.
- [68.](#) Abu-Na'im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 3:236.
- [69.](#) Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib 1:366.
- [70.](#) Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib 1:367.
- [71.](#) Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib 1:364.
- [72.](#) Musnad Ahmad 2:351, H. 1367.
- [73.](#) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:26.
- [74.](#) Abu-Na'im, Hilyat Al-Awliya' 1:81.
- [75.](#) Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 2:261.
- [76.](#) Nahj Al-Balaghah, Letter No. 45.
- [77.](#) 'Abbas Al-Qummi, Muntaha Al-Amal 1:334.
- [78.](#) 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 41:29.
- [79.](#) Musnad Ahmad 1:78.
- [80.](#) Shaykh Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi 1:410.
- [81.](#) Ibn 'Asakir, Tarikh Madinat Dimashq 3:236.
- [82.](#) Al-Jahis, Al-Rasa'il 2:222.
- [83.](#) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:20.
- [84.](#) Al-Yaghmuri, Nur Al-Qabas, pp. 245.
- [85.](#) Ibn Abd-Rabbih Al-Andalusi, Al-'Iqd Al-Farid 1:102.
- [86.](#) 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 41:276.
- [87.](#) Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib 3:439.
- [88.](#) Sharif Al-Murtadha, Al-Amali 1:525.
- [89.](#) Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib 6:380.
- [90.](#) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:23.
- [91.](#) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:24.
- [92.](#) Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib 1:373.
- [93.](#) Nahj Al-Balaghah, Aphorism No. 36.
- [94.](#) Al-Zamakhshari, Rabi' Al-Abrar 4:131.
- [95.](#) Al-Zamakhshari, Rabi' Al-Abrar 4:127.
- [96.](#) Nahj Al-Balaghah, Aphorism No. 42.
- [97.](#) Al-Zamakhshari, Rabi' Al-Abrar 4:132.
- [98.](#) Nahj Al-Balaghah, Aphorism No. 82.
- [99.](#) Sharif Al-Murtadha, Al-Amali 1:274.
- [100.](#) Al-Jahis, Al-Bayan wa'l-Tabyin 2:197.
- [101.](#) Ibn Al-Dimashqi, Jawahir Al-MaTalibb 2:129.
- [102.](#) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:205.
- [103.](#) Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib 4:349.
- [104.](#) 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 41:29.
- [105.](#) Al-Irbali, Kashf Al-Ghummah, pp. 50.
- [106.](#) Tafsir Furat, pp. 213.
- [107.](#) Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 1:22.
- [108.](#) Nahj Al-Balaghah, Letter No. 45.
- [109.](#) Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib 1:382.
- [110.](#) Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib 1:379.
- [111.](#) Ibn Shahr'ashub, Manaqib Ali Abi Talib 1:107.
- [112.](#) 'Allamah Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar 41:118.
- [113.](#) Ibn Al-Dimashqi, Jawahir Al-MaTalibb 1:273.
- [114.](#) Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 5.

- [115.](#) Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 90.
- [116.](#) Nahj Al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 173.
- [117.](#) Sharif Al-Murtadha, Al-Amali 2: 101.
- [118.](#) Nahj Al-Balaghah Sermon No. 195.
- [119.](#) Nahj Al-Balaghah Sermon No. 105.
- [120.](#) See, for instance, the following reference books: Sahih Al-Tirmidhi 2:300; Tarikh Al-tabari 2:55; Ibn Kathir, Al-Bidayah wa'l-Nihayah 3:27; Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al-Sahihayn 3:112; Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahj Al-Balaghah 4:169.
- [121.](#) Al-Nassa'i, Khasa'is Amir Al-Mu'minin, pp. 3; Musnad Ahmad 1:309; Ibn Sa'd, Al-tabaqat Al-Kubra 8:10.
- [122.](#) Al-Haythami, Majma' Al-Zawa'id 9:224; Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Kanz Al-'Ummal 7:56.
- [123.](#) Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al-Sahihayn 3:499.
- [124.](#) Tarikh At-Tabari 2:63; Tarikh Ibn Al-Athir 2:24; Musnad Ahmad 1:63.
- It is worth mentioning that when Ibn Kathir reported this incident, he shunned mentioning the Holy Prophet's words: "and he will be my brother, successor, and next-in-line amongst you". Rather, he wrote: "and he will be so and so!" Similarly, he shunned mentioning the Holy Prophet's words about Imam Ali ('a): 'This is truly my brother, successor, and next-in-line amongst you.' Rather, he wrote down: 'This is so and so!'
- How spiteful this fanaticism is! It means that this man has nothing to do with following the orders of the Holy Prophet.
- [125.](#) Al-Amini, Iman Abi Talib, pp. 261.
- According to Tarikh Al-Ya'qubi 2:25, Lady Khadijah passed away in the month of Ramadan, three years before the Holy Prophet's migration to Al-Madinah, while Abu Talib passed away three days after this date.
- [126.](#) Al-Miqrizi, Imta' Al-Asma' 1:38.
- [127.](#) Al-Miqrizi, Imta' Al-Asma' 1:39.
- [128.](#) This report is also mentioned in the following reference books among many others: Ibn Al-Athir, Usd Al-Ghabah fi Ma'rifat Al-Sahabah 4:25; Al-Shabalnaji, Nur Al-Absar, pp. 77; Tafsir Al-Razi 5:223; Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 1:348; Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad 13:191; Ibn Sa'd, Al-tabaqat Al-Kubra 8:35.
- [129.](#) Al-Nuri At-Tabrisi, Al-Sahifah Al-'Alawiyah Al-Thaniyah, pp. 117.
- [130.](#) Al-Kaf'ami, Al-Balad Al-Amin, pp. 27-8.
- [131.](#) Sayyid Muhsin Al-Amin Al-'Amili, A'yan Al-Shi'ah 3:92.
- [132.](#) Ibn Sa'd, Al-tabaqat Al-Kubra 3:22.
- [133.](#) Ibn Al-Athir, Usd Al-Ghabah fi Ma'rifat Al-Sahabah 4:92.
- [134.](#) Sahih Al-Tirmidhi 2:299; Al-Hakim Al-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala Al-Sahihayn 3:14.

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