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## The First Imam, 'Ali (as) Ibn Abu Talib

It was Friday 13th of Rajab 30 Amulfeel Hazrat Fatima binte Asad, the wife of Hazrat Abu Talib entered the precincts of the Kaaba and prayed to Allah saying O'my protector ease my pain.'All of a sudden the wall of the Kaaba opened up and she, as if by some unseen force went inside the Kaaba and the wall closed.

'Ali (as) the youngest son of Abu Talib was born inside the Holy Kaaba. She stayed inside for three days. On the 3rd day she came out through the door and Muhammad was waiting outside. She told Muhammad (S) that the boy had not taken any milk. Muhammad gave him the first feed from his mouth and afterwards asked his uncle Abu Talib that he wished to adopt the baby.

'Ali entered the house of Muhammad from the very first day of his birth. 'Ali's mother Fatima binte Assad Also lived there who looked after his own son as well as Muhammad (S) so much so that later the Holy Prophet used to say that she was like his own mother.

Shah Waliullah, Mohadith-e-Dehlvi writes in the book "Izalatul Kholafa" giving reference from Imam Hakim in his Mustadrak Part 3, Page 483. Qud Tawatarul Akhbar Inna Fatimah Binte Asad woledat Aliyan Fi Jaufil Kaaba". Another writer of the old school Sibtel Jauzi in his book Tazkeratul Khawas ul Umma, page 7 mentions the same fact that 'Ali was born inside the Kaaba.

Khawja Moinuddin Chishti Ajmeri mentions this fact in his famous Quartet saying that when 'Ali was born inside the kaaba the Sky and the earth was filled with a light and Angel Gabriel announced that a child was born in the house of God.

Maulana Rumi in his Mathnawi writes, " O'one who travels to Najef to visit the tomb of 'Ali must know the fact that the pearl of the Kaaba lies there to give us security because of our intense love for him."

Masoodi the famous historian writes in his book of history Muruj el Zahab, that 'Ali was born inside the Kaaba on the orders of Muhammad the Messenger of God.

It was after the adoption of 'Ali (as) that he lived with the Holy Prophet in his house.

Wherever Muhammad (S) went 'Ali (as) was with him all the time. Even in the Mountain of Hira when Muhammad (S) went for meditation 'Ali (as) went with him most of the time. Sometimes they stayed on the mountain for 3 or 4 days. Sometimes 'Ali (as) took his food there. In Nahjul Balagha 'Ali (as) said that " I used to go with the Holy Prophet like the baby camel goes with his mother."

Some historians try to show that when Muhammad (S) declared his prophet hood 'Ali (as) was the first among male children who accepted Islam. The implication here is that both Muhammad (S) and 'Ali (as) were non-believers before this declaration.

This is against the Qur'anic verdict which says that Ibrahim was a Muslim and he taught his children to be Muslims so that when the Prophet was born among the descendants of Ibrahim through the line of Ismael he was born a Muslim and so was 'Ali. The correct thing to say would be that when Muhammad (S) declared his prophet hood openly 'Ali (as) immediately adhered to the declaration without hesitation.

The three persons seen in prayers in the Kaaba were Muhammad, Khadija and 'Ali before anyone else accepted Islam. For 3 years young and poor persons of Makka were accepting Islam secretly. The first open declaration came when the Qora'nic verse tells the Prophet to "come out openly and warn the people of your own clan."

Invitations were sent to leaders of the Banu Hashim to come to the house of Muhammad (S) for Dinner. Forty of them came, ate food and then heard Muhammad (S) about his mission of ' No god but Allah and Muhammad (S) as the messenger of Allah and whoever offers his help to propagate this religion will be his deputy and successor.

No one stood up except 'Ali (as) . After announcing this 3 times Muhammad (S) declared that 'Ali (as) will be his deputy to his mission and will be his successor after him. People thought it as a joke that a 13 year old boy was to be a deputy of this prophetic mission.

Even Abu Lahab jokingly told Abu Talib, go and obey your son to which Abu Talib smilingly accepted. 'Ali (as) promised to help Muhammad (S) in his mission and kept this promise all his life.

The next thing which we see in the life of 'Ali (as) is the reflection of this promise he gave at this place in front of the leaders of the Quraish.

We see 'Ali (as) protecting Muhammad (S) from the abuses of the enemies of Islam. When Muhammad (S) went to Taif a nearby town to preach Islam children of Taif hurled stones and it was 'Ali (as) who protected the Prophet and drove the stone throwing children away from the Prophet.

As a youth 'Ali (as) was strongly built, strong arms, wide chest and a very strong brave and shining face. Children of his age and even older to him were frightened of him and whenever they tried to mock the Prophet, they always ran away when they saw 'Ali (as) standing by for protection.

Time passed and hostility of the Quraish increased so much so that Muhammad (S) was ordered by

Allah to leave Makka. 'Ali (as) slept on Muhammad's bed without hesitation and when the non-believers entered the house of Muhammad (S) to kill, they found 'Ali (as) who was not afraid at all at the site of 40 swordsmen entering the house.

When they questioned 'Ali: "where is Muhammad" he bravely replied, did you leave him in my custody? When after 3 days of Muhammad's departure 'Ali returned all the goods entrusted to Muhammad to their owners, he set out to leave Makka for Madina with the rest of the family.

'Ali (as) had with him his mother Fatima binte Asad, His aunt, the wife of Hamza, and Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad (S) and many other ladies. Non-believers of Makka tried to stop 'Ali (as) from his departure but 'Ali (as) fought back, drove the infidels away and safely reached Madina. Muhammad (S) was waiting for the family outside the precincts of the town. He entered the city with 'Ali (as) and the rest of the family.

The Holy Prophet created a bond of brotherhood between the Muslims, making 'Ali (as) as his Muslim brother saying O'Ali, you are my brother in this world as well as in the next.

Once the family settled in the newly adopted city of Madina their first task was to complete the mosque around which their houses were also built. 'Ali initially stayed with his mother but when he married Fatima the daughter of the Prophet he was given a house next to the Prophet by the side of the mosque. He had been betrothed to her several days before the battle of Badr.

But the marriage was celebrated three months later. 'Ali was about 23 years old and Fatima was 18. This was most happy and celebrated marriage. The distinctiveness of their respective characters blended so well with each other that they never quarreled and complained of one another and led a happy and most contented life.

Materially the couple did not possess much, spiritually they were at the highest level of assent. They had no worries if they go hungry or their clothes had patches. They would be more concerned if an orphan goes away from their door without receiving any food.

History records 'Ali's life in Madina with the Holy Prophet for the next ten years as the busiest in defending Islam against the attackers from Makka. 'Ali (as) was always the standard bearer of the Flag of Islam in all such battles and his bravery became legendary.

Ibne Abil Hadid, the Motazelli commentator of Nahjul Balagha says that: 'Ali (as) 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 men are always hard hearted, cruel and eager to shed blood.

On the contrary 'Ali was kind, sympathetic, responsive and warmhearted person, qualities quite contrary to the other phase of his character and more suited to pious and God fearing persons.'Ali's bravery and

piety both became legendary. Life in Madina while the Holy Prophet was alive was the busiest for 'Ali. But he remembers these times as the best times of his life. He says in Nahjul Balagha 'Life with my brother was a life of ease and happiness.'

The battles of Badr, Uhud, Khandaq and Khyber were fought in the defense of Islam and won on the hands of 'Ali (as) . He was not only the standard bearer of the Flag of Islam in these battles, but always led the forces of Islam against Kufr and came out victorious. Khyber was the climax of these battles when 'Ali's victory brought prosperity in the Muslim ranks.

Ayesha the wife of the Prophet said once that until the victory of Khyber we in the house of the Prophet spent days without food. It was only after Khyber that life at home became a little easier. Thus 'Ali (as) brought an end to the hostilities of Quraish in three encounters of Badr, Uhud and Khandaq.

Their best warriors were killed, their unity against Islam was crushed, their pride was humiliated and their prestige before Arab clans was lowered by him and by him alone. Khyber saw an end to the hegemony of Jews in Arabia at the hands of 'Ali (as) .

The peace agreement of Hudaibiya was written by 'Ali (as) and at the time of the peaceful victory at Makka, the idols of the Kaaba were demolished by the Holy Prophet with the help of 'Ali (as) .Details of these battles were shown in the life of the Prophet.

## **Battle of Hunain**

The Victory of Makka brought many non believers into the fold of Islam. Broadly speaking there were three types who embraced Islam. Fear, greed and the true understanding of Islam and its principles. Some of the Makkans became Muslims for fear of their lives, they were afraid that the Prophet would kill them, others were simply frightened that the Holy Prophet with the help of Angel Gabriel would bring the wrath of God on them.

Then there was greed that Islam was now victorious, so if they joined in the good life would be theirs for free. Very few of them truly understood Islam and accepted it as a true faith. The Test of their true faith came immediately after the fall of Makka while Muslims were still in the sweet pleasure of this bloodless victory, that various tribes outside Makka gathered an army of 20,000 in Taif to fight the Muslims.

The hostile tribes decided to attack at a vantage point at Hunain and selected two prominent places where they concealed their archers. The Muslims were proud of their success in Makka, but their behavior during the encounter was timorous and cowardly. The Qur'an tells us this in (9:9):

***“God came to your help on so many occasions, on the day of Hunain, your vanity in the number of your soldiers and your arrogance did not prove any avail to you, you were badly defeated and could not find any place of shelter, you started running away without shame.”***

This encounter took place in the month of Shawwal 8th Hijri (Jan 630 AD). When the Muslim army marched towards the place where archers were concealed the enemy opened the campaign with such a severe onslaught that the Muslim army could not stand it.

Their assault was fierce and 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 and started running without putting any resistance and were not concerned to leave the Prophet alone, (see Saheeh Bukhari).

The first battalion to run was the one in the command of Khalid ibne Waleed (Rauzathus Safa vol II page 137) This was followed by such a disorderly and tumultuous flight that only 10 people were left out of an army of 15,000 with the Holy Prophet. Eight of them were of Bani Hashim, (.Abbas, two of his sons, 'Ali and three other cousins of the Holy Prophet)

Abbas was shouting to the Muslims to come back, reminding them of the oath of allegiance taken and promises made, but it was to no avail. Those who accepted Islam for greed, wealth and power were not willing to risk their lives.

Many of them who had carefully hidden their enmity from the rising power were happy at the defeat. They gathered round Abu Sofian, started congratulating him and saying, "The magical circle of the lying Prophet is broken," They were praying for the return of Polytheism. 1.

Once again it fell to the lot of 'Ali (as) to save the Holy Prophet and the Islam. Armies of Bani Hawaazen and Banu Saqeef under cover of their archers were rushing the hillock and were getting ready for a fierce onslaught.

'Ali (as) divided the small band of faithful true Muslims in three divisions; to Abdullah Ibne Masood, Abbas ibne Abdul Muttalib and Abu bin Harris has assigned the duty of protecting the Holy Prophet, to three he ordered to guard the rear and he himself faced the onslaught with only three warriors with him.

He fought, wounded at many places, but continued fighting when he faced the commander of the hostile army, Abu Jerdal in hand to hand fight and killed him with one stroke of his sword. He alone killed over 30 of the enemy and with this bravery his aids also fought bravely and enemy was defeated.

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 they started retreating. The sight of the powerful army in retreat, made the fleeing Muslims bold and they came back as victory was won for them 2.

The defensive battles were over and the peaceful spread of Islam began. 'Ali (as) was again in the forefront. He brought the whole tribe of Bani Hamdan to Islam by preaching. Similarly when he was sent to Yemen he brought the whole country in to the fold of Islam by his sermons.

This news so pleased the Holy Prophet that he bowed down in Sajdah to thank God three times and

said loudly, peace be to Bani Hamdan and to 'Ali. Again in the year 10th of Hijra 'Ali's sermon and preaching proved so effective that the whole province embraced Islam as one man.

In the 9th year of Hijra the famous event of Mobahela took place. Najran was a city in the province of Yemen. It was the center of Christian Missionary activities in southern Arabia. The Holy Prophet had written to the Chief Priest of the City to realize the blessings of Islam.

In reply he wrote that he personally would like to discuss the teachings of this new religion. His name was Haris. He was invited and came with a group of 14 priests.

These priests as guest of the Holy Prophet. Long discussions took place during the course of 4 days of their stay in Madina. When Sunday came the Chief priest wanted to go out of the city to have their Sunday Service. Prophet Islam said that they all have permission to conduct their religious service inside the mosque of the Prophet which they happily did.

Long discussions continued about monotheism verses trinity and it was realized that these priests were not open minded, on the contrary they were prejudiced against monotheism. The Almighty Lord ordered the Holy Prophet to explain to that:

***“Verily Jesus is as Adam in the sight of God. He created Adam from dust. He said unto him, Be, and he was. This is truth from thy Lord. be not therefore one of those who doubt, and whoever shall dispute thee, say unto them, “come let us call together our sons and your sons, our women and your women, our Selves and your Selves, then let us make imprecations and lay the curse of God upon those who lie.” (3:61)***

According to Bibi Ayesha when the above verse was revealed to the Apostle of God, he called 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husayn and said, “Lord, this is my family (Ahlul Bayt). The Holy Prophet took this small family with them to the open land outside the city where they all assembled to bring the curse of God on those who lie.

When the Chief priest saw these faces, he told his companions that he was looking at the faces that if they call the mountain, the mountain will go them. Do not have Mobahela with them or you will be destroyed. On hearing this they all agreed to pay homage to the Holy Prophet and an annual tax for living in the Islamic State and withdrew from the scene.

## **Designation of 'Ali as successor to the Prophet**

In history there were numerous occasions when the Holy Prophet designated 'Ali as his Deputy and successor after him. From the moment of Zulasheera to the time of the conquest of Khyber and the occasion of the battle of Tabuke the Holy Prophet made it abundantly clear that no one deserved more than 'Ali to be his Deputy and successor. But at the time of Ghadeer this was clearly ordered by Allah through a clear verse revealed on the Prophet. The Verse said,

***"O' apostle; proclaim the whole of that which hath been sent down to thee from thy Lord, for if thou dost it not, it will be as if thou hast not at all performed the duty of His Prophethood. And God will protect thee from evil men, verily God guideth not the unbelievers."*** (5:67.)

The occasion was after the last pilgrimage in 10th Hijri. The Prophet delivered his Sermons on Mount Arafat, had the final rounds of the Kaaba and left for Madina. More than 120,000 pilgrims were coming out with him from Makka going to the North.

Half way through their journey where the routes were separated for various pilgrims, the Holy Prophet ordered the whole caravan to halt. All those who went ahead were called back and for those who were behind they waited for them to arrive.

The place was Ghadeer, near the pool of water. That is why it was named Ghadeer-e-Khom. When all assembled at this place the Holy Prophet stood up on top of the pulpit and said, "People, shortly I shall be called towards my creator where I shall have to give an account as to how I have conveyed His message to you and you in your turn will be asked as to how you have accepted and carried out the teachings. Now tell me what you will say".

Thereupon all the pilgrims declared as one man, "Apostle of God, we testify and declare that you have conveyed the message of God fully, you have strived 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 God repay you for all that."

After that the Prophet said, "Do you not testify that there is no god but Allah, that Muhammad is His creature, His servant, and His apostle, that there is the Heaven and the Hell, that death will overtake every one of you, that you will be brought back from your graves that the Day of Judgement will surely dawn and human beings will be resurrected from their graves to account for their deeds.

The whole crowd declared in unison, "We believe and testify all this." Hearing this the Apostle declared, "I am leaving amongst you two most important things worthy of obedience, the Qur'an and my progeny (Ahlul Bayt). Take care how you treat them, they will not separate from each other till they reach me at the fountain of Kauser."

Then he said, "The Almighty God is my Lord (Maula) and I am the Lord of all Muslims and have more right and power on their lives than they themselves. Do you believe in this assertion of mine?" They all in one voice replied "Yes O'Apostle of God. Three times he asked the same question and three times he received the same affirmative reply.

At this solemn affirmation he said, "Hear and remember that to whomever I am Lord or Maula, 'Ali is the Lord and Maula to him. He is to me what Aaron was to Musa. The Almighty God is a friend to his friends and a foe to his foe, help those who help him and frustrate those who betray him.

While saying this he raised 'Ali High over his shoulders in order to be seen by all the Muslims assembled there. Thereupon the Holy Prophet received the final revelation:

***"This day I have perfected your religion for you and have filled up the measure of my bounties upon you and I am pleased with Islam to be your Deen," (5:3).***

After performing this ceremony and receiving the above revelation the Holy Prophet came down from the pulpit and ordered a tent to be erected. In this 'Ali (as) was made to take his seat and all Muslims were ordered to pay homage to him and address him as Amirul Momeneen (Lord of the faithful) The first person to congratulate and address him as such was Omar Ibne Khattab saying, "I congratulate you, O'Ali, today you have become my Maula and Lord and Lord of every Muslim man and woman. 1.

The event of Ghadeer was on 18th of Zilhijja 10th Hijri, immediately after the last pilgrimage by the Holy Prophet. He then arrived back in Madina and lived only for 70 days after the event. (130 Prominent Companions of the Holy Prophet narrated this Hadith including the first three Kholafa-e-Rashidoon)

The year 11th AH was the saddest year for 'Ali. (as) He lost two of his best friends. One of whom he loved and venerated like a father, like a master and like a dearest friend, the Holy Prophet(S) who died on 28th Safar 11th Hijri, exactly 70 days after the event of Ghadeer. His death followed by the death of his dearest companion his wife Fatima, the Lady of Light.

Immediately after the death of the Holy Prophet who was buried by 'Ali (as) with the help of his uncle Abbas and all the family of Bani Hashim, the news was given to 'Ali (as) about the events at the Saqeefa that Abubakr was made Caliph. Abu Sofian heard the news came to 'Ali (as) and told him that his Right was taken away from him.

If he wishes, Abu Sofian would fill the city of Madina with horsemen to defend 'Ali's Right of Khilafat. 'Ali's reply was typical, he said, "since when you have become friends of Islam", you want to create serious dissension amongst the Muslims. You have always tried to harm Islam I do not need your sympathies or help."

'Ali realized that any serious dissension at this stage would harm the cause of Islam. He had before him the example of Hodaibiya and he had been foretold by the Holy Prophet of all that would happen. Allama 'Ali Ibne Mohammed (630 AH) in his book Usdul Ghaba Vol iv page 31 says, The Holy Prophet had told 'Ali, your status is like that of Kaaba.

People go to Kaaba but that August house never approaches anybody. Therefore after my death, if people come to you and swear the oath of allegiance you accept it and if they do not come to you then you do not go to them."

'Ali's love for Islam was so intense, he could not, for the sake of worldly rule, endanger Islam. He knew fully well that a civil war at this stage would give chances to the Jewish tribes of Banu Nuzair and Banu

Qoraiza on the one side, and the Byzantine armies in the north with the Munafiqoon (hypocrites) the new converts on the third side to simply take advantage of the situation.

When they would find the Muslims busy killing each other they would literally cut them to pieces and Islam would totally disappear as a message of peace. 'Ali's utmost desire was to see Islam and the Arabs in one piece and wanted the enemies of Islam to realize that Islam was strong enough to defend itself as "Deen". even after the demise of the Apostle of God.

He had another important job to complete that is the completion of the collection of Qur'an with its Tafseer (explanations) according to the instructions of the Holy Prophet. Qur'an as a book was already completed by the Holy Prophet, many copies were made and circulated among the Muslim communities all over the Islamic world.

What 'Ali did in the next six months after the demise of the Holy Prophet was to collect all the explanations of the various verses, reasons behind their revelation and their full context. This monumental job he completed in six months and brought before the Muslims in the city of the Prophet.

Unfortunately this was ignored by the ruling party and 'Ali (as) took it back with him. Their comment was "this is too bulky and people will not understand it."

The original remained with 'Ali (as) all his life and then passed on to his son Hasan (as) and then to Husayn (as) which then continued with the Ahlul Bayt of the Prophet. It is now with the 12th Imam (as) .

During the time of the three Kholafa, although 'Ali (as) did not take part in any of the battles, he was always available when they sought his advice on religious matters. His position as the jurist was on the top of the list among the companions of the Holy Prophet.

Omar Ibne Khattab the 2nd Caliph had given clear instructions that when 'Ali was present in the mosque of the Prophet no one should take precedence over him in answering questions on religious matters.

In one such encounter during the time of the 2nd Caliph, a group of Jewish scholars approached the caliph and said, " We have a few questions. If we get the answers to these questions correctly, we will accept the Islamic faith. "Ask whatever you want to ask," said the caliph. They asked the following questions.

1. What are the locks and keys of heaven?
2. Who was the messenger who was neither of the human nor of the jinn and who warned his people?
3. Which are the 5 beings that were created without the aid of ovaries?
- 4 What are one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven and twelve?

The caliph thought over these questions for a time, then said, I do not know the answers to these

questions. I will take you to a man who is most knowledgeable in the commandments of God and the Prophet and the greatest among us. The caliph then brought the Jewish scholars to 'Ali (as) . They asked the same questions to him. 'Ali (as) answered thus:

1. The locks of the heavens are beliefs in more than one God, and its keys are the letters of "La Ilaha Illallah, Muhammad-Ur-Rasulallah."
2. The messenger who warned his people is the ant who, when Solomon's army was passing by, said to his people, " Enter your houses so that the army may not stamp you out (without intention)". So God states in the Holy Qur'an,  
***"Until they came to the valley of the Ants, said an ant (addressing the other ants of the valley) O" you ants' enter into your dwellings, so that Solomon and his hosts may not crush you while they know it not". (27:18)***
3. The five beings that were not born of ovaries are: Adam, Eve, the staff of Moses which used to change into a python, the camel of Saleh, and the sheep of Ibrahim (which was sent by God to become a ransom of the life of Ibrahim's son Ismael).
4. One is God who has no partners, two are Adam and Eve, three are the substances ( i.e. non-living matter, plants and animals), four are the Heavenly books: Torah of Moses, Bible of Jesus, Zubur of Dawood and the Qur'an of Muhammad (S).

Five are the daily prayers. Six are the days of creation of the heavens and earth, as per the verse of the Qur'an:

***"And indeed We created the heavens and the earth and what is between them two, in six periods and touched us not any fatigue." (Surah 50:38). Seven are the seven heavens, in the light of the Qur'anic Verse: "And we have erected above you the seven strong ones." (78:12)***

Eight are those angels who bear the heavens, as per the Qur'anic Verse:

***"And the angels shall be on the side of it; and above them shall bear that day 'Arsh'(the throne of authority). of your Lord, eight of them (69:17)***

Nine are the nine signs given to Moses as stated by God:

***"And indeed we gave Moses nine clear signs (miracles); so ask the children of Israel when he came to them, Pharaoh said to him; "Verily I deem you O'Moses one bewitched." (17:101).***

Ten are the ten days, i.e. God had promised Moses that he would stay on the mountain of Toor for thirty days, and later added ten more days to this duration, as it is stated in the Qur'an.

***“And we made an appointment with Moses for thirty nights and completed it with ten more;” Thus was completed the term of his Lord, forty nights, and (before he went up) Moses said to his brother Aaron: You take my place among my people, act rightly and follow not the path of the mischief-makers.” (7:142).***

Eleven are the brothers of Joseph, son of Jacob, as the Qur’an states,

***“When said Joseph to his father, O’my father; Verily I did see (dream) eleven stars and the sun and the moon,, I saw them all prostrating to me.” (12:4).***

Twelve are the Twelve water-springs manifested by the staff of Moses, as God states,

***“And (remember) when Moses sought water for his people; said We, ‘Strike the rock with your staff’ Then gushed out therefrom twelve springs; each people knew their drinking place; “Eat and drink God’s provision, and commit not evil in the earth acting mischievously.” (2:60)***

When the Jewish scholars heard the replies of ‘Ali (as) they said, “We bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad (S) is His Messenger and ‘Ali (as) is the “Wasi” and successor of the Messenger of God as Aaron was the Wasi of Moses. They all embraced Islam, went back to their tribe and converted all of them to Islam.(Kaukabe Durri).

After the death of Osman the 3rd Caliph ‘Ali (as) was elected by the overwhelming majority of Muslims as the 4th Caliph. He was reluctant to accept the office of the caliph but when pushed by the majority , accepted it by saying that he was taking the reins of worldly authority only to bring back the Ummah of the Prophet on the Right Path, though the value of this worldly khilafat is less than the sneeze of a goat.

His position as an Imam and guide was already established during the period of three earlier khulafa, with worldly power he began the daunting task of establishing the type of rule the Messenger of God had established during his time.

Imam Bukhari mentioned in his Saheeh that the very first prayers which ‘Ali (as) led in the mosque of the Prophet as the Caliph, many companions of the prophet said that “today we have prayed as the Messenger of God used to pray”.

But during the past 25 years many companions of the Prophet had, due to excessive wealth coming in from the conquest of the foreign lands, changed into the habit of living like feudal lords of the period of Jahiliya of pre-Islamic days. ‘Ali (as) as caliph warned them of the dangers of excessive wealth by these words. " Beware of the intoxication of wealth".(Masudi,Muruj el Zahab).

The path of ‘Ali (as) was full of thorns and as soon as he tried to establish the austere path of the Messenger of God, he created many enemies. The first and foremost was the Governor of Syria Moawiya ibne Abi Sofian.

He persuaded Talha and Zubair, when they were denied the Governorship of various provinces by 'Ali (as), to start a revolt against 'Ali. (as) Both of them left Madina, arrived in Makka and somehow persuaded bibi Ayesha the widow of the Prophet to start a fight against 'Ali. (as) They left Makka for Basra and assembled an army against 'Ali. (as) .

He warned them of the dangers of war against the caliph upon whose hand they had taken the oath of allegiance, but persuasion from Moawiya and promises of Governorship of various provinces was so strong that they would not hear any advice. 'Ali (as) left Madina in pursuit of these deviants and two Muslim armies faced each other near Basra.

When many companions of the Prophet saw this they questioned the validity of this war and cast doubt as to which party was on the right path. 'Ali (as) replied in the most subtle way to these doubters. " Truth cannot be identified from men, find the truth and you will find the deserving person".

The battle of Jamal was fought, 'Ali 's army was victorious, both Talha and Zubair were killed by their own men and bibi Ayesha was sent back to Madina under the escort of her brother Muhammad ibne Abibakr. She always repented this venture and asked forgiveness from God.

When with the connivance of Moawiya her brother Muhammad ibne abi bakr was killed and his body was put into the body of a dead camel and burnt, she cursed Moawiya five times a day after every prayer, throughout her life..

The Battle of Siffin was also fought due to the deviant action of Moawiya against the Islamic State. Some companions of 'Ali's army deserted him by accepting bribes from Moawiya and due to this deceitful action the battle of Siffin remained indecisive, no one won and no one lost.

In the meantime this deviant group which was later named as "Khawarij" meaning deviant, began to spread trouble within the Islamic State by looting and burning villages and killing women and children that 'Ali (as) fought against them and the battle of Nahrwan took place.

On the way to Nahrwan 'Ali (as) passed a monastery. An old Christian monk who also claimed to be an astrologer of some repute called out, " O' army of Islam, ask your leader to come to me. Upon hearing this 'Ali (as) turned his horse towards the monastery and approached the monk. Where do you go ask the monk. To fight the enemies of Islam, replied 'Ali (as) .

Do not fight now, because at this moment the stars do not favor the Muslims. Wait for a few days when the stars will become favorable for you. 'Ali (as) replied, do you defy Allah for this action we are taking on the orders of Allah and for His Deen.

'Ali (as) said, " since you profess knowledge of the stars, tell me about the movement of such and such star." The old man said, By God, I have never heard the name of this star. 'Ali (as) asked him another question about the skies and when the old man failed to reply said "It is now known that you do not

know about the skies.

Shall I ask you about the earth? Tell me what is buried beneath your feet at the spot where you stand. I do not know said the old monk, "There is a vessel filled with so many silver coins and the coins bear such and such emblem. How do you know enquired the monk".

"By God's grace." said 'Ali (as) . Then 'Ali proceeded to say that in the ensuing fight, less than ten persons of Islamic army would be killed whereas less than ten persons from the opposing army would escape. The old monk listened astonished. As per 'Ali's command, when the earth beneath the feet of the monk was dug, a vessel filled with silver coins was found exactly as described by 'Ali (as)

'Ali (as) proceeded to Nahrwan and in the ensuing fight, the Khawarij were thoroughly defeated. Out of the four thousand men of the Khawarij only nine escaped and only nine men of the Islamic army were killed in this battle. (Rawdhatul Shuhada, Kaukab el Durri )

Returning from the battle 'Ali (as) passed the monastery and when the monk heard the full story he embraced Islam immediately.

'Ali (as) also admonished him about his belief in astrology. He said " do you think you can tell the hour when a man goes out and no evil befall him. Whoever testifies this falsifies the Qur'an and becomes unmindful of Allah in achieving his desired objective and in warding off the undesirable."

Then 'Ali (as) addressed to his own soldiers and said "Beware of learning the science of stars except that with which guidance is sought on land or sea, because it leads to divining and an astrologer is a diviner, while a diviner is like the sorcerer, the sorcerer is like the unbeliever and the unbeliever's place is in hell."(Nahjul Balagha)

The four years and ten months of the Khilafat of 'Ali (as) has been regarded by many historians as the best example of Islamic State after the Prophet of Islam's death, in spite of the fact that the family of Abu Sofian tried their best to destroy it.

Imam Abu Yousuf the famous disciple of Imam Abu Hanifa in his book about the history of Kholafae Rashedun declares above the title of his book that 'Ali's (as) time of Khilafat was the best in the management of the Islamic State and most just.

Many European historians mentioned 'Ali's name with love and affection. Carlyle writes in his Heros and Heroworship that" 'Ali had such a personality that he was liked, loved and venerated by everybody. He was the man of excellent character loving and lovable, 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."

The famous Egyptian scholar Mohammad Abdoh relates a story about the time of the conquest of Alexandria during the reign of the 2nd caliph. They found a great library there and did not know what to

do with it.

Orders were issued from Madina that 'if these books are according to the Holy Qur'an, 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 any case they ought to be burnt. (Akhbarul Ulama wa Aakhbarul Hukama of Ibne Quftee, pages 232 and 233, Printed Cairo).

When 'Ali (as) heard the news of this, he tried to persuade them to refrain from issuing such order. He told them, "These 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 the Holy Book and would assist and help in further explanations of the knowledge as presented by the Holy Prophet. Knowledge is an asset for human beings and a birth right of man. It should not be destroyed."

It was 19th of Ramadan 41 Hijri while 'Ali (as) was leading the morning prayers and was in the second Sajdah of the 2nd Rakaat that Ibne Muljim's sword fell and the life of the greatest warrior saint was taken away to his merciful Lord.

The famous christian writer of Lebanon George Jurdaq writes in his books on 'Ali (as) that with this one blow of the sword of Ibne Muljim the world was deprived of the person who, if had lived a few more years would have given the world a system of administration that future generations would have benefited for a long time to come."

In fact the letter to his Governor of Egypt Malike Ashter advising him of the "Do's and Don'ts for a successful administration of the State is the hall mark in the annals of history". We can only say that 'Ali's supreme wisdom provides the guidance of a stature that mankind can aspire to.

'Ali (as) injured with the wound from the poisonous sword lived for two days. In these two days he dictated his Will and last testament to his son Hasan (as) which is again a brilliant part of literary history.

He advised his eldest son to love God and obey Him and to live for the service of the people in the way of God. "And then do not forget to set apart the best of your time for communion with God, although every moment of yours is for Him, provided it is spent sincerely in the service of your people."

'Ali's (as) sermons, collected by Sayyid Razi in the 4th century (AH) are the examples of the most brilliant piece of Arabic literature that after the Holy Qur'an and the authentic Hadith of the Prophet of Islam, ever produced.

What Sayyid Razi could compile in Nahjul Balagha does not contain all the Sermons, letters and sayings of 'Ali (as) . Masoodi (d.346) in his famous book of history Muruj-al-Zahab says that the only Sermons of 'Ali, (as) which have been preserved by various people, number more than 480.

These were extempore orations, people have copied them from one another and compiled them in the book forms' they have cited them and quoted passages from them in their books. The famous companion and pupil of 'Ali (as) Hasan al Basri had made such arrangements that one of his own friends would memorize the sermons delivered in the mosque of Kufa and relate the same in the next Friday prayer in Basra. This shows the deep interest people of his own time had in these sermons and sayings.

Apparently out of these 480 sermons some were lost and Sayyid Razi could lay hands on only 245 sermons. Besides them he has collected about 75 letters and 489 sayings. Almost every one of the sermons, sayings and letters collected in Nahjul Balagha is to be found books of authors who died long before Sayyid Raza was even born.

Here we quote a few selected sayings of 'Ali (as) from Nahjul Balagha, The numbers given as they appear in the English translation by Sayyid 'Ali Raza from Pakistan.

1. During civil disturbance be like an adolescent camel that has neither a back strong enough for riding nor udders for milking." ( 1, page 568)

2. He who adopts greed as a habit devalues himself, he who discloses his hardship agrees to humiliation, and he who allows his tongue to overpower his Nafs debases the Nafs.(2 page 569)

5. Knowledge is a venerable estate, good manners are new dresses and thinking is a clear mirror. ( 5, page 569)

7. Charity is an effective cure, and actions of people in their present life will be before their eyes in the next life.( 7, page 570)

10.Meet people in such a manner that if you die they should weep for you and if you live they should long for you.( 10, page 571)

27." Keep walking in your sickness as long as you can."(27, page 576)–A simple cure through exercise and ignoring the sickness as much as possible)

31. Faith stands on four supports: on endurance, conviction, justice and Jihad.(31 page 576)

40. The tongue of the wiseman is behind his heart and the heart of the fool is behind his tongue.(40 page 579)

45. Even if I strike the nose of a believer with this sword for hating me, he will not hate me, and even if I pile all the wealth of the world before a hypocrite for loving me he will not love. This is because it is pronounced by the tongue of the beloved Prophet. O"Ali, a believer will never hate you and a hypocrite (Muslim) will never love you.( 45 page 580)

54. There is no wealth like wisdom, no destitution like ignorance, no inheritance like refinement and no

support like consultation.(54 page 584)

64. The people of the world are like travelers who are being carried while asleep. 64, page 584)

67. Do not feel ashamed for giving little, because refusal is smaller than that.( 67, page 584)

90. The perfect jurist of Islam is he who does not let people lose hope from the mercy of Allah, does not make him despondent of Allah's kindness and does not make him feel safe from Allah's punishment.( 90 page 589)

117. Two categories of persons will face ruin on account of me; he who loves me with exaggeration and he who hates me intensely. (117 page 594)

146. Protect your belief by charity, guard your wealth by paying Allah's share, and ward off the waves of calamity by praying.(146 page 600)

334. Beware of disobeying Allah in solitude, for the witness is also the judge.(334. page 648)

The famous French historian and Orientalist Gabriel Enkiri writes in his famous book 'Le chevalier de Islam', In the extremely superfine, grand and noble character of 'Ali, there were two traits which, it is difficult to believe that can be united in one man.

Besides 'Ali, history cannot show any other man who has displayed these two qualities at one and the same time, and each one, in such a marked way that none can surpass him.

1. He was the greatest marshal of his time (even of all time) and , 2. He was the wisest man who could explain and expound religion, philosophy, science, sociology and ethics, in a style which was not and which cannot be improved; what is more, he was such a great speaker that his speeches enchant you even fourteen centuries after his death".

Read the book called Nahjul Balagha and find out yourself.

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