

## Part Seven

### [Nahjul-Balagha: The Book, This Book](#)

“One cannot help liking young Ali (as). A noble-minded person, as he shows himself, now and always afterwards, a man full of affection, one who loved everyone. There is something chivalrous in him: he is as brave as lion, yet with a grace, a truth and affection worthy of Christian knighthood.”

Thomas Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, p. 77 (1968 edition)

### [This Book](#)

This book is a translation of the sermons, letters, orders and some of the sayings of Imam Ali (as) as compiled by Sayyid al-Razi and called *A Nahjul-Balagha*, the path to eloquence.

These sermons and preaching of Imam Ali (as) were so highly valued and venerated in the Islamic world that within a century of his death they were taught and read as the last word on the philosophy of monotheism, as the best lectures for character building, as exalted sources

of inspiration, as very persuasive sermons towards piety, as guiding beacons towards truth and justice, as marvelous eulogies of the Holy Prophet (S) and the Holy Qur'an, as convincing discourses on the spiritual values of Islam, as awe inspiring discussions about the attributes of Allah. As an historic masterpiece in literature alone *Nahjul-Balagha* is the original and undisputed model in the Art of Rhetoric.

### [In the 1st Century A.H.](#)

According to the famous book of biographies *Rijal al-Kabir*, the first person to collect these sermons in a book form was Zaid ibn Wahab al-Juhni, who died in 90 A.H. And who was regarded as a narrator of ahadith. Thus, within thirty years of Imam Ali's death and during the first century of Hijra, his sermons, letters, ahadith etc. were collected quoted and preserved.

## In the 2nd Century A.H.

With the dawn of 2nd century, Ibn Wahab's example was followed by (1) the famous calligrapher of the early Abbaside regime, Abdul Hamid ibn Yahya (132 A.H.), (2) then ibn al-Muqaffa' (142 A.H.) took up this work of compilation. Jahiz al-Othmani says ibn al-Muqaffa had very carefully studied these sermons and used to say that he had saturated himself from the Fountains head of knowledge and wisdom and was daily getting fresh inspirations from these sermons (3) Ibn Nadim in his biography book titled The Fahrist says that Hisham ibn al-Sa'ib al-Kalbi (146 A.H.) had also collected these sermons (Fahrist: Ibn Nadim, section VII page 251).

Thence onward, century after century, Muslim scholars, theologians, historians and traditionists were citing these sermons, quoting them, discussing the meanings of the words and phrases used by Imam Ali (as) and referring them when they needed an authority on theology, ethics, the teaching of the Holy Prophet (S) and the Holy Qur'an or on literature and rhetoric.

## In the 3rd Century

During the third century five famous men took up this work:

1. Abu 'Othman Umar ibn Bahr al-Jahiz, who died in 255 A.H. (868 A.D.), quoted many sermons in his book Al-Bayan wal Tabyin.
2. Ibn Qutaybah al-Daynuri, who died in 276 A.H. in his books Uyin al-Akhbar and Gharib al-Hadith quoted many sermons and discussed meanings of many words and phrases used by Imam Ali (as).
3. Ibn Wazih al-Ya'qubi, who died in 278 A.H. cited many sermons and sayings of Imam Ali (as) in his History.
4. Abu Hanifah al-Daynuri (280 A.H.), in his history Akhbar al-Tiwal, quotes many sermons and sayings.
5. Abul-Abbas al-Mubarrad (286 A.H.), in his book Kitab al-Mubarrad, collected many sermons and letters.

## In the 4th Century

1. The famous historian ibn Jarir al-Tabari, who died in 310 A.H. quoted some of these sermons in his Tarikh al-Kabir.
2. Abu Muhammad Hassan ibn Ali ibn Shu'bah al-Halabi (320 A.H.) had collected some sermons in his book Tuhaf al-'Uqul. This book was later printed in Iran.

The following writers have also extensively quoted the sermons and sayings of Imam Ali (as) in their respective books.

3. Ibn Warid (321 A.H.) in his book Al-Mujtabeen.
4. Ibn Abd Rabbih (328 A.H.) in Al-Iqd al-Farid.
5. Thiqatul-Islam al-Kulayni (329 A.H.) in his book titled Al-Kafi.
6. Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Abdullah al-Madani (335 A.H.) collected sermons, letters and sayings of the Imam (as) in his book. Yaqut al-Hamawi mentions of this book in Mu'jam al-Udaba' page 313 Vol. 5.
7. The historian al-Mas'udi (346 A.H.), in Muruj al-Dhahab, has quoted some of the letters and sermons of the Imam (as) Abul-Faraj al-Isbahani (356 A.H.) in his book titled Al-Aghani,
8. Abu Ali Quali (356 A.H.) in his Nawadir and
9. Shaikh al-Saduq (381 A.H.) in Kitab al-Tawhid, has extensively quoted these sermons, letters and sayings.

### In the 5th Century

1. Shaikh al-Mufid (413 A.H.) in Al-Irshad has quoted many sermons, ahadith sayings and letters of the Imam (as).
2. Sayyid al-Razi (420 A.H.) compiled the book titled Nahjul- Balagha.
3. Shaikhul Ta'ifa [sect's scholar] Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn al- Hassan al-Tusi (460 A.H.) was a contemporary of Sayyid al-Razi and had collected some of these sermons etc. long before Sayyid took up his work.

What Sayyid al-Razi could compile in Nahjul-Balagha does not contain all the sermons letters and sayings of Imam Ali (as). Mas'udi (346 A.H.) in his famous history Muruj al-Dhahab (Vol. 2, p. 33 printed at Cairo) says that only sermons of Imam Ali (as), which have been preserved by various people, number more than four hundred and eighty. These were spontaneous orations, people have copied them one from another and have compiled them in book forms; they have cited them and have quoted passages from them in their books.

Apparently out of these four hundred and eighty sermons some were lost and Sayyid al-Razi could lay hand on only about 245 sermons, in addition he collected about 75 letters and more than 200 sayings. Almost everyone of the sermons, letters and sayings collected in Nahjul- Balagha is to be found in books of Authors who died long before Sayyid al-Razi was born, while some are found in works of such authors who, though his contemporaries, yet were older to him and had written their books before Nahjul-Balagha was compiled. In the Index No. 2: A,B and C, I have given a list of the names of these authors, books and the number of sermons, etc. found in those books.

If I quote all of what has been said by the Muslim and the Christian Arab scholars, theologians, philosophers and historians in praises of these sermons, sayings and letters, it will cover a Volume as big as this book, therefore, I shall briefly quote only a few of them:

1. Abu Sa'adah Mubarak ibn al-Athir al-Jazri (606 A.H.) is recognized unto this day not only as a narrator of ahadith but also as a lexicologist of great eminence. His book *Al-Nihaya*, is a study of the history and meanings of the difficult words of Holy Qur'an and the traditions. In this book he has at great length discussed many words, phrases and the sentences of the Imam Ali's sermons from the book *Nahjul-Balagha*. He says that so far as comprehensiveness is concerned Ali's words come next only to the Holy Qur'an.

2. Allama Shaikh Kamalludin ibn Muhammad ibn Talhah, the Shafi'ite, (who died in 652 A.H.) in his famous book *Matalib al-Sul*, writes the following: "The fourth attribute of Imam Ali (as) was his eloquence and rhetoric. He was such an Imam in these arts that none can aspire to rise up to the level of the dust of his shoes. One who has studied *Nahjul-Balagha* can form some idea of his supreme eminence in this sphere."

3. Allama Abu Hamid Abdul Hamid ibn Hibathullah, known as Ibn Abul-Hadid, the Mu'tazilite, who died in 655 A.H. And who has written a really great commentary on these sermons says the following:

i. His speeches, letters and sayings are so supremely eminent that they are above the sayings of man and below only the words of Allah. None can surpass it but the Holy Qur'an.

ii. In another place, he says, "His sayings are (the actualized) miracle of the Holy Prophet (S). His predictions show that his knowledge was super-human."

4. Allama Sa'ddud-Din al-Taftazani (791 A.H.), in *Sharh al-Maqasid*, says, "Ali had a supreme command over the language, over ethics and over the tenets of the religion. At the same time, he was a great orator. His sermons, compiled in *Nahjul-Balagha*, bear witness to these facts.

5. Allama Ala'ud-Din al-Qawshaji (875 A.H.), in *Sharah al-Tajrid*, says, "The book *Nahjul-Balagha*, that is, the sermons and sayings contained the rein, prove that none can surpass it on these lines but the Holy Qur'an.

6. The mufti of Egypt, Shaikh Muhammad Abdoh (1323 A.H.), has written a commentary on the book, *Nahjul-Balagha*. He was among those modern thinkers, who made the modern world realize the beauties of the teaching of Islam. His introduction on his own commentary of *Nahjul-Balagha* deserves careful study.

In this Introduction, he says that everyone who fully understands Arabic language must agree that the sermons and sayings of the Imam (as) are next only to the words of Allah and the Holy Prophet (S). Ali's words are so full of meanings and they convey such great ideas that this book *Nahjul-Balagha* should

be very carefully studied, referred and quoted by students as well as teachers. This professor of Arabic literature and philosophy persuaded the universities of Cairo and Beirut to include the book Nahjul-Balagha in their courses for advance studies of literature and philosophy.

7. The famous author and orator Shaikh Mustafa Ghalaini of Beirut, who is considered as an authority on commentaries (tafsir) of the Holy Qur'an and also on Arabic literature in his book, Arij al-Zahr and from the chapter titled The Style of Language is written: "Who can write better than Ali except the Holy Prophet (S) and Allah. Those who want to study eminent standards of literature should study the book Nahjul-Balagha. It contains such depth of knowledge and such wonderful advises on the subjects of ethics and religion that its constant study will make a man wise, pious and noble-minded and will train him to be an orator of great standing.

8. Muhammad Mohiuddin, a professor of Arabic at Al-Azhar University of Cairo, says that Nahjul-Balagha is a collection of the works of Imam Ali (as). It is compiled by Sayyid al-Razi. It contains such examples of chaste language, noble eloquence and superior wisdom that none but Ali can produce such a work because next to the Holy Prophet (S), he was the greatest orator, the greatest authority on language and literature and the greatest source of wisdom of the religion (Islam). He was such a philosopher that from his words flow streams of knowledge and wisdom.

9. Abdul Wahhab Hammudah, an authority on Arabic literature and on traditions and also a professor at the Fu'ad I University of Cairo, wrote the following in 1951: "The Book Nahjul-Balagha contains all that great scholars, professor of ethics, philosophers, scientists, authorities on religions and politicians can say or write. The wonderful force of advises and the superfine way of presenting arguments and the depth of vision prove that it is the work of a super mind like that of Ali (as)."

10. Abdul Maseeh al-Antaki, the Christian editor of the Egyptian newspaper Al-Ahram, in his . famous book titled Sharh al-Quasaid al-Alawiyya writes the following: "It cannot be denied that Ali (as) was the Imam of speakers and orators and he was the teacher and leader of writers and philosophers. There is truth in this assertion that his sayings are superior to that of any man and are inferior only to the sayings of Allah the Almighty. He undoubtedly was the man from writers, speakers, philosophers, theologians and poets have drawn inspirations, have improved their styles and have mastered their arts. The compilation of his work is named Nahjul-Balagha, which should be read often."

11. Fu'ad Afram al-Bustani, a professor of Arabic literature, in the Qiddis Yousuf [Saint Joseph] College of Beirut, is a Roman Catholic. He has compiled a book containing selections from the works of philosophers, scientists, theologians and essayists. He starts this book with the following words, Al want to start this work of mine with the selections from the book Nahjul-Balagha. It is a work of the greatest thinker of the world Imam Ali-Ibn Abu-Talib.

12. The famous Christian moralist, author and poet, Paulis Salamah, in his famous book Awwal Malhama al-Arabiyya (printed at al- Ans ari Press of Beirut) says, "The famous book Nahjul-Balagha is

the work which makes one realize the great mind of Ali ibn Abu Talib. No book can surpass it but the Holy Qur'an. In it, you will find pearls of knowledge strung in beautiful chains, flowers of language making one's mind fragrant with sweet and pleasing smell of heroism and nobility and streams of chaste language sweeter and cooler than the famous stream of the Kawthar flowing constantly and refreshing minds of readers.

## **Author: Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (as)**

### **1. Genealogy**

Imam Ali (as), the master of the faithful, was the first cousin of the Holy Prophet (S). His father, Abu Talib and the father of the Holy Prophet (S), Abdullah, were sons of Abdul-Muttalib and children of the same mother, Fatima (as), the daughter of Asad son of the famous Banu Hashim. Thus, his (Imam Ali's) parents were cousins. His genealogical table is as follows. etc. (Refer to Index 1).

### **2. Birth**

Hazrat Ali (as) was born on the 13th of Rajab 30 A.H. (in the Year of Elephant) (about 610 A.D.), i.e. 23 years before the Hijra of the Holy Prophet (S). Historians say that he was born in the precincts of Kaba. In this connection please refer the following books: 1. Imam Hakim, in his Mustadrak, 2. Al-Masudi, in his Muruj al-Dhahab, p. 125, 3. Izalatul-Khafa, 2nd subject, p. 251 and 4. Allama al-Lusi in Sharh al-Ainiyya.

### **3. Name**

At the time of his birth his father and his cousin, Muhammad, the Holy Prophet (S), were out of Mecca, his mother gave him the names of Asad and Hayder; when his father returned he called him Zaid. But when the Holy Prophet (S) came back to the city, he took his young cousin in his charge and gave him the name Ali, saying that it was the name decreed for him by Allah.

- 1) Imam Noodi, the commentator of Bukhari.
- 2) Ibn al-Arabi in his book Yawaqit.
- 3) Sibte ibn al-Jawzi, in his book Tadhkirat Khawas al-A'imma. Hazrat Ali (as) has referred to himself as Ali and Hayder.

### **4. Kunya**

Among various kunyas, the most famous were Abdul-Hassan, Abul-Sibtain and Abu Turab. (Refer to the note below).

## 5. Titles

His titles were: “al-Murtada (the pleased one), Amir al-Mu'minin (as) (the Commander of the Faithful), Almamul-Muttaqin (the leader of the pious).

## 6. Physique

The famous historian and biographer Allama Ali ibn Muhammad, in his book titled *Usd al-Ghaba fi Tamyiz al-Sahaba* (book IV page 398), says that he was a man of middle height with very black and very big and piercing eyes, very handsome cast of face, very clear and fair complexion, broad shoulders, powerful arms, vast chest, strong and roughened hands, a long muscular neck, a broad forehead and he had few hairs on the top of his head.

Note: The names are derived from some relationship or kinship. It is an Arab system that respectable people are addressed with their kunya and not with their names.

Imam Hakim, in his *Mustadrak* (Vol. 3), Kamil ibn Athir in his *Tarikh al-Khamis*, Ibn Abdul Birr, in his *Istiyab* (Vol. 2, p. 486) and Allama Tabrani, in his *Riyad al-Nadira* (Vol. 2 pp. 202 and 218) agree with the above description. Tabrani further says that he used to walk with very light tread and was very agile in his movements, had a very smiling face, very pleasing manner, a jovial temperament, very kind disposition and very courteous behavior. He would never lose his temper.

## 7. Upbringing

He was born three years before the marriage of the Holy Prophet (S) with Hazrat Khadija. Soon after his birth, the Holy Prophet (S) took him under his holy care and Ali was like a son unto him. He used to live with the Prophet (S), used to sleep with him, was fed by him, washed and dressed by him and even carried by him on a sling whenever he would go out. The historian al-Masudi, in *Ithbat al-Wasiyya* (p. 119) says that when the Holy Prophet (S) married Khadija, she adopted this child as her son.

Hazrat Ali himself has described his childhood in *al-khutba al-qasi'a* saying, “I was still a new born baby when the Prophet (S) took me from my parents. I used to cling to him; he would make me sleep in his bed, pressing my body against his and making me smell his fragrance and feel its warmth; he used to feed me and (when I grew a little older) he never found me uttering a lie or feigning a deceit.

To me, he was like a guiding star and I used to carefully follow his actions and deeds. I was attached to him like a young camel attached to its mother. He used to place before me high values of morality and used to advise me to follow them; every year he would spend some days at the grotto of the Hera mountain. And I used to be with him, I was his only companion then and none else could meet him at Hera, there I used to see the light of revelation and used to smell the fragrance of Prophethood.

Once the Holy Prophet (S) said to me, ‘Ali! You have attained a very eminent place. You see what I see

and you hear what I hear.” Both hafiz Abu Na’im in his book Hilyat al-Awliya’, (Vol. 1, p.67) and imam al-Sayyuti in his Tafsir al-Durr al-Manthur say that once Holy Prophet (S) said to Hazrat Ali (as), “O Ali! Allah has ordered me to keep you near me. You are to me like an ear that retains everything because you are the retaining ears that the Holy book (Holy Qur’an) has praised.”

## **8. The Holy Prophet (S) and Hazrat Ali (as): How They Loved Each Other**

(i) Ibn Abul-Hadid, the Mu’tazilite scholar and commentator of Nahjul-Balagha, cites Abdullah ibn Abbas saying, “Once I asked my father: ‘Father! My cousin, Muhammad, has many sons. They all died while still infants. Which of them did he love the most?’ He replied: Ali ibn Abu Talib’. I said, ‘Father! I was inquiring about his sons.’ He replied, ‘The Holy Prophet (S) loved Ali (as) more than all of his sons.

When Ali (as) was a child I never saw him separated from Muhammad (S) for half an hour, unless Muhammad (S) went out of the house for some work. I never saw a father love his son so much as the Holy Prophet (S) loved Ali (as) and I never saw a son so obedient, so attached and so loving to his father as Ali (as) was to Muhammad (S).”

(ii) The same author cites the companion of the Holy Prophet (S), Jubayr Ibn Mut’im ibn ‘Adiyy ibn Nawfil, saying that once his father addressed him and some young men of his family: “Have you noticed how the child Ali has been loving, venerating and obeying that young man, Muhammad (S), instead of his own father?! What an intensity of love and veneration! I swear by our gods, the Lat and the Uzza, that instead of having so many offspring of Nawfil around me, I wish I had a son like Ali (as)!”

(iii) Allama al-Tirmidhi (Jami al-Tirmidhi, Vol. 1, p. 38; Mishkat Vol. 2 p. 8 and Musnad Imam Ahmed Vol. I p. 146), quotes the Holy Prophet (S) saying, “O Ali! I wish to achieve every such thing for you that I desire to acquire myself and I want to keep you away from all those things whose contact I abhor.”

(iv) Allama al-Tabrani (in his book titled Al-Awsat) and Imam Hakim (in his Sahih) say that whenever the Holy Prophet (S) was in anger nobody dared to address him but Ali.

(v) Ibn Abul-Hadid (in his Commentary on Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 21, p. 251) once again quotes the uncle of the Holy Prophet (S), Abbas, saying that they (the Holy Prophet [h] and Ali) loved each other intensely. The Prophet (S) was so fond of Ali that once when Ali was a young boy, he sent him out on some errand and the child took a long time to return, so he started getting worried and anxious; in the end, he prayed to Allah saying: Please, Lord! Do not let me die unless I see Ali again.” This incident is also quoted by al-Tirmidhi.

(vi) Ali started acting as the bodyguard of the Holy Prophet (S) even when he was just a boy of 13 or 14 years. The young men of Quraish under instigation of their parents used to stone the Holy Prophet (S). Ali took up the work of acting as his defender. He fell upon those young men, broke the nose of one, teeth of the other, pulled the ears of the third and threw down the fourth. He often fought against those who were older than himself, was often himself hurt, but he never forsook the self imposed duty. After

some days he got the nickname of “Qazeem”(one who breaks or throws away) and nobody dared to throw anything at the Holy Prophet (S) when Ali (as) was with him. He would not let the Holy Prophet (S) go out of the house alone (Ayan, Vol. 3, p. 280).

Offering himself as a sacrifice at the night of Hijra (migration) and his subsequent behavior in all the battles are enough proofs of the intensity of Ali’s love for the Holy Prophet (S).

## 9. Character

I. Jurjy Zaidan (George Gordan) who died recently was a famous Christian historian, linguist, philosopher and poet of modern Egypt. Arabic was his mother tongue, but he was so well-versed in English, French, Germany, Persian and Latin that he used to contribute to historical and philosophical magazines of France, Germany and England. About Hazrat Ali he says the following:

“None can praise Ali (as) to the extent that he deserves. So many instances of his piety and fear of Allah are cited that one starts loving and venerating him. He was a true, strict and scrupulous follower of Islam. His words and deeds bore stamps of nobility, sagacity and courage of conviction. He was a great man having his own independent views about life and its problems. He never deceived, misled, or betrayed anybody.

In various phases and periods of his life he exhibited marvelous strength of body and mind which were due to his true faith in religion and in his sincere belief in truth and justice. He never had servants and never allowed his slaves to work hard. Often he would carry his household goods himself and if anybody offered to relieve him of the weight he would refuse.”

II. The famous Egyptian philosopher and Professor of Islamics of Alazhar University, allama Muhammad Mustafa Beg Najeeb, in his equally famous book Himatul Islam [protectors of Islam] says the following: “What can be said about this Imam?! It is very difficult to fully explain his attributes and qualities. It is enough to realize that the Holy Prophet (S) had named him the gateway of knowledge and wisdom. He was the most learned person, the bravest man and the most eloquent speaker and orator.

His piety, his love of Allah, his sincerity and fortitude in following religion were of such high order that none could aspire to reach him. He was the greatest politician because he hated diplomacy in the way of injustice and loved truth and justice, his was the policy as taught by Allah.

On account of his sagacity and thorough knowledge of the human mind, he always arrived at correct conclusions and never changed his views. His was of the best judgement. Had he had no fear of Allah, he would have become the greatest politician among all the Arabs. He is loved by all and everyone has a place for him in his heart. He was a man of such surpassing and pre-eminent attributes and such transcending and peerless qualities that many learned men accepted perplexed about him and imagined him to be an incarnation of Allah. Several men among the Jews and Christians love him and such philosophers who came to know of his teachings bow down before his incomparable vast knowledge.

Roman kings would have his pictures in their palaces and great warriors would engrave his name on their swords” (Himatul Islam, part I, p. 98).

III. Another philosopher and historian of Egypt, namely Prof. Muhammad Kamil Hatha, pays his tributes in the following words: His life is a agglomeration of pleasing incidents, bloody encounters and sad episodes. His personality is very prominent on account of his transcending and high qualities.

Each aspect of his life is so lofty and glorious that a study of one phase would make you feel that it was the best phase of his character and the most beautiful picture of his personality, while contemplation of any other phase will enchant you more and you will come to the conclusion that no human being can attain that height and a third aspect will fascinate you equally and you will realize that before you is a personality of such great eminence that you cannot fully appreciate its greatness and you will feel that Ali (as) was an Imam (Leader) in battlefield, was an Imam (Leader) in politics, was an Imam in religion and also an Imam in ethics, in philosophy, in literature, in learning and wisdom. It is not difficult for Allah to create such a person (a review on the character of Ali by Ustad (Professor) Muhammad Kamil Hatha, P. 40)

IV. The historian John J. Pool (author of The Life of H.M. Queen Victoria) in his book Studies in Muhammadanism makes the following points:

i) This prince was a man of mild and forbearing character, wise in counsel and bold in war. Prophet Muhammad (S) had given him the surname of “the Lion of Allah.”

ii) Ali (as) and his sons Hassan (as) and Hussain (as) were truly noble men; men of righteousness, men of a brave, a humble and a forgiving spirit. Their lives deserve to be commemorated for there was a peculiar pathos about them (their lives) which were not spent selfishly or in vain. As Matthew Arnold (Essays in Criticism) says, “The sufferers of Kerbala’ had aloft to the eyes of millions the lessons so loved by the sufferer of Cavalry (Representation of Crucifixion): ‘Learn from me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls.’”

He further says that Ali (as) was the first Caliph to protect and encourage national literature. This prince was a scholar himself and many of his wise sayings and proverbs are published in a book. It is a remarkable work and deserves to be more widely read in the West.

V) Ibn Abul-Hadid, the Mu’tazilite commentator of Nahjul- Balagha, says the following: “Hazrat Ali had a personality in which opposite characteristics had so gathered that it was difficult to believe a human mind could manifest such a combination. He was the bravest man that history could cite and such brave persons are always hard hearted, cruel and eager for bloodshed. On the contrary Ali was kind, sympathetic, responsive and a warm-hearted person, qualities quite contradictory to the other phase of his character and more suited to pious and Allah fearing persons.”

He was an extremely pious and God-fearing person and often pious and religious persons avoid society

and do not care to mix with men of sins and men of wrath. Similarly, warriors, kings and dictators are usually arrogant and haughty. They consider it below themselves to mix with poor, lowly and humble persons. But Ali (as) was different.

He was a friend to all. As a matter of historical fact it is known that he had a tender spot in his heart for the poor and humble and for the orphans and the cripples. To them he was always a kind friend, a sympathetic guide and a fellow sufferer; he was meek unto them but haughty and arrogant against famous warriors and generals, so many of whom he had killed in hand to hand combat. He was always kind but strict with wayward persons, sympathetically teaching them the ways of Allah. He always smiled and passed happy and witty rejoinders, it was difficult to overcome him in any debate or repartee, his rejoinders and retorts always bore high marks of culture, education and knowledge.

He was a scion of a very illustrious, rich and noble clan, as well as son-in-law and great favorite of the Holy Prophet (S). At the same time he was the greatest warrior and marshal of his time, yet in spite of his riches he ate, dressed and lived like a poor person. To him wealth was for the use of other needy persons, not for himself and his family.

Change of times and change of circumstances did not bring any change in his bearing, mien, or character. Even when he ascended the throne of Arabia and was acclaimed as the Caliph, he was the same Ali (as) as they had found him to be during the previous regimes. Once in the society of Abdullah, son of Imam Malik ibn Hanbal, a discussion took place about Ali and his caliphate. Abdullah brought the discussion to an end saying that the caliphate did not bring any honor or glory to Ali, but it was itself honored and glorified by Ali and it received the status actually due to it.

V. Ibn Abul-Hadid also says that, in this world, an example cannot be found of any person other than Ali who was a first class warrior and a marshal, a philosopher, a moralist and a great teacher of religious principles and theology. A study of his life shows that his sword was the only help that Islam received during its early days of struggle and its wars of self-defense.

For Islam he was the first line of defense, the second line of defense and the last line of defense. Who was with him in the battles of Badr, Uhud, Khundak, Khayber and Hunain? This is one aspect of his life. Yet the other phase of his character is portrayed by his sermons, orders, letters and sayings. What high values of morality they teach, what ethics they preach, what intricate problems of Unitarianism they elucidate, how rich they are in philosophy.

How they try to train us to be kind, good, benevolent and Allah fearing rulers and faithful, sincere and law abiding subjects. How they persuade us to be warriors who can fight only for Allah, truth and justice and not mercenaries murdering and plundering for wealth and riches, and how they instruct us to be teachers who can teach nothing injurious and harmful to mankind. Was there any such combination before and will there ever be?

VI. To Oelsner, the famous French Orientalist and author of *Les Effects de La Religion de Muhammad*,

Ali (as) was the beau ideal of chivalry and the personification of gallantry, bravery and generosity.

He says the following: Pure, gentle and learned without fear and without reproach, he set for the world the noblest example of chivalrous grandeur of character. His spirit was a pure reflection of that of Muhammad (S), it overshadowed the Islamic world and formed the animating genius of succeeding ages.

VII. Osborne, in Islam under the Arabs, says that Ali (as) had been advised by several of his counselors to defer the dismissal of the corrupt governors previously appointed until he himself was sure against all enemies. The standard of Islam, the hero without fear and without reproach, refused to be guilty of any duplicity or compromise with injustice. This uncompromisingly noble attitude cost him his state and his life; but such was Ali, he never valued anything above justice and truth.

VIII. Gibbon, in Vol. 5 of the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire says, "The zeal and virtues of Ali were never out-stripped by any recent proselyte. He united the qualification of a poet, a soldier and a saint. His wisdom still breathes in a collection of moral and religious sayings, and every antagonist in the combats of tongue or of sword was subdued by his eloquence and valor. From the first hour of mission to the last rites of his funeral, the messenger was never forsaken by this generous friend, whom he delighted to name his brother, his vicegerent and the faithful Aaron of a second Moses.

IX. Al-Masudi, the famous historian of Islam, says, "If the glorious name of being the first Muslim, a comrade of the prophet in exile, his faithful companion in the struggle for the faith, his intimate associate in life and his kinsman, if a true knowledge of the spirit of his teachings and of the Book, if self-abnegation and practice of justice, if honesty, purity and love of truth and if knowledge of law and science constitute a claim to pre-eminence, then all must regard Ali as the foremost Muslim. We shall search in vain to find, either among his predecessor (save the Holy Prophet [h]), or among his successor, those virtues with which Allah had endowed him."

## 10. Faith

As has been declared by all the historians of Islam, since his childhood, Ali (as) was adopted and looked after by the Holy Prophet (S). It was only natural that his religious tendencies from his childhood were those of the Holy Prophet (S). The question as to when he embraced Islam is out of consideration. He was Muslim from the very beginning.

His religion was the religion of the Holy Prophet (S). At his 5th, 7th, 10th, 12th and 14th year of age, he was following the religion which the Holy Prophet (S) had at his 35th, 37th, 40th, 42nd and 44th year of his life respectively. The difference between the respective ages of the Holy Prophet (S) and Ali was about 30 years. If the Holy Prophet (S) at any period of his life was a non-Muslim, then Ali at that period was also a non-Muslim. This is the logic of facts. Imam Nur ad-Dīn Ali ibn Ibrahim, the Shafi'ite, in his book Al-Sira al-Halabiyya says, "Ali was like a son to the Holy Prophet (S); therefore, his religion from

the very beginning was the religion of the Holy Prophet (S).” The famous historian Masudi says, “The general census of opinion among the Muslim historians and theologians is that Ali (as) was never a non-Muslim and never prayed before idols. Therefore, the question of his embracing Islam does not and cannot be raised.”

## **11. Wife, Children and Domestic Life**

Hazrat Ali (as) was married to Hazrat Fatima (as), the only daughter of the Holy Prophet (S) from Hazrat Khadija. He had been betrothed to her several days before the expedition of Badr. But the marriage was celebrated three months later, Hazrat Ali, being 21 years old and Hazrat Fatima (as), being 15, (as stated in the Spirit of Islam), was very happy in his blessed marriage.

The transcendental distinctiveness of their respective characters blended with each other so well, so much so that they never quarreled nor complained about each other, leading a happy and contented life. Each one of them was rich in his own rights. Fatima (as) was the only heir of one of the richest women of Arabia, Khadija and had inherited many orchards and gardens in Mecca and Medina. Besides, that she was the daughter of the head of a rich clan and a king of a fast growing kingdom.

Ali was a marshal who had very handsome shares from the spoils of wars. Yet all that they owned went to the poor, crippled and orphans and they themselves often starved. Their only luxury in life was prayer and the company of each other and their children. They willingly shared the sorrows and suffering of the poor. They were given a slave girl, Fizza, but the Holy Prophet (S) had made arrangements that every alternate day was the off day of Fizza and her mistress would do all the household work.

Even when Hazrat Fatima (as) was ill on Fizza's off day, Fizza would not be allowed to attend to the duties, but Hazrat Ali would work, and the hero of Badr, Uhud, Khandaq, Khayber and Hunain was seen grinding oats, lighting the oven, preparing the bread and looking after the children. Salman says, “What a household, the only daughter of the Holy Prophet (S) and wife of his vicegerent leading the life of a poor laborer.

If they had spent one-tenth of what they were distributing daily they would have led a life of ease and comfort. From Hazrat Ali the Lady of Light (Fatima [x]) had four children and the fifth (Mohsin) was a still birth. The causes of this mishap and also that of her death are very sad and pathetic incidents of their lives. The names of these four children were Hassan, Hussain, Zainab (wife of Abdullah ibn Jafar) and Umm al-Kulsoom (wife of Obaydullah ibn Jafar).

During the lifetime of Hazrat Fatima (as) (S) Hazrat Ali did not marry another woman. After her death he married Yamama. After the latter's death, married another lady, having the name of Hanafiyya by whom he had a son, Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya. After her death, he married again, thus he had many children some of whom had unparalleled places in the history of mankind, e.g. Hassan, Hussain (as) (the hero of Kerbala), Zainab (the defender of true Islam in Kufa and Damascus). Abbas (the commander of

Hussain's army in Kerbala) and Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya, the hero of Nahrawan.

## **12. Ali Among his Friends and Foes, the Rich and the Poor**

Cited below are some incidents which typically portray the characteristics of Ali ibn Abu-Talib'. He was, as Pool says, "Truly a noble man, a man of righteousness and a man of brave, humble and forgiving spirit," and as Oelsner says, "Pure, gentle and learned without fear and without reproach, setting the noblest example of character to the world." Out of hundreds and hundreds of cases to select I find it rather difficult which to choose and which not to choose. I have selected a few according to the standard of my knowledge and visualization.

### **Ali's Treatment Of His Foes**

(1) Talhah ibn Abu Talhah was not only a bitter enemy of Islam, but was a personal enemy of the Holy Prophet (S) and Ali (as). His exertions to harm these two and their mission is historically verifiable. In the battle of Uhud, he was the flag-bearer of the army of Quraish. Ali (as) faced him and in a hand to hand encounter dealt him such a severe blow that he reeled and fell down. Ali (as) left him like that and walked away from him. Many Muslim warriors ran up to Ali (as) and advised him to finish Talhah, saying that he was Ali's worst enemy. Ali (as) replied, "Enemy or no enemy, he cannot defend himself now and I cannot strike a man who is not in a status to defend himself. If he survives, he is welcome to live as long as his life-span lasts."

(2) During the Battle of Jamal, in the thick of the encounter, his slave Qambar brought him some sweet syrup saying, "My master! The sun is very hot and you have been constantly fighting, so, have a glass of this cold drink to refresh yourself." Ali (as) looked around himself and replied, "Shall I refresh myself when hundreds of people around me are lying wounded and dying of thirst and of wounds?! Instead of bringing a sweet drink for me, take a few men with you and give each of these wounded men a cool drink." Qambar replied: "Master! But they are all our enemies!" Ali (as) said, "They may be, but they are human beings, so tend to them."

(3) In the battle of Siffin Muawiyah reached the river Euphrates before the army of the Imam (as) and took status of the river. When Hazrat's army reached there he was informed that they would not be allowed a drop of water from the river. The Imam (as) sent a messenger to Muawiyah saying that this action was against the canons of humanity and orders of Islam. Muawiyah replied saying, "A war is a war, and the rule is that one cannot accept the principles of humanity and doctrines of Islam. My sole aim is to kill Ali (as) and to demoralize his army and this blockage of water supply will bring about these results easily and quickly." The Imam (as) ordered Imam Hussain to attack and get back the river. The attack took place and the river-side status was captured. It was then Muawiyah's turn to beseech permission to get water from the river. His messengers arrived; Ali (as) told them to take as much water as they liked and as often as they needed. When his officers told him that those were the very people who had refused water to them adding, "Should they be allowed a free run of the river?" He replied,

“They are human beings and, even though they have acted inhumanely, I cannot follow their example and cannot refuse a man food and drink because he happens to be my worst enemy.”

(4) It was the battle of Nahrawan and he himself was fighting like any other ordinary soldier. During this battle a man came to face him and in the encounter lost his sword. He realized his hopeless plight of standing before Ali (as) without any weapon in hand.

Ali's hand was raised for a blow when he saw the antagonist trembling with fear; he, therefore, lowered his hand slowly and said, “Run away, friend! You are not in a status to defend yourself.” This conciliatory attitude made the man bold, so he said, “Ali! Why don't you kill me?! It would have reduced the number of your enemies by one!” Ali (as) replied, “I do not strike a man who cannot defend himself. You are begging for your life and it was spared.” The opponent got even bolder and said, “I am told that you have never refused a beggar. Now I beg you for your sword... Will you grant it to me?” Ali (as) handed him the sword. Taking possession of the sword, the ungrateful foe said, “Now, Ali, who is going to defend you against me and save you from my killing blow?!” Ali (as) replied, “Allah, of course; He will defend me if He so wills. He has appointed my death to be my guarding angel.

None can harm me before it is opportune time is due, and none can save me when it does arrive.” Nobility of thought and action impressed Ali's foe, so he kissed the bridle of Ali's horse as he said, “O master! You are a great man, indeed. You cannot only forsake the life of your enemy in a battlefield but also you can grant him your sword. May I have the honor to act as your bodyguard and to fight for you?” Ali (as) replied, “Friend! Fight for truth and justice and do not fight for individuals.”

(5) During 39 and 40 A.H. Muawiyah organized bands of murderers and brigands to enter border towns and to carry on loot, plunder, arson and rape. Kumail was at that time the governor of Heet. He asked Hazrat Ali's permission to organize similar bands and carry out plundering in the province of Circiea which was under the control of Muawiyah.

Hazrat Ali (as) replied to him saying, “I never expected such a suggestion from a man like you. It is more noble and more moral to guard your own people and province than to plunder others. They might be our enemies, but they are also human beings. They consist of a civilian population comprised of women and children. How can one kill, loot and plunder them? No, never, do not even dream of such a venture.”

(6) It was the month of Ramadan, the month of fasting, and the time was the morning prayers. The mosque was full of Muslims. Ali (as) was kneeling before Allah and when he raised his head a terrible blow fell upon it giving a very deep cut. There was a great disturbance and commotion in the mosque. The murderer started running. The Muslims followed, caught and bound him in ropes and brought him before Ali (as) who was on the prayer carpet drenched in blood and was reclining upon his sons. He knew the blow was fatal and he could not survive it but when the murderer was brought before him, he saw that the rope which had bound him was so tightly bound that it was cutting into his flesh. He turned towards those Muslims and said, “You should not be so cruel with your fellow being. Slacken his ropes.

Do you not see that they are cutting into his flesh and he is in agony?”

Such was Ali (as). Islamic history repeatedly notes well the incidents of his chivalrous and merciful treatment towards his enemies.

### **His Behavior With His Friends And Relatives**

1. Abdullah, a son of his brother Ja'far, was his favorite nephew whom he had raised since the death of Ja'far and to whom he had given his most favorite daughter, Zainab, to marry. This Abdullah came to him requesting an advance installment of his share from Baytul-Mal. Ali (as) refused and when the young man persisted, he said, “No, my son, not a day before all the others, nor one piece more!”

2. Aqil, his elder brother, was financially in a very unhappy condition, he asked for something more than his share and before the time was due. The Imam (as) refused, saying that he could not resort to dishonesty. Aqil must wait till the time of distribution and must bear the sufferings patiently. He had cited this incident in one of his sermons.

3. Ibn Hanif was his trusted disciple and a faithful follower. He was governor of a province and was once invited to a function which was followed by sumptuous dinner. When Hazrat heard of this he wrote him a severe letter, criticizing his action and said, “You went to a dinner where only rich people were invited and the poor were scornfully excluded. This letter can be seen in Nahjul-Balagha.

### **Ali (As) Among His Servants And Slaves**

He had two slaves, Qambar and Sa'id. After Ali's martyrdom, Qambar used to relate saying that he very seldom had the occasion to serve his master. The Imam (as) used to do his work for himself, washing his own clothes and even patching them when patching was needed. He also drew water from the well for his own daily use. He would give them good food and decent dresses and would himself eat and dress like a very poor man. Let alone whipping or beating he never even got angry with us. He never used a cane even on his horse, camel or mule. These animals apparently understood his mood and desire and would trot and walk as he wished them to do.

His often used phrase with them was Ago easy child' Continuing, Qambar said, “Once and only once he got annoyed with me. It was the occasion when I showed him the money that I had hoarded. It was from my share of income given to me like others from the Muslim treasury and the gifts I had received from the members of his family. I had no immediate use of it and had collected the amount. It was not much, being barely 100 dirhams. When I showed him the amount, he looked annoyed, and what caused me a greater pain was that he looked very sad. I asked him why he was so sad.

He said, ‘Qambar! If you had no use for this money, were there not people around you who were in need of it? Some of them might have been starving and some ill and infirm, could you not have helped them? I never thought that you could be so heartless and cruel and loved wealth for the sake of wealth. Qambar!

I am afraid you are not trying to acquire much from Islam. Try more seriously and sincerely. Take these coins out of my house.’ I took them out and distributed them among the beggars at the Kufa Mosque.”

Sa’id says, “It was a very hot day. The Imam (as) was writing some letters. He wanted to send me to call some of his officers. He called me once, twice and the third time. Each time I purposely remained silent and did not reply. He got up to go himself and saw me sitting not very far from him. He asked me why I did not respond to his call. I replied, ‘Sir! I want to find out when and how you get angry.’ A smile painted itself on his lips and he replied: ‘You cannot rouse my anger with such childish tricks.’ Then he set me free and kept on supporting me till his death.”

### Ali (as) Among His Subjects

(i) Once Ubaydullah ibn Abbas, when he was governor, ill-treated Banu Tamim’s clan. They complained to the Imam (as). He wrote to ibn Abbas, “You should not behave like a beast with your subjects. They are respectable people and should be treated respectfully. You are representing me and your treatment is considered as that of mine. Your first consideration should be the welfare of those over whom you rule then to treat them with due respect and consideration.

(ii) Once a group of non-Muslim subjects met the Imam (as) and complained about Abdullah ibn Abbas treating them with contempt and scorn. They were farm tillers and agricultural laborers. It had then become a practice that non-Muslims were usually treated scornfully. The Imam wrote to Abdullah, “The agricultural population of your province complains about your harsh, contemptuous and cruel treatment. Their complaints require careful considerations. I feel they deserve a better treatment than what was met out to them. Give them a chance to approach you and meet them kindly and politely. They may be heathens and polytheists, but being your subjects and human beings, they do not deserve to be driven from us and to be treated harshly and with contempt.”

(iii) Hazrat Ali (as) was passing through Ahwaz (in present-day Iran) with his army. The rich men of the province, as was the custom of those times, came out to greet him. They offered him their best Persian horses as presents, requesting his permission to host his army. He met them very courteously. But he very politely refused to accept the gifts and the invitation saying, “You have paid your taxes. To receive anything more from you, even when you offer it voluntarily and willingly, is a crime against the state.” But when they persisted and pressed their request, he ordered that the horses could be accepted against their taxes; so far as the feast was concerned, it must be paid out of the war budget.

(iv) In the magazine Al-H ukam, Vol. 2, No. 47 of 1906, there appeared an article saying that the Russians in 1905 found an order of Hazrat Ali (as), in his own handwriting which was in Kufic script. This was found in a monastery in Ardabil, chief town [provincial capital] of Azerbaijan. This letter was an amnesty deed to the monastery and the Christians of Ardabil. A translation of this deed appeared in the Russian newspapers, then it was translated and published in the Turkish papers as well as in the Arabic magazines of Cairo and Beirut. Many commenting articles on the spirit of toleration and the treatment of

conquered by Islam were written by the Russians and by Arab Christians. Apparently, according to the magazine Al Habl al-Mateen, it was translated by Al- Hukam.

In this deed, the Imam (as) says that as the caliph and ruler, he promises safety and security of life, property, honor, social status and religious freedom of Armenian Christians. This order should be obeyed by his officers and his successors. The Christians should not be mistreated or looked down upon because they are non-Muslims so long as they do not try to betray or harm the cause or the State of Islam. They should not be maltreated and should be allowed to practice their religion and trade freely and openly.

Islam teaches us to carry a message of peace with us and improve the status of society wherever we go, and the best way to achieve this is to create amity, friendliness and concord among human beings. Therefore, Muslims should try to develop friendship of these people and should never resort to the wrong use of power, force and arrogance. They should not be over-taxed, humiliated and forced out of their homes, lands and trades.

Their priests should be treated with due respect, their monasteries should be protected; they should be allowed to carry on their lectures, teachings and preaching as usual and their religious ceremonies should not be prohibited. If they want to build their places of worship, then fallow and ownerless lands should be allotted to them. One who disobeys this order, is going against the orders of Allah and the Holy Prophet (S) and will deserve His wrath. Harith ibn Shuhail, one of the governors of the provinces was in Kufa and while riding through the city he saw Imam Ali (as) also riding.

He got down from his horse to accompany the Imam (as) on foot. The Imam (as) stopped his horse and said, "It ill becomes a man to lower himself before anybody but his Allah. Please get back upon your horse.

Even had you not been an officer of the State, still I would not allow you to lower yourself like this. The sight of such humiliation of man before another man never pleases me. It is the worst form of tyranny which can be practiced.

There is a letter of the Imam (as) which is actually a system of rules and regulations for the administration of benign government and a code for higher values of morality. It is included in Nahjul-Balagha and it is referred to so very often by historians of Europe and philosophers of Arabia. Even Justice Kayani refers to it in his presidential address in Karachi on April 16, 1960, that it now needs no further introduction. In it, there are orders which show that he wanted his officers to remember that the people over whom they ruled are exclusively entrusted to them by Allah and should be treated as such.

### [Ali \(As\) Among The Poor](#)

He had a very soft corner in his heart for old, weak, infirm, disabled and poor and children were always his favorites.

(i) It was the hottest day of the season, he had finished his noon– prayers in the mosque and was passing through the bazaar when he saw a young slave–girl piteously weeping on the road. He asked her the reason. She said that her master had given her some money to get dates from the bazaar. The dates which she brought were not liked by her master and he wanted them to be returned and his money refunded. The fruit seller refused to take them back, her master was beating her for the money and seller had also caned her for going to him over and over again. She did not know what to do and whom to approach for help. The Imam (as) accompanied her to the seller and advised him to take back the dates. He was a new comer to Kufa and did not recognize the Imam (as) and was rude to him. A passerby intervened and told him who the Imam (as) was. He jumped from his shop and begged of the Imam (as) to excuse him and said that he would give back the money immediately to her. The Imam (as) replied that it was really mean of him to treat an honest suggestion disdainfully and haughtily and to cower before power and might so abjectly and humiliatingly. The owner of the slave–girl had also heard the news of this incident and ran to meet the Imam (as) to apologize for the trouble caused by the slave–girl. The Imam (as) told him, “You have no mercy for a person who is under your power and cannot forgive her mistake. Have you then a right to expect mercy and forgiveness from our Master? You, people, have acquired nothing from Islam except its name.”

(ii) One day, he saw an old woman carrying a heavy load of firewood which she could ill–afford to lift. She was tottering under the weight. The Imam (as) relieved her of her weight and carried it to her hamlet and, on her request, lit her oven for her and gave her some money. She did not know who the Imam (as) was and was thanking him for his kindness. When a neighbor entered the hamlet, he recognized the Imam (as) and told her who he was. Only then did she realize who had served her like an obedient servant; it was the caliph, the king.

(iii) Only after his death did the world come to know that he had provided a shelter outside of the town for a leper in an advanced stage of the disease. He used to go there daily, dress his wounds, feed him with his own hands (because the leper had lost his hands), wash him, put his bed in order and carry him out of the shelter for a little time so that he could get some fresh air. Accidentally, relatives and friends of the Imam (as) came across this shelter, found the leper in it, learned his story and told him the Imam (as) was murdered and that they had just buried him. The news affected the poor cripple so much that he died on the spot.

### **13. Ali's Diet**

Imam Ali (as) always ate the kind of food and dressed in such a way that even the poorest could afford better. It was not because he was poor but because he wanted to lead the life of the poorest person and spend all that could be spared on the poor. I have noted below certain cases quoted by the historians. These incidents are of the time when he was the ruler and king of the entire Muslim Empire except Syria.

(i) Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal, in his Musnad, cited Suwayda ibn Ghafalah saying, “One day I went to see

Ali (as) at the government house (Darul Imara). It was the time of breakfast and before him there was a cup of milk and some barley bread. The bread was dry, stale, hard and did not contain any butter or oil. It could not be easily broken into pieces. The Imam (as) was exerting himself to break and soften it. I turned towards his slave, Fizza and said, 'Fizza! Have you no pity on your old master? Why cannot you give him softer bread and add some butter or oil to it?' She replied, 'Why should I pity him when he never pities himself. He has given strict orders that nothing is to be added to his bread and even chaff and husks are not to be separated from the flour. We, ourselves, eat much better food than this, though we are his slaves.' Hearing this, I said to him, 'O Master! Have pity on yourself! Look at your age, your responsibilities, your hard work and your food.' He replied: 'O Suwayda! You have no idea what the Holy Prophet (S) used to eat.'"He never ate to satiety for three consecutive days.

(ii) Allama Kamalud-Din Muhammad ibn Talhah al-Shafi'i, in his book titled Matalib al-Sul, quotes Abdullah ibn Zurarah saying, "I went to see Imam Ali (as) on an Eid day. He asked me to join in his breakfast. I agreed. A very poor kind of food was served before us. I told him, O Master, you are such a rich man, a caliph and a king. I was expecting that game would be served before us but what do I see?"The Imam (as) replied, "O Ibn Zurara! You have heard of mighty kings who have lead life of luxury. Let me be a ruler leading the life of a poor and humble person, a humble laborer."

(iii) Al-Milani, in his book titled Sira and Imam Ahmed, in his Musnad, quote the famous tabi'i Ibn Abu Rafi saying that he went to the Imam (as) on an Eid day and while he was sitting there a bag was brought before the Imam (as) which he thought might contain jewels. The Imam (as) opened the bag but it only contained dried pieces of bread, which he softened with water. Ibn Abu Rafi asked him as to the reason of sealing such a kind of food which even a beggar would not care to steal. The Imam (as) smiled and said, "I keep it sealed because my children try to substitute softer bread, containing oil or butter in it. Ibn Abu Rafi said, "Has Allah prohibited you to eat better kind of food?"He replied, "No, but I want to eat the kind of food which the poorest of his realm can afford at least once a day. I shall improve it after I have improved their standards of life. I want to live, feel and suffer like them."

## **14. His Clothing**

(i) Imam Ahmed, in his book Al-Manaqib and Ibn Athir in his history book, quote Harun ibn Anzah saying that he accompanied his father (Anzah) to the Khawarnaq castle to meet Imam Ali (as). Those were winter days and the winter was very severe. He found the Imam (as) in a very thin cotton garment and the cold wind was making him shiver. Anzah asked him, "O Commander of the faithful! Allah has reserved a share for you and your family from Baitul-Mal (Muslim state treasury). Why do you not make use of it?"He replied, "O Anzah! I do not want anything from your treasury; this is the same outfit which I have brought with me from Medina!"

(ii) Imam Ahmed quotes Zaid ibn Wahab saying that once the Imam (as) came out of his house and there were patches sewn to his dress. Ibn Na'ja, a Kharijite and an enemy, was allowed by the Imam (as) to lead a peaceful and comfortable life at Kufa taunted the Imam (as) on the very poor and coarse

kind of outfit put on by him. He replied, "Let go, what have you to find objection in my outfit? It is the kind which our masses can afford. Why can you not think of their lives and outfits?! I shall improve my standard after I have succeeded in improving theirs. Meanwhile, I shall continue to live like them. Such kind of outfit makes one feel humble and meek, it is helpful as a reminder and an encouragement to give up vanity, haughtiness and arrogance."

(iii) Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, in his books titled Kanzul-'Ummal, and al-Tabari in Al-Riyad al-Nadira, quote 'Umar ibn Qais saying that once he asked the Imam (as) as to the reason of his having patches in his outfit."He replied, "O 'Umar! Such type of outfit makes you soft-hearted; it vanishes vanity from your mind and it is the kind which poor Muslims can conveniently afford."

(iv) Shaikul-Islam Imam Abu 'Umar, Yousuf ibn Abdul-Birr, in his book Al-Istiab quotes Hussan ibn Jermooz saying that his father once saw the Imam (as) coming out of the Kufa mosque in a shirt made of jute cloth. Around him were people so well dressed that compared to him they looked like princes. He was instructing them as to how they might better understand their own submission to the Will of Allah (Islam).

(v) Imam Ahmed quotes Abu Noziah, the ready-made cloth merchant of Kufa, saying that the Imam (as) purchased two shirts from his shop, one was of superior quality, which he handed over to his slave Qambar to put on. The other was of a rough cloth, very coarse and cheap which he reserved for himself.

## **15. Ali's Services to Islam and the Holy Prophet (S)**

(i) The first occasion on which Ali (as) offered his services to the cause of Islam was when the Holy Prophet (S) was first ordered by Allah to preach Islam openly.

For three years the Holy Prophet (S) was preaching Islam under absolute secrecy. At the end of the third year (i.e. The fourth year after the Bi'tha, dawn of Prophethood, in 45 mul-Fil), he received orders to preach to his near in kin and to admonish them. The Holy Prophet (S) directed Ali (as) to prepare a banquet and to invite to it the sons and grandsons of Abdul-Muttalib. This was done and about forty of them came, but Abu Lahab, made the company break up before Muhammad (S) had an opportunity to speak. The next day a second invitation was issued. When they came and the frugal meal was served the Holy Prophet (S) rose and declared his sacred character and offered the treasures of time and of eternity to whomsoever should become his disciples.

He then concluded by demanding, "Who among you will aid me to bear this burden, who will be my Lieutenant and Vizier, just as Aaron was to Moses?"The assembly remained mute with astonishment, not one venturing to accept the offered perilous office until Ali (as), Muhammad's cousin, stood up and exclaimed "O Prophet (S)! I will! Though I am indeed the youngest of these present, the most rheum of them as to the eyes and the slenderest of them as to the legs; I, O Prophet (S), will be your Vizier over them."Throwing his arms around the generous and courageous youth and pressing him to his bosom,

Muhammad (S) declared: "Behold my brother and Vizier and obey him" (see John Davenport's An Apology to Muhammad and the Holy Qur'an).

Many historians are of the opinion that it was a monumental declaration and indeed a momentous occasion and that Ali's declaration was the first and greatest service done in behalf of the Islamic cause. Had the appeal of the Holy Prophet (S) been left unanswered, the propagation of Islam would have been nipped in the bud. To them the whole idea was the actualization of an adult person preaching Monotheism and Submission and a young courageous youth offering his services vehemently appeared completely foreign to the gatherings' traditional sensibilities. They laughed at both of them and dispersed, advising Ali's father to obey his youngest son from that day onward.

These two, the Holy Prophet (S) and Imam Ali (as) proved to the world that there was nothing laughable in their declaration. They proved to the world that their wisdom and courage was enough for Allah to make their mission a success. Carlyle says that in his opinion, young Ali (as) had the kind of personality as could be liked, loved and venerated by everybody. He was a man of such excellent character, so loving and lovable and so intensely brave that if anything stood against his bravery it was consumed as if by fire, yet he was so gentle and kind that he represented the model of a Christian knight.

As was already said, this was really the first and the greatest service to the cause of Allah; Monotheism and Submission to His Will alone (Islam). From this day to the last day of his life, Imam Ali (as) sincerely, bravely and nobly acted as the defender of the faith.

(ii) The second great occasion was when the Holy Prophet (S) was forced to leave Mecca, making somebody stay in his place in such a way that his enemies would believe that he was still in his house and thus he might safely go away in the darkness of the night. This departure to Medina is called the Hijra and the Muslim era is named after this event. It took place during the month of September, 662 A.D. Thursday the 26th Safar (thirteen years after the Holy Prophet [h] started preaching Islam).

The people of Medina were favorably inclined towards Islam and some had embraced this religion and had promised every kind of support to the Holy Prophet (S). Many Muslims had left for Medina and were handsomely treated by the Ansars of Medina. The tribesmen of Quraish, realizing that Islam was gaining a good support and a firm hold at Medina and those who had fled from Mecca were being happily settled there, decided to strike at the root cause. Their hatred of the Holy Prophet (S) was so intense that nothing would satisfy them but his death. They gathered at Dar al-Nadwa and decided that a few people from each clan of Quraish would jointly attack the Holy Prophet (S) and strike him with their swords at one and the same time. Thus no individual of any single clan would be responsible of his death. Banu Hashim would not be able to kill any person in return or to fight against any single clan and as they were not strong enough to fight against all the clans of Quraish at the same time they would be forced to be satisfied with blood-money (diyya). They further decided to surround the house of the Holy Prophet (S) during the night so that he could not get away then to kill him the next morning. Thus forty men got ready and surrounded his house.

Allah revealed to His Messenger of the intrigue planned against him and ordered him to leave Mecca the very same night. It was a serious and dangerous occasion. He was ordered by Allah to go and to go in such a way that none of his enemies might suspect his departure and, if possible, none of his friends might know of it. The walls of his house were barely seven feet high and anyone placing a stone and standing upon it could easily peep into the house. He knew the house was surrounded. Anyone whom he asked to sleep in his bed covering himself with the Prophet (S)'s coverlet. Such a person was expected not to expose his identity till dawn (by which time the Prophet (S) would be safe and out of danger). This person was also to be unarmed so that he might not rouse the suspicion of the peeping enemies.

He should thus be willing to bear the brunt of the enemies' anger in the morning and be ready to be killed. To whom but Ali could be Holy Prophet (S) turn at this most dangerous moment? In detail he informed Ali (as) of the whole plan and of the positive danger of taking his place in details saying that the least that could be expected of those enemies would be death and torture. Ali (as) asked, "I take your place and leave you alone to go through the gathered enemies, will your life be safe?" "Yes," replied the Holy Prophet (S). Allah has promised me a safe passage through them. Ali (as) bowed his head before Allah as a sign of thanksgiving. He lied down on the bed of the Holy Prophet (S) and covered himself with the Prophet's coverlet. During the night, many stones and arrows were aimed at him. Stones hit him in the back and on the head and arrows embedded in his legs but he did not even turn in his bed. In the morning he was found out by the enemies only when one of them pulled back the coverlet. When they wanted to attack him, knowing that he was Ali (as) not Muhammad (S), only then did he unsheathe his sword.

In Medina, the Holy Prophet (S) was forced to defend himself and his followers and was thus forced to fight many battles. At each and every battle Ali (as) was the hero. And it was he who fought single-handedly with the famous warriors of Arabia, defeated the enemies and brought a victory to Islam. Records of these battles carry with them chronicles of his bravery, courage and chivalry. Even the enemies sang songs of his valor and gallantry.

Everyone of these battles was an outcome of very grave circumstances and conditions and a complex combination of intricately serious events initiated by quite real and extremely harmful forces launched against the peace and well being of Muslims and Islam. There were many such encounters but I have briefly mentioned only five of those instances where the events had far reaching effects. In each of them Ali (as) alone broke through evil combinations and carried the Muslims and Islam to a status of safety, eminence and power.

(iii) The first of these battles was Badr. It took place in the month of Ramadan of the 2nd year of Hijra. Muslims were not prepared for a battle and could ill-afford to fight against superior forces. But Medina was being invaded and the Holy Prophet (S) was necessarily forced to defend himself and his followers. He decided to leave Medina and fight out the battle in an open field. He had only 313 Muslims who were

not adequately armed for a battle, many of them were nervous of an encounter and were suffering from inferiority complex. The tribesmen of Quraish had come with an army of about 1000 warriors which had frightened the Muslims even more. The battle took place and about 36 Quraish were killed by Ali (as); some of them were very important persons and famous warriors of the tribesmen of Quraish.

Ali (as) killed everyone of those 36 antagonists in hand to hand combat and most of them were the persons who had surrounded the house of Holy Prophet (S) on the night of the Hijra. During this encounter he was wounded, but by his bravery and courage he brought home to Muslims that he would act as the first line of defense for Islam, that they had no cause to suffer from inferiority complexes and that Allah would defend them against heavy odds. Among the tribesmen of Quraish were two of the worst enemies of Islam, Abu Jahl and Abu Sufyan, and in this battle Abu Jahl was killed. Ali (as) was the hero of this battle and brought the first victory in Islam in armed encounters with its enemies.

(iv) The second most important battle was that of Uhud. The tribesmen of Quraish and their leader Abu Sufyan were smarting under the defeat of Badr and had sworn to retaliate. The idolaters were burning for revenge. They made formidable preparations for another encounter and succeeded in obtaining the assistance of Tihama and Kinana tribes. Abu Sufyan's wife, Hind, mother of Muawiyah, took a keen interest in all arrangements and preparations. She had written poems to entice Quraish against Islam and had organized a band of women minstrels who accompanied the army of Quraish to the battlefield. Thus they had mobilized an army of 3000 infantry and 2000 cavalry. The Holy Prophet could muster only 700 Muslims to face this horde. They faced each other in the battlefield of Uhud. The battle took place on the 11th Shawal 3 A.H. (a year after the battle of Badr). The command of the Muslim army was divided between Ali (as) and Hamza and Abu Sufyan had appointed Khalid ibn al-Walid, Akram ibn Abu Jahl and 'Umar ibn al-s as the three commanders to command the right wing, left wing and the center respectively.

The first encounter took place between Ali (as) and Talhah ibn Talhah. This encounter carries with it an incident of marvelous chivalry by Ali (as), which I have narrated elsewhere. Talhah suffered defeat at the hands of Ali (as) and died. He was the flag bearer of Quraish's army. His death brought his four sons and one grandson to face Ali (as) and each one of them was killed by him. As other flag bearers followed them, they were in turn killed by Ali (as). Then a general encounter took place in which Ali (as) and Hamza carried the day and the Muslims were victorious. But eagerness of spoils threw the ranks of the Muslim army into disorder, Ali (as) however tried to keep them in order, but it was not to be. Khalid ibn al-Walid immediately attacked them from the rear and the flank. He wounded the Holy Prophet (S) with a javelin and had also stoned him. The face of the Prophet (S) was also wounded and he had fallen down from the horse. Khalid ibn al-Walid started shouting with a loud voice: "The lying Prophet is slain!" Without stopping to verify this claim, the followers of Islam fled, panic-stricken (Davenport).

The wounded Prophet (S) was left in the battlefield with only Ali (as), Hamzah, Abu Dujanah and Thakwan to defend him. These brave warriors fought fiercely and during this encounter, Hamzah was

killed, Thakwan and Abu Dajana lay seriously wounded and Ali (as) was left alone in the battlefield. He had received 16 wounds but he searched and found the Holy Prophet (S) lying wounded and surrounded by enemies under command of Khalid who were trying to kill him. He fought against these six men, killed two of them and scattered the rest. He bodily lifted the Holy Prophet (S) and carried him to a mount while he kept on attacking the rallying armies of the enemy and shouted that the Holy Prophet (S) is alive! and calling Muslims to "Come back!"

Those Muslims who had not fled very far came back and saw the wounded Prophet (S) with his daughter, Fatima (as) (who had come out of Medina upon hearing the rumor of her father's death) to look after him. They took heart and gathered again under the command of Ali (as) and starting to fight again, victory was gained. The most peculiar aspect of this battle was that the greed of the Muslim warriors had converted a hard-earned victory into a ignominious defeat and Ali (as) had reconverted this defeat into a glorious victory. He thus once again saved the day by saving the face of the fleeing Muslims. Most important of all, he saved was the life of the Holy Prophet (S), for without Ali (as) the Holy Prophet (S) would have been killed.

Twenty-eight famous warriors of Arabia were killed by Ali (as) in this battle of whom seventeen were flag bearers of the tribesmen of Quraish. The Holy Prophet (S) declared that the Angel Gabriel was loud in the praise of Ali (as) and had said, "There is no braver youth than Ali and no better sword than his Dhul-Fiqar." A detailed account of this battle is available in

(1) Al-Waqidi's History of Prophets

(2) Shah Isma'il al-Hamawini's History

(3) Tabari's Tarikh

(v) The third momentous armed encounter of the Muslims with the tribesmen of Quraish is called the battle of the clans (Ahzab) or battle of the moat or ditch (Khandaq). It is so called because many clans of Arabs were persuaded by Abu Sufyan to help him to annihilate Islam and the Muslims. Because these forces invaded Medina, the Holy Prophet was obliged to dig a moat or ditch around his army. This battle also proves that the Holy Prophet (S) was forced to take up arms in defense of his followers and his mission. It took place on the 23rd of Dhul-Qi'da in the year 5 A.H.

The defeat at Uhud was a crushing blow to the tribesmen of Quraish and to their leader, Abu Sufyan. While retreating from Uhud, he promised that he would come back again to avenge the defeat. He instigated the clans of Banu al-Nazir, Banu Ghatfan, Banu Sleem and Banu Kinanah and also succeeded in persuading Banu Qurayzah who, till then, had not sided with any party, to join their forces against Islam. Abu Sufyan was very sure of his success. He especially relied upon the fame of Umar ibn Abd Wudd, who was as famous in Arabia as Rostam was in Iran. He had gathered an army of about 9 to 10 thousand soldiers under command of this famous warrior.

They marched upon Medina, the Holy Prophet (S) could barely muster 2000 Muslims to face this army. For nearly a month the armies stood facing each other and one day 'Umar jumped the moat and faced the Muslim army, challenging them for an encounter. He was accompanied by Ikrimah ibn Abu Jahl, Abdullah ibn al-Mugheerah, Zurarah ibn al-Khattab, Nawfal ibn Abdullah and others.

His bravery, valor and courage were so well known in Arabia that none of the Muslims except Ali (as) dared face him. The assemblage of famous warrior tribes and the presence of 'Amr ibn Abd Wudd as their commander had made the Muslims so nervous that even the Holy Qur'an says that "Their eyes were petrified, their hearts were beating violently," and they were thinking of running away.

Thrice did 'Amr ibn Abd Wudd challenge them, and every time, none but Ali (as) stood up and asked permission of the Holy Prophet (S) to face him. Twice did the Holy Prophet (S) refuse him permission, but in the end he allowed him saying, "Today, faith in embodiment is facing embodied infidelity," then he raised his hands in prayers, beseeching Allah thus: "O Lord! I am sending Ali (as) alone in the battlefield, do not allow me to be left alone; You are the best Companion and the best Guardian." Muslims were so certain of Ali (as) being killed by 'Amr that some of them came forward to have a last look at his face. The encounter ended in Ali's success and Omer's death. After 'Amr, he faced Abdullah ibn Mughirah and Nawfal ibn Abdullah, killing them both.

Thus, a victory was won without any Muslims, except Ali (as), coming out of the ranks. In the encounter with 'Amr and the defeat and death of this great warrior, Ali (as) again exhibited such a chivalrous attitude that the sister of Amr composed a poem in praise of the man who faced her brother, fought him bravely and demonstrated such a noble and chivalrous tribute to his subdued enemy. In it she said that if anyone else other than Ali (as) had killed her brother, she would have wept over the infamy for the rest of her life. The death of Amr had completely demoralized the various clans gathered; they started leaving the army in retreat, going back to their localities. The tribesmen of Quraishites went back to Mecca sad and dejected.

Thus, Ali (as) brought an end to the hostilities of Quraish in three encounters at Badr, Uhud and Khandaq. Their best warriors were killed, their unity against Islam was crushed, their pride was humiliated and their prestige before the Arab clans was lowered by him and by him alone.

He further raised the status of Muslims among the haughty, merciless and warring tribes of Arabia. In all of these three battles not more than sixty Muslims were killed. He alone had killed more than seventy enemies of Islam, everyone of whom was the head of some clan or a sub-clan, a warrior famous for his bravery or a deadly enemy of the Holy Prophet (S) and Islam.

For a detailed account of this battle following books may be consulted:

(1) Shah Waliyyullah Dehlawi's *Ithbatul-Ghafa'*.

(2) Kamil ibn al-Athir's *History*, Vol. 2.

(3) Al-Sayyuti's Al-Durr al-Manthur.

(4) Tabari's Tarikh.

(iv) In their struggle for existence, the Muslims had to face a very serious opposition from the Jews. In the beginning they tried to help the tribesmen of Quraish against Islam surreptitiously then openly. But when Ali (as) broke through the enmity of the tribesmen of Quraish and when the Holy Prophet (S) was forced to banish the Jews from Medina, they decided to try their fate against Islam with the help of Banu Asad, Banu Kinanah and Banu Ghatfan. Khayber was the province which they had occupied since the times of their banishment from Palestine<sup>1</sup>. It contained a few fortresses, the biggest of them was called Qamos, which was on a steep hill. In these fortresses, they started gathering in large numbers. After raising an army of 10 to 12 thousand warriors their misguided venture was to include a march on Medina. Hearing this serious news the Holy Prophet (S) decided to face them at Khayber only.

He marched at the head of an army of 3,000 soldiers. This battle took place in Muharram of the year 7 A.H.

Ali (as) then was suffering from an eye problem and was left at Medina. The Muslim army succeeded in defeating the Jews in minor skirmishes, but when they tried to capture the main fort of Qamos, they suffered a setback. They could not succeed though they tried for days at a stretch. The defeats sustained sadly demoralizing the Muslim army. Holy Prophet (S) had allowed every important person to command the Muslim forces day by day.

Yet each day the result was fresh defeat, fresh demoralization, fresh boldness of Jews and daily increasing danger of some more clans, emboldened by the weakness and defeats of Muslims, joining hands with the Jews. There were still many such tribes who were deadly against Islam and wanted to harm it, but Muslims victories at Badr, Uhud and Khandaq had made them nervous.

The news of the defeats at Khayber were making them bold. "The Jews of Khayber united by an ancient alliance with a Beduin horde of Banu Ghatfan were incessantly working for the formation of a powerful coalition against the Muslims. The Holy Prophet (S) knew fully well the power possessed by the desert races to injure the Muslims" (The Spirit of Islam). There was further danger of the munafiqun (hypocrites and double dealers) staging a rebellion in Medina. Prompt measures were needed to avert these evils. Only a victory could have saved the situation which was getting more and more critical day by day. The Prophet (S) was himself ill and sadly felt the need of Ali (as) at his side.

He knew that although he himself was ill, Ali (as) had not left him alone and had followed him., therefore, ill or not ill Ali (as) had to come to the succor of Muslims, Islam and the Holy Prophet (S). When the news of the last disastrous repulses of the Muslims were brought to him, the Holy Prophet (S) said, "Tomorrow I shall give the command (the flag, an insignia of the command) of this army to a man who is brave, who will keep on attacking, who will not run away from the battlefield, who loves Allah and His Prophet (S) and is beloved by Allah and His Prophet (S). He will not come back to me without success. The next

day, Ali (as) was called from his bed and was handed over the command. He took the fort by storm; killed Marhab, Antar, Murrah, al- Harith and four other tribal chieftains of the Jews in hand to hand combat.

He broke the door of the fort single-handedly, carried his army inside the fort and within four hours he flew the flag of the Holy Prophet (S) on the biggest fortress of Arabia. He once again moved the cause of Allah ever closer towards an ultimate Islamic Victory at the hands of Muslims and on that day saved Islam from disastrous ends.

The news of success pleased the Holy Prophet (S) so much that he, though ill, came out to greet the victor, embraced him said, "Ali (as) had I not been afraid that Muslims will start regarding you as Christians regard the Christ, I would have said things about you which would have made the Muslims venerate you and to consider the dust of your feet as something worth venerating. But it will suffice to say that you are from me and I am from you; you will inherit me and I will inherit you; you are unto me what Aaron was unto Moses.

You will fight for my cause, you will be nearest to me on the day of Judgement and you will be next to me on the fountain of Kawthar. Enmity against you is enmity against me; a war against you is a war against me; your friendship is my friendship. To be at peace with you is to be at peace with me; your flesh is my flesh; your blood is my blood; who will obey you will obey me. Truth is on your tongue, in your heart and in your mind. You have as much faith in Allah as I have. You are a door to me. As per orders of Allah I give you these tidings that your friends will be rewarded in the Heaven and your enemies will be punished in the Hell.

For further details of the above hadith and the battle of Khayber, following books may be consulted:

(1) Maarij al-Nubuwwa, Vol. 4, p. 216.

(2) The Manaqib of Akthab al-Kharzami

(3) Mullah Ali Hamdani's Yanabi' al-Mawadda

(4) Ibn Hisham's Sira, p. 187

(5) Tabari's Tarikh.

(vi) The victory which Ali (as) brought to Islam in Khayber proved of great consequence to its mission and its followers. It gave such an importance and prestige over the infidels of the tribesmen of Quraish, who till then had complete control and sway over Mecca and did not even allow the Holy Prophet (S) and his followers to come for hajj and umra and had forced them for the treaty of Hudaibiya, were now obliged to surrender the city to him. Mecca fell before the superior forces of Islam.

The causes of the invasion and fall of Mecca are not to be discussed here. Suffice it to say that Abu

Sufyan who had brought it all upon the heads of Quraish, later leaving the country and countrymen to the devil, started running after every important person to secure his own and his family's freedom of life and property from the Holy Prophet (S).

Through the mediation of Abbas (uncle of Holy Prophet [h]) he received the pardon that he sought. The behavior of the Holy Prophet (S) against these murderers of Muslims and the enemies of Islam was so merciful, beign and humane that he pardoned everyone of them, a clemency and kindness which was and shall ever remain unparalleled in the history of mankind. When Mecca was taken over by the Muslims, the precincts of Kaba were cleared of all idols by the person of the Holy Prophet (S) and Ali (as) and it ceased to exist as the center of infidelity and polytheism in Arabia.

The fall of Mecca which took place in the Ramadan of 8 A.H. (January 630 A.D.) was accompanied with serious repercussions. The success of Islam since the Hijra had brought many followers to its fold. These were of three types. Some had seen the truth in its preaching and had accepted it sincerely and faithfully. Some were such that they wanted to bask in the glory of a religion which was fast becoming a mighty temporal power and they wished to make their worldly positions good through its influence and had accepted it with those ulterior motives. While there were some whose conversion was under false impression that unless they had accepted Islam their lives and properties were not safe.

The fall of Mecca had a very sad effect upon those two latter groups. They were not expecting that Abu Sufyan and the tribesmen of Quraish would succumb so easily to the pressure of Muslim invasion. The clearing of idols from the precincts of Ka'ba and closing its doors to the infidels was a heavy blow.

It became more poignant when they found out their age-long enemy, the man whose valor and whose sword brought all these victories to Islam as well as disastrous defeats to their side, Ali (as) was the flag bearer a (commander) of the Holy Prophet's (S) forces on the occasion of the fall of Mecca. Along with the Holy Prophet (S) he was the man who cleared the Ka'ba of its idols. There still were many polytheist clans in Arabia. To them Mecca was the center of worship.

Among them there were two powerful bedouin tribes; Banu Hawazin and Banu Thaqif. They now were joined by Banu Nusair, Banu Sa'd, Banu Hashim and Banu Hilal. Those tribes decided to stage a comeback and were quietly promised help by the hypocrites.

(vii) The whole thing was arranged so quickly and so stealthily that by the time the Muslims could come out of the sweet pleasure of success at Mecca there was an army of 20,000 warriors at Tayef ready to face them. The Holy Prophet (S) marched to Ta'if at the head of an army of 15,000 Muslims. Some of them were freed slaves of the Muslim's conquest of Mecca and many more were the hypocrites of the types mentioned above. There were a few thousand of those Muslims who had accompanied him from Medina.

The hostile tribes decided to attack the Muslim army at a point of vantage at Hunain and selected two prominent locations where they concealed their archers. The Muslims were very proud of their strength

and were very sure of their success, but their behavior during the encounter was shamelessly timorous and cowardly. The Almighty discussing their attitude in this battle says, "Allah came to your help on so many occasions. Yet, on the day of Hunain, your vanity in the number of your soldiers and your arrogance did not prove of any avail to you, you were badly defeated and could not find any place of shelter. You started running away without shame (section 9, Tawba).

This encounter took place in the month of Shawwal 8, A.H. (January/February 630 AD). When the Muslim army marched towards the place where the archers were concealed the enemy opened the campaign with such a severe onslaught of their archery that the Muslim army could not stand it. The assault was fierce and the confusion in the Muslim ranks made the archers bolder and they came nearer and attacked from both flanks and from the front. The Muslims could not stand the attack any longer. They started running without putting up any resistance and had lost their senses and touch with reality so much that they even left the Holy Prophet (S) unprotected beyond their cares (Bukhari's Sahih).

The first battalion to run in trouble was the one commanded by Khalid ibn al-Walid (Rawzat al-Safa, Vol. 2, p. 137, Tarikh al-Anbiya, Vol. 2 p. 388). He was accompanied by Banu Saleem and the recently converted Quraish of Mecca. This was followed by such a disorderly and tumultuous flight of Muslims that only ten persons out of an army of 15,000 were left with the Holy Prophet (S). Eight of them were Banu Hashim (Abbas and his two sons, Ali (as), Aqil and three other cousins of the Holy Prophet (S).

Abbas was shouting at the Muslims to return, reminding them of oaths of allegiance taken and promises made, but it was of no avail. Those who had accepted Islam for wealth and power or under false fears were not willing to risk their lives. They ran as fast as they could. Many of them who had carefully hidden their enmity of the rising power were happy at the defeat. They gathered around Abu Sufyan, started congratulating him and saying that "The magical spell of the lying prophet is broken! they were praying for the comeback of polytheism (Abul-Fida, p. 349, Rawzat al-Safa, p. 136 Vol. 2, Tarikh al-Anbiya', p. 389 Vol. 2).

Once again it fell to the lot of Ali (as) to save the Holy Prophet and Islam. Armies of Banu Hawazin and Banu Thaqif under the cover of their archers were rushing down the hillock and were getting ready for a fierce onslaught. Ali (as) divided the small band of faithful Muslims in three divisions; to Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Abbas ibn Abdul-Muttalib and his nephew Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harith, he assigned the duty of guarding the Holy Prophet (S). To three others he gave orders to guard the rear while he faced the onslaught with only three warriors along with him. He fought and fought, was wounded, but faced the commander of the hostile army, Abu Jerdal in a hand to hand combat and killed him with one stroke of sword. He attacked the enemy's rank once again, bringing the number of those whom he had slain on that day to forty. His aides had a glorious example before them. They also fought bravely, killing thirty more men.

The day was saved, the commander of the enemy's army was killed, their ranks were broken, they had no courage to face Ali (as) and started retreating. The sight of a powerful enemy under retreat made the

fleeing Muslims bold and they came back afterwards as victory was won for them.

A detailed account of this encounter is to be found in:

(1) Rawzat al-Safa, Vol. 2, p. 136.

(2) Tarikh al-Anbiya', Vol. 2, p. 388

(3) Sirat ibn Hisham, Vol. 2, p. 621

(4) Kunzul-Ummal, Vol. 5, p. 307

(viii) During the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (S), Imam Ali (as) was sent on many occasions for the propagation of Islam and on many missions of mercy and peace. He carried out these duties to the satisfaction of the Holy Prophet (S) and Allah. For instance in the words of AThe Spirit of Islam, AThe men of Khalid ibn al-Walid, under the order of this newly converted warrior killed Banu Khazimah's bedouins. The news of this wanton bloodshed deeply grieved the Prophet (S) and he prayed "O Master! I am innocent of what Khalid has done. He immediately dispatched Imam Ali (as) to make every possible preparation for the outrage committed. Such a mission was congenial to Ali's nature and he executed it faithfully.

After making a careful enquiry as to the number of persons killed, their status and the losses incurred by their families and paid the diyya strictly. When every loss was made good he distributed the remainder of the money he had brought among the kinsman of the victims of other members of the tribe. This gladdened every heart by his gentleness and benevolence and while carrying with him the blessings of the whole people, he returned to the prophet who overwhelmed him with praises and thanks.

Similarly in 8 A.H. when other missions failed to bring the powerful Yemeni tribe of Banu Hamdan to the folds of Islam, Ali (as) was sent the re. Ibn Khaldun says that on the first occasion he gathered the tribesmen some of whom were very learned and spoke before them of the truths which Islam preached. This sermon was so effective that some of those learned persons immediately embraced Islam.

This was followed by long discussions with others. He made them realize the rationality of the doctrines of Islam. The discussions ended in the whole-hearted conversion of Banu Hamdan, who followed their learned leaders. This news pleased the Holy Prophet (S) to the extent that he bowed down before Allah in thanks and thrice said, "Peace be to Banu Hamdan and to Ali (as). Again in 10 A.H. his sermons and preaching proved so effective that the whole province embraced Islam as one entity.

## **16. Appointment of Ali (as) as the Prophet's Vicegerent**

It is generally supposed that the Holy Prophet (S) had not expressly designated anyone as his successor in the spiritual and temporal government. Yet this notion is framed on an incorrect apprehension of fact, for there is abundant testimony that many times the Prophet (S) had openly indicated Ali (as) as his

successor (see *The Spirit of Islam*, p. 292).

(i) The first occasion was when he was ordered by Allah to openly and unreservedly invite his kith and kin to Islam. This occasion is called *Adawat al-asheera* (inviting the relatives to Islam). In the words of Rev. Sale, the Holy Prophet (S) said, "Allah has commanded me to call you unto Him; who therefore, among you will be assisting to me herein and become my brother and my vicegerent? All of them hesitating and declining the matter, Ali (as) at length rose up and declared that he would be his assistant and threatened those who should oppose him. Muhammad (S), upon this, embraced Ali (as) with great demonstration of affection and desired all those present to listen to and to obey him as his Deputy.

Thus, at this occasion of the introduction of Islam as a religion Imam Ali (as) was declared by the Holy Prophet (S) as his Deputy. The value of Ali's support to the Holy Prophet (S) and his designation as a vicegerent at this stage is fairly well assessed by theologians, historians and thinkers of the West and the East. Refer to:

(1) *Al-Tabari's Tafsir*, Vol. 19, p. 68.

(2) *Tafsir Ma'alim al-Tanzil*, p. 663.

(3) *Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal* Vol. I p. 163.

(4) *Mustadrak Imam Hakim* Vol. 21 p. 133.

(5) *Tarikh of Tabari* Vol. 2 p. 216.

(6) *Al-Tarikh al-Kamil*, Vol. 2 p. 26.

(7) *Tarikh of Abul-Fida'*, Vol. I p. 116.

(ii) The second occasion was at the time of Ali's conquest of Khayber. The words of the Holy Prophet (S) quite clearly, positively and expressively give his opinion about Imam Ali (as) and his desire to leave Imam Ali (as) as the guardian and the propagator of his mission. He said, "You are from me and I am from you, you will inherit me. You are unto me what Aaron was unto Moses. You will be nearest to me on the day of Judgement and next to me on the fountain of Kawthar, enmity against you is enmity against me, a war against you is a war against me. You have as much faith in Allah as I have. You are a door to me" (refer to p. 26 the Battle of Khayber). What more can one say?! Can there be anything more forceful, more eloquent, more pregnant with clear indications and more categorical than the words which the Holy Prophet (S) has used? Do they leave any shadow of doubt? Has the Holy Prophet (S) ever used such words for anybody else?

(iii) The third instance was the occasion of the invasion of Tabuk. To understand the occasion and the cause of remarks of the Holy Prophet (S) it is necessary to know the historical background of the incident. It was the summer of 9 A.H. And the Holy Prophet (S) had received the information that the

Roman King was mobilizing his forces to invade the Islamic State and many Arab tribes were gathering round him. He decided to face them in their own land and not to allow them the run of the Muslim state so that they may not lay waste to the lands through which they would pass.

The situation had become very serious because there was famine in Hijaz, Ta'if and Yemen. The Hypocrites (the munafeqeen) were carrying on an intensive propaganda campaign to try to make the people believe that the famine was the sign that Allah was angry with Muslims and wants to exterminate them with the worst form of death. And in the case of a defeat against the Roman armies, there was an imminent danger of a rebellion.

It was imperative that the state should be left in the hands of a faithful and powerful guardian; otherwise, there was every possibility of being sandwiched between the two enemies. The Holy Prophet (S), therefore, decided that Imam Ali (as) should act as a regent in his place so the world might realize that in the opinion of the Holy Prophet (S), none could look after the temporal as well as spiritual welfare of the Muslims during his absence but Ali (as). He called Ali (as) and told him that he would have to act as the last line of defense for him and Islam, saying "O Ali! Nobody could look after the center of the Muslim state but you or I. (Imam Hakim in Mustadrak, Allama ibn Abdul-Birr in Isti'ab, Shah Waliyullah in Izalatul-Khafa', Sibt ibn al-Jawzi in Tadhkiratul-Khawass and Allama al-Muttaqi al-Hindi in Kanzul-Ummal). Imam Ali's stay at Medina disappointed the Amunafiqun (hypocrites) as they constituted the majority of those left behind by the Holy Prophet (S).

They claimed that the Prophet (S) had lost faith in Imam Ali (as) and had, therefore, left him behind and that it was positively certain that the Holy Prophet (S) was going to suffer a defeat. Imam Ali (as) naturally felt anxious for the Holy Prophet (S) and annoyed at aspersions against him. He left Medina immediately, met the Prophet (S) at the place of Jerf and told him all that was said at his back. Thereupon, the Holy Prophet (S) said, "Ali! They shall lie against you as they have lied against me. They have called me an epileptic, a magician, a sorcerer and a necromantic and have always portrayed me as a liar. I have appointed you as my vicegerent and my caliph over all those whom I have left behind. Are you not satisfied to realize that you are to me like Aaron was to Moses?" (Bukhari's Sahih, Ch. 145, p. 387 and Ch. 18, p. 89).

(IV) The fourth time was (in the wording of the Spirit of Islam): "Notably the occasion of the return journey from the performance of the Farewell Pilgrimage, during a halt at a place called Khumm, the Prophet (pbuh) had assembled the people accompanying him, using the words which could leave little doubt about his intention regarding his successor, Ali (as). He (pbuh) said, "To me, Ali (as) is what Aaron was to Moses. O Allah! Be the friend of his friends and the foe of his foes; help those who help him and frustrate those who betray him"(The Spirit of Islam, p. 292).

I would be doing a great disservice to the cause of the truth and to the history of Islam if I do not sketch at least an outline of this incident. More than fifty thousand people had gathered on that occasion, and many of them narrated all that took place there. Among those narrators we find such luminaries as Abu

Bakr, Umar, Othman, al-Zubair ibn al-Awwam,

Abdullah ibn Umar, Abdullah ibn Abbas, Mother of the Faithful Aisha, Mother of the Faithful Umm Salamah, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud and Hassan ibn Thabit. The book *Arjahul-Matalib* cites 100 names of the companions of the Holy Prophet (S) [who testify to the Ghadir Khumm incident].

There are about 153 historians and collectors of the Holy Prophet's traditions and authors of *Sihah* books, *mu'jams* and *musnads* from the 1st Century A.H. right up to 1300 A.H. who have all narrated the entire incident in detail and have drawn practically the same inference as the author of *The Spirit of Islam*. The book *Arjahul-Matalib* again gives a list of them in chronological order of 13 centuries, from which I have quoted a few names at the end of this section.

Here is the incident in more details:

In 10 A.H./632 A.D., immediately following *ijjatul-Wada'* (the Farewell Pilgrimage, the last pilgrimage performed by Prophet Muammad [h] ), a divine order was revealed to the Prophet to convey the remaining Islamic tenets: the annual pilgrimage to Mecca and the Imamate of the Twelve Infallible Imams. The Prophet called upon the faithful to accompany him on his last pilgrimage; he knew that it would be his last and that he would soon have to leave this temporary abode for the eternal one. More than one hundred and twenty thousand Muslims responded to his call.

The Prophet and his company put on the *iram* garbs at the appropriate time at *Masjid al-Shajara*, a short distance from Mecca, his birthplace, which he entered on *Dhul-ijja* 5, 10 A.H./March 6, 632 A.D. The Prophet's call reached Yemen where 'Ali ibn Abu alib (as) was acting as his representative. Twelve thousand Yemenite pilgrims came out headed by Ali (as) in response to the Prophet's call to accompany him on his historic Pilgrimage, bringing the total number of those early pilgrims to more than one hundred and thirty-two thousand.

The Islamic pilgrimage starts in the month of *Dhul-ijja* (month of the pilgrimage), the last Islamic lunar calendar month, and continues for at least ten days. First, each pilgrim dons a special garb called *iram*; males' *iram* consists of two white sheets or towels covering the upper and lower parts of the body, whereas females wear a full white cotton outfit, simple and modest. This *iram* reminds the pilgrim of his/her death and of the equality of all before God. All pilgrims perform the same rituals; none receives any favourable treatment or distinction on account of his status, power, or wealth. The pilgrimage starts by the *awaf*: the circling of the Kaba seven times. The Kaba is identified in Islamic literature as an earthly counterpart to the Almighty's Throne ('Arsh) in heaven where the angels circle it in adoration.

Likewise, in imitation of those angels, Muslim pilgrims circle the Kaba in adoration of their Lord. The *awaf* is followed by the *sai*: the pilgrims run back and forth seven times between the *afa* and the *Marwa* in commemoration of Hagar (Hajar), mother of Ishmael, frantically searching for water for her newborn son Ishmael. After that, the pilgrims drink of the well of *Zamzam* which had appeared miraculously for Hagar and Ishmael, wash with it or use it to make ablution for prayers at the Kaba but never to use it in

the toilet; Zamzam is too sacred for such an application.

Then the pilgrims leave Mecca for Muzdalifa, Arafa, and finally Mina to perform certain rites which fall outside the scope of this book which is intended to be a historical account of the Prophet of Islam, not one of fiqh. The author is a writer, a researcher, someone who, according to a friend of mine, "insists on finding out who the foundling's father is!" But he is not a faqih. Now let us go back to our original story after having cast a glimpse at the rite of the pilgrimage in Islam.

It was at Arafa that the divine command was received by Prophet Muammad (S) to appoint 'Ali (as) as "Amirul-Mu'minin<sup>2</sup>," the Commander of the Faithful, title of the bearer of the highest temporal and religious powers in the Islamic State, one reserved solely for caliphs, those who are supposed to be the most knowledgeable of all people of secular and religious problems and of how to solve them. Muammad (S) was also ordered to convey to Ali (as) the knowledge which the Almighty had bestowed upon him so that it would not be lost once he is dead.

In Mina, the Prophet (S) delivered two sermons in preparation of the great announcement to come. In the first, he referred to Ali's caliphate and reminded the audience of one particular adith which he had conveyed to them on various occasions and which is identified in books of hadith as "adith al-thaqalain," tradition of the two weighty things (the first being the Holy Qur'an and the second being the Prophet's Progeny, the "Ahl al-Bayt" mentioned in verse 33 of Chapter 33 [al-Azab] of the Holy Qur'an). He delivered his second sermon at Masjid al-Khaif, also located in Mina in the Meccan valley. In it, the Prophet reminded his audience of Ali's Imamate, emphasizing the necessity of disseminating the contents of his sermon, announcing that those present were duty-bound to convey it to those who were absent. In both of these sermons, the Prophet publicly vested upon Ali (as) both powers referred to above.

As soon as the rituals of the pilgrimage were completed, and to be exact on Dhul-ijja 17, 10 A.H./March 18, 632 A.D., the divine order came to the Prophet embedded in verse 67 of Chapter 5 (al-Ma'ida) quoted in the text of the Prophet's sermon to follow. The Prophet immediately ordered Bilal ibn Raba, his caller to prayers and one of his faithful aaba, to convey the following order to the faithful: "Tomorrow, nobody should lag behind but should go to Ghadir Khumm."

The word "ghadir" means "swamp," an area where rain water gathers to form a shallow lake. Ghadir Khumm is located near the crossroads of trade and pilgrimage caravans coming from Medina, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and Nejd on their way to Mecca. The presence of water and a few old trees there served as a resting place for trade caravans for centuries. A mosque, called Masjid al-Ghadir, was later built on the same spot where the great gathering took place to commemorate that momentous event, an event which has unfortunately been forgotten by the vast majority of the Muslims who, by thus forgetting, forgot the most important part of their creed, one without which their faith is not complete at all according to the Prophet's sermon to follow and according to the text of the Holy Qur'an...

The announcement conveyed by Bilal was transmitted by one person to another till it reached as far as Mecca proper, and people were wondering about what it could be. They had expected the Prophet to linger a little bit longer at Mecca where the pilgrims could meet him and ask him whatever questions they had about this new institution called "ajj" and about other religious matters.

In the morning of the next day, Dhul-ijja 18, 10 A.H./March 19, 632 A.D., the Prophet and his 120,000 companions went to Ghadir Khumm, and so did 'Ali (as) with his 12,000 Yemenite pilgrims who had to change their route to the north instead of to the south where they would be home-bound. The Prophet also issued an order to four of his closest aaba, namely Selman al-Farisi, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, Miqdad ibn al-

Aswad al-Kindi and Ammar ibn Yasir, with whom the reader is already familiar, to clear the area where the old trees stood, to uproot the thorn bushes, collect the rocks and stones, and to clean the place and sprinkle it with water. Then these men took a piece of cloth which they tied between two of those trees, thus providing some shade. The Prophet told those aaba that a ceremony that would last for three continuous days would be held in that area. Then the same men piled the rocks on top of each other and made a makeshift pulpit over them of camel litters as high as the Prophet's own length. They put another piece of cloth on the pulpit which was installed in the middle of the crowd, giving the Prophet (S) an overview of the whole gathering. A man was selected to repeat loudly what the Prophet was saying so that those who stood the furthest would not miss a word.

The athan for the noon prayers was recited, and the congregational (jama'a) prayers were led by the Prophet (S). After that, the Prophet ascended the pulpit and signalled to Ali ibn Abu Talib (as) to stand on his right. Ali (as) did so, standing one pulpit step below the Prophet (S). Before saying anything, the Prophet (S) looked right and left to make sure that people were prepared to listen to every word of his.

The sun was so hot that people had to pull some of their outer mantles over their heads and under their feet in order to be able to somehow tolerate the heat. Finally the Prophet (S) delivered his historic sermon which he intended, as the reader will see, to be not only for the assembled crowd but for all those who were not present at that gathering and for all their offspring, one generation after another, till the Day of Judgment.

Here is the text of the Prophet's sermon. We hope it will bring the reader guidance in the life of this world and happiness and success in the life to come through the intercession of Muammed (pbuh), the one loved most by Allah, peace and blessings of the Almighty be upon him, his progeny, and true companions who obeyed him during his lifetime and after his demise and who did not forget or pretend to forget his following khuba:

## **Prophet's Historic Ghadir Sermaon**

Here is a humble translation by our Brother Yasin T. al-Jibouri, Editor of this book, of the Prophet's

historic Ghadir Khumm sermon, the English translation of which was published in book form together with the original Arabic text in Dhul-Hijjah 1419/March 1999 in the United States of America by Darul-Salam Center, Inc., P.O. Box 4355, Rockville, Maryland 20849-4355, U.S.A. The original Arabic text of this lengthy sermon was compiled from various sources by Muhammad Baqir al-Ansari, may the Almighty reward him with His Divine Unmatched

Generosity, and published by Ansariyan Publications of Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran.

All Praise is due to Allah Who is Exalted in His Unity, Near in His Uniqueness, Sublime in His Authority, Magnanimous in His Dominance. He knows everything; He subdues all creation through His might and evidence. He is Praised always and forever, Glorified and has no end. He begins and He repeats, and to Him every matter is referred.

Allah is the Creator of everything; He dominates with His power the earth and the heavens. Holy, He is, and Praised, the Lord of the angels and of the spirits. His favors overwhelm whatever He creates, and He is the Mighty over whatever He initiates. He observes all eyes while no eye can observe Him. He is Generous, Clement, Patient. His mercy encompasses everything, and so is His giving. He never rushes His revenge, nor does He hasten the retribution they deserve. He comprehends what the breast conceals and what the conscience hides. No inner thought can be concealed from Him, nor does He confuse one with another. He encompasses everything, dominates everything, and subdues everything. Nothing is like Him. He initiates the creation from nothing; He is everlasting, living, sustaining in the truth; there is no god but He, the Omnipotent, the Wise One.

He is greater than can be conceived by visions, while He conceives all visions, the Eternal, the Knowing. None can describe Him by seeing Him, nor can anyone find out how He is, be it by his intellect or by a spoken word except through what leads to Him, the Sublime, the Mighty that He is.

I testify that He is Allah, the One Who has filled time with His Holiness, the One Whose Light overwhelms eternity, Who effects His will without consulting anyone; there is no partner with Him in His decisions, nor is He assisted in running His affairs. He shaped what He made without following a preexisting model, and He created whatever He created without receiving help from anyone, nor did doing so neither exhaust Him nor frustrated His designs. He created, and so it was, and He initiated, and it became visible. So He is Allah, the One and Only God, the One Who does whatever He does extremely well. He is the Just One Who never oppresses, the most Holy to Whom all affairs are referred.

I further testify that He is Allah before Whom everything is humbled, to Whose Greatness everything is humiliated, and to Whose Dignity everything submits. He is the King of every domain and the One Who places planets in their orbits. He controls the movements of the sun and of the moon, each circles till a certain time. He makes the night follow the day and the day follow the night, seeking it incessantly. He splits the spine of every stubborn tyrant and annihilates every mighty devil.

Never has there been any opponent opposing Him nor a peer assisting Him. He is Independent; He

never begets nor is He begotten, and none can ever be His equal. He is One God, the Glorified Lord. His will is done; His word is the law. He knows, so He takes account. He causes death and gives life. He makes some poor and others rich. He causes some to smile and others to cry. He brings some nearer to Him while distancing others from Him. He withholds and He gives. The domain belongs to Him and so is all the Praise. In His hand is all goodness, and He can do anything at all.

He lets the night cover the day and the day cover the night; there is no god but He, the Sublime, the oft-Forgiving One. He responds to the supplication; He gives generously; He computes the breath; He is the Lord of the jinns and of mankind, the One Whom nothing confuses, nor is He annoyed by those who cry for His help, nor is He fed-up by those who persist. He safeguards the righteous against sinning, and He enables the winners to win. He is the Master of the Faithful, the Lord of the Worlds Who deserves the appreciation of all those whom He created and is praised no matter what.

I praise Him and always thank Him for the ease He brings me and for the constriction, in hardship and in prosperity, and I believe in Him, in His angels, in His Books and messengers. I listen to His Command and I obey, and I initiate the doing of whatever pleases Him, and I submit to His decree hoping to acquire obedience to Him and fear of His penalty, for He is Allah against Whose designs nobody should feel secure, nor should anyone ever fear His "oppression."

I testify, even against my own soul, that I am His servant, and I bear witness that he is my Lord. I convey what He reveals to me, being cautious lest I should not do it, so a catastrophe from Him would befall upon me, one which none can keep away, no matter how great his design may be and how sincere his friendship. There is no god but He, for He has informed me that if I do not convey what He has just revealed to me in honor of Ali (as) in truth, I will not have conveyed His Message at all, and

He, the Praised and the Exalted One, has guaranteed for me to protect me from the (evil) people, and He is Allah, the One Who suffices, the Sublime. He has just revealed to me the following (verse):

**In The Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.**

O Messenger! Convey what has (just) been revealed to you (with regard to 'Ali), and if you do not do so, you will not have conveyed His Message at all, and Allah shall protect you from (evil) people; surely Allah will not guide the unbelieving people. (Qur'an, 5:67)

O people! I have not committed any shortcoming in conveying what Allah Almighty revealed to me, and I am now going to explain to you the reason behind the revelation of this verse: Three times did **Gabriel command me on behalf of the Peace, my Lord, Who is the source of all peace, to thus make a stand in order to inform everyone, black and white, that: Ali ibn Abu alib (as) is my Brother, Wai, and successor over my nation and the Imam after me, the one whose status to me is like that of Aaron to Moses except there will be no prophet after me, and he is your master next only to Allah and to His Messenger**, and Allah has already revealed to me the same in one of the fixed verses<sup>3</sup> of His Book saying, ***"Your Master is Allah and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep***

***up prayers and pay zakat even as they bow down" (Qur'an, 5:55)***, and Ali ibn Abu alib is the one who keeps up prayers, who pays zakat even as he bows down, seeking to please Allah, the Sublime, the Almighty, on each and every occasion.

I asked Gabriel to plead to the Peace to excuse me from having to convey such a message to you, O people, due to my knowledge that the pious are few<sup>111</sup> while the hypocrites are many, and due to those who will blame me, and due to the trickery of those who ridicule Islam and whom Allah described in His Book as saying with their tongues contrarily to what their hearts conceal, thinking lightly of it, while it is with Allah magnanimous, and due to the abundance of their harm to me, so much so that they called me "ears" and claimed that I am so because of being so much in his (Ali's) company, always welcoming him, loving him and being so much pleased with him till Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime One, revealed in this regard the verse saying:

***"And there are some of them who harm the (feelings of the) Prophet and say: He is an ear (uthun; i.e. he always listens to Ali). Say: One who listens (to Ali) is good for you; He believes in Allah and testifies to the conviction of the believers and a mercy for those of you who believe; and those who (thus) harm the Messenger of Allah shall have a painful punishment" (Qur'an, 9:61).***

Had I wished to name those who have called me so, I would have called them by their names, and I would have pointed them out. I would have singled them out and called them by what they really are, but I, by Allah, am fully aware of their affairs. Yet despite all of that, Allah insisted that I should convey what He has just revealed to me in honor of Ali.

Then the Prophet (S) recited the following verse:

***O Messenger! Convey what has (just) been revealed to you (with regard to 'Ali), and if you do not do so, you will not have conveyed His Message at all, and Allah shall protect you from (evil) people. (Qur'an, 5:67)***

O people! Comprehend (the implications of) what I have just said, and again do comprehend it, and be (further) informed that Allah has installed him (Ali) as your Master and Imam, obligating the Muhajirn and the Anar and those who follow them in goodness to obey him, and so must everyone who lives in the desert or in the city, who is a non-Arab or an Arab, who is a free man or a slave, who is young or old, white or black, and so should everyone who believes in His Unity. His decree shall be carried out. His (Ali's) word is binding; his command is obligating; cursed is whoever opposes him, blessed with mercy is whoever follows him and believes in him, for Allah has already forgiven him and forgiven whoever listens to him and obeys him.

O people! This is the last stand I make in such a situation; so, listen and obey, and submit to the Command of Allah, your Lord, for Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime One, is your Master and Lord, then next to Him is His Messenger and Prophet who is now addressing you, then after me Ali (as) is your Master and Imam according to the Command of Allah, your Lord, then the Imams from among my

progeny, his offspring, till the Day you meet Allah and His Messenger.

Nothing is permissible except what is deemed so by Allah, His Messenger, and they (the Imams), and nothing is prohibitive except what is deemed so by Allah and His Messenger and they (the Imams). Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime One, has made me acquainted with what is permissible and what is prohibitive, and I have conveyed to you what my Lord has taught me of His Book, of what it decrees as permissible or as prohibitive.

O people! Prefer him (Ali) over all others! There is no knowledge except that Allah has divulged it to me, and all the knowledge I have learned I have divulged to Imam al-Muttaqin (leader of the righteous), and there is no knowledge (that I know) except that I divulged it to Ali, and he is al-Imam al-Mubin (the evident Imam) whom Allah mentions in Surat Ya-Sin:

***".. and everything We have computed is in (the knowledge of) an evident Imam" (Qur'an, 36: 12).***

O people! Do not abandon him, nor should you flee away from him, nor should you be too arrogant to accept his authority, for he is the one who guides to righteousness and who acts according to it. He defeats falsehood and prohibits others from acting according to it, accepting no blame from anyone while seeking to please Allah. He is the first to believe in Allah and in His Messenger; none preceded him as such. And he is the one who offered his life as a sacrifice for the Messenger of Allah and who was in the company of the Messenger of Allah while no other man was. He is the first of all people to offer prayers and the first to worship Allah with me. I ordered him, on behalf of Allah, to sleep in my bed, and he did, offering his life as a sacrifice for my sake.

O people! Prefer him (over all others), for Allah has preferred him, and accept him, for Allah has appointed him (as your leader).

O people! He is an Imam appointed by Allah, and Allah shall never accept the repentance of anyone who denies his authority, nor shall He forgive him; this is a must decree from Allah never to do so to anyone who opposes him, and that He shall torment him with a most painful torment for all time to come, for eternity; so, beware lest you should oppose him and thus enter the fire the fuel of which is the people and the stones prepared for the unbelievers.

O people! By Allah! All past prophets and messengers conveyed the glad tiding of my advent, and I, by Allah, am the seal of the prophets and of the messengers and the argument against all beings in the heavens and on earth. Anyone who doubts this commits apostasy similar to that of the early jahiliyya, and anyone who doubts anything of what I have just said doubts everything which has been revealed to me, and anyone who doubts any of the Imams doubts all of them, and anyone who doubts us shall be lodged in the fire.

O people! Allah, the most Exalted and the Almighty, has bestowed this virtue upon me out of His kindness towards Ali (as) and as a boon to Ali (as), and there is no god but He; to Him all praise belongs

in all times, for eternity, and in all circumstances.

O people! Prefer Ali (as) (over all others), for he is the very best of all people after me, be they males or females, so long as Allah sends down His sustenance, so long as there are beings. Cursed and again cursed, condemned and again condemned, is anyone who does not accept this statement of mine and who does not agree to it. Gabriel himself has informed me of the same on behalf of Allah Almighty Who he said (in Gabriel's words):

***"Anyone who antagonizes Ali (as) and refuses to accept his wilayat shall incur My curse upon him and My wrath." "... and let every soul consider what it has sent forth for the morrow, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah" (Qur'an, 59: 18),***

***"And do not make your oaths a means of deceit between you lest a foot should slip after its stability" (Qur'an, 16:94),***

***"Allah is fully aware of all what you do" (Qur'an, 58: 13).***

O people! He (Ali) is janb–Allah mentioned in the Book of Allah, the Sublime One: The Almighty, forewarning his (Ali's) adversaries, says,

***"Lest a soul should say: O woe unto me for what I fell short of my duty to Allah, and most surely I was of those who laughed to scorn" (Qur'an, 39:56).***

O people! Study the Qur'an and comprehend its verses, look into its fixed verses and do not follow what is similar thereof, for by Allah, none shall explain to you what it forbids you from doing, nor clarify its exegesis, other than the one whose hand I am taking and whom I am lifting to me, the one whose arm I am taking and whom I am lifting, so that I may enable you to understand that: Whoever among you takes me as his master, this Ali (as) is his master, and he is 'Ali ibn Abu alib (as), my Brother and wai, and his appointment as your wali is from Allah, the Sublime, the Exalted One, a commandment which He revealed to me.

O people! Ali (as) and the good ones from among my offspring from his loins are the Lesser Weight, while the Qur'an is the Greater One: each one of them informs you of and agrees with the other. They shall never part till they meet me at the Pool (of Kawthar). They are the Trustees of Allah over His creation, the rulers on His earth.

Indeed now I have performed my duty and conveyed the Message. Indeed you have heard what I have said and explained. Indeed Allah, the Exalted One and the Sublime, has said, and so have I on behalf of Allah, the Exalted One and the Sublime, that there is no Amirul– Mu'minin (Commander of the Faithful) save this Brother of mine; no authority over a believer is permissible after me except to him.

Then the Prophet patted Ali's arm, lifting him up. Since the time when the Messenger of Allah ascended the pulpit, Amirul–Mu'minin was one pulpit step below where the Messenger of Allah had seated himself

on his pulpit, while Ali (as) was on his (Prophet's) right side, one pulpit step lower, now they both appeared to the gathering to be on the same level; the Prophet lifted him up. The Prophet then raised his hands to the heavens in supplication while Ali's leg was touching the knee of the Messenger of Allah. The Prophet continued his sermon thus:

O people! This is Ali, my Brother, Wai, the one who comprehends my knowledge, and my successor over my nation, over everyone who believes in me. He is the one entrusted with explaining the Book of Allah, the most Exalted One, the Sublime, and the one who invites people to His path. He is the one who does whatever pleases Him, fighting His enemies, befriending His friends who obey Him, prohibiting disobedience to Him. He is the successor of the Messenger of Allah and Amirul-Mu'minin, the man assigned by Allah to guide others, killer of the renegades and of those who believe in equals to Allah, those who violate the Commandments of Allah. Allah says,

***"My Word shall not be changed, nor am I in the least unjust to the servants" (Qur'an, 50:29),***

and by Your Command, O Lord, do I (submit and) say, O Allah! Befriend whoever befriends him (Ali) and be the enemy of whoever antagonizes him; support whoever supports him and abandon whoever abandons him; curse whoever disavows him, and let Your Wrath descend on whoever usurps his right.

O Lord! You revealed a verse in honor of Ali, Your wali, in its explanation and to effect Your own appointment of him this very day did You say,

***"This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour on you, and chosen for you Islam as a religion" (Qur'an, 5:3);***

***"And whoever desires a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted from him, and in the hereafter he shall be one of the losers" (Qur'an, 3:85).***

Lord! I implore You to testify that I have conveyed (Your Message).

O people! Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime, has perfected your religion through his (Ali's) Imamate; so, whoever rejects him as his Imam or rejects those of my offspring from his loins who assume the same status (as Imams) till the Day of Judgment when they shall all be displayed before Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime, these are the ones whose (good) deeds shall be nil and void in the life of this world and in the hereafter, and in the fire shall they be lodged forever, "... their torture shall not be decreased, nor shall they be given a respite" (Qur'an, 2:162).

O people! Here is Ali, the one who has supported me more than anyone else among you, the one who most deserves my gratitude, the one who is closest of all of you to me and the one who is the very dearest to me. Both Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime, and I are pleased with him, and no verse of the Holy Qur'an expressing Allah's Pleasure except that he is implied therein, nor has any verse of praise been revealed in the Qur'an except that he is implied therein, nor has the Lord testified to Paradise in

the (Qur'anic) Chapter starting with **"Has there not come over man a long period of time when he was nothing (not even) mentioned?" (Qur'an, 76: 1)** nor was this Chapter revealed except in his praise.

O people! He is the one who supports the religion of Allah, who argues on behalf of the Messenger of Allah. He is the pious, the pure, the guide, the one rightly guided. Your Prophet is the best of all prophets, and your wai is the best of all wais, and his offspring are the best of wais.

O people! Each prophet's progeny is from his own loins whereas mine is from the loins of Amirul-Mu'minin Ali.

O people! Iblis caused Adam to be dismissed from the garden through envy; so, do not envy him lest your deeds should be voided and lest your feet should slip away, for Adam was sent down to earth after having committed only one sin, and he was among the elite of Allah's creation. How, then, will be your case, and you being who you are, and among you are enemies of Allah?

Indeed, none hates Ali (as) except a wretch, and none accepts Ali's wilayat except a pious person. None believes in him except a sincere mu'min, and in honor of Ali (as) was the Chapter of Ar (Ch. 103) revealed, I swear to it by Allah: **"In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. I swear by time that most surely man is in loss" (Qur'an, 103: 1-2)** except Ali (as) who believed and was pleased with the truth and with perseverance.

O people! I have sought Allah to be my Witness and have conveyed my Message to you, and the Messenger is obligated only to clearly convey (his Message).

**O people! "Fear Allah as He ought to be feared, and do not die except as Muslims" (Qur'an, 3: 102).**

**O people! "... Believe in what We have revealed, verifying what you have, before We alter faces then turn them on their backs or curse them as We cursed the violators of the Sabbath" (Qur'an, 4:47).**

By Allah! He did not imply anyone in this verse except a certain band of my aaba whom I know by name and by lineage, and I have been ordered (by my Lord) to pardon them; so, let each person deal with Ali (as) according to what he finds in his heart of love or of hatred.

O people! The noor from Allah, the Exalted One and the Sublime, flows through me then through Ali ibn Abu alib (as), then in the progeny that descends from him till al-Qa'im al-Mehdi (as), who shall effect the justice of Allah, and who will take back any right belonging to us because Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime, made us ujjat over those who take us lightly, the stubborn ones, those who act contrarily to our word, who are treacherous, who are sinners, who are oppressors, who are usurpers, from the entire world.

O people! I warn you that I am the Messenger of Allah; messengers before me have already passed

away; so, should I die or should I be killed, are you going to turn upon your heels? And whoever turns upon his heels shall not harm Allah in the least, and Allah shall reward those who are grateful, those who persevere. Ali (as) is surely the one described with perseverance and gratitude, then after him are my offspring from his loins.

O people! Do not think that you are doing me a favour by your accepting Islam. Nay! Do not think that you are doing Allah such a favour lest He should void your deeds, lest His wrath should descend upon you, lest He should try you with a flame of fire and brass; surely your Lord is ever-watchful.

O people! There shall be Imams after me who shall invite people to the fire, and they shall not be helped on the Day of Judgment.

O people! Allah and I are both clear of them.

O people! They and their supporters and followers shall be in the lowest rung of the fire; miserable, indeed, is the resort of the arrogant ones. Indeed, these are the folks of the saifa; so, let each one of you look into his saifa!

This reference to the saifa has been overlooked by most people with the exception of a small band, and we will, Insha–Allah, shed a light on this saifa later on. The Prophet continued his historic sermon thus:

O people! I am calling for it to be an Imamate and a succession confined to my offspring till the Day of Judgment, and I have conveyed only what I have been commanded (by my Lord) to convey to drive the argument home against everyone present or absent and on everyone who has witnessed or who has not, who is already born or he is yet to be born; therefore, let those present here convey it to those who are absent, and let the father convey it to his son, and so on till the Day of Judgment.

And they shall make the Imamate after me a property, a usurpation; may Allah curse the usurpers who usurp<sup>4</sup>, and it is then that you, O jinns and mankind, will get the full attention of the One Who shall cause a flame of fire and brass to be hurled upon you, and you shall not achieve any victory!

O people! Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime, is not to let you be whatever you want to be except so that He may distinguish the bad ones from among you from the good, and Allah is not to make you acquainted with the unknown.

O people! There shall be no town that falsifies except that Allah shall annihilate it on account of its falsehood before the Day of Judgment, and He shall give al–Imam al–Mehdi (as) authority over it, and surely Allah's promise is true.

O people! Most of the early generations before you have strayed, and by Allah, He surely annihilated the early generations, and He shall annihilate the later ones. Allah Almighty has said,

***"Did We not destroy the former generations? Then did We follow them up with later ones. Even***

***thus shall We deal with the guilty. Woe on that Day to the rejecters!" (Qur'an, 77:16-19).***

O people! Allah has ordered me to do and not to do, and I have ordered Ali (as) to do and not to do, so he learned what should be done and what should not; therefore, you should listen to his orders so that you may be safe, and you should obey him so that you may be rightly guided. Do not do what he forbids you from doing so that you may acquire wisdom.

Agree with him, and do not let your paths be different from his.

O people! I am al-ira al-Mustaqeem (the Straight Path) of Allah whom He commanded you to follow, and it is after me 'Ali (as) then my offspring from his loins, the Imams of Guidance: they guide to the truth and act accordingly.

Then the Prophet (S) recited the entire text of Surat al-Fatia and commented by saying:

It is in my honor that this (Sura) was revealed, including them (the Imams) specifically; they are the friends of Allah for whom there shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve; truly the Party of Allah are the winners.

Indeed, it is their enemies who are the impudent ones, the deviators, the brethren of Satan; they inspire each other with embellished speech out of their haughtiness.

Indeed, their (Imams') friends are the ones whom Allah, the Exalted One, the Great, mentions in His Book saying,

***"You shall not find a people who believe in Allah and in the latter Day befriending those who act in opposition to Allah and to His Prophet, even though they may be their own fathers or sons or brothers or kinsfolk; these are they into whose hearts He has impressed conviction" (Qur'an, 58:22).***

Indeed, their (Imam's) friends are the mu'mins (believers) whom Allah, the Exalted One, the Sublime, describes as:

***"Those who believe and do not mix up their faith with iniquity, those are the ones who shall have the security, and they are the rightly guided" (Qur'an, 6:82).***

Indeed, their friends are those who believed and never doubted. Indeed, their friends are the ones who shall enter Paradise in peace and security; the angels shall receive them with welcome saying, "Peace be upon you! Enter it and reside in it forever!"

Indeed, their friends shall be rewarded with Paradise where they shall be sustained without having to account for anything..

Indeed, their enemies are the ones who shall be hurled into the fire.

Indeed, their enemies are the ones who shall hear the exhalation of hell as it increases in intensity, and they shall see it sigh. Indeed, their enemies are the ones thus described by Allah:

***"Whenever a nation enters, it shall curse its sister..." (Qur'an, 7:38).***

Indeed, their enemies are the ones whom Allah, the Exalted One and the Sublime, describes thus:

***"Whenever a group is cast into it, its keepers shall ask them: Did any warner not come to you? They shall say: Yea! Indeed, there came to us a warner but we rejected (him) and said: Allah has not revealed anything; you are only in a great error. And they shall say: Had we but listened or pondered, we would not have been among the inmates of the burning fire. So they shall acknowledge their sins, but far will be (forgiveness) from the inmates of the burning fire" (Qur'an, 67:8-11).***

Indeed, their friends are the ones who fear their Lord in the unseen; forgiveness shall be theirs and a great reward.

O people! What a difference it is between the fire and the great reward!

O people! Our enemy is the one whom Allah censures and curses, whereas our friend is everyone praised and loved by Allah.

O people! I am the Warner (nathir) and Ali (as) is the one who brings glad tidings (bashir).

O people! I am the one who warns (Mundhir) while Ali (as) is the guide (hadi).

O people! I am a Prophet (nabi) and Ali (as) is the successor (wai).

O people! I am a Messenger (rasul) and Ali (as) is the Imam and the Wai after me, and so are the Imams after him from among his offspring. Indeed, I am their father, and they shall descend from his loins.

Indeed, the seal of the Imams from among us is al-Qa'im al-Mehdi. He, indeed, is the one who shall come out so that the creed may prevail. He, indeed, is the one who shall seek revenge against the oppressor. He, indeed, is the one who conquers the forts and demolishes them. He, indeed, is the one who subdues every tribe from among the people of polytheism and the one to guide it.

He is the one who shall seek redress for all friends of Allah. He is the one who supports the religion of Allah. He ever derives (his knowledge) from a very deep ocean. He shall identify each man of distinction by his distinction and every man of ignorance by his ignorance. He shall be the choicest of Allah's beings and the chosen one. He is the heir of all (branches of) knowledge, the one who encompasses every perception. He conveys on behalf of his Lord, the Exalted and the Sublime, who points out His miracles. He is the wise, the one endowed with wisdom, the one upon whom (Divine) authority is vested.

Glad tidings of him have been conveyed by past generations, yet he is the one who shall remain as a ujja, and there shall be no ujja after him nor any right except with him, nor any noor except with him.

None, indeed, shall subdue him, nor shall he ever be vanquished. He is the friend of Allah on His earth, the judge over His creatures, the custodian of what is evident and what is hidden of His.

O people! I have explained (everything) for you and enabled you to comprehend it, and this Ali (as) shall after me explain everything to you.

At the conclusion of my khuba, I shall call upon you to shake hands with me to swear your allegiance to him and to recognize his authority, then to shake hands with him after you have shaken hands with me.

I had, indeed, sworn allegiance to Allah, and Ali (as) had sworn allegiance to me, and I on behalf of Allah, the Exalted One and the Sublime, I require you to swear the oath of allegiance to him:

***"Surely those who swear (the oath of) allegiance to you do but swear allegiance to Allah; the hand of Allah is above their hands; therefore, whoever reneges (from his oath), he reneges only to the injury of his own soul, and whoever fulfills what he has covenanted with Allah, He will grant him a mighty reward" (Qur'an, 48: 10).***

O people! The pilgrimage (Hajj) and the umra are among Allah's rituals;

***"So whoever makes a pilgrimage to the House or pays a visit (to it), there is no blame on him if he goes round them [afa and Marwa] both" (Qur'an, 2: 158).***

O people! Perform your pilgrimage to the House, for no members of a family went there except that they became wealthy, and receive glad tidings! None failed to do so except that their lineage was cut-off and were impoverished.

O people! No believer stands at the standing place [at Arafat] except that Allah forgives his past sins till then; so, once his pilgrimage is over, he resumes his deeds.

O people! Pilgrims are assisted, and their expenses shall be replenished, and Allah never suffers the rewards of the doers of good to be lost.

O people! Perform your pilgrimage to the House by perfecting your religion and by delving into fiqh, and do not leave the sacred places except after having repented and abandoned (the doing of anything prohibited).

O people! Uphold prayers and pay the zakat as Allah, the Exalted One and the Sublime, commanded you; so, if time lapses and you were short of doing so or you forgot, 'Ali (as) is your wali and he will explain for you. He is the one whom Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime, appointed for you after me as the custodian of His creation. He is from me and I am from him, and he and those who will succeed him

from my progeny shall inform you of anything you ask them about, and they shall clarify whatever you do not know. alal and aram things are more than I can count for you now or explain, for a commandment to enjoin what is permissible and a prohibition from what is not permissible are both on the same level, so I was ordered (by my Lord) to take your oath of allegiance and to make a covenant with you to accept what I brought you from Allah, the Exalted One and the Sublime, with regards to 'Ali (as) Amirul-Mu'minin and to the wais after him who are from me and from him, a standing Imamate whose seal is al-Mehdi till the Day he meets Allah Who decrees and Who judges.

O people! I never refrained from informing you of everything permissible or prohibitive; so, do remember this and safeguard it and advise each other to do likewise; do not alter it; do not substitute it with something else.

I am now repeating what I have already said: Uphold the prayers and pay the zakat and enjoin righteousness and forbid abomination.

The peak of enjoining righteousness is to resort to my speech and to convey it to whoever did not attend it and to order him on my behalf to accept it and to (likewise) order him not to violate it, for it is an order from Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime, and there is no knowledge of enjoining righteousness nor prohibiting abomination except that it is with a ma'oom Imam.

O people! The Qur'an informs you that the Imams after him are his (Ali's) descendants, and I have already informed you that they are from me and from him, for Allah says in His Book,

***"And he made it a word to continue in his posterity so that they may return" (Qur'an, 43:28)***

while I have said: "You shall not stray as long as you uphold both of them (simultaneously)." O people! (Uphold) piety, (uphold) piety, and be forewarned of the Hour as Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime, has said,

***"O people! Guard (yourselves) against (punishment from) your Lord; surely the violence of the Hour is a grievous thing" (Qur'an, 22: 1).***

Remember death, resurrection, the judgment, the scales, and the account before the Lord of the Worlds, and (remember) the rewards and the penalty. So whoever does a good deed shall be rewarded for it, and whoever commits a sin shall have no place in the Gardens.

O people! You are more numerous than (it is practical) to shake hands with me all at the same time, and Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime, commanded me to require you to confirm what authority I have vested upon 'Ali (as) Amirul-Mu'minin and to whoever succeeds him of the Imams from me and from him, since I have just informed you that my offspring are from his loins.

You, therefore, should say in one voice: "We hear, and we obey; we accept and we are bound by what you have conveyed to us from our Lord and yours with regard to our Imam Ali (as), Amirul-Mu'minin,

and to the Imams, your sons from his loins. We swear the oath of allegiance to you in this regard with our hearts, with our souls, with our tongues, with our hands.

According to it shall we live, and according to it shall we die, and according to it shall we be resurrected. We shall not alter anything or substitute anything with another, nor shall we doubt nor deny nor suspect, nor shall we violate our covenant nor abrogate the pledge. You admonished us on behalf of Allah with regard to Ali (as), Amirul- Mu'minin, and to the Imams whom you mentioned to be from your offspring from among his descendants after him: al- assan and al- Hussain (as), and to whoever is appointed (as such) by Allah after them. The covenant and the pledge are taken from us, from our hearts, from our souls, from our tongues, from our conscience, from our hands.

Whoever does so by his handshake, it shall be so, or otherwise testified to it by his tongue, and we do not seek any substitute for it, nor shall Allah see our souls deviating therefrom. We shall convey the same on your behalf to anyone near and far of our offspring and families, and we implore Allah to testify to it, and surely Allah suffices as the Witness and you, too, shall testify for us."

O people! What are you going to say?! Allah knows every sound and the innermost of every soul; "Whoever chooses the right guidance, it is for his own soul that he is rightly guided, and whoever strays, it is only to its detriment that he goes astray" (Qur'an, 17: 15).

O people! Swear the oath of allegiance to Allah, and swear it to me, and swear it to Ali (as), Amirul- Mu'minin, and to al- assan and al- ussain (as), and to the Imams from their offspring in the life of this world and in the hereafter, a word that shall always remain so. Allah shall annihilate anyone guilty of treachery and be merciful upon everyone who remains true to his word:

***"Whoever reneges (from his oath), he reneges only to the harm of his own soul, and whoever fulfills what he has covenanted with Allah, He will grant him a mighty reward" (Qur'an, 48: 10).***

O people! Repeat what I have just told you to, and greet Ali (as) with the title of authority of "Amirul- Mu'minin" and say:

***"We hear, and we obey, O Lord! Your forgiveness (do we seek), and to You is the eventual course" (Qur'an, 2:285),***

and you should say:

***"All praise is due to Allah Who guided us to this, and we would not have found the way had it not been for Allah Who guided us" (Qur'an, 7:43).***

O people! The merits of 'Ali ibn Abu alib (as) with Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime, the merits which are revealed in the Qur'an, are more numerous than I can recount in one speech; so, whoever informs you of them and defines them for you, you should believe him.

O people! Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger and Ali (as) and the Imams to whom I have already referred shall attain a great victory.

O people! Those foremost from among you who swear allegiance to him and who pledge to obey him and who greet him with the greeting of being the Commander of the Faithful are the ones who shall win the Gardens of Felicity.

O people! Say what brings you the Pleasure of Allah, for if you and all the people of the earth disbelieve, it will not harm Allah in the least.

O Lord! Forgive the believers through what I have conveyed, and let Your Wrath descend upon those who renege, the apostates, and all Praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

The Holy Prophet (S) was returning from the Farewell Pilgrimage and had reached the place Khumm, (which in the words of the famous historian and geographer Ibn Khallikan is a valley lying between Mecca and Medina and in the neighborhood of Juhfa). It contains a pond, Ghadir, near which the Prophet (S) pronounced his invocation. This took place on the 18th of Dhul-Hijja and the 18th of this month of the year 10 which coincided with March 18, 632 A.D., and this date has been ever since the anniversary of the Feast of Ghadir (Eidul-Ghadir).

There, the Holy Prophet (S) suddenly stopped his camel and said that just then a message from Allah was revealed to him which must immediately be conveyed to the Muslims. He dispatched messengers towards those who had gone ahead and those who were following him leisurely to come back or to hurry up and join him at once. When all of them were gathered he performed the noon-prayers in that blazing hot summer sun. A pulpit was erected for him and from this eminence he preached a sermon which is rightly considered as a masterpiece of Arabic literature and a brief survey of what the Holy Prophet (S) had taught and achieved for the Muslims.

Then he said that he had just then received the revelation which said, "O Messenger! Proclaim the whole of what which hath been sent down to you from Your Master, for if you dost it not, it will be as if you hast not all performed the duty of His Prophethood. And Allah will protect you (thy mission) from evil men, verily Allah guides not the unbelievers," and he was standing there to convey that message to the Muslims and to perform the duty he was ordered to perform.

Continuing the sermon, he said, "O people! Shortly I shall be called (to Heaven), and if I go back, I shall have to give an account as to how I have conveyed His Message to you and you (in your turn) will also be asked as to how you have accepted and carried out my teachings. Now tell me what you will say." All the gathering as one man declared, "O Messenger of Allah! We testify and declare that you have conveyed the message of Allah in full details, you have striven your utmost to guide us to the right path and taught us to follow it.

You were most kind to us and you never wished for us but our good, may Allah repay you for all

that.” Thereupon, he asked the gathering, “Do you not testify that there is no god but Allah, that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger, that there is Heaven and Hell? Do testify that death will overtake every one of you, that you will be brought back from your graves, that the day of resurrection will surely dawn and human beings will be resurrected from their graves to account for their deeds?” The gathering declared, “We believe and testify to all of this. Hearing this declaration he said, “I am leaving among you two of the most important things worthy of obedience, the Holy Qur’an and my trait, progeny. Take care how you treat them; they will not separate from each other till they reach me on the Fountain of Kawthar.”

Then said he, “The Almighty Allah is my Master (mawla) and I am the master of all Muslims and have more right and power on their lives than they themselves; do you believe in this assertion of mine?” In one voice, they all replied, “Yes, O Messenger of Allah!” Thrice he asked the same question and thrice he received the same reply.

On this solemn affirmation he said, “Hear and remember that to whomever I am a Master (mawla), Ali (as) is his master (mawla). He is to me what Aaron was to Moses. O Allah Almighty! Be the friend of his friends and the foe of his foes! Lord! Help whoever helps him and frustrate those who betray him.” Having said all of this, he raised Imam Ali (as) so that the gathering could have a look at the man who would be master of those who believe in the Holy Prophet (S) as their master. There upon, the Holy Prophet (S) received the following congratulatory Qur’anic revelation: “This day have I perfected your religion for you, filled the measure of my blessings upon you, and I am pleased with your submitting to His Will alone (Islam) as your religion.”

Having performed this ceremony and received the above revelation, the Holy Prophet (S) came down from the pulpit, prostrated before Allah in prayers and ordered a tent to be put up. In this tent, Imam Ali (as) was took his seat and people were ordered to pay homage to him and to address him as Amir al-Mu’minin (as) (Commander of the Faithful). The first person to congratulate and to swear the oath of allegiance was ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab who said, “I congratulate you, O Ali! Today, you have become my mawla (Master) and Master of every Muslim man and woman.”

For more details, refer to the following references:

1) The Musnad of Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal (Vol. 5, p. 281)

2) Imam al-Ghazali in Siyar al-lamin

In addition to these two references, allama al-Amini wrote 11 volumes on this incident, choosing Al-Ghadir as the title of his encyclopedia.

The remarks of Imam al-Ghazali about this event and the inferences which he has drawn are instructive readings. If I have room in this book at my disposal, I shall add them as a separate index; otherwise, Siyar al-lamin may suffice as a reference.

Here is a list of some of the famous 153 authors and books which contain details of the above historical event:

- 1) Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri (125 A.H.)
- 2) Muhammad ibn Ishaq (152 A.H.)
- 3) Ibn Rahooya (238 A.H.)
- 4) Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Musnad, Vol. 5, p. 281 (243 A.H.)
- 5) Jarir al-Tabari (310 A.H.)
- 6) Al-Tirmidhi (320 A.H.)
- 7) Imam Hakim (Mustadrak) (400 A.H.)
- 8) Imam al-Ghazali (Siyar al-lamin) (505 A.H.)
- 9) Sibte ibn al-Jawzi (654 A.H.)
- 10) Ibn Subbaq al-Malekee (855 A.H.)
- 11) Sayyuti (1011 A.H.)
- 12) Shaikh Abdul-Haqq muhaddith Dahlawi (1052 A.H.)
- 13) Shah Waliyullah muhaddith Dahlawi (1176 A.H.)
- 14) Allama Muhammad Mu'in (1280 A.H.)

## **A Brief Narrative Of Imam Ali's Life From The Hijra To The Death Of The Holy Prophet (S)**

### **1 A.H. To 40 A.H.**

When the Holy Prophet (S) left his house at Mecca in the night and Ali (as) was found in his bed, the tribesmen of Quraish at first thought of killing him, but when they found him ready to defend himself they gave up idea and dispersed in search of the Holy Prophet (S).

Ali (as), as per orders of the Holy Prophet (S), stayed three days at Mecca and handed back to their owners all the articles which were entrusted to the Holy Prophet (S) for custody. Most of their owners were his enemies. He left the city in broad daylight.

He was entrusted by the Holy Prophet (S) for the safe transport of the Holy Prophet's daughter, Fatima

(as), the daughter of Hamzah, another Fatima, his own mother, a third Fatima and his aunt, the daughter of Abdul-Muttalib, a fourth Fatima (as). The tribesmen of Quraish wanted to prevent the departure of these four ladies. Eight prominent people came out to fight. Ali (as) fought single handed with them.

He killed Junah with a stroke of his sword and scattered the rest and continued the journey. On account of scarcity of mounts he had to travel on foot and thus he reached Medina with bleeding feet. Awaiting the arrival of Imam Ali (as) the Holy

Prophet (S) was staying at Quba', two miles away from Medina, when he reached Quba', on the 12th of Rabi' al-Awwal (probably the end of June) the Holy Prophet (S) embraced him, dressed his bleeding feet and entered Medina along with him.

Before his migration to Medina, the Holy Prophet (S) had created a bond of brotherhood between the immigrant Muslims and their Medina supporters. He had fraternized Abu Bakr to the Imam (as) Umar, Othman to Abdul-Rahman ibn Awf, the Imam (as) Hamza to Zaid ibn Haresa and Talhah to al-Zubair. On that occasion he had fraternized Imam Ali (as) to himself, saying, "O Ali! You are my Brother in this world as well as in the next (Tarikh al-Khamis Vol. I p. 398).

## 1 A.H

During the five months following his arrival at Medina, as indicated above, the Prophet (k) created a fraternity between the Muhajirun (the immigrants) with the Ansars (the supporting citizens of Medina). On that occasion, he again called Ali (as) and said, "O Ali (as) you are my brother in this world and hereafter. The historian ibn Hisham says, "The Holy Prophet (S) caught the hand of Imam Ali (as) and said, "he alone is my brother. Thus the Messenger of Allah, who was actually the leader of all the prophets as well as of all the pious men of the world and who had no parallel among human beings by fraternizing with Imam Ali (as), showed that Ali (as) also had no parallel among mankind except the Holy Prophet (S). (Seerath al ibn Hisham Vol. 2, Abul-Fida' Vol. I p. 127, Mustadrak of Imam Hakim Vol. 21 and Fath al-Bari, commentary of Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 7, p. 211).

## 2 A.H.

During the 2nd year of Hijra Imam Ali's marriage took place with the Holy Prophet's daughter Fatima (as). The Holy Prophet (S) was receiving many offers for his daughter from very rich people of Medina, from some of the Muhajirun and from chiefs of mighty clans of Arabia. He had refused even to consider these offers and sometime felt annoyed at them. At the end he closed the door by saying that he was awaiting the orders of Allah. The book Usd al-Ghaba fi Tamyeez al-Sahaba, gives a detailed account of these offers and the way of refusal by the Holy Prophet (S). Some of the Ansars suggested to Imam Ali (as) to place a proposal for himself before the Holy Prophet (S).

Imam Ali (as) went before him feeling shy and modest. This was the first time in his life that he talked reservedly to a man who was like a father unto him and to whom he was like a dear son. When the Holy

Prophet (S) heard the proposal he was so pleased that he smiled and said (it is a welcome and happy proposal) Tarikh al-Khamis, Vol. I p. 407, Ibn Sa'd, Vol. 8, pp. 11, 12 and Usd al-Ghaba).

The Holy Prophet (S) took the consent of Fatima (as) for this proposal. The marriage ceremony was very simple and without pomp and ostentation. There was a sermon from the Holy Prophet (S) in which he praised Allah mentioning some of His attributes and citing verses of the Holy Qur'an and concluding with the remarks that he was ordered by Allah to give Fatima (as) into marriage with Imam Ali (as).

This was followed by a khutba from Imam Ali (as), praising Allah and the Holy Prophet (S) and desiring the gathering to witness his marriage with Fatima (as), the daughter of Holy Prophet (S). After this happy ceremony somebody reminded the Holy Prophet (S) of his late companion in life the mother of Fatima (as), Khadija and he said, "Khadija! Where is Khadija?! Who can be like Khadija?! She testified for me when the world was falsely accusing me as a liar. She relieved me of much of my weight, she was my partner in my work and she helped me when others were creating obstruction in my mission."

After reaching Medina, the Holy Prophet (S) stayed in the house of Kulthum ibn Hadam for seven months and Imam Ali (as) was staying with him. When the Holy Prophet (S) finished the construction of mosque he built houses for his wives around it and in the center of them he built a house for Imam Ali (as) (Bukhari's Sira, Ch. 14 p. 387).

Following his example, many of his companions except Abu Bakr built their houses around the mosque. Abu Bakr was staying in the locality of Banu Abd Awf where the marriages of both of his daughters took place and later on he shifted to Sukh (Bukhari, Vol. 1). The doors of all the houses built around the mosque opened into the mosque. One day, the Holy Prophet (S) ordered that except the doors of his houses and that of Ali (as) all the other doors should be closed. Some of the companions requested him to allow them to keep a small window open. He replied, "No, not a pin hole, Allah so willed it" (refer to: Imam Ahmed's Musnad, the Mustadrak of Imam Hakim, the Khasa'is of al-Nisa'i).

In the year 2 A.H. the Battle of Badr took place.

### 3 A.H.

In the year 3 A.H. the first child to Imam Ali (as) and Fatima (as) was born and he was named Hassan (as) by the Holy Prophet (S).

In the same year (3 A.H.), the Battle of Uhud took place (Refer to Section 15, p. 22) which was followed by the dispatch of an expeditionary force to Hamra'ul-Asad under Imam Ali (as).

### 4 A.H

In the year 4 A.H. Imam Ali (as) and Fatima (as) had the second child Hussain (Imam Hussain [as]) who was also named by the Holy Prophet (S). In the same year a battle took place with Banu Nazir and

Imam Ali (as) brought it to a successful end and Banu Nazir were forced to vacate their fortress.

## **5 A.H.**

In the year 5 A.H. three battles took place, the Battle with Banu Mostaliq, the Battle of Khandaq (moat) and the Battle with Banu Anzah. In all of them, Ali (as) was the Commander of the army. The most important of them was the Battle of Khundaq (which I have narrated in Section 15 p. 23).

## **6 A.H.**

In the year 6 A.H. an expedition to Fadak was sent under the command of Imam Ali (as) and without a battle or skirmish he brought the whole province under control of the Holy Prophet (S).

In Dhul-Qi'da of this year, the Holy Prophet (S), along with fourteen hundred Muslims left for Mecca with the intention of hajj (pilgrimage). He had no desire to fight anybody and had left all the armaments at Medina. When the tribesmen of Quraish came to know about this intending pilgrimage they refused to allow the Holy Prophet (S) to enter Mecca. Khalid ibn al-Walid came out with a force of two hundred well-equipped cavalry men to obstruct the Holy Prophet (S) and if necessary to fight over the issue. At an oasis called Hudaibiya the opponents faced each other. A chieftain named 'Urwa from Quraish came out to discuss the situation with the Holy Prophet (S) and instead of a battle, a treaty was arranged and it was written by Imam Ali (as). The last clause of the treaty was that the present intention of the pilgrimage would be given up until the following year although the Holy Prophet (S) and Muslims could come for Umra.

## **7 A.H.**

In the year 7 A.H. two battles took place, the Khayber and the Wadi al-Qura. The more important of them was Khayber which I have accounted in section 15 p. 25.

In the same year the Holy Prophet (S) along with Muslims went to perform the umra, it was very peaceful mission. The Holy Prophet (S) and many of the Muslims had their wives and children with them. The umra was performed without incident.

## **8 A.H.**

In Islamic History, the year 8 A.H. held some important events in its unfolding.

The first of them was the Liberation of Mecca. The terms of the treaty of Hudaibiya were dishonored by the tribesmen of Quraish. Within two years of the treaty, they killed twenty persons from Banu Khuza'a's clan without any justifiable reason. Representatives of the clan came to the Holy Prophet (S), asking for his promised support. He was annoyed at this flagrant dishonoring of the treaty and said, "I am not helped if I do not help them".

The arrangement for the invasion of Mecca was being carried on by the Muslims. In the meanwhile, Hatib, a companion of the Holy Prophet (S) who was with him in the battle of Badr, wrote a letter to his family, informing them of the intention of Muslims. This espionage, under the orders of the Holy Prophet (S) was detected by Imam Ali (as) and he brought this letter to the Holy Prophet (S). It was being sent through an Abyssinian slave girl. Hatib confessed his crime and was mercifully pardoned by the Holy Prophet (S) (Bukhari).

When all the arrangements were ready, the army of invasion, numbering ten thousand, marched towards Mecca. The command of the army this time was given to Sa'd ibn Abadah al-Ansari, with orders to enter Mecca as the advancing party. Sa'd entering Mecca, saying, "Today is going to be a big day, a day of retaliation, a day when Mecca will be looted." Hearing this, Abbas, uncle of the Holy Prophet (S), came to the

Holy Prophet (S) and said, "O Messenger of Allah! Sa'd has very serious intentions against Quraish. He may carry on a massacre." The Holy Prophet (S) called Imam Ali (as) and said, "O Ali (as)! Go and take the command from Sa'd and do what is needed. He will not be unhappy in handing over the command to you and to you in particular." Imam Ali (as) took over the command of the expedition and entered the city, declared perfect amity and peace and waited for the Holy Prophet (S). When the Holy Prophet (S) entered Mecca, he went straight to the Ka'ba and started removing the idols placed there. Some of them were placed on a very high platform where his hands would not reach, he asked Ali (as) to mount on his back and remove the idols. Ali (as) obeyed the order, mounted on his back and was removing the idols when the Holy Prophet (S) asked "O Ali (as)! how do you find yourself? Imam Ali (as) replied,

"O Messenger of Allah! I find myself on such an eminent place that I feel as if my head is resting on the Empyrean of Allah the Almighty. Thereupon, the Holy Prophet (S) replied "O Ali (as), how fortunate you are, doing the work of Allah and how fortunate I am that I am bearing your burden (Imam Ahmed's Musnad, Vol. I p. 151).

At the occasion, a poet presented a praise in praise of Imam Ali (as).

I am asked to praise Ali (as) in verses,  
Because recital of his praises will  
Release a man from Hell.  
I replied to them, how can I praise  
A man whose attributes are so sublime  
That men got confused over these attributes  
And started apotheosizing him.  
He has placed his foot at such an eminent  
Place, that according to the Holy Prophet (S),  
It is the place on which, on the night of Mi'raj,  
Allah has placed His hand of Grace and Mercy.

Hearing this praise, the Holy Prophet (S) rewarded the poet handsomely.

The second important event was the massacre of Banu Jazimah at the hands of Khalid ibn al-Walid and reparations carried by Imam Ali (as) under orders of the Holy Prophet (S) (Refer to section 15 p. 28).

During the month of Shawwal of that year, the Muslims faced certain powerful tribes of Arabs on the battlefield of Hunain. Ali (as) again secured a victory for them (Refer to section 15 p. 28). Hunain was followed by an expedition to Thaeef under the command of Imam Ali (as).

Those who had run away from Hunain had gathered there and wanted to measure their strength once again. The commander of their army who was the chiefs of Banu Zaigham clan was killed by Imam Ali (as), which broke the back of resistance and various parties of hostile clans started dispersing. Seeing the Holy Prophet (S) raised the siege and brought the expedition to an end.

In the same year Imam Ali (as) was sent to Yemen on a missionary service. He carried on this work so successfully and his speeches there proved so effective that the tribe of Banu Hamdan embraced Islam as one entity (refer to Section 15, p. 29 of the same reference).

## 9 A.H.

The 9th year of the Hijra relates four important incidents of Imam Ali's life.

The first was the expedition to Thatul-Salasil. Ali (as) brought it to a successful end, defeated the clans gathered there to invade Medina and brought the happy news to the Holy Prophet (S). The Messenger of Allah came out of Medina to welcome the warrior. Ali (as) was riding a horse at the head of his army, saw the Holy Prophet (S) walking towards him and jumped from his horse. The Prophet (S) told him, "Keep on riding, do not dismount, Allah and His Prophet (S) are really pleased with your services." The Prophet (S) made him remount his horse and he walked along with the horse (refer to Hamra'ul-Ashira and Ma'arijul-Nubuwwa).

The second event was the Holy Prophet's expedition in person to Tabuk, which I have narrated in Section 16, p. 30.

The third important event in the life of Ali (as) and in the history of Islam was the reading of the Chapter (Sura) Bara'at before the infidels of Mecca. This Sura declares that Allah and his Messenger in the future will have nothing to do with the infidels and polytheists. All the treaties which existed till then were now annulled and cancelled. No polytheist or infidel would, in the future, be allowed to enter the city of Mecca or the precincts of Kaba.

Imam Hakim in his Mustadrak, Vol. 3, p. 32, Al-Riadul-Nadira, Vol. 2, p. 203, the Musnad of Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Vol. I p. 331, Al-Isaba fi Ma'rifatil-Sahaba, Vol. IV, p. 270 and Izalatul-Khafa', Section 2, p. 261 say that the Holy Prophet (S) first ordered Abu Bakr to convey this Sura to Mecca and

to read it at the Kaba. But immediately after him he sent Imam Ali (as) to replace Abu Bakr on the mission. When Abu Bakr complained about this change, the Messenger of Allah replied, "I have done it under orders of Allah which came explicitly that either I should perform this duty or somebody who is like me."

The fourth event took place in Najran, a city in the province of Yemen. It was center of the Christian Missionary activities in Southern Arabia. The Holy Prophet (S) had written to the Chief priest of the city to realize the blessings of Islam. In reply he wrote that he would like to personally discuss the teachings of this new religion.

His name was Harith. He was invited and came with a retinue of fourteen priests. The priests stayed at Medina as guests of the Holy Prophet (S). Long discussions about monotheism versus trinity took place and it was realized that these priests were not open minded. On the contrary, they were prejudiced against Islam.

The Almighty ordered the Holy Prophet (S) to explain to them that Verily Jesus is as Adam in the sight of Allah. He created him out of dust. He then said unto him, "Be!" and he was. This is the truth from Your Master; be not, therefore, one of those who doubt, and whoever shall dispute with you after the knowledge which hath been given you, say unto them, come let us call together our sons and your sons, our women and your women and ourselves and yourselves. Then let us make imprecations and lay the curse of Allah upon those who lie. (Surat Ali Imran, Chap. III).

According to Aamir ibn Sa'd and Ummul-Mu'minin Aisha, when the above verses were revealed to the Messenger of Allah he called Ali (as), Fatima (as), Hassan and Hussain (as) and said, "Master! This is my family and progeny (Ahl al-Bayt)." (Bukhari's Sira, Parts VII p. 77, Saree Muslim, Vol. 2 p. 278, al-Tirmidhi, P. 421, Misquath Vol. 8, p. 129)

Imam Fakhruddin al-Razi (in Al-Tafsir al-Kabir, Vol. 2, p. 701, printed in Egypt) says that when the above verses were revealed the Prophet of Allah (k) covered himself with a black coverlet, took in it Ali (as), Fatima (as), Hassan and Hussain (as) and said, "Master! This is my progeny, my household and my family (Ahl al-Bayt)." There upon, the Messenger of the master received the following revelation: "

***Verily! Allah desires to remove from you every abomination, you the Household of the Prophet, and to purify you with a perfect purification***(33: 33). (Tafsir Khshshaf, Vol. I, p. 308 agrees with Imam Fakhruddin al-Razi).

Hearing the glad news of the Divine Purification, Sanctification and Consecration, the Holy Prophet (S) decided to take only these four persons along with him for the ceremony of trial by imprecations as ordered by Allah. That is, Ali (as) representing the selves as mentioned in the above verses, Fatima (as) representing women, Hassan and Hussain (as) representing sons.

The Christian priests were then informed of these orders of Allah and said, "They agreed next morning

to abide by the trial as a quick way of deciding which of them were in the wrong. Muhammad (S) met them accordingly accompanied by his daughter Fatima (as), his son-in-law Ali (as) and his two grandsons Hassan and Hussain (as) and desired them (the Christian priests) to wait till he had said his prayers. But when they saw him kneel down their resolution failed them and they dared not venture to urse him and his party, but agreed to sign a treaty and pay tribute to him” (Rev. George Sale).

Ahl al-Bayt (as), people of the Household (of Muhammad [h]), is the designation usually given to Fatima (as), Ali (as) and their children and descendants. This is the name by which ibn Khaldun invariably designates them and followers and disciples, Shi’as or adherents of the “People of the House.” Sanai (the famous Sufi poet whom Rumi praises) represents the general feeling with which the descendants of Muhammad (S) were regarded in the following verses of poetry:

Excluding the book of Allah and his family (Descendants),  
Nothing has been left by Ahmed the Prophet (S),  
Memorial such as these can never be obtained  
Till the day of Judgment.

See The Spirit of Islam, p. 313; note, Kanzul-Ummal Vol. VI, p. 159, Tafsir al-Kushshaf, Vol. 1, p. 308, al-Hamadani in Mawaddat al-Qurba and Allama Ibn Hajar al-Makki in Al-Sawa’iq al-Muhriqa, while discussing this event and the verses referred above, have given their opinion that the Holy Prophet (S), by translating the word “selves” as himself and Ali (as), the word “women” as Fatima (as) and the word “sons” as Hassan and Hussain (as) have shown to the Muslim the estimation in which these four persons are held by Allah and by himself. They and they alone are his Ahl al-Bayt (as) who deserve the Divine purification, sanctification and consecration.

## 10 A.H.

During this year, Ali (as) was sent once again on a propagation mission to Yemen then on an expedition against Amr ibn M’adi Karb. He performed both the duties successfully. Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal in his Musnad, Vol. V, p. 356, Imam Nisa’i in Khasa’is and Allama ibn Hajr al-Makki in Al-Sawa’iq al-Muhriqa, p. 2, say that from the later expedition Khalid ibn al-Walid sent a letter containing complaints of Imam Ali (as) to the Holy Prophet (S).

This letter was carried by Buraydah, a companion of the Holy Prophet (S). On receipt of this letter, the Messenger of Allah was annoyed and got angry and said, “You are fabricating lies and fictitious complaints against Ali (as); he is from me and I am from him; he is your master (wali) after me. Whoever annoys him actually annoys me, and whoever forsakes him forsakes me. He is made of the same mold that I am made of, and I am made of the same mold that Abraham is made of, and my status with Allah is superior to that of Abraham.”

The end of the 10th A.H. saw the Holy Prophet (S) perform the Farewell Pilgrimage. Returning from

there, for the last time he designated Imam Ali (as) as his Vicegerent.

## 11 A.H.

The year 11 A.H. was the saddest year of Imam Ali's life. He lost two of his best friends. One of whom he loved and venerated like a father, like a master and like the dearest friend, the Holy Prophet (S) who died during the early months of the year. His death was followed by the death of Imam Ali's dearest companion, his wife, Fatima (as), the lady of the Light.

The last year of Holy Prophet's life was spent at Medina. An envoy of his was killed by the Syrians and he had ordered an expedition against the Byzantines under Usamah ibn Zaid and he had ordered all his companions except Imam Ali (as) join this expedition and had ordered the troops to be encamped outside the city (al-Tabari's Tarikh, Tarikh al-Kamil ibn Athir. Tabaqat al-ibn Sa'd and Al-Sira al-Halabiyya, Madarij al-Nubuwwah, Vol. 2, p. 766). Although he was ill, and in spite of his weakness, he came out, arranged the flag (the Insignia of the command) with his own hands and handed it over to Usamah.

He felt that people were not willing to join this expedition because of the young age of Usamah. He got annoyed and said, "May the curse of Allah be on those who forsake the army of Usamah." (Al-Milal wal-Nihal of allama Shahristani and Sharh al-Mawahib al-Laduniyya).

The cause of this illness was the poison which had been given to him and which had slowly penetrated into his system and had now begun to show its effect. It became evident that he had not long to live. The news of his approaching end led to the stopp. of the expedition (The Spirit of Islam).

At the last stage of illness the Holy Prophet (S) was staying at the house of Ummul Mu'minin Aisha. From there he came out for the last time to lead the prayers. He was so weak that he was actually carried there by the sons of Abbas ibn Abdul-Muttalib. He, himself, led the prayers (Fath al-Bari, Sharah Sirat al-Bukhari, Ch. 3, p. 372).

This exertion proved too much for the messenger of the master and when he returned home from the mosque he fainted. His condition was very serious at that time and the fainting fit was of long duration. His children and members of family and his companions started weeping and lamenting. He came out of the swoon and looked at those tear sprinkled faces around him and said, "Bring a pen, some ink and paper so that I may write a will for you that will keep you on the straight path."

Some of his companions wanted to offer him the pen and paper while 'Umar was of the opinion that he was talking insanely on account of the intensity of his illness. He argued that they had the Holy Qur'an with them which would suffice them. This discussion took a serious turn and people started arguing in loud voices. The Messenger of Allah got annoyed at this and asked them to go away and to leave him alone. (Sahih al-Bukhari, Ch. 12, p. 126, Ch. 8, p. 100, Ch. 23, p. 384, Minhaj al-Sunna of allama Ibn Taymiyyah, Sharh Sahih Muslim of Allama Noodi, gives a detailed account of this event).

This was Sunday the 27th Safar. After the above incident the Messenger of Allah called Ali (as) and said, "Ali! You will be first to meet me on the fountain of Kawthar. After me, when hardship and reverses face you, do not lose patience, and when you find people running after worldly gains, then you should busy yourself in the way of disseminating the truth and serving Allah. (Rawzat al-Ahbab, Vol. I, p. 559, Madarij al-Nubuwwah, Vol. 2, p. 551). On the next day, Monday the 28th of Safar, the Messenger of Allah passed away to the realm of His Grace, Blessings and Majesty.

### **The Last Moment and Burial Rites of the Holy Prophet (S)**

Allama Muhammad ibn Sa'd, in his famous book Tabaqat (Vol. 2, Section 2, pp. 51, 61) relates that during the caliphate of 'Umar, the famous Jew Ka'b al-Ahbar (who later embraced Islam), asked once the caliph: "Sir, please tell me what the last words of the Holy Prophet were." The Caliph told him to ask Imam Ali (as) about it. Ka'b went to Ali (as) and asked him the same question. The Imam (as) replied, "During the last moments of the Holy Prophet (S) his head was resting on my shoulder and his words were: Salat! Salat! (Uphold prayers, prayers!)." Ka'b declared, "Verily, the last moments of all prophets have always been thus; they are ordained for it, and they carry the message even with their last breath."

Then Ka'b went to 'Umar and asked him: "Who performed the ghusul for the body of the Prophet after his death?" The caliph told him to ask Imam Ali (as) about that, too. He again went to Imam Ali (as) and repeated the question. Imam Ali (as) replied, "The Messenger of Allah had willed that none but I should perform those ablutions because if any other person looked at his naked body he would get blind. A curtain was hung and from the other side of the curtain Fazl ibn Abbas and Usamah, blind-folded, were handing water to me and I was performing the ghusul."

These facts, that Imam Ali (as) was the only person to be with the Holy Prophet (S) at his last moments and to have performed the last rights, are also acknowledged by the authors of these books: Tadhkirat Khawass al-A'imma, Ch. II, p. 16, Kanzul Ummal, Vol. 4, p. 55, Mustadrak of Imam Hakim, Vol. 3, p. 139, Riad al-Nadira, printed in Egypt, p. 80 and Mu'jam al-Kabir of al-Tabrani.

After the last ablutions and after shrouding the sacred body of the Messenger of Allah as per his will, first Imam Ali (as) performed the Adeath prayers' alone. Then the parties of the Muslims came and offered the death prayers without any leader (Imam). Allama ibn Abdul Birr in Al-Isti'ab says that after Imam Ali (as) offered his A Death prayers' alone then Banu Hashim offered the prayers, then the Muhajirun then the Ansar.

### **Burial of the Holy Prophet (S)**

After the death, prayers were performed. Imam Ali (as), Abbas, Fazl ibn Abbas and Usamah ibn Zaid got busy with the arrangements of the burial of the Messenger of Allah. At the request of the Ansar, Aws ibn Kholee al-Ansari, who was also a Badri (a participant in the Badr campaign), was allowed to join them. Usamah dug the grave in the house of Ummul Mu'minin (mother of the faithful) Aisha. Aws got into the

grave and Imam Ali (as) lifted the sacred body in his hands and lowered it into the grave. He stayed in the grave for some time weeping bitterly. Usamah says, "I have never seen Ali (as) weeping like that before or after this occasion."

Then Ali (as) came out of the grave and, lifting his hands, said, "Lord! He was Your first creation; his death is not a sign of mortality; he lifted the gloom prevailing before the creation started; he was a proof of Your Glory and Benevolence. He had come to us from the realm of Your Love and Glory and was our guide towards that Realm. His soul was the Emblem of Your Supreme Might, his body was the masterpiece of Your Creation and his mind was Your Treasure house." Then he covered the grave (Irshad of Shaikh al-Mufid).

When Ali (as) and Banu Hashim were busy with the last rites of the burial of the Messenger of Allah, some Muhajirun and Ansar gathered at the saqifa of Banu Sa'ida and decided [with the persuasion of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab] that Abu Bakr should be the first caliph [forgetting, or pretending to have forgotten, their oath of allegiance to Ali (as) as the successor of the Prophet (k)].

Imam Ali (as) was asked to accede to this decision. He refused. Abu Sufyan came to Medina and went to Abbas (uncle of the Holy Prophet (S) and said to him, "People have taken away the caliphate from Banu Hashim. You are the uncle of the Messenger of Allah and the oldest among the tribesmen of Quraish. You have been kind to them also. They will accept your leadership. Let you and I swear the oath of allegiance to Ali (as). If anybody opposes us, we shall kill him."

They both went to Ali (as). Abu Sufyan said to him, "Ali! If you like, I shall overflow Medina with infantry and cavalry; do accept our proposal. Stretch your hand and let us swear the oath of allegiance to you." Hearing this, Ali (as) replied, "Abu Sufyan! I swear by Allah Almighty that you, through this proposal, want to create serious dissension among the Muslims. You have always tried to harm Islam. I do not need your sympathy or your help."

A detailed account of this event may be found in

1. Tabari, Vol. 21, pp. 202, 303
2. Tarikh al-Khulafa, p. 45
3. Kanzul-'Umml Vol. 21, p. 140.

Imam Ali (as) realized that any serious dissension at this stage would harm the cause of Islam considerably. He had before him the example of the Holy Prophet (S) and treaty of Hdaybiya and had been foretold by the Holy Prophet (S) of all that would happen. Allama Ali ibn Muhammad (630 A.H.) in Usd al-Ghaba fi Thamyiz al-Sahaba (Vol. IV, p. 31) says, "The Holy Prophet (S) had said to Imam Ali (as), 'Your status is like that of the Ka'ba. People (Muslims) approach the Ka'ba, but this holy house never approaches anybody. Therefore, after my death, if people come to you and swear the oath of allegiance to you, accept it, and if they do not come to you, then you should not go to them.'"

Allama Shaikh Abdul Haqq, the traditionist al-Dehlawi, in *Madarij al-Nubuwwa* (Vol. 2, p. 511) says that the Holy Prophet (S) had advised Imam Ali (as) saying, “After me, you will have to face the extremes of suffering. Do not get disheartened and do not lose patience, and when you find people craving for and trying their utmost to secure worldly power and wealth you mold your life for the hereafter.”

Imam Ali (as) loved Islam as intensely as the Holy Prophet (S) had loved it. He could not, therefore, for the sake of worldly kingdom endanger Islam. He knew that a civil war at that stage would give chances to the Jewish clans of Banu Nazir and Banu Quraiza on one side and the Christian tribes of Najran and Syria by the Byzantine armies on the other. The munafiqun (hypocrites) and fresh converts on the third would simply take advantage of the situation.

When they found the Muslims busy killing each other, they would literally cut them into pieces and Islam would totally disappear as a message of peace. He wanted the Arabs to remain in the fold of Islam even with the desires of making their worldly status good and wanted the enemies of Islam to realize that Islam was powerful enough to defend itself even after the sad demise of the Messenger of the master. Therefore, he was willing to accept every wrong for the Islam and to retire to the seclusion of his house. The advice he gave to his uncle Abbas is to be found in *Nahjul-Balagha* wherein he told him not to join the turmoil.

According to the famous Arab philosopher, mathematician and physician Avicenna (Abu Ali Ibn Sina), Imam Ali (as) and the Holy Qur’an were the two miracles of Muhammad (S), the Messenger of Allah. The life of Imam Ali (as) at every stage was a mirror like the reflection of the life of the Holy Prophet (S).

The days of Badr, Uhud, Khayber and Hunain were not long passed and their hero still had the same courage, valor, bravery and strength with him. He could have jumped at the proposal of Abu Sufyan, but had he done so he would not have been Ali ibn Abu Talib, the man who loved Allah and His Messenger and was loved by Allah and His Messenger (*Ma’arij al-Nubuwwa*).

### [Death of Fatima \(as\)](#)

Unfortunately, his feelings were not reciprocated. The following books provide an account of very serious events which happened at Imam Ali’s refusal to accede to the decision at the saqifa:

1. Tabari, Vol. 3, p. 198.
2. *Al-Iqd al-Farid* of Ibn Abd Rabbih, Vol. 2, p. 179, printed in Egypt.
3. *History of Abul-Fida’* Vol. 1, p. 156 printed in Egypt.
4. *Kitab Imama wal Siyasa* of Allama Ibn Qutaybah, Vol. I, p. 20, printed in Egypt (this book gives a very detailed account)
5. *Muruj al-Dhahab* by al-Mas’udi, p. 159

6. Al-Milal wal-Nihal of al-Shahristani, Vol. I, p. 25 printed in Bombay, India

7. Al-Faruq of al-Shibli al-Nu'mani, printed in India

8. Ibn Abul-Hadid in his Commentary on Nahjul-Balagha.

What one could gather, from various accounts which these books have given, is a sad and pathetic episode. It appears that though Imam Ali (as) decided to retire to the seclusion of his house and not to take any part in power politics, his house was burned down on his family and him. And either the burning door or a hard hit from the hilt of a sword or a heavy push or all together broke the ribs and hand of Fatima (as) (daughter of the Holy Prophet (S)).

This caused her such a serious injury that the baby she was carrying was a still- birth. Allama Shahristani, in Al-Milal wal-Nihal (Vol. I, p. 25), says that there was nobody in the house but Ali (as), Fatima (as) and their children (who were between the ages of 4 to 8). Apparently, the assault was sudden and unexpected; nobody was ready for it. The resulting confusion could be better imagined than narrated.

The lady of the house was seriously hurt and had fainted, the house was full of smoke, the children were frightened. As Ali (as) was attending to his wounded wife and suffocating children he was overpowered and dragged from the house. Later Fatima (as) was refused her heritage. The physical injury and themental shock laid her low and after a short illness she passed away on the 14th of Jamadul-Awwal, 11 A.H. She was buried in the dead of the night.

Besides Banu Hashim only the following companions of the Holy Prophet (S) attended her funeral: Salman, Abu Dharr, Ammar and Miqdad. Before the death she had expressed her sufferings in a poem, a verse of which has come down in the Arabic language as a proverb. She says, "So many calamities have descended upon me that if they had descended upon bright days, they would have been turned into dark nights."

The account of the last day of her life clearly shows what kind of a lady was this daughter of the Holy Prophet (S). She told the household that she was feeling better, the pain in her ribs and in her hand was not so severe and that her fever had come down. Then she started bathing the children. Immediately Ali (as) and Fizza came to her assistance. She got the children bathed, dressed and fed, then sent them away to her cousin.

Then she called Imam Ali (as) to her side and said, "Ali (as), my dear husband! You know very well why I did all that. Please excuse my fussiness; they have suffered so much with me and during my illness that I want to see them happy on the last day of my life. Yes, Ali (as), you know also that this is the last day of my life. I am happy and also sad. Happy I am that my troubles will shortly be over and I shall meet my father, and I am sad because I shall part with you. Please, Ali (as), make a note of what I say and do as I wish you to do. After me, you may marry anybody you like, but you must marry my cousin

Yamama; she loves my children and Hussain is very much attached to her. Let Fizza remain with you even after her marriage, if she so desires; she was more than a mere servant to me. I loved her like my daughter. Ali, bury me in the night and do not let those who have been so cruel to me attend my burial. Let not my death dishearten you. You have to serve Islam and humanity for a long time to come. Let not my sufferings embitter your life, promise me Ali.” Imam Ali (as) said, “Yes, Fatima, I promise.” “Ali,” she continued,

“I know how you love my children, but be very careful about Hussain (as). He loves me dearly and will miss me sadly, be a mother to him as well. Till my recent illness, he used to sleep on my chest; he is already missing it.”

Ali (as) was by then caressing the broken hand, his hot and large tears dropped on her hand. She looked up and said, “Do not weep, Ali. I know that despite an outwardly tough appearance, the heart you possess is quite tender. You have already borne too much and will have to bear more. Farewell, my Imam, farewell my dear husband; farewell Ali. Bid Fatima farewell.” Hearing his farewell, she said, “May the merciful Master help you bear these sorrows and sufferings patiently. Now let me be alone with my God.” Saying this, she turned towards her prayer mat and prostrated before Allah.

After a short while, Imam Ali (as) entered the room. He found her still in prostration but her soul had already departed to join her Holy father in the realm of His Grace, Mercy and Might. She died very young as Imam Ali (as) says, “... a flower nipped in the bud; she was a flower from Paradise, and she went back to Paradise, leaving the fragrance of Paradise behind her in my mind.”

### **From 12 A.H. To 24 A.H.**

From that time onward till 35 A.H. Imam Ali (as) led a reclusive life. In the beginning, he spent his days compiling the Holy Qur’an in the chronological order of chapters and verses as they were revealed to the Holy Prophet (S). He presented this to the Muslims, but when its acceptance was refused, he advised his companions to accept the Holy Book as compiled officially, saying that his compilation would not be seen by anybody, so that there might not come into existence more than one version of the Holy Qur’an and might not create doubts about the authenticity of this sacred Book.

When Abu Sufyan found that Imam Ali (as) was not paying attention to him, he tried to get in the good books of the government and his eldest son Yazid was appointed as the governor of Syria and on Yazid’s death, his brother Mu’awiyah was appointed on the same post.

During the caliphate of Abu Bakr and more often during the time of Umar, whenever Ali’s advice was asked for, he, like a true Muslim, offered his sincere advice.

Although the people of Banu Hashim were never given any place of honor within the government, Ali (as) did not mind this indifference and whenever a serious problem arose and his counsel was sought, he cooperated whole-heartedly.

The Spirit of Islam says, “From the commencement of the Islamic preaching, Imam Ali (as) had extended the utmost consideration and friendship to the conquered. After the battle of Qadisiyya, Ali (as) used to devote his share of prize money to freeing of captives and repeatedly with his counsel and persuasive interference, he persuaded Umar to lighten the burden of subjects and captives.”

Imam Hakim, in his Mustadrak, and Ibn al-Athir in his history say that until the year 17 A.H. there was no calendar fixed by the Muslims. Sometimes, Amul-Feel (year of the Abyssinian invasion of Mecca) was considered as the beginning of an era. At other times, the battle of Fijjar (a pre-Islamic encounter between Arab clans) was chosen. Still, others considered a time when repairs on the Ka’ba were done as the year to mark the era. When this confusion was brought to the attention of Umar, he asked the advice of Imam Ali (as) who told him to begin the Muslim era from the year of the Hijra (migration of the Holy Prophet [h]) from Mecca to Medina.

On another occasion, the people went to Umar saying that a lot of jewels and valuable articles and attachments in the Ka’ba could be converted into currency and be used for arming the armies, proving to be a very useful asset. When Imam Ali’s advice was sought he said, “These articles were there during the times of the Holy Prophet (S) but he did not touch them. Although Muslims were poorer then than now, and although they were more in need of arms and mounts then, but the Holy Prophet (S) still did not make use of those ornaments for such purposes. It shows that the Messenger of Allah did not care much about such things. You also do not do it. Hearing this, ‘Umar said, “O Ali! Had you not been here, we would have suffered a disgrace” according to Rai’ul-Abrar of Allama Zamakhshari.

On the occasion of the invasion of Rome, when Umar sought his counsel as to the advisability of heading the army as the Commander-in-Chief, he advised him to be at the helm and to send some experienced general as a commander. This advice is narrated in a sermon in Nahjul-Balagha. Similarly, at the time of invasion of Iran, he counselled ‘Umar not to leave the capital and to send somebody else.

The books Izalatul Khafa’ (subject II, p. 268 and 269), Al-Riaz al-Nadira Vol. 2, pp. 194 to 197), Musnad Imam Ahmed Vol. 2, p. 231 (Margin), Mustadrak Imam al-Hakim Vol. I, pp. 438 to 460, Al-Isti’ab of Allama Abdul Birr Vol. 2 474) and Ihya’ul-’Ulum of Imam Ghazali, cite several such cases where the Imam’s counsel was asked for and he sincerely gave his advice.

Only one case I want to relate shows in what high esteem Ali (as) held the value of the knowledge acquired, collected and preserved by man in the fields of philosophy, science, history, geography and ethics.

The following authors give a detailed account of the famous library of Iskandariyya (Alexandria) in Egypt:

1. Judge Abul-Qasim Sa’d ibn Ahmed al-Andalusi (462 A.H.) in Tabaqat al-Umam.
2. Haji Khalifa Chulpee in Khashf al-Zunun, Vol. I, Preface, p. 24, printed in Egypt.

3. The famous biographer Ibn Nadim in Al-Fahrist, p. 334, printed in Egypt.
4. The historian Jamal ud-Din, known as Ibn al-Qifti, in Akhbarul- Ulema' wa Akhbar al-Hukama', pp. 232, 233, printed in Egypt and also in Liepzig, Germany.
5. Imam Hafizud-Din Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Shahal, known as Ibnul-Bazzaz al Kurmi (827 A.H.), in Kitab Imam al- A'zam, Vol. I, p. 37, printed in Hyderabad, India.
6. Allama Ahmed ibn Mustafa, known as ATashul-Kubra Zada (962 A.H.) in Miftahul-Sa'ada and Misbahul-Siyada, Vol. 1, p. 241, printed in Hyderabad, India.

They are unanimous in saying that there was a fairly large library at Alexandria, Egypt. It contained between five to seven thousand books on papyri, pal, leaves and parchments, a very large library indeed when compared with the standard of literacy and education of those days.

It contained books on chemistry, astronomy, irrigation, engineering, physics, philosophy and various religions etc.

When Amr ibn al-As conquered Egypt, he inquired as to what was to be done with those books. Orders were issued from the Center that All of these books are according to the Holy Qur'an (i.e. They say the same things which this Holy book has said), then we do not need them, and if they say anything contrary to the Holy Qur'an, then we do not want them. Therefore, in either case, they ought to be burnt according to Akhbarul-'Ulema' wa Akhbar al-Hukama' of Ibn al-Qufti, pp. 232 and 233, printed in Cairo and Leipzig.

The history of Muhammad ibn Abdo edited by Allama Rashid Rida, Editor, Al-Manar, Cairo, Egypt, Vol. 1, p. 535, Tabaqat al-Umam of Judge Sa'id al-Andalusi, as well as Al-Ayat al-Bayyinah of Muhsinul-Mulk, say that when Imam Ali (as) heard the news of this, he tried to persuade them to refrain from issuing such an order.

He said, "Those books are treasures of knowledge and they cannot say anything against the Holy Qur'an. On the contrary, the knowledge contained therein would act as commentaries of this Holy Book and would assist and help in further explanations of the knowledge as presented by the Holy Prophet (S). Knowledge is an asset for human beings and a birthright of a man. It should not be destroyed. Akhbarul-Ulema' further states that his suggestion was not accepted and those books were distributed among one thousand hot water bath houses of Alexandria to be burnt as fire wood.

### [From 11 A.H. To 33 A.H.](#)

Shortly before his death, Abu Bakr nominated Umar as his successor to the caliphate and, 'Umar, upon his death, appointed a board of six members to select his successor; the board considered (1) Abdul Rahman ibn A'waf, (2) Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas (3), Othman ibn Affan (4), Talhah ibn Abdullah (5), al-Zubair

ibn al- Awwam and (6) Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (as). The terms of reference for this council were as follows:

1. If they unanimously selected a person, he would be designated as the caliph.
2. If there was no unanimity, then that person would be caliph for whom Abdul-Rahman ibn 'Awf and his party voted.
3. If any five of them agreed on one man and the sixth disagreed, then the dissenter should immediately be killed.
4. If any four of them agreed on one man then two disagreed, then those two should be killed.
5. If there was a tie, then the casting vote would be that of Abdullah ibn 'Umar (his son). Abdul-Rahman ibn 'Awf was a cousin of Othman and husband of the aunt of Sa'd ibn Abi-Waqqas and al- Zubair was the son-in-law of Abu Bakr. Abdu- Rahman ibn 'Awf withdrew his candidacy to the caliphate.

(Refer to Kitabul-Imama walSiyasa of Muhammad ibn Qutaybah al-Daynuri (270 A.H.), p. 26, History of Ibn Khaldun, second part, pp. 134 to 136, printed in Egypt).

In the council, the opinions were equally divided in favor of Imam Ali (as) and Othman. Abdul-Rahman ibn Oaf asked Imam Ali (as), "If you are selected as a caliph, do you promise that you will act according to the Holy Qur'an and the traditions and orders of the Holy Prophet (S) and according to the rulings and decisions of the previous two caliphs?"

Imam Ali (as) replied, "So far as the Holy Qur'an and the orders and traditions of the Holy Prophet (S) are concerned, I agree to abide by them and follow them faithfully and sincerely, but so far as the rulings and decisions of the previous two caliphs are concerned, if these are according to the Holy Book and the traditions of the Holy Prophet who could dare refuse them. If they are against the orders of Allah or the Holy Prophet (S), who would dare accept and follow them? I refuse to bind myself with those rulings and decisions. I shall act according to my knowledge and my discretion."

Then Abdul-Rahman asked the same question of Othman. The latter agreed not only to act according to the Holy Qur'an and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (S) but also to implicitly follow the rulings and the decisions of the previous two caliphs. Abdul-Rahman declared 'Othman as a caliph. Refer to 1. Tabari, Vol. 5, pp. 35 to 38, Vol. 16, p. 590) 2. Ibn Khaldun, p. 134 to 136, 3. Abul-Fida', p. 34, 4. Rawzatul-Safa, Vol. 2, p. 98.

### [Muharram 1, 24 A.H.](#)

Justice Sayyid Amir Ali, in his book titled A Short History of the Saracens, p. 46, says, "The choice of electorate fell upon Othman, a member of the Ummayyad family (Muharram, 1, 24 A.H. November 7, 644 A.D.). In the end, his election proved to be the ruin of Islam. He fell at once under the influence of his

clan. He was guided entirely by his secretary and son-in-law Marwan, who had once been expelled by the Prophet for a breach of trust. With Ali's usual patriotism and devotion to the faith, he gave his adherence to Othman as soon as he was elected.

Othman displaced most of the lieutenants employed by Umar and appointed in their stead incompetent and worthless members of his own family. The weakness of the center and the wickedness of the unworthy favorites was creating a great agitation among the people. Loud complaints of exaction and oppression by the governors began pouring into the capital. Ali (as) pleaded and tried to reason several times with the caliph concerning the manner in which he allowed the government to fall into the hands of the unworthy favorites, but Othman, under the influence of his evil genius Marwan, paid no heed to the Imam's advice.

Twice, Imam Ali (as) was asked to leave Medina and to go to a village near it and twice he was called back to intervene between the ruler and the ruled. A few sermons in Nahjul-Balagha has related these facts.

To continue the version of the short History of the Saracen, At last, a deputation from the provinces arrived in Medina to demand redress. They were sent back with promises. On their way home, they intercepted a letter by Marwan, purporting to bear the seal of the caliph. This letter contained directions to the local governors to behead the leaders of the deputation upon arrival of their destinations. Furious at this treachery, the representatives returned to Medina and demanded the surrender of Marwan. This demand was requested even by members of the house of Ummayyah; refer to al-Mas'udi's Muruj al-Dhahab.

The ill-fated Othman met this demand with a stern refusal. Enraged at what they believed to be the complicity of the caliph, they besieged him at his home (A Short History of the Saracen, pp. 47 and 48).

Narrating the details of the siege and the murder, Tarikh al-Khamis (Vol. 2, pp. 61, 262), Tarikh al-Khulafa' by al-Sayyuti, p. 108, Muruj al-Dhahab of al-Mas'udi and Al-Riaz al-Nadira, Vol. 2, p. 125, say that at this hour of peril, the Ummayyad deserted the old chief and some fled towards Syria. Mu'awiyah, though ordered by the caliph, did not come to his help.

On the contrary, the contingent which he sent to Medina was ordered to stop and stay at a place thirty miles away from Medina and wait for further orders. These orders never arrived until the caliph was killed and the contingent was called back.

But Imam Ali (as) sent water and food to the caliph during the siege and later, as per the Imam's orders, Othman was bravely defended by his sons and dependents. The insurgents had great difficulty in making any impression on the defenders; therefore, on the 18th of Dhul-Hijja 34 A.H. some of these besiegers scaled a wall of a neighbor's house, entered the house of the caliph and killed him inside his house.

The people who were furious against the caliph were:

1. **Talhah:** He played an important role in the siege and the cutting of water supply. He was commanding the group of the people who were bent upon killing Othman. On that account, Marwan killed him in the Battle of Jamal as we read in Tabari, Vol. 6, p. 154, Kamil ibn al- Athir, Vol. 4, p. 70, and in Ibn Khaldun, Vol. 2, p. 397). This very Talhah later came out as the avenger of murder of the caliph and carried out the propaganda that Imam Ali (as) was responsible for Othman's murder.

He was one of the chief instigators of the Battle of Jamal. He had instigated the people to kill Othman with the hope of succeeding the caliphate. When he was frustrated with it, he launched a rebellion against Imam Ali (as) (Refer to sermon 179 of Nahjul-Balagha).

2. **Al-Zubair ibn al-'Awwam** was considered the number one enemy of the caliph (Mustadrak of Imam Hakim, Vol. 2I, p. 118, Kitabul- Imama wal-Siyasa, Vol. VI, p. 58, Muruj al-Dhahab of Mas'udi, Vol. 2, p. 11).

Later, al-Zubair, with motives like those of Talhah, staged a rebellion against Ali (as) and was the prime initiator for the Battle of Jamal. On the battlefield of Jamal, Imam Ali (as) reminded him of the orders given to him by the Holy Prophet (S) about Imam Ali (as).

Al- Zubair left the battlefield and was riding to Medina when he was killed by Umar ibn Jernuz, who was neither in Imam Ali's army nor his own companion. Imam Ali (as) felt sad at Zubair's death and said, "Although he later turned into a bitter enemy of mine, in the early days of Islam, he was a good defender of the cause of religion (Refer to sermon 12).

3. **Amr ibn al-As** was the third bitter enemy of Othman. Tabari gives a detailed account of the way he insulted the caliph in the mosque and says, "Nobody was more pleased at the murder of Othman than Amr ibn al-As. The reason was that he had been deposed from the governorship of Egypt by the third caliph. Later, this 'Umar joined Mu'awiyah as a claimant for retribution of the murder of Othman."

When the events from year 11 A.H. To 34 A.H. were unfolding, Imam Ali (as) took no part in the affairs of the state. In the words of The History of Saracens, "He was endeavoring in Medina to give an intellectual turn to then ewly developed energy of the Saracenic race. In the public mosque at Medina, he delivered weekly lectures on philosophy, logic, history, explanation of the traditions of the Holy Prophet (S) and the verses of the Holy Qur'an, as well as Muslim law and rhetoric. Thus, he formed the nucleus of the intellectual movement which displayed itself in such a great force in the later days. Those lectures and sermons were compiled during forty years following his death by Zaid ibn Wahab al- Juhni (Rijalul-Kabeer). Many of them were lost, but some of them are preserved in Nahjul-Balagha (Mas'udi).

### [34 to 40 A.H.](#)

Five days after the death of Caliph Othman, by a unanimous election in which representatives from

Basra, Kufa, Egypt and Hijaz took part, Imam Ali (as) was elected as the caliph. This took place on the 24th Dhul-Hijja, 34 A.H.

Eric Schroeder, in *Muhammad's People*, printed in England in 1955, says, "Five days after the murder of Caliph Othman, the people gathered together and decided: "We know no fitter man to be Imam than Ali (as), but will he take the burden of Imamate?" Some answered, "Pressure him at home till he consents." They all gathered at Ali's house with such eagerness that they were pushing and crushing each other. They called to Ali (as) and said, "If we go to our homes again without an Imam and caliph, such a strife will stir as will never again be stilled. You will have to consent to be our Imam and Caliph of Allah."

Ali (as) replied, "Small longings have I for this authority, yet the believers must have a chief and gladly will I accept temporal authority of someone else." "Nay! You have more right than I," said Talhah. One who stood nearby forced open Ali's palm and Talhah swore the oath of allegiance to Ali (as). Al-Zubair did likewise and from Ali's house, they brought him to the mosque. Everybody thronged around him to swear the oath of allegiance to him as their imam and caliph.

The Spirit of Islam says, "It might have been thought that all would submit themselves before his glory; so fine and so grand. But it was not to be. Al-Zubair and Talhah, who had hoped that the choice of people might fall on either of them for caliphate, balked in their ambitious design.

Smarting under the refusal of the new caliph to bestow on them the Governorship of Basra and Kufa, they were the first to raise the standard of rebellion. They were assisted by Ummul Mu'minin Aisha, who had taken a decisive part in the former elections. She was the life and soul of the insurrection and she, herself, accompanied the insurgent troops to the field riding a camel. Ali (as), with his characteristic aversion to bloodshed, sent his cousin Abdullah ibn Abbas to adjure the insurgents by every obligation of the faith and abandon the arbitrament of war. It was to no avail.

Al-Zubair and Talhah initiated a battle at a place called Khurayba and were defeated and killed. The battle is called the Battle of Jamal (camel) from Aisha's presence in a litter on a camel. Aisha was taken prisoner, treated with courtesy and consideration and escorted with every marks of respect to Medina. She was sent escorted by her brother Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr." Refer to *Asam al-Kufi*, p. 147; *Tabari*, Vol. 4, pp. 548-565, *Rawzat al-Safa*, Vol. 2, *Tarikh al-Dhahbi*, pp. 1-21; *Abul-Fida'*, pp. 518-520.

After the battle, Ummul Mu'minin Aisha felt that even though she had brought about this insurgence, she saw that Imam Ali (as) was treating her with utmost courtesy and kindness. She requested that her nephew, Abdullah ibn al-Zubair, who had been commander-in-chief of the rebel forces and was taken prisoner, to be forgiven and freed. Imam Ali (as) granted the request. Marwan got nervous thinking that as the two worst enemies of Imam Ali (as) (Talhah and al-Zubair) were killed and (Abdullah ibn al-Zubair) was excused and pardoned, the burden of vengeance might fall upon him. He requested Imam Hassan and Imam Hussain to plead for his cause. They requested his pardon and he was also pardoned. (Years afterward, the very same Marwan made his archers shoot arrows on the dead body

and bier of Imam Hassan and later he persuaded the governor of Medina, though unsuccessfully, to immediately kill Imam Hussain on his refusal to accept Yazid as the Caliph). Then an order of general amnesty, peace and forgiveness was issued. Every opponent was forgiven and every prisoner was released (al-Mas'ud al-Zahbi, p. 28).

Ali's officers and commanders in this battle, besides his sons Imam Hassan, Imam Hussain and Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya, were the following companions of the Holy Prophet (S):

1) Abdullah ibn Abbas, 2) Ammar ibn Yasir, 3) Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, 4) Hassan ibn Thabit (for whom the Holy Prophet (S) had said that his sole testimony would be equal to the testimony of two witnesses), 5) Qays ibn Sa'd ibn 'Abadah, 6) 'Ubaydullah ibn Abbas, 7) Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr, 8) Hajr ibn Adiy al-Kindi, 9) Adiy ibn Hatim al-Ta'i.

The victory gave Ali (as) time to consolidate his sovereignty in Hijaz, Iraq and Egypt. According to Mas'udi, with the honesty of purpose which always distinguished him, he disregarded all advises for temporizing. Several of his advisers counseled him to defer the dismissal of the corrupt officers previously appointed until he was, himself, sure concerning who were the enemies, but this hero, without fear and reproach, refused to be guilty of any duplicity or compromise with injustice and inequity. Therefore, immediately after his accession, he gave orders for the dismissal of the corrupt and tyrannical governors, for the return of fields and states which had been previously bestowed with public revenues among the favorites of the rulers and for the equal distribution of the public revenues among the Arabs and non-Arabs, black and whites, masters and slaves, rich and poor.

These orders gave great offence to those who had enriched themselves under former administrations and his endeavors to remedy the evils which had crept into administrations, raised a host of enemies against him. No sooner was the rebellion of Talhah and al-Zubair suppressed, Mu'awiyah, an Umayyad by descent, a man who had held the governorship of Syria since the time of Umar, raised the standard of rebellion.

Abu Sufyan, his son Mu'awiyah and his clan Banu Umayyah had little sympathy and no faith in Islam. Mas'udi, in *Muruj al-Dhahab*, Vol. VI, says that when Abu Sufyan had grown old and blind, he was sitting in the mosque and there were Imam Ali (as), Abdullah ibn Abbas and many other Muslims besides them. The mu'aththin (the caller to prayers) started the adhan. He reached the part, "I testify that Muhammad (S) is the Prophet of Allah." Now Abu Sufyan said, "Look at my cousin! (meaning the Holy Prophet [h]) See where he has placed his name! Imam Ali (as) became angry and said that it was done by the order of Allah. *Tarikh al-Khamis*, Vol. 2, p. 97, printed in Egypt, says that Abu Sufyan advised Banu Umayyah to treat the caliphate like a ball and to pass it on from one to another of their clan and never let the ball out of their possession, saying, "I swear that there is neither punishment nor judgement, neither the Heaven nor the Hell and neither the resurrection nor the day of Reckoning. His son and his clan accepted his teachings, followed his faith, adopted his advice and obeyed his orders.

In the very beginning, Mu'awiyah had made fools of Talhah and al-Zubair. According to Ibn Abul-Hadid, when Mu'awiyah learned that people had sworn the oath of allegiance to Imam Ali (as), he wrote to al-Zubair that he had taken the oath of allegiance for him and for Talhah as his successor. The whole of Syria was ready to back them and they should try to overthrow Imam Ali's regime and accept the caliphate which was awaiting them in Damascus (Refer to Sermon 12 of Nahjul-Balagha). Thus, exciting these two old men, Mu'awiyah kept Imam Ali (as) busy with their rebellion and secured time to make his government more powerful in Syria.

Talhah and al-Zubair, with their rebellion, had done a great service to Mu'awiyah's cause but now, they were no longer living to serve his purpose. Therefore, he approached Mughirah ibn Shu'bah (who had originally tried to converge with Imam Ali (as) but was repulsed by him), Marwan ibn al-Hakam, Walid ibn Uqbah, Abdullah ibn 'Umar, Abu Huraya and Amr ibn al-As. His best friend was Amr ibn al-As.

Although Mu'awiyah had to pay a heavy price (governorship of Egypt and more than 10 Laes of dinars) to purchase the fidelity and faith of Umar, the later events proved that it was the best investment that Mu'awiyah had made in his life. He also collected proofs that Ziyad ibn Abih was actually the son of Abu Sufyan (born in sin) and not the son of a slave Obayd. This change of fatherhood was officially (though shamelessly) proclaimed and Ziyad "proudly" became the natural brother of Mu'awiyah. Zaid proved himself to be a man without a conscience, without any remorse, without faith in Islam and without any consideration for human rights, but a very useful ally to Mu'awiyah. He was Mu'awiyah's second best friend. Histories of Tabari, Rawzatul-Safa, Asim al-Kufi, Muruj al-Dhahab, Abul-Fida', the Kamil of Ibn Athir may be referred to for details of the above mentioned facts. With these henchmen beside him, Mu'awiyah staged a rebellion against the elected caliph, Imam Ali (as).

After settling Chaldea and Mesopotamia, Imam Ali (as) was forced to march towards Syria to face Mu'awiyah's forces at a place called Siffin. The previously noted books and Simon D. Aucklay in the History of the Saracens, give a detailed account of this battle which was an extensive one.

Tabari, Vol. VI, p. 577, Rawzatul-Safa, Vol. 2, p. 425, Abul-Fida', p. 425 narrate in details the orders issued by Imam Ali (as) to his officers and soldiers before the battle. As these orders give a clear indication of the principles and methods laid down by Imam Ali (as) as to how jihad (holy war) should be carried on, I have briefly copied them here:

1. Never begin a war yourself, Allah does not like bloodshed, fight only in defense.
2. Never be the first to attack your enemy, repulse his attacks, but do it boldly, bravely and courageously.
3. While declaring yourself and your deeds (via the medium of rajaz [martial] poetry, a custom in hand to hand combatants), never waste your time. Instead of speaking about yourself, speak about Allah and the Holy Prophet (S).

4. Never follow and kill those who run away from the battle or an encounter as life is dear to them. Let them live as long as death permits them to live.
5. Never kill wounded persons who cannot defend themselves.
6. Never strip naked a dead man for his coat of arms or outfit.
7. Never cut noses or ears of dead men to humiliate them.
8. Never submit to looting and arson.
9. Never assault nor insult the modesty of a woman.
10. Never hurt a woman even if she swears at you or hurts you.
11. Never hurt a child.
12. Never hurt an old or a feeble person.

This battle started on the 1st of Safar 38 A.H. And lasted for more than two months. During this period about 18 encounters took place.

In the beginning, in his usual humanitarian nature, Imam Ali (as) endeavored to bring about a peaceful settlement. But Mu'awiyah was inflated with pride and wanted impossible conditions. To avoid unnecessary shedding of blood, Imam Ali (as) offered to end the quarrel by personal combat, but Mu'awiyah, realizing who and what Imam Ali (as) was, declined the challenge.

In spite of every exasperation, Imam Ali (as) commanded the troops to await the enemy's attack, to spare the fugitives and to respect the captives. Once, during the encounters, 'Amr ibn al-As and at another time Bisr ibn Arta'ah, faced Imam Ali (as) in the battlefield. They did not realize until the encounter started that the warrior facing them was Imam Ali (as).

One blow was sufficient to send them down from their horses. When they found no way of escaping his sword, each one of them, in his turn, immediately stripped naked and fell down turning their faces towards the earth and backs towards the sky. Both armies laughed at those life-saving antics and someone suggested that Imam Ali (as) kill them. In the case of 'Amr ibn al-As he replied, "I cannot kill timid dogs. He has begged for his life in a shameless and humiliating manner. I cannot dirty my arms with the blood of such a cowardly and shameless person.

These rebels were defeated in three successive battles. Mu'awiyah was ready to fly from the field when a trick of his accomplice, Amr ibn al-As, saved them from destruction. He made his mercenaries tear the Holy Qur'an into many pieces and to tie those pieces to their lances and standards then shout foul. Even when the sacred pages were not available, mere rags were tied to the lances. There were some persons in the army of Imam Ali (as) who were bribed by Mu'awiyah. Among them, al-Ash'ath ibn Qays was one.

As per orders of 'Amr ibn al-As, they and their soldiers desisted from the battle and forced other soldiers to desist as well. They gathered around Imam Ali (as) and called upon him to refer the dispute to arbitration.

Imam Ali (as) saw through the ploy practiced by the rebels and tried to make his soldiers realize it, but the clamor of the army led him to consent to the course granted. He then wanted Abdullah ibn Abbas to represent his side in the arbitration. Again, a part of the army, under instigation of al-Ash'ath, demanded that a weak and old man named Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, who was also secretly hostile to Imam Ali (as) (according to History of the Saracens), be nominated as an arbitrator from this side. There was immediate danger of serious factions arising in his own army, which might have developed in bloodshed.

Therefore, Imam Ali (as) acceded to the demand and Abu Musa was appointed as an arbitrator. Mu'awiyah was represented by the astute and cunning Umar ibn al-As. They both decided against Imam Ali (as), who, deprived of the fruits of victory by a section of his soldiers and faithless officers, retired in disgust with a part of his army and faithful followers to Kufa.

In the battle of Siffin, one of the famous companions of the Holy Prophet (S) Ammar ibn Yasir and another great favorite of the Holy Prophet (S), Owais al-Qurni, fought for Imam Ali (as) and were killed in the battle.

The men who had been, with ulterior motives, most clamorous at Siffin for arbitration, felt that their hopes could not be realized. They repudiated the arbitration and denounced it as sinful. They openly mutinied against Imam Ali (as); therefore, they were called Kharijites.

From Kufa, they withdrew to a place called Nahrawan, which was on the border of the desert. There, they assumed a threatening attitude, killing some officers of the government and many respectable men, women and children. They refused to listen to reasonable advice, to join duty or to return home. Their conduct at last became so serious that Imam Ali (as) was forced to attack them at Nahrawan. That encounter is called the battle of Nahrawan. The majority fought, but a few escaped to Bahrain and Ahsa [in the Eastern Province of today's Saudi Arabia, the only country in the world named after its ruling clan, Al Saud] where they formed the nucleus of a fanatical horde which later assumed various names and adopted various guises.

Abu Musa had also retired to Medina where he subsequently received a handsome yearly pension from the court of Mu'awiyah. (Refer to Tabari, Abul-Fida', Asim al-Kufi, Rawzat al-Safa, Muruj al-Dhahab, the Kamil of Ibn Athir and the Short History of the Saracens).

From the day of ascension as caliph to the last day of his life, Imam Ali (as) did not get a day's rest and peace. It is a wonder, that facing the heavy odds that he had to encounter, how and when he could get time to introduce reforms in the government; to lay out fundamentals of grammar for Arabic language; to deliver sermons on theology, rhetoric, philosophy of religion, wonders of creation and nature and duties of man to Allah and man; to advise people in the most persuasive style; to suppress the tendencies for

innovation and schism, which had crept in the minds of Muslims or to introduce and bring into effect principles of a benign government.

After dealing with the rebellion of the Kharijites, Imam Ali (as) had to face the problem of consolidating his control over Egypt. He had sent Qais ibn Sa'd as a governor there, but had to call him back and send Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr in his place. Unfortunately, Muhammad, though brave and sincere, was no match to Mu'awiyah and Amr ibn al-As. He was forced by Mu'awiyah into a battle. Muhammad wrote to Imam Ali (as) who sent Malik ibn al-Ashtar for help. But Malik could not reach Egypt. He was poisoned on the way by a henchman of Mu'awiyah and died (Tabari, Vol. IV, p. 521).

Muhammad was informed of this fact. That young man faced 'Amr ibn al-As alone, was defeated in the encounter, killed and by the orders of Mu'awiyah, his dead body was burnt and his ashes were strewn (Tabari, Vol. IV, p. 592). Imam Ali's words at the news of the death of Muhammad show he loved the young man and how the youth loved him. After Muhammad, Imam Ali (as) had to send some experienced officer to Egypt.

He was busy with that problem when Mu'awiyah organized bands of guerillas with orders to loot, murder, arson and rape. These bands were to attack in waves against the provinces of Hijaz, Basra, Rayy, Mosul and Harath [Herat?]. Imam Ali (as) organized defenses of these provinces, defeated these bands and freed the country from earlier harassment.

It would have been very easy for Imam Ali (as) to divert the minds of masses towards foreign invasion and thus make them busy in murder and plunder. It had always been done by rulers and is even today considered as the best form of employing energies of a rising nation as well as the easiest way to form an empire to propagate religion.

But Imam Ali (as) hated bloodshed, did not believe in imperialism and had no faith in propagation of religion with a sword in one hand and the Holy Qur'an in the other. He believed Islam to be a message of peace and love and wanted mankind to be ruled on the basis of equity and justice. Therefore, after strengthening one province after another and fortifying their defenses, he introduced reforms to create a benign temporal state and never considered expanding his domain.

By the time he got complete control over those problems and could organize an army to liberate Syria and Egypt from the reign of terror which had held them in its sway, the fateful month of Ramadan 40 A.H. arrived.

#### 40 A.H.

It was the 19th of Ramadan, the month of fasting of that eventful year. It was the time of morning prayers. The place was the mosque in Kufa. Imam Ali (as) had arrived in the mosque long before the time of the prayers, had roused those who were sleeping in the mosque. Among them was Abdul-Rahman ibn Muljim al-Muradi. He was lying on his face and had hidden under his garment a sword, the

blade of which had been poisoned.

Imam Ali (as) roused him and told him that it was an unhealthy way of sleeping as it hinders free breathing. He also told him that he had hidden a sword in his garment and an evil intention in his mind. Imam Ali then called the Muslims to morning prayers and led the service. It was the first part of the prayers and he was rising from the kneeling posture when the sword of Abdul-Rahman ibn Muljim descended on his head, giving him a very deep cut.

It was the same sword that Imam Ali (as) had pointed out only half an hour earlier. The prayers were disturbed. Abdul-Rahman started running and people went after him. Nobody was attending the prayers. There was confusion everywhere. But Imam Ali (as) finished his two prostrations then reeled into the hands of his sons Hassan and Hussain. The wound which was bleeding profusely was attended to. His blood-drenched lips parted into thanks-giving prayers as he said, "Master! I thank You for rewarding me with martyrdom; how kind are You and how Gracious. May Your Mercy further lead me to the realm of Your Grace and Benevolence.

Abdul-Rahman was caught by Sasa ibn Sohan and was brought before Imam Ali (as). The hands of the murderer were tied behind his back. The Imam (as) saw that the ropes were cutting into the flesh of the murderer. He forgot the wound of his head, the blow which was to end his life and to cut his career in its prime. He forgot that Abdul-Rahman was a murderer. All that he saw was a human being subjected to inhuman torture. He ordered the Muslims to loosen the ropes on Abdul-Rahman's hands and treat the man humanely. This kindness touched the murderer and he started weeping. A smile played on those lips and, in a faint voice, Imam Ali (as) said, "It is too late to repent now; you have done your deed. Was I a bad Imam or an unkind ruler?"

People carried the Imam to his house. When he saw the bright day, he said, "O daylight! You can bear testimony to the fact that during the life time of Ali, you have never, not even once, dawned and found him sleeping."

He lived two days after this event and in that interval, whenever he found time, he delivered a few sermons (sermon No. 152 is one of them). In those sermons and with his dying breath, he expressly ordered that no harshness should be used towards his murderer, who should be executed if the heirs of Imam Ali (as) so desired, with one blow.

He should not be tortured before death, his dead body should not be mutilated, members of his family should not suffer on account of his crime and his property should not be confiscated. He designated his son Imam Hassan (as) as his vicegerent.

Thus, the last chapter closed on the history of a life which from beginning to end was filled with noble deeds, pious thoughts and sublime words and every filled hour of a glorious life. "Had Ali (as) been allowed to reign in peace," says Oeslner, "his virtues, firmness and ascendancy of character would have perpetuated the basic principles of a good government and its simple manners.

The dagger of an assassin destroyed the hope of Islam.” “With him,” says Osborne, “perished the truest- hearted and the best Muslim of whom the Mohammedan history has preserved the remembrance.” “Seven centuries before,” says Justice Amir Ali, “this wonderful man would have been apotheosized and, thirteen centuries later, his genius, talents, virtues and valor would have exerted the admiration of the civilized world. Chivalrous, humane and forbearing to the verge of weakness, as a ruler he came before his time. He was almost no match by his uncompromising love of truth, his gentleness and his merciful nature to cope with Umayyads’ treachery and falsehood” (The Spirit of Islam). Justice Amir Ali further says, “To quote the language of the modern French historian, ‘But for his assassination, the Muslim world might have witnessed the realization of the prophet’s teaching, in actual amalgamation of the first principles of true philosophy into positive action. The same passionate devotion to knowledge and learning which distinguished Muhammad (S) breathed in every word of Ali (as). With a liberality of mind, far beyond the age in which he lived, was joined a sincere devotion of spirit and earnestness of faith. His sermons, his psalms, his litanies portray a devout outlook towards the source of all good and an unbounded faith in humanity.’”

According to his will, he was buried at Najaf, a place about two miles from Kufa.

About Ali (as), his character, his wisdom, his teaching, his services to Islam, his love of mankind, his respect to duty, his adherence to piety, truth and justice, more than eight thousands books have already been written. They are in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, English,

Spanish, Italian, German, French, Gujarati, Hindi, Telugu and Tamil, a sincere homage to the sincerity of his faith in the greatness and nobility of character inherent in man and in the possibility of human beings developing these traits by good thoughts and good deeds.

## **Imam Ali (as): Ruler And Statesman**

Before Imam Ali (as) took charge of the state, the condition of the country was in hopeless turmoil. All of the most important people and the companions of the Holy Prophet (S) had lost sympathy with the government and were openly hostile to it. Rank, favoritism and the short- sighted greed of Marwan and his clan were responsible for this chaos. People were embolden to rise in arms against the mismanaged and malevolent rule. Their uprising had succeeded. They had lost all respect for authority and had no desire to see the ruling junta back in power again. On the other hand, the members of the overthrown regime had sinister designs to gain back the control which had benefitted them for so long, while some influential persons were hoping to gain the caliphate for themselves.

For three days after the murder of the caliph, there was anarchy in the capital and on the fifth day, Imam Ali (as) was unanimously elected. He neither claimed nor contested for the temporal kingdom. It was forced upon him. But when he accepted it, in his first speech, he openly declared they had elected him as their temporal ruler and he would remain so as long as they kept on obeying him. He had grave doubts about the sincerity of their desire as twice, he had refused to accept their request to act as their

ruler.

Yet, seeing their hopeless plight and their repeated solicitations moved him to assent to their entreaties; yet he was under no obligation to them for their election, on the contrary, he had done them a service by agreeing to rule over them. He knew well, the reasons of their persistent supplications for his rulership. They had been badly treated by the malevolent, cruel and oppressive regime and the ruling class had insulted them and had always refused to listen to their grievances or come to their relief. The masses had been kept under complete ignorance of the true teaching of Islam and were made to feel that such ignorance was the best thing for them.

They had been made to concentrate on worldly benefits at the cost of religion and piety, the result being a rule of brutal force of which they were tired and wanted the kind of benign government which had been introduced by the Holy Prophet (S). That desire had made them look for somebody who could reintroduce that type of government they realized that Imam Ali (as) was the man in whom the Holy Prophet (S) had confided and intrusted more than in anybody else and that he had been the trustee to every secret of the Holy Prophet (S). Therefore, they unanimously elected him as their ruler.

Ironically, they had not realized the responsibilities and obligations under which they had brought themselves by making him their Amir (ruler). He knew their weaknesses and also knew that they would lose their confidence in him when they would find that he attached more importance to general welfare than to personal good, when he would make them follow the path laid down by the Holy Prophet (S), when, with the introduction of equality and equity he would make them accept the principles of brotherhood of man and general amity towards their fellow beings and when he would try to lead them toward selfless discharge of duties as laid down by Allah and the Holy Prophet (S), thus making them a model subject of the kingdom of Allah, a model to be adopted by those who desire peace and prosperity under a benign rule. He was afraid that with the introduction of such a revolutionary (Islamic) system of government and society, the uninitiated would rebellion against him, continuing to clamor for unwarranted and unreasonable personal benefits as usual and crave vicious pleasures that would no longer be possible in a fairness-to-all and a godly system of government which he had envisioned in Islam.

Those who would rebellion did not realize that the previous, traditionally exploitive secular regimes, by allowing them cheap and simple pleasure, granting them limited power and keeping them in the darkness of ignorance their rulers, had actually turned them into automata to work for them as kinds of slaves deprived of vision and foresight without hope for a good prospect of a future life.

On the other hand, Imam Ali (as) would try to make them follow the true part of religion at the behest of their own free will, make them develop the habit of simple living and high thinking and teach them to give up the desire of seeking undue favors and unjustifiable pleasures. That was the kind of men that Allah wanted them to be and the Holy Prophet (S) had tried to model them into. The task had not been easy then and the lapse of a quarter century had made it even more difficult, but Imam Ali (as) would try to

achieve it, according to Al-Karrar of mawlana Riad Ali.

Whatever shadow of hope was lurking in the minds of persons expecting wealth, prosperity and governorship disappeared with this very first speech of Imam Ali (as). They knew that they could not expect unholy and ungodly concessions from Ali ibn Abu Talib (as). Their unreasonable claims on public wealth, their fiefs and their unjustifiable holdings of public property would not remain with them. The result was three rebellions against Imam Ali (as) and a restless period of rulership for about four years.

## **His Reforms**

But Ali (as), with the sincerity of purpose, tried to do what he had promised and raise the mental uplift of the masses. The first thing was the consolidation of the state which he successfully carried out against very heavy odds. The second thing was to create a central bureau where he distributed the work of training the crude Arabs into educated and civilized people.

To Abul-Aswad al-Du'ali [the renown poet], he dictated basic principles and rules of grammar for the Arabic language with special instruction to concentrate on the syntax of that language. Abdul- Rahman al-Salami was made to look after the art of reading the Holy Qur'an correctly. Kumail ibn Ziyad was made responsible for mathematics, engineering and astronomy, Umar ibn Sulma for the Arabic language and literature (prose), Abadah ibn al-Samit for poetry and logic, Abdullah ibn 'Abbas for principles of administration and rhetoric and he himself, for philosophy of religion, ethics, commentary of the Holy Qur'an and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (S).

Actually, he was hub of the whole activity. Although every hour of his glorious life was filled, he still found time to teach his assistants, what to say, when and how to say it, what to teach and when and how to teach it. Long after his death, everyone of his above pupils proved a shining star in the sky of Muslim civilization and have been considered as Imams.

## **Introduction of New System of Government**

The next subject which engaged his immediate attention was the improvement of administration. To make due arrangements for security of the state from external attacks, to preserve law and order, to control corruption and bribery, to provide equality of opportunities and equal distribution of public wealth among his subjects, to appoint honest and pious officers, to chastise and remove from service dishonest ones, to maintain a powerful army, to avoid enrollment of mere mercenaries in it, to take care of traders and traders and treat non-Muslims with deserving leniency and respect, were apparently the items of his program which he successfully carried out.

How He Organized Public Service Departments

1) He divided the state service into following sections:

- 2) Public finance
- 3) Army
- 4) Central administrative bureau
- 5) Judiciary,
- 6) Provincial offices

The department of Public Finance was divided into two sections:

- a) Collection section and
- b) Distribution sections.

The collection section was subdivided into three heads and only three kinds of taxes were allowed to be collected by Imam Ali (as):

i) Land Revenue: It was usually collected in coins of silver and gold or in bullion. Officers to collect this revenue were sometimes appointed by the center, but the Imam (as) had also authorized the governors to appoint such officers themselves.

ii) Zakat (poor rate) and sadaqa (poor fund): These were usually collected in kind or in live-stock. Officers to collect this revenue were always appointed directly by the Imam (as) and he took great care to appoint honest and pious persons on these posts and to keep a sharp look out on their activities and behavior.

iii) Jizya: This was a tax from non-Muslims in lieu of zakat, etc. And in return for the security and amenities provided to them. Collection of no other kind of tax, from non Muslims, was allowed by him.

Land surveys were carried out by him wherever necessary. Every taxpayer had the right to appeal and an appellate jurisdiction was brought into force. Officers for this court of appeal were directly appointed by the Imam (as).

He was the first man to introduce a budgetary system for the collection of revenues and expenditure. Every province had to present its budget direct to him for approval. The incomes were divided into two heads; provincial and central. Zakat and sadaqa were items of the central revenues, land revenue and jizya were provincial revenues.

The schedule of rate for land revenue was fixed by him as follows:

- 1) 1st Class (most fertile) land 1.5 dirham per Jareeb
- 2) 2nd class fertile land 1 dirham per Jareeb

3) 3rd Grade land.5 dirham per Jareeb

4) Vineyards and orchards 10 dirhams per Jareeb and date palm groves

Note: 1 Jareeb equals 2268 3/4 sq. yd.

Sadaqa and zakat were the taxes [the first being optional] which only Muslims had to pay. It was a tax levied on personal income, landed property, hoarded bullion and currency and on livestock. Its rate was that which was fixed by tenets of the Muslim law.

Jizya was an annual, personal tax, collected per head of a person irrespective of his income or property. But such persons were divided into classes. The division of classes follows:

1st class: very rich persons and landlords: 48 dirhams per head

2nd class: middle class people: 42 dirhams per head

3rd class: businessmen: 42 dirhams per head 4th class: general public: 12 dirhams per head

There were positive orders that no jizya was to be collected from beggars or persons falling in following categories:

1) Those who were above 50 years of age

2) Those who were below 20 years of age

3) All women

4) All paralyzed persons

5) All disabled persons

6) All blind persons

7) All mentally disabled persons

Income from the source of zakat and sadaqa was reserved for the following heads:

A) Administration of the departments of collection and distribution.

B) Grants, donations and aids to poor, have-nots, orphans, aged widows and disabled persons.

C) Honorarium to volunteers who fought for the state.

D) Pensions to widows and orphans of soldiers and officers of the army.

E) To acquire and set free slaves from the bondage of slavery.

F) Reparation of government loans.

G) To help pilgrims whenever and wherever they were found stranded.

Items C to F were, for the first time, introduced by Imam Ali (as) and as far as F was concerned, no king had ever thought his kingdom to be morally obliged to pay back a loan taken from somebody.

Imam Ali (as) was the first man who declared that a ruler's share of income from the state was equal to that of any commoner.

Income from jizya was earmarked for the following items of expenditures:

- i) Maintenance of the army
- ii) Construction and maintenance of forts
- iii) Construction and maintenance of roads and bridges
- iv) Well sinking
- v) Construction of rest houses

Land revenue was the provincial income to be spent on maintenance of courts, offices and other necessary items as per orders of the center. Before I bring an end to the narration of his system of revenue collection, I must mention a remark passed by him in this respect to one of his governors. He said, "As far as the collection of land revenue is concerned, you must always keep in view the welfare of the taxpayer which is primarily of more importance than the taxes themselves. And, the actual taxable capacity of the people rests on the fertility quotient of the land. More attention should, therefore, be paid to land fertility and the prosperity of the taxpayer than to the collection of revenues."

The distribution of public wealth was a subject on which Imam Ali (as) spent much time and thought and, in return, caused him to lose many adherents and followers.

The first reform that Imam Ali (as) introduced was to reorganize the treasury and the accounts department. Dishonest officers were removed from the service. A system of accounting was introduced. Othman ibn Hanif was appointed as the chief treasury officer. A principle

of equal distribution of public money was introduced. For the first time, a system of weekly distribution was adopted. Every Thursday was the distribution day or pay day so that Muslims could spend their Friday holiday happily. Every Thursday the accounts were closed and every Saturday started with fresh books of accounts.

Impartiality and equity were the keynotes of Imam Ali's policy of distribution of wealth. At the Center (Kufa), he often supervised the distribution himself and after the work was over and the accounts

cleared, he would say prayers in the treasury and thank his Master that he had performed his duty faithfully.

Imam Sha'bi says that as a young boy, once he passed the treasury at the time when Imam Ali (as) was supervising the distribution. He saw African slaves standing in line with the Arab sheikhs and getting equal shares and within a short time the heaps of silver and gold coins disappeared, the treasury was cleared, Imam Ali (as) said the prayers and left the office empty-handed. That day he had given his share to an old woman who complained that her share was not sufficing her (Kitab al-Gharat).

Once one of his most favorite and trustworthy companions, Othman ibn Hanif told him that by introduction of the principle of equal distribution of wealth and bringing important persons down to the level of commoners, by raising the status of Blacks and Persians to that of Arabs, by allotting shares to slaves equal to their masters, by depriving the rich persons of their worldly attachments and by stopping special grants apportioned to them according to their status, he had done more harm to himself and his cause than good. Continuing he said, "Look my Master, these are the reasons why influential and rich Arabs are deserting you and are gathering around Mu'awiyah. Of what use are these poor persons, disabled people, aged widows and Black slaves to you. How can they help and serve you?"

The Imam (as) replied, "I cannot allow rich and influential persons to exploit the society of this Muslim state and to run an inequitable and unjust system of distribution of wealth and opportunities. I cannot for a moment tolerate this. This is public wealth, it comes from the masses it must go back to them. The rich and powerful persons have not created any wealth, they have merely sucked it from the masses and after paying the taxes, etc. what is left to them is many times more than what they pay to the state and they are welcome to retain it. Had all this been private property I would have gladly distributed it in the same manner. As far as their desertion is concerned, I am glad they have deserted me. As far as the usefulness or services of these disabled persons and have-nots is concerned, remember that I am not helping them to secure their services, I fully well know they are unable to serve me. I help them because they cannot help themselves and they are as much human beings as you and I. May Allah help me to do my duty as He wishes me to do" (Kitab al-Gharat).

## [The Army](#)

Imam Ali (as) was a born soldier and had started his military career at the age of fourteen when he acted as a bodyguard to the Holy Prophet (S). From that time onward, he was the only military talent on whom the Holy Prophet (S) would rely and all arrangements for organization of defenses and maintenance of an army of volunteers or soldiers were totally entrusted to him by the Holy Prophet (S). It was his ability and valor which brought such success to Islam in its early stage against such enormous odds. Even 'Umar was taking his advice on military problems (Al-Sirajul-Mubin, Al-Murtada and Kitab al-Gharat).

Time had not dimmed his valor or his ability to organize such an important section of the state. At the age of sixty, in the battlefields of Jamal, Siffin and Nahrawan, he was as brave a soldier, as good a leader and as keen a marshal as he was in the prime of his life in the battlefields of Badr, Uhud, Khandaq, Khaybar and Hunain.

During his short period of rulership of about four years, he organized this department very carefully.

The first liability on the state exchequer was the army department. Every governor of the province, besides being chief finance officer of the province, was the commander of the army placed under him. When officers could not be found to look after the military as well as civil administration, then the functions were divided.

Imam Ali (as) did not tolerate mere mercenaries but did not let services of volunteers go unpaid. He hated murder and bloodshed and desired his soldiers to be soldiers in the service of Allah and religion. His strict orders to the army were, Always keep fear of Allah in your mind, remember that you cannot afford to do without His Grace. Remember that Islam is a mission of peace and love. Keep the Holy Prophet (S) before you as a model of bravery, valor and piety. Do not kill anybody unless in self-defense. Take care of your mounts and your arms, they are your best guards. Work hard while you are at it then devote some time to rest and relaxation. Rest and relaxation are as necessary for you as hard work. Do not let one overstep the time limit of the other. Do not pursue those who run away from an encounter and do not kill fleeing persons. Do not kill those who beg for life and mercy. Do not kill civilians. Do not outrage the modesty of women. Do not harm old people and children. Do not accept any gifts from the civil population of any place. Do not lodge your soldiers or officers in the houses of civilians. Do not forget to say your daily prayers.

Fear Allah. Remember that death will inevitably come to everyone of you some time or other, even if you are thousand of miles away from a battlefield, therefore, be always ready to face death. He did not appreciate heavily armed and clad soldiers. He liked lighter swords, lighter bows and arrows, lighter coats of arms and lighter chains of armor. He preferred to have an agile and a noble army.

I wish I had space at my disposal to translate parts from the books Al-Gharat, Al-Sir aj al-Mubin, Al-Murtada and Kitab al-Siffin (as quoted by ibn Abul-Hadid). They have discussed and narrated at some length his system of reorganizing the army, his principles of strategy and his tactics of war: how he divided the army into six units, beginning from the vanguard and ending it at the rear guards (Rawdah and Saqqah); how he arranged to cover every possibility of a retreat with the help of these units; how he sub-divided the cavalry into horse and camel units, and infantry into archers, swordsmen and Mata'een (soldiers armed with short lances which they throw with precision, skill and force); how he made the vanguard responsible for scouting, pioneering and performing duties of army engineers and miners; how he used to arrange the army in a battlefield; how he never suffered a defeat in his life; how bold he was; how he used to fight without protecting his body with armor or shield; how he never delivered more than one blow (mostly his one blow was sufficient to kill his opponent, if not he would give the opponent a

chance to get up and run away) and how nobody ever dared stand before him for his second blow. To him war was a pious duty to be performed only for the purpose of defense.

He often declared, "Muslim's life is a battlefield, where he is seldom required to defend his self or his cause and country at the point of sword, which is Jihad al-Asghar (holy war on a minor scale), however formidable be the forces he is to face, while in every day of his life he is to fight against evil desires, vicious cravings and inordinate wishes, which is al-jhad al-akbar (a holy war on a major scale), take care and do not suffer a defeat in this battle; remember it is life-long struggle; a success here will be honored with martyrdom, even if one dies in his bed surrounded by his relatives."

## Judicial Procedure

The principle of keeping independent of and over and above the executive, administrative and military sections of the state was the main factor of the reforms introduced by Imam Ali (as). He was very particular about this, so much so that historians narrate that once he appeared before his Chief Justice (Judge Shuraih) as a complainant and the Chief Justice wanted to give him a place of honor in the court and to treat him like a king or caliph. He reproached the judge for such a behavior, saying that he was there as plaintiff and not as a king or a caliph then he cheerfully accepted the decision of the court against him.

The effect of upholding the prestige of the court of justice and his adherence to the principles of equality and equity were so impressive that the person, against whom he had filed the case and had lost it, ran after him, kissed the hem of his garment and said, "Master! Teach me Islam, I am a Christian and I want to convert to Islam." Why?," inquired Imam Ali (as), "Did anyone force you to do that?" "No, Master," the Christian said, "But your behavior of treating even a non-Muslim subject as your equal, the prestige which you have granted to justice and fair play and your abstention from use of power and authority made me feel that Islam is indeed a great religion. You are a ruler and a caliph, you could have easily ordered me to be killed and my property looted and nobody dare ask reasons of your actions, but you took the case against me to the court and cheerfully accepted the decision against you; I have never heard of such a ruler before you. What is more, what you claimed as yours is actually yours and not mine, but I know the persons who could provide proof of this are out of Kufa, therefore, I boldly said that it was mine and not yours. That was a lie and now I am ashamed to feel that I lied against such an honorable person. You have heard me. Will you not allow me to enter the fold of Islam?"

The Imam (as) again inquired: "Are you, of your own free-will, entering our fold?" "Yes," the Christian replied. "Under your regime," he went on, "I have nothing to lose by remaining in my religion and no worldly benefit to gain by embracing Islam and by confessing my guilt and sin."

The code which he laid down for selection and enrollment of judges shows he took care of even minute requirements of the post and status. It says,

- 1) Only such persons should be selected who are well versed in Muslim law and know enough of the Holy Book and traditions of the Holy Prophet (S) to decide according to the principles laid down therein. Besides, they must have knowledge of personal laws of other religions followed in their provinces.
- 2) They must be men of some standing and status.
- 3) They must not lose their tempers or patience and treat litigants harshly and insultingly. The litigants must feel that their interests are well-guarded and well looked after and that the doors of justice are always open to them.
- 4) If they feel that they have made a mistake, they should not obstinately stick to it, but try to undo the injustice done by them.
- 5) They should be able to probe deeply before them and to reach the truth.
- 6) They must be able to reach decisions quickly and must not unnecessarily prolong a case.
- 7) They must not accept recommendations and must not be influenced.
- 8) Their salaries should be fixed so that they are not tempted by bribes and gifts.
- 9) In audiences and levees of the governors they should be given seats of honor.
- 10) Greedy and various persons and those who are open to flattery and cajolery should also be avoided.
- 11) The door of appeal to the public should not be closed. The caliph should always hear appeals against the decisions of the courts and should decide as per orders of Allah and the Holy Prophet (S).

### **Central and Provincial Secretariat and Subordinate Offices**

The Imam (as) has laid down a code for the officers of the State which covers every aspect of their duties and obligations. It is embodied in the form of a letter (Letter No. 53, Nahjul-Balagha) written to one of his governors. Abdul-Masih al-Antaki, the famous Christian jurist, poet and philosopher of Beirut who died in the beginning of the 20th century says, "It is by far a superior and better code than the ones handed down by Moses and Hammurabi. It explains what a humane administration should be like and how it is to be carried on and it justifies the claims of Muslims that Islam wants to introduce a godly administration of the people, by the people and for the people. It decrees that a ruler should not rule to please himself but to bring happiness to the ruled. No religion before Islam tried to achieve this end. Ali (as) must be congratulated for having introduced these principles in his government and for having written them down for posterity.

I quote here just a few points to illustrate what Abdul-Masih meant by saying that it was a better code than the codes handed down by Moses or Hammurabi.

- 1) You must create in your mind kindness and love for your subjects. Do not behave with them as though you are a voracious and ravenous beast and that your success lies in tearing them up and devouring them.
- 2) Muslims and non-Muslims should be treated alike. Muslims are your brothers and non-Muslims are human beings just like you.
- 3) Do not feel ashamed to forgive. Do not hurry over punishments. Do not quickly lose your temper over mistakes and failures of those over whom you rule. Anger and desire of vengeance are not going to be much use to you in your administration.
- 4) Do not allow the (evil) force of favoritism and nepotism to violate your duties to Allah and to man and drive you towards tyranny and oppression.
- 5) While selecting officers take care that you do not select such people who have served tyrannous and oppressive rulers and have been responsible for atrocities and savage cruelties committed by the state.
- 6) Select honest and kind persons and, from among them, prefer those who speak out the bitter truth to you unreservedly without fear or favor.
- 7) Appointments in the first place must be on probation.
- 8) Keep your officers well paid so that they may not be tempted to corruption or misappropriation.
- 9) Appoint confidential officers to secretly watch the activities of your officers and staff and report to you about their behaviors.
- 10) the secretaries of your civil, judicial or military services should be of personage naturally richer in character than the average. Choose the best amongst them irrespective of age or period of service.
- 11) All letters or applications should be dealt with by the officers and replies or orders about them should be drafted by them only, no subordinate must be allowed to work as the eyes and minds of these officers.
- 12) Take your subjects into your confidence and make them feel that you are their wellwisher and friend.
- 13) Never break a promise or go against the terms of a treaty. It is a sin against Allah.
- 14) You must take care of your traders but should never allow them to resort to hoarding, black-marketing and profiteering.
- 15) Promote and encourage local arts and crafts, it reduces poverty and raises the standard of life.
- 16) Farm tillers are assets to the state and should be protected as an asset.

17) Remember that your sacred duty is to look after the poor, disabled and orphans. Let not your officers humiliate them, ill-treat them or oppress them. Help them, protect them and let them approach you whenever they are in need of your help.

18) Avoid bloodshed. Do not kill anybody unless he deserves to be killed according to the canons of Islam.

## **Ali (as) And The Philosophy Of Religions**

A man enters a garden laid out into beautiful flower beds, artistically and aesthetically arranged. The flowers have been grown by those persons who know the art and science of it. The beauty of their colors and the delicacy of their forms and shades are pleasing to the eyes and their fragrance enchants the minds. The man knows that he has not the knowledge and capability to cultivate and grow flowers like that and the public has no time to go through the garden and enjoy the sights and fragrance of these beds at leisure. He picks up a few flowers from each of these beds and arranges them in a bouquet as a humble homage to the grandness and beauty of the garden.

With this view in mind, these chapters were written. I have drawn freely from the following books Al-Murtada, al-Karrar, Al-Sirajul-Mubin. Tahtheebul-Matin, Nafs al-Rasul, the Spirit of Islam, Islam Under the Arabs, the preaching of Islam, Khasa'is al-Nisa'i, al-Tabrisi's Ihtijaj, Bihar al-Anwar, Al-Manaqib, Sharh of Ibn Maisum, Sharh of Mirza Fathallah, the Sharh of Ibn Abul-Hadid and Irshad.

I am sure the selection is not the best, but it is the best that I can do and I am sure it will provoke minds superior to mine for better efforts.

In this last chapter, I shall try to discuss the teachings of the Imam (as) in the field of philosophy of religion.

With Imam Ali (as) and the Imams of his descent, religion was a vital and positive force of life. Their philosophy never sinks to a war of words without life and without earnestness which is the main feature of the schools under Ptolemies or the vicious circles created by the philosophers of the West and East. Their ardent love of knowledge, devotion in the evolution of the human mind, their sincere faith in Allah and His Mercy, Love and Kindness and their looking upwards for the literalness of common interpretations of law, show the spirituality and expansiveness of their philosophy of religion.

The Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (S) defines knowledge by saying, "Enlightenment of the heart is its essence, Truth is its principal object, Inspiration is its guide, Reason is its acceptor, Allah is its Inspirer and the words of man are those who utter them. To him, the evolution of the mind was the essence of life and religion was the essence of the evolution of the mind.

How correctly Imam Ali (as) taught us that a man without a mind is not a man and a mind without religion is worse even than the instinctual nature of a beast, more harmful, more dangerous and more

carnivorous. Devotion without understanding will not bring the Blessing of Allah, it is useless.

He attaches so much value to the mind and its correct ways of grasping the truth that he says your first leader and guide is your mind. At other places he says that nothing is more useful to man than his intelligence, there is nothing wealthier than wisdom, there is no greater bounty of the master than the intellect granted to you, you can dispense with everything but your mind and intelligence, there is no better guide towards truth than wisdom, one hour of deep and sober meditation is better than a life of prayers without understanding and a wise man thinks first and speaks or acts afterwards.

Next to intelligence and wisdom, he taught us to attach importance to the sincerity of purpose in life. Once explaining a certain verse to Abdullah ibn Abbas, he said, "Ibn Abbas, if you sincerely and intelligently go in search of truth or religion and if you wander out of the right path, even then there is a reward for you." There is a sermon in Nahjul-Balagha in which he says, "Do not kill the Kharijites after me because to go in search of the truth and to lose the true path is better than to spend the entire span of one's life in pursuit of vicious pleasure and wickedness."

The natural and logical sequence of the above two attributes is to take account of yourself, your knowledge, your thoughts, your intentions, your desires and your deeds. He, therefore, advises us thus: "Weigh your own souls before the time of weighing of your actions arrives. Take account of yourself before you are called upon to account for your conduct in this existence."

To obtain favorable results of such weighing and taking account of oneself, one must have done good deeds. And as far as actions and reactions are concerned, he wants us to understand that human conduct is not fortuitous, one act is the result of another; life, destiny and character means a series of incidents, events and actions which are related to each other, as cause and effect by an ordained Law.

Therefore, apply yourself to good and pure actions, adhere to truth, follow the true path to salvation, before death makes you leave this abode. If you do not warn and guide yourself none other can direct you. The master has pointed out to you the path of salvation and has warned you of the temptations of this world. Abstain from foulness though it may be fair to your sight. Avoid evil, however pleasant, for you know not how far it can take you away from him.

His discourses in Nahjul-Balagha about noble deeds are supreme reading. His warnings against sinful life are very persuasive teachings. He says, "O You servants of the Lord! Fulfil the duties that are imposed on you for in their neglect there is abasement, your good work alone will render easy the road to death and to the Heaven. Remember each sin increases the debt and makes the chain heavier. The message of mercy has come, the path of truth (haqq) is clear; obey the command that has been laid on you; live in purity and work with nobility of purpose and ask Allah to help you in your endeavors and to forgive your past transgressions. Cultivate humility and forbearance, comfort yourself with the sincere truth."

Next to sincere faith in the Unity of Allah and the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet (S), he lays a great

emphasis on piety. He wants us to realize that piety is not a juicy morsel to be swallowed easily nor is it dip in the river to clean all dirt and filth from the body. Piety means those actions, which at the beginning may be sour, harsh and painful to perform. Piety means to free oneself from vicious desires and wicked deeds. This freedom cannot be obtained but by constant effort and endeavor. Such efforts are a continuous struggle and a long drawn war against the vicious cravings of the mind. Nobody can be free from vices and sins unless he or she develops the capacity to abhor and hate them. When once this capacity develops, then to adopt a pious and sober life because a habit, a second nature. Few things are forbidden to you and so many things are allowed that no one is barred from normal relaxation, ease and comfort from sober and harmless pleasures and pursuits.

To him, asceticism was a sin against the self. History cites many instances where he admonished the persons who had given up their homes and families, had severed every connection with society, had taken to a mosque and had been praying, fasting and reciting the Holy Book morning, noon and night. He sent them back to their homes and told them that their duties lie among their fellow beings and what they had done was not piety but fanatic asceticism which is not allowed in Islam. He strongly reprobated observance of asceticism and condemned the abandonment of the affairs of this life in fanatic pursuits of rituals.

He says that he who acts with piety gives rest to his soul; he who takes warning understands the truth and he who understands it attains the perfect knowledge.

His teachings do not convey any impression of predestination; on the contrary they portray a soul animated with a living faith in Allah and yet full of trust in human development founded on individual exertion springing from human volition. One day, someone asked him the meaning of Qaza' and Qadar. He replied, "Qaza' means obedience to the commandments of Allah and avoidance of sin and qadar means the ability to live a pious and holy life, to do that which brings one nearer to Allah and to shun that which throws him away from His Perfection. Say not that man is compelled, for that attribution is tyranny against Allah, nor say that man has the absolute discretion to decide what is right and what is wrong, we achieve success through His Help and Grace in our endeavors, to act righteously and we transgress because of our neglect of His Commandments."

Explaining the meaning of the verse, "There is no power nor help but from Allah," he said, "It means that I am not afraid of Allah's Wrath, but I am afraid of His Purity, nor have I power to observe His Commandments, but my strength is in His assistance. Allah has placed us on earth to try each of us according to his endowments." Explaining the verse saying, "We will try you to see who are strivers (after truth and purity) and who are forbearing and patient and we will test your actions and we will help you by degrees to attain what you know not!," he says, "These verses prove the liberty of human volition." Explaining the verse: "Allah directs him whom He chooses and leads him astray whom He chooses," he says, "This does not mean that He compels men to evil or good deeds, or that He either gives direction or refuses it according to His caprice, for this would do away all responsibility for human

action; on the contrary it means that Allah points out the road to truth and lets men choose as they will.”

In a sermon in Nahjul-Balagha, Imam Ali (as) says, “The theory of compulsion, predestination or predetermination of fate is a Satanic insinuation and a doctrine of faith among the enemies of Allah. On the contrary, Allah has ordained man to obey His Commands and has given him freedom of will and action, he is at full liberty to obey His Commands or to disobey. There is no compulsion in accepting the religions preached by His Messengers and no compulsion to obey His Commands. Even His Commands (like daily prayers, fasting, zakat, etc.) are not hard, harsh and unbearable and every leniency and ease on account of age and health is granted to man.”

The freedom of human will, based on the doctrine that man would be judged by the use he had made of his reason, was inculcated in the teachings of the Holy Prophet (S), along with an earnest belief in the Supreme Power ruling the universe. Imam Ali (as) gave this idea a more definite form and it grew into a philosophy. In reply to a question he says, “Perhaps you consider predestination to be necessary and the particular decree to be irreversible; if it were so then reward and punishment would be in vain and the promise and the threat would be of no account, and surely blame would not have come from Allah for the sinner nor praise for the righteous, nor would the righteous be more worthy of the reward of his good deeds, nor the wicked be more deserving of the punishment of his sin than the righteous. Allah has ordained the giving of choice to man and the putting of them in fear and He hath not laid duties upon men by force nor sent his prophets as farce.”

When asked, “What is predestination and the particular decree which drove us? He answered, “The command of Allah and the rein His purpose.” Then he repeated the verse, “The Lord has ordained that you must worship none but Him and to be kind to your parents.”

Morality of life is another point which Imam Ali (as) wanted men to realize fully, sincerely and rationally. He wants us to understand that death is a biological incident of all forms of life and it is unavoidable, inevitable and sudden. No one knows when and how he or she is going to cross this barrier., therefore, it is foolish to imagine that it can be avoided, sinful self deception to forget it and idiotically timid to be afraid of it.

He says, “I am as fond of death as a baby is fond of his mother’s breast. The natural sequence of the mortality of life is that everything connected with it and with this world is mundane and has no lasting value. Therefore, why concentrate on pleasure and take to vicious ways to acquire them, why not try to improve your lot in the hereafter?”

Imam Ali’s teachings are a true gospel of the work ethic. He wants man to work, to work honestly, sincerely and diligently and to work for the reward reserved in the Heaven. He says, “Work, work and do good work while you still have life, health and opportunities. Allah ordains you to work while there is still time to work. Be thankful for the time and opportunities allotted to you and work for the good of mankind and for your own good. A life without work is a life without worth.

A mind without sober thoughts and a life without a program of honest work is the most fertile soil for the seeds of wickedness and vice. Work, with the nobility of purpose is one of the forms of prayer.” His advice to his son was, “Exert yourself to earn an honest living. The worst form of folly is the wasting of opportunities. Opportunities do not repeat themselves so make use of each of them when it presents itself, but let piety guide in all of your actions.”

Thus, Imam Ali (as) guides us through the problems of men with respect to ourselves individually as he leads us towards solving problems encountered with one another. In a letter to Imam Hassan (S), he says, “My dear son, as far as your behavior with other human beings is concerned let yourself act as scales to help you judge its goodness or wickedness. Do unto others as you wish others to do unto you. Whatever you dislike to happen to you, spare others from such happenings.” At another place, he advises, “Do not make yourself a slave of anything.

Allah has created you a free man. Do not sell away this freedom in return for anything. There is no real value or benefit that you derive by selling your honor, conscience and self respect. Do not run after him who tries to avoid you. Remember that to oppress a weak or helpless person is the worst form of tyranny. Do good to your brother when he is bent upon doing harm to you. Befriend him when he ignores you. Be generous to him if he is miserly to you. Be kind to him if he is harsh and cruel to you. But be very careful that you do not behave with undeserving, mean and wicked persons.”

Imam Ali (as) had a very soft corner in his noble heart for the poor, the disabled, the aged and the orphans. To Malik he says, “I want to caution you about the poor. Fear Allah about your attitude towards them. Let it be remembered that their welfare is the first charge to a state and on the well-to-do people.”

As far as the question of man and Allah is concerned, Imam Ali (as) teaches us to believe in Allah Who has created us, Who loves us, nourishes us, helps us and is our well-wisher. He should be loved, adored and venerated.

Through many of his prayers Imam Ali (as) has implanted in the minds of those who have faith in Allah the highest devotional spirit. He teaches us to love and adore Him and to think of Him as the Lord, the Adorable, the Eternal, the Everlasting, the Cherisher, the True Sovereign,

Whose Mercy and Grace overshadows the universe. Who is the master, the Loving and Forgiving, Who bestows power and might on whom He pleases. None can lower him whom He exalted. Whose beneficence is all persuading. Whose Forgiveness and Mercy is all embracing. Who is the Helper of the afflicted, the reliever of all distressed, the Consoler of the broken hearts. Who is present everywhere to help His Creatures. Who fulfills all needs, bestows all blessings. Who is a friend of the poor and the bereaved. At another place he beseeches the master thus, “You are my Fortress; a Castle for all who seek Your Protection and Help. The Helper of the pure and true, the refugee of the weak. The Helper of those seeking Your Help. Thanks be to You, O Lord Whose Mercy extends to every sinner and who provides for even those who deny Him.”

This is how he wants us to have faith in Allah, a Creator, a Nourisher, a Helper, a Refuge, a Protection. One who loves you and One to be loved, adored, venerated and worshipped.

The other aspect of his teaching is that he has clearly and emphatically condemned all anthropomorphic (to attribute human forms, qualities or personality to Allah) and anthropathy (ascription of human passions and affections to Allah) concepts. He says, "Allah is not like any object that the human mind can conceive. No attribute can be ascribed to Him which bears the least resemblance to any qualities which human beings have perceived of from their knowledge of material objects. The perfection of piety consists in knowing Allah; the perfection of knowledge is the affirmation of His Verity, and the perfection of verity is the acknowledgment of His Unity in all sincerity, and the perfection of sincerity is to deny all attributes to the Deity. He, who refers an attribute to Allah believes the attributes to be Allah and he who so believes an attribute to be Allah, regards Allah as two or part of one. He who asks where Allah is assimilates him with some object. Allah is the Creator, not because He Himself is created. Allah is Existent not because he was non-existent. He is with every object, not from resemblance or nearness. He is outside everything not from separation or indifference towards His creatures. He works and creates not in the meaning of motions or actions. He sees and hears but not with help of bodily organs or outside agencies. He was seeing when there was nothing created to see. He has no relationship to matter, time and space, Allah is Omniscient because knowledge is His Essence, Loving because Love is His Essence, Mighty because Power is His Essence, Forgiving because Forgiveness is His Essence and not because these are attributes apart from His Essence."

At another place he says, "O Lord! You are the Creator, I am the created; You are the Sovereign, I am only Your servant; I am the one who beseeches, You, Lord are the refuge. You are the Forgiver, I am the sinner; You my Lord, are the Merciful, the all-Knowing, the all-Loving; I am groping in the dark; I seek Your knowledge and Love. Bestow, Lord, all Your Knowledge, Love and Mercy upon me and let me approach You, my Lord. You live in every heart and every soul. Your Knowledge is ingrained in every mind."

## **Compiler And Commentators Of Nahjul-Balagha**

The last compiler of the sermons, letters, orders and sayings of Imam Ali (as) was Sayyid al-Sharif ar-Radi. His was the compilation which came down to us in its entire form through ten centuries. He named this compilation Nahjul-Balagha.

Sayyid ar-Radi's name was Abul-Hassan Sayyid Muhammad ar-Radi. Al-Radi was his nicknamed, laqab. He was born in Baghdad (in 359 A.H.) in a family famous all over the country for its connections with the state, patronage of arts and literature and interest in history, philosophy and religion. It was a time when Baghdad was vying with Cairo and Cordoba for superiority over arts, sciences, philosophy and languages.

His father, "Abu Ahmed" Sayyid Hussain, was appointed five times as a naqeeb or chief of the Family of

Imam Ali (as). His family was held in the highest regards by 'Abbaside caliphs and Alawide kings.

Sayyid ar-Radi's father was a descendant of the Imam Musa al-Kazim (as) being the great grandson of the Imam (as). His mother was the great granddaughter of the Imam Zainul-Abidin (as). She was a woman famous for her piety and her literary talents.

His elder brother, Sayyid Murtada, was a great theologian and poet. Sayyid Murtada's works (poems) are still being published in Cairo and Beirut and form part of the course of Arabic literature in the universities of those two cities. Sayyid Murtada has a great place among the Shi'a theologians and is nicknamed A'lamul-huda (standards of the true path of religion).

His mother took a keen interest in educating her two sons, Sayyid Murtada and Sayyid ar-Radi. She personally took them both to the Shi'a theologian and mujtahid, Abu Abdullah Shaikh al-Mufid and requested him to educate these children under his personal supervision and care.

Sayyid ar-Radi, under the instructions of Shaikh al-Mufid, received an early education in Arabic grammar, literature and lexicology from Hussan ibn Abdullah Sairafi. At the early stage of ten he was considered a finished product of that institution and a good poet. He joined the educational institutions of Aby Ishaq-Ahmed ibn Muhammad-Tabari, Ali ibn Isa Rubace, Othman ibn Jinny and Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Musa Khawarizmi; with them he studied the Holy Qur'an, traditions, theology, history of religions, philosophy and literature. Since early childhood, his keen desire of acquiring knowledge and concentrating on studies was noted and appreciated by everyone of those great scholars under whom he received his training. As a matter of fact, he was considered as a prodigy by many of them.

At the age of twenty, his merit was recognized and respected by all of them and even Shaikh al-Mufid regarded this young man as his equal.

Sayyid ar-Radi died young at the age of forty-five or forty-seven years, but during this short period he had written many books. His commentary of the Holy Qur'an is considered by the historian Ibn Khallikan to be peerless and his explanation of the traditions of the Holy Prophet (S) is still respected as a great resource of the meaning of the words used by the Holy Messenger of Allah.

At the age of twenty-one, he was elected in place of his father as naqeeb of the family of Abu Talib and was appointed by the State as the amir of the pilgrimage to Mecca.

He was a man of strong character, free will and independent views. During his time the Abbaside caliphate of Baghdad was at war with the Fatimide caliphate of Egypt, and had persuaded Sunni and Shi'a dignitaries to sign a mahzar (public declaration) exposing the non-Muslims tendencies and activities of some Fatimide caliphs. Even the elder brother of Sayyid ar-Radi and his father were forced to sign it, but Sayyid ar-Radi refused to sign such a decree. This brought him onto a blacklist of the government, but he cheerfully accepted the loss of political privilege and status. Four times during his life did he refuse financial aid from the government.

In his early age he had come across sayings, sermons and letters of Imam Ali (as). He had found them scattered in various books of philosophy, religion, history, biography, literature and commentaries of the Holy Qur'an and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (S). He had also found that the collections of Imam Ali's work as carried on by great scholars of the first four centuries because of the unsettled political condition of the centers of learning in the peninsula, were lost.

He, therefore, decided to re-collect them once again. The desire became a passion with him. He toured all over the peninsula to collect these sermons, sayings and letters, gathering all the various books containing them and classified them into sermons, letters and sayings. The letters also included orders of Imam Ali (as) to his officers and two of his wills. In fact, the classification was on the basis of what Imam Ali (as) preached, what he wrote and what he said.

Some biographers say that for years he devoted eighteen hours a day for this work. It was a labor of love for him. His health was failing yet he continued the work without an abatement of intensity.

To him this compilation was a sacred duty and he carried it out with the devotion and diligence that it deserved. He was particularly and sincerely careful not to add and not to subtract a word from the texts which he found. If he found a sermon divided into many parts he did not join them into a continuous whole but let them remain as two, three or four disjointed parts. This system of compilation annoyed the later commentators of Nahjul-Balagha, like ibn Abul-Hadid and ibn Maisum and they have complained about it. Sometimes, when Sayyid ar-Radi found the middle part of a sermon missing, he kept the two remaining parts as two separate sermons.

He collected from a pile of books and manuscripts on various subjects and had come across those books at various periods of his work. Naturally, there was not any chronological order in his collection. The sermons which are supposed to be delivered in Medina or in the early period of Imam Ali's temporal rulership are found in the later part of the book and sermons on the events of Siffin and Nahrawan in early part. Similarly, the sermon, which is considered as the last sermon of Imam Ali (as), precedes many discourses which by their test, may rightly be considered to be delivered in Medina during the periods of the first and second caliphate. At places we find that the Sayyid had copied the same sermon in different places as quoted by different authors.

All these discrepancies jar upon the readers' minds. But they stand as iron clad irrefutable proof to the honest and sincere desire of Sayyid ar-Radi to present the work as he found it and not to interfere with it in any way however essential it might be.

Some historians and biographists are of the opinion that Sayyid ar-Radi was helped in this work by his elder brother Sayyid Murtada. But, had this been a fact, the noble-minded Sayyid would have willingly mentioned it in his preface because he has tried to mention all the sources from which he found these sermons etc.

Sayyid ar-Radi died in the month of Muharram 404 A.H. at the age of 45 years. Some biographists are

of the opinion that the year of his death was 406 A.H. And his age at the time of death was 47 years. His elder brother Sayyid Murtada and his teacher Shaikh al-Mufid were so grievously stricken that they could not lead the funeral service of that great man and the service was led by the Prime Minister "Abu Ghalib" Fakhrul Mulk.

Sayyid ar-Radi has left about 40 books as his memorial, some of them are great works, they consist of commentaries of the Holy Qur'an on religion and philosophy, yet his masterpiece was the collection of the sermons, letters and sayings of Imam Ali (as).

As soon as the noble Sayyid compiled this book (Nahjul- Balagha), his contemporaries started writing commentaries on it. The work of commenting on the text and explaining the meanings of the words used by Imam Ali (as), and the historical events mentioned therein, is still going on even nowadays. I am citing herein the names of some of the famous commentators of Nahjul-Balagha:

### Sunni Commentators

- 1) Imam Ahmed ibn Muhammad al-Wayri (cir. 470 A.H.)
- 2) Abul-Hassan Ali ibn Abul-Qasim al-Bayhaqi (565 A.H.). His commentary is quoted by Mu'jam al-Udaba' of Yaqut al-Hamawi, Vol. 13, p. 225, printed in Egypt.
- 3) Imam Fakhrud-Din al-Razi (606 A.H.). His commentary is quoted by:
- 4) Akhbarul-Hukama' of Ibn al-Qufi, p. 192, printed in Egypt.
- 5) Uyun al-Anbiya' of Ibn Abu Sabe'e'a, p. 25, printed in Egypt.
- 6) Abdul-Hamid Hibathullah Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Abul-Hadid, the Mu'tazilite scholar (known as Ibn Abul-Hadid, 655 A.H.). His commentary is a world-famous classic covering 17 volumes, printed half a dozen times in Cairo, Beirut, Tehran and Isfahan.
- 7) Shaikh Kamalud-Din Abdul Rahman al-Shaybani (cir. 705 A.H.)
- 8) Allama Sa'dud-Din al-Taftazani (797 A.H.)
- 9) The Judge of Baghdad, Shaikh Qa'imud-Din.
- 10) Allama Shaikh Muhammad Abdoh (1323 A.H.) His commentary has been printed quite often and forms a part of the university course in Cairo and Beirut.
- 11) Professor Muhammad Hassan al-Nayer al-Mursafi of Egypt. His commentary is printed at Darul-Epistle Press Cairo, Egypt.
- 12) Professor Muhammad Mohiuddin Abdul Hamid, Professor of Lexicology of Al-Azhar University. His

book was printed at Istiqamatul-Misr Press, Cairo.

13) Professor Shaikh Abdullah al-Bayruni of Cairo, Egypt.

## Shi'a Commentators

- 1) Allama Sayyid Ali ibn Nasir (d. cir. 450 A.H.). He was a contemporary of Sayyid ar-Radi.
- 2) The famous Shi'a mujtahid, theologian and philosopher Allama Qutubud-Din al-Ravandi. His Commentary is named Minhajul- Bara'a.
- 3) Fazil al-Jalil, Allama Sayyid Ibn Tawus.
- 4) Allama ibn Maisum al-Bahrani (d. cir. 660 A.H.). He was a contemporary of Ibn Abul-Hadid. His commentary is famous and is considered of immense value on problems of the philosophy of Islam. He has not devoted as much time towards the literary and historical aspects of Nahjul-Balagha as ibn Abul-Hadid. His book is greatly valued by Shi'a theologians and philosophers.
- 5) Allama Qutubud-Din Muhammad ibn Hussain al-Iskandari. His commentary is named Al-Islah.
- 6) Shaikh Hussain ibn Shaikh Shihabud-Din Hayder Ali al-Amili al- Karki. He died in Hyderabad, India, in 1076 A.H.
- 7) Shaikh Nizamud-Din Ali ibn al-Hussain ibn Nizamud-Din al- Jilani. He named his commentary Anwarul-Fasaha and Asrarul- Balagha.
- 8) Allama Sayyid Sanad Mirza Allaiddin Muhammad ibn Abu Turab, known as Fazil al-Gulistanah (1110 A.H.). His commentary covers 20 volumes.
- 9) Agha Shaikh Muhammad Raza. His commentary is called Ba'dra al-Najafia. It has been printed often and very well received throughout Iran.
- 10) Allama Sayyid Ma'jid ibn Muhammad Bahrani. He was a contemporary of Shaikh al-Baha'i and died in 1028 A.H. His commentary is greatly valued by Shi'a theologians.
- 11) Mullah Fathallah Kashani. He died in 997 A.H. He was a lexicographer, grammarian, mathematician, physicist, engineer and theologian. He had been to the court of Akbar also. He was a contemporary of the famous historian of Akbar's court,
- 12) Mullah Abdul-Qadir Badayuni. The mullah speaks very highly of him in his book Muntakhabul-Tawarikh. He says, "Adil Khan, governor of Deccan, Khan al-Khanan and Hakeem Abul-Fath of the court of Akbar, paid great respects to him and Akbar also had great regards for him. His commentary is printed very often and so far as the translation of words used by Imam Ali (as) in Persian is concerned, it is the best book ever published.

# Preface By The Compiler Of Nahjul-Balagha, Allama Ash-Sharif

## Ar-Radi

### **In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate**

All Praise is due to Allah Who has held praise as the price of His bounties, protection against His retribution, pathway to His paradise and means for multiplication of His good treatment. May blessings be on His Messenger, the Prophet (S) of mercy, the torch of the people, the chosen one from the origin of greatness and family of longstanding honors, the plantation of all-engrossing glory and the branch of sublimity full of fruits and foliage. And, may blessing be upon the members of his family who are lanterns against darkness, protection of the people, brilliant minarets of religion and high standards of greatness. May Allah shower upon them all the blessings befitting their distinction as rewards for their actions and suitable to the chastity of their lineage so long as the morning dawns and the stars twinkle.

In my early age at the dawn of youth, I commenced writing a book on the characteristics of the Imams covering the account of their virtues and masterpieces of their utterances. The purpose of the compilation was stated in the beginning of the book. The rein, I completed the portion relevant to the account of Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (as) but I could not complete that part concerning the other Imams due to impediments of the time and obstacles of the days.

I divided the book into several chapters and sections, in a manner for its last section to compromise whatever had been related to Ali's short utterances such as his counsel, maxims and proverbs but not his long lectures and detailed discourses.

A number of my friends and brothers-in-faith, while wondering at its delicate and blossoming expressions, admired the contents of this particular section and desired that I complete a book which should cover all the forms of the utterances of Amir al-Mu'minin (as), including diverse materials such as lectures, letters, counsels, ethics, etc. They were convinced that because Amir al-Mu'minin (as) was the fountain of eloquence and the source of rhetoric, the entire proceedings would comprise wonders and surprises of eloquence and rhetoric, brilliant jewels of the Arabic language and shining expressions about faith that were not collected nor found together in any other book.

Through the Imam, the hidden delicacies of eloquence and rhetoric came to light and from him, its principles and rules were learned. Every speaker and orator had to tread on his footprints and every eloquent preacher availed of his utterances.

Even then, none could equal him and so the credit for being the first and foremost remained with him because his utterances are those that carry the reflection of the Divine knowledge and savor the Prophet's utterance. Accordingly, I acceded to their requests because I knew that it meant great reward, handsome reputation and a treasure of recompense.

The object of this compilation is to bring forth Amir al-Mu'minin's greatness and superiority in the art of rhetoric, in addition to his countless qualities and innumerable distinctions and to show that he had risen to the highest pinnacle of this attainment. He was singular among all those predecessors whose utterances are quoted here and there, whereas his own utterances are such an on-rushing stream that its flow cannot be encountered and its treasure of delicacies cannot be matched. Since I proudly trace my descent from him, I have a pleasure of quoting a couplet of al-Farazdaq:

These are my forefathers O Jarir.

When we get together, can you claim forth their equals?

In my view, Amir al-Mu'minin's utterances were divisible in three categories: firstly sermons and decrees; secondly, letters and correspondence, and thirdly, maxims and counsels. Allah willing, I have decided to compile the sermons first, then the letters and finally the maxims and counsels. I then propose a separate chapter for each category, leaving blank pages in-between each so that if anything has been left out and becomes handy afterwards, it may be inserted therein. If my utterance which is routine or in reply to some question or has some other aim does not fit in with any of my divisions, it should be included in the category for which is most suitable or to which its subject matter is most similar. In this compilation, some sections and sentences have crept in whose arrangement shows disarray and disorderliness. This is so because I am only collecting the most representative brilliant utterances and do not wish to arrange or array them.

The characteristic of Amir al-Mu'minin (as) in which he is unparalleled and is shared by no one, is that his utterances on seclusion, piety, remembrance of Allah and admonition are such that when a person pursues them without bearing in mind that they are the words of a man who enjoys great and ruling status and who controls destinies of men, he can have no doubt that these are the utterances of a man who has no interest other than seclusion and no activity save worshipping; who is confined to the interior of some house or the valley some mountain where he hears nothing save his own murmur and sees no one except himself.

Would one believe that these are the utterances of one who plunges in battles with his sword drawn, severing heads and vanquishing the heroes while returning with his sword dripping with blood and the heart's fluid? And despite all of this, he is supreme among the recluse and chief among the saints. This distinction is one of those astonishing characteristics of Amir al-Mu'minin (as) with which he collected within himself contradictory qualities and patched together diverse greatness. I often mention this subject to my brethren-in-faith and cause them to ponder over it.

Within this compilation, some repetition of words or subject matter are to be expected, as the utterances of Amir al-Mu'minin (as) have been known to be related in numerous forms. Sometimes it happened that a particular utterance was found in a particular form in a tradition and was taken down in that very form. Thereafter, the same utterance was found in some other tradition either with acceptable addition or in a more attractive style of expression. In such a case with a view to further the object of compilation and to

preserve the beautiful utterance from being lost it was decided to repeat it elsewhere. It has also happened that a particular utterance had appeared earlier but due to remoteness it has been entered again. This is through omission, not by intent.

In spite of all this I do not claim that I have collected Amir al- Mu'minin's utterances from all the sources and that no single sentence of any type or construction has been left out. In fact I do not rule out the possibility that whatever has been left out might be more than what has been collected and what has been in any knowledge and use is far less than what has remained beyond my reach. My task was to strive to the best of my capacity and it was Allah's part to make the way easy and guide me to the goal if Allah so wills.

Having completed my work, both in the collection and compilation of this manuscript, Nahjul-Balagha, the pathway of rhetoric would be the appropriate title of the book, in that it would open the doors of eloquence for the reader and shorten its approach for him or her, the scholar and the student would meet their needs from it and the rhetoricians as well as the recluse would find their objectives in it. In this book will be found a wonderful discussion on Allah's Oneness, Justness and His being free from body and form, that will quench every thirst (for learning), provide a cure for every malady (of unbelief) and remove every doubt. I seek from Allah succor, protection against straying, correctness of action and His assistance. I seek His protection against mistakes of heart before mistakes of tongue and against mistakes of speech before mistakes of action. He is my Reliance and He is the best Trustee.

## Notes

Al-Farazdaq, whose name was Hamman ibn Ghalib, belonged to the tribe of Banu Darim and was a notable poet. He was generally at odds with another Arab poet named Jarir ibn Atiyyah and they showed their merit only in mutual abuse and boasting over each other. The quoted couplet of al-Farazdaq is a link from that chain, wherein he addresses Jarir saying, "My forefathers were such as you have just heard, now you come forward with what your forefathers were and if there were any one like mine, name them before all of us. Reciting this couplet about his own forefathers Sayyid ar-Radi challenges everyone to bring forth their like, if any. Al-Farazdaq had addressed only Jarir but its quotation here has made it general and universal when its addressee is no more one single individual, but every person can consider himself to be its addressee. Despite this generality and universality the challenge to Aname their like remains unresponsive like the Qur'anic challenge: "... then bring forth its Like... etc."

Sayyid ar-Radi has pointed at this relationship and distinction at such an appropriate moment that there can be no better occasion because the greatness of the personality (namely Amir al-Mu'minin (as)) through whom he claims pride has already been mentioned and eyes have stood dazzled at the brilliance of his status while minds have acknowledged the sublimity of his status.

Now hearts can easily be made to bow before the height and greatness of this individual who bears relationship to him. Thus at the moment when hearts and minds were already inclined, Sayyid ar-Radi's

eloquence—conscious eyes turned the sight towards himself as he was the ray of the sun whose abundant light dazzled the eye and a scion of the same lineal tree whose root is in the earth and whose branch extends up to the sky. Now who is there who would remain unaffected by this relationship and distinction and refuse to acknowledge his greatness and sublimity?

In the world, such persons are rarely found in whom besides one or two virtuous qualities other qualities might also attain prominence, much less the convergence of all contradictory qualities. Because every temperament is not suited for the development of every quality, each quality has a peculiar tempo and each virtue needs a particular climate and they are appropriate only for such qualities or virtues with which they accord.

But where there is contradiction instead of harmony, the natural tendencies act as obstacles and do not allow any other quality to grow. For example, generosity and bountifulness demand that a person should possess the feeling of pity and God-fearing so that on seeing anyone in poverty or want, his heart would rend and his feelings would be disturbed at other's tribulations. While the dictates of bravery and fighting require that instead of pity and compassion there should be the passion of bloodshed and killing, prompting the person at every moment to enter into scuffle, ready to kill or be killed. These two qualities differ so widely that it is not possible to fuse the delicacies of generosity into the stiff manifestations of bravery just as bravery cannot be expected from Hatim nor generosity from Rustom. But the personality of Ali ibn Abu Talib (as) showed full accord with every greatness and complete harmony with every accomplishment and there was no good attribute or accomplishment which he lacked, nor any robe of greatness or beauty which did not fit his body.

Thus the contradictory qualities of generosity and bravery were found in him side by side. If he rained like the cloud in generosity, he also fought bravely standing firm as a mountain. Thus, his generosity and liberty of nature was of a degree that even during days of want and starvation, a major portion of whatever he earned as the wage of his day's toil was distributed among the poor and the starving. He would never allow a beggar to return disappointed from his door, so much so that even when in the battlefield the enemy asked him for his sword, he threw it before him being confident of the prowess of his naked arm.

An Urdu couplet says the following: The unbeliever depends on his sword But the believer fights even without it.

And his bravery and courage was such that the onslaught of armies could not shake the firmness of his foot with the result that he achieved success in every encounter and even the most brave fighter could not save his life in an encounter with him. Thus, Ibn Qutaybah writes in *Al-Ma'arif* saying, "Whomsoever he encountered bowed down to him. The heartless nature of the brave is not prone to thinking or pondering. Ali (as) had the quality of thinking of the highest degree. Thus, al-Shafi'i said as follows: 'What can I say about a man in whom three qualities existed with three other qualities that were never found together in any other man: generosity despite want, bravery with sagacity and knowledge with

practical achievements?”

It was the result of this proper thinking and correct judgement that after the death of the Prophet (S) when some people advised him to fight and promised to enlist warriors for him he rejected this advice. Although on such occasions, even a slight support is enough to encourage the heartless brave. Yet, the farsighted mind of Ali (as) saw at once that if a battle was waged at that moment, the voice of Islam would be submerged under the clatter of swords. Even then, if success was achieved it would be said that the status was gained by the power of the sword and there was no right for it. Thus, by withholding his sword on the one hand he provided protection to Islam and on the other saved his own right from the imputation of bloodshed.

When the veins are full of daring blood and the bosom full of flames of anger and wrath, it is extremely difficult to curb the passion of vengeance by adopting the course of forgiveness and, despite authority and power, to pardon and overlook. But Ali's metal used to shine on such occasions when his forgiving nature would accommodate even his bloodthirsty foes. Thus, at the end of the Battle of Jamal he made a general proclamation that no one who left the field or sought out protection would be assaulted and he let go without any punishment, even such enemies as Marwan ibn al-Hakam and Abdullah ibn az-Subayr. And the treatment that he meted out to Aisha. Aisha was a matchless manifestation of his nobility and high character and, in spite of her open enmity and rebellion, he sent with her women in men's garb to escort her to Medina.

By giving his own personal malice the garb of fundamental differences, man not only deceives others but also tries to keep himself under deception. In these conditions such a delicate situation arises that man fails to distinguish and separate his personal malice from a fundamental difference but easily mixes them together and considers that he has followed the Command of Allah and in this way he satisfies his passion for vengeance as well.

But Amir al-Mu'minin's discerning eyes never got deceived nor did they willingly deceive themselves. Thus, on an occasion after bringing down his opponent and placing himself on his bosom the vanquished opponent then spat on his face. As a mortal man, the Imam's rage should have risen and his hand should have moved quicker. Instead of being enraged, he got off from the man's bosom lest his action would be tarnished by personal feeling and slew him only after the anger had subsided.

There is nothing in common between combat and encounter and seclusion and God-fearing because one shows valor and courage while the other supplication and submission. But Amir al-Mu'minin (as) was a unique combination of both of these qualities as his hands that were bound in devotion were equally active in the battlefield and side by side with relaxing in seclusion for devotion he was a common visitor of the field of action.

The scene of the night of Harir puts human wit in astonishment and wonder when closing his eyes to the bloody action around, he spread his prayer cloth and engaged himself in prayer with full peace of mind

and heart while arrows were darting off sometimes over his head and sometimes from his right or left. But he remained engaged in Allah's remembrance without any fear or apprehension. Upon finishing, he again cast his hand on the sword's handle and the fierce battle that then followed is unparalleled in history. The status was that on all sides there was such hue and cry and fleeing activity that even voices falling on the ears could not be discerned. Of course, after every moment or so his own call of Allahu Akbar rose in the atmosphere and resounded in the ears and every such call meant death of a foe. Those who counted these calls of takbir recorded their number as five hundred and twenty-three.

The taste for learning and acquiring knowledge of Allah does not combine with material activity but Amir al-Mu'minin (as) adorned the meetings of learning and scholarship along with war-like pursuits and he watered the field of Islam with springs of learning and truth along with shedding streams of blood (in battles).

When there is perfection of learning, then even if there is not a complete absence of action, there must no doubt exist shortness of action, but Amir al-Mu'minin (as) treaded the field of knowledge and action equally, as has been already shown in al-Shafi'i's poetry.

Examples of harmony in utterance and action are quite rare but Amir al-Mu'minin's action preceded his utterance, as he himself says the following: "O people I do not exhort you to any action but that I myself first proceed towards it before you and do not desist you from any matter but that I first desist from it myself.

As soon as we think of a recluse and a pious man we visualize a face full of frowns because for piety, severity of temper and hardness of face are inseparable so much so that the thought of a smile on the lips of a pious man is regarded as a sin. But despite extreme piety and self-denial, Amir al-Mu'minin (as) always had such an appearance that his light temper and brightness of face was apparent from his looks and his lips always bore a playful smile.

He never showed frowns on his forehead like the dry recluse, so much so that when people could not find any defect in him, this very lightness of his temper was taken to be his fault, while a hard temper and a bitter face were held to be a virtues.

If a man possesses a cheerful heart and a joyous temper, he cannot command authority over others; but Amir al-Mu'minin's cheerful face was so full of awe and dignity that no eye could face it. Once Mu'awiyah tauntingly said, "May Allah bless Ali! He was a man of cheerful disposition." Then Qays ibn Sa'd retorted, "By Allah! Despite a cheerful disposition and an entertaining countenance, he was more awe-inspiring than a hungry lion, and this awe was due to his piety, not like your fear of the miscreants of Syria!"

Where there is rule and authority there is also a crowd of servants and workers, checks of grandeur and eminence with equipment of pageantry, but Amir al-Mu'minin's period of rule was an example of the highest simplicity. In him, people saw only a tattered turban in place of a royal crown, patched apparel in

place of the regal robes and the floor of earth in place of the ruler's throne.

He never liked grandeur nor allowed a show of external grandiosity. Once he was passing on a horseback when Harb ibn Shurahbil started walking with him and began talking. Amir al- Mu'minin (as) said to him, "Get back because walking on foot with me by one like you is mischievous for the ruler (me) and brings an insult to the believer (you)."

In short, he was such a versatile personality in whom numerous contradictory qualities had joined together and all the good attributes were centered in their full brightness as though his self was a collection of several selves and each self was an astounding portrait of achievement which showed forth the delineation of distinction in its untainted form and on whose accomplishment one wonders with bewilderment.

A Persian couplet says the following:

The figure of my beloved is so beautiful that when I cast my glance on the body from head to toe,  
Every spot there of calls my attention claiming to be the most enchanting.

1. There are two theories as to what brought those Jews to Medina. One says they went there from Jerusalem fleeing the persecution of the Romans. Another says they fled the persecution of fanatical rulers of Yemen who were appointed by the then Ethiopian empire, at the time fanatically Christian- Ed
2. Linguistically, the meaning of "Amirul-Mu'minin" is: the one who bestows knowledge on the believers, the one who "mirs" (pours knowledge upon) them.
3. Fixed verses are those which are never abrogated; the injunction(s) they contain remain valid forever.
4. This is surely a Prophetic prediction that Ali's right to the caliphate would be usurped. The usurpers were the very first to swear the oath of allegiance to Amirul-Mu'minin Ali (as) and the very first to violate it.

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