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The First Imam: Ali Ibn Abi Talib

Birth and Martyrdom

The first Imam of the Shi'ah, Imam Ali (a.s.), was born on thirteenth of Rajab, thirty years after 'amul Fil in Mecca, inside the Ka'bah.

His father was Abu Talib and his mother was Fatimah Binti 'Asad. His nicknames were Abu Turab, Abul Hasan, Abus Sibtayn, and Abur Riyhanatayn. His titles were Amiral Mu'minin, Sayyidul Muslimin, Imamul Muttaqin, and Sayyidul 'Awsiya'.^{[1](#)}

He was hit by Ibn Muljam Muradi when performing the Morning Prayer on nineteenth of Ramadan and was martyred on Ramadan twenty first. His holy body was buried outside Kufah (now called Najaf).

Imam 'Ali in Prophet Muhammad's Age

A precise detailed review of Imam Ali's (a.s.) life requires authoring tens of volumes of books. The present book, however, can only point out the major events of his lifetime briefly.

Imam Ali (a.s.) left his father's house at age six to live with Prophet Muhammad (S), with suggestion of the Prophet (S), who accepted the guardianship of Ali (a.s.). This way, Ali (a.s.) learnt much from Prophet Muhammad (S)'s conduct and followed his teachings. He accompanied Prophet Muhammad (S) in his 'i'tikaf (seclusion for worship) in Hara' cave, observing the signs of revelation and prophethood.^{[2](#)}

Ali (a.s.) was the first man to accept Islam and pray with the Prophet (S). He was nearly ten years old then.^{[3](#)}

In difficulties of early prophet hood of Muhammad (S), Ali (a.s.) was always at his service and the best helper for him. In economic, social, and political embargo of the infidels against the Muslims in Shi'bi Abu Talib (Abu Talib valley), Ali (a.s.) was present.

When the infidels threatened Prophet Muhammad (S)'s life and he was going to immigrate to Medina, Imam Ali (a.s.) slept in his bed to save his life on *Laylatul Mabit* (the night of staying). Then he got a mission from the Messenger of Allah (S) to finish the Prophet (S)'s incomplete works and immigrate to Medina along with some ladies from the Prophet (S)'s Household.[4](#)

The Messenger of Allah (S) signed a brotherhood contract with Ali (a.s.) in Medina.[5](#)

In the second year after Hijra, Ali (a.s.) was honored to become Prophet Muhammad (S)'s son-in-law, marrying Hadrat Fatimah (s.a.), the best lady of the world.[6](#)

At that time, Imam Ali (a.s.) was a powerful brave young man ready for war and *Jihad*. He participated in all the wars, battled bravely, and killed the enemies of Islam. He had a major role in victory of the Muslims, being far ahead of other battlers.[7](#)

During his prophetic mission, the Prophet of Islam (S) gave two important duties to Imam Ali (a.s.); first, writing and collecting the Quranic verses (ayat) and chapters (surahs), and second, learning and maintaining religious sciences, teachings, commandments, and rules revealed to Prophet Muhammad (S).

Ali (a.s.) accomplished these two responsibilities very well by Allah's support and under direct supervision of Prophet Muhammad (S).

Imam 'Ali After Prophet Muhammad's Demise

Imam Ali (a.s.) was thirty three at the demise of prophet of Islam (S). The Messenger of Allah (S) had frequently announced Ali's (a.s.) Imamate and caliphate after himself during his lifetime. Therefore, after the Prophet (S)'s demise, the caliphate position was transmitted to Imam Ali (a.s.); he was the Prophet (S)'s successor and the people were obliged to prepare the conditions for his caliphate.

Unfortunately, however, a group of ambitious people ignored Prophet Muhammad (S)'s recommendations, abandoned Ali (a.s.) for illogical excuses, such as young age, and took the oath of allegiance with Abu Bakr. After Abu Bakr, 'Umar got the caliph and after him 'Uthman. The caliphate of the three of them lasted twenty four years and some months.

During this period, though Imam Ali (a.s.) knew caliphate as his legitimate right, he avoided any severe opposition or schismatic speech in order to safeguard Islam. Furthermore, he helped the government officials when necessary, giving them consultation and scientific-cultural assistance. He also attempted in propagating authentic Islamic sciences and teachings and training virtuous perfect Muslims.

In the year thirty five after hijrah, 'Uthman was killed during the riot of a group of Muslims. The Muslims, afterward, enthusiastically and urgently took the oath of allegiance with Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.), selecting him as the caliph and Imam.[8](#)

From then on, caliphate of the Muslims found its real course and it was hoped that previous losses and problems be compensated and the Prophet (S)'s authentic goals be pursued under Imam Ali's (a.s.) leadership and by cooperation of Prophet Muhammad (S)'s sincere companions. Nevertheless, this was not accomplished. Imam Ali's (a.s.) justice, opposition with prejudices, and following Prophet Muhammad (S)'s tradition was not liked by a group of opportunists.

Although these people were among the allegiants, they began opposition with Imam Ali (a.s.) from the beginning, facing the newly-established Alawite government with three devastating wars; Jamal, Siffiyn, and Nahrawan. Imam Ali (a.s.) could do nothing but defense against these civil wars and stop the seditions. This way, the realization of Divine Justice, Imam Ali (a.s.), found little opportunity to lead the government in the direction of genius Islamic purposes, such as justice, equality, fighting prejudices, removing social gap, and defending the oppressed poor people.

Finally, Imam Ali (a.s.) was martyred by one of hypocrite people when worshipping and the pretty call of equality was silenced forever. Reviewing these three devastating wars requires a wider opportunity. The readers interested in historical discussions can refer to Islamic history books.

Texts Proving His Imamate

As mentioned before, the reasons for Imamate are of two kinds. The first kinds of reasons are general reasons used for proving the Imamate of every infallible Imam, which are not mentioned again here.

The second kinds of reasons are the ones mentioned by each Imam for the Imam after him. In biography of infallible Imams (a.s.), including Imam Ali (a.s.), we cite only these reasons.

As pointed out in previous sections, the honorable Messenger of Allah (S) prepared the conditions for Imam Ali's (a.s.) Imamate during his prophetic mission. He frequently emphasized the virtues of Ali (a.s.), recommending his companions to follow Ali (a.s.) as caliph. Finally, Prophet Muhammad (S) officially appointed Ali (a.s.) to wilayat (guardian) of the Muslims during his *Hajjatul wida'* (last *Hajj* pilgrimage) in Ghadir Khum.

Some of the traditions about this issue were cited in previous sections, which are not repeated here. The eager readers can refer to those sections and other related books.

Virtues and Ethics

As testified by tradition and history books, Imam Ali (a.s.) was a perfect human and the realization of all ethical virtues in the best possible way and he was away from any vices and evilness.

His enemies avoided publishing of his virtues, vilifying and cursing him in sermons and from atop tribunes for many years. His friends could not talk about his virtues for the fear of the enemies, who killed everyone demonstrating Shi'ism. Nevertheless, the Sunni and Shi'ah books are replete with his

virtues.

Muhammad Ibn Mansur Tusi quotes from 'Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, "The virtues cited for Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) has not been cited for any of Prophet Muhammad (S)'s companions."[9](#)

Asbagh Ibn Nabatah says, "One day Dharar Ibn Dhamarah came to Mu'awiyat Ibn Abi Sufyan. Mu'awiyah told him, 'Describe Ali for me.' Dharar said, 'Do not ask me this!' 'You should describe him,' said Mu'awiyah again. Dharar said, 'May Allah bless Ali! When he was among us he was like one of us. When we went to him we felt ourselves close to him. When we asked him questions he answered. When we went to see him he accepted us with no doorkeeper. Though we visited him face to face, we did not dare talk to him out of awe. His smile was like a string of pearl.'"

Mu'awiyat said, 'Tell me more.' Dharar said, 'May Allah bless Ali! By Allah that he was awake most of the times and slept little. He recited the Quran day and night. He surrendered his heart to Allah and repented to Him with tears. No curtains were hung for him and no one prevented us from seeing him. He did not lean in meetings and it was not hard for him.'"

'O Mu'awiyat! I wish you saw Ali (a.s.) in dark nights; holding his beard, agonizing like a snake-bitten person, and saying, 'O world! You have attended to me. I do not need you and divorce you three times. Woe! Woe! (I fear) the far destination, little provision, and difficult path!'"

Asbagh Ibn Nabatah continues, "Then Mu'awiyah cried and said, 'That is enough. By Allah that Ali was so. May Allah bless Abul Hasan!'"[10](#)

Sa'id Ibn Kulthum says, 'I was with Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.), when we talked about Amiral Mu'minin, Ali (a.s.). Imam Sadiq (a.s.) praised him much and stated, "By Allah that Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) did not eat a single unlawful morsel in his whole life. If he were to choose between two desirable things, he chose the one more religiously desired. No difficult situation happened to Prophet Muhammad (S), except that he asked help from Ali (a.s.), because he trusted Ali (a.s.).

No one could act as the Prophet (S) but Ali (a.s.). Ali (a.s.) behaved as if he was between the Paradise and the Hell; he was always hopeful of the Paradise and fearful of the Hell. He bought and freed one thousand servants from his own property acquired by hard work during his lifetime. The sustenance of his family and him was olives, vinegar, and dates. His clothing was only from burlap."[11](#)

Imam Ali's Knowledge

As pointed out before, Prophet Muhammad (S) had a mission from the Exalted Allah to teach religious sciences, teachings, commandments, and rules to Imam Ali (a.s.). Prophet Muhammad (S) accomplished this mission gradually during his prophet hood. Imam Ali (a.s.) recorded and learned all the sciences by Allah's support and under Prophet (S)'s supervision. Moreover, with the Prophet (S)'s recommendation, he recorded this knowledge collection in some books for the Imams after himself. For

this reason, Imam Ali (a.s.) can be called ‘treasurer of Prophetic sciences’.

The Messenger of Allah (S) had praised the scientific stance of Ali (a.s.) many times. He stated, “I am the city of science and Ali is its gate. Everyone who wants the sciences should enter the city gate.”^{[12](#)}

The companions of Messenger of Allah (S) confessed to Ali’s (a.s.) knowledge, especially in judgment. Abu Harirah has quoted from ‘Umar Ibn Khattab, “In judgment, Ali (a.s.) is the most knowledgeable of us.”^{[13](#)}

Sa’id Ibn Musayyib has said, “‘Umar always took refuge in Allah from any difficult problem in which Ali (a.s.) was not present.”^{[14](#)}

‘Alqamah has quoted from Abdullah, “We always said that Ali (a.s.) is the most learned one in Medina in issues of judgment.”^{[15](#)}

Aban Ibn ‘Ayash said, “I asked Hasan Basri about Ali (a.s.). He said, ‘What do I say about Ali (a.s.)? He is the first one to accept Islam. His jurisprudence, knowledge, and virtues are obvious to everyone. He always cooperated with Prophet Muhammad (S). His brevity, piety, familiarity with judgment issues, and his relation with the Messenger of Allah (S) are undeniable.”^{[16](#)}

Ibn Abbas has said, “The science of Messenger of Allah (S) is from Allah’s science and the science of Ali (a.s.) is from the science of Messenger of Allah (S) and my science is from Ali’s (a.s.) science. The science of other companions and I in comparison to Ali’s (a.s.) science is like a drop in comparison to seven seas.”^{[17](#)}

Ibn Abbas has also said, “When a trustworthy person quoted a verdict from Ali (a.s.) we did not transgress it.”^{[18](#)}

Adhinah Abdi has said, “I asked ‘Umar, ‘Where should I become muhrim (wear *Hajj* garb) for performing ‘Umrah (a kind of *Hajj* pilgrimage)?’ ‘Umar answered, ‘Ask Ali (a.s.)!’”^{[19](#)}

Abu Hazim has said, “Someone went to Mu’awiyah and asked him a question. Mu’awiyah told him, ‘Ask Ali (a.s.), because he is the most knowledgeable.’ The questioner told Mu’awiyah, ‘Your answer is better than Ali’s answer for me.’ Mu’awiyah said, ‘You told something bad. You dislike the speech of someone who has learned the sciences of Messenger of Allah (S). The Messenger of Allah (S) told Ali (a.s.), ‘Your relation to me is like the relation of Aaron to Moses. The difference is that no prophet comes after me.’ ‘Umar referred to Ali (a.s.) for solving difficult problems, too.”^{[20](#)}

Imam Ali’s Worship

Imam Ali (a.s.) was one of the best worshippers of his time. His worship was excellent both in quantity –the amount of worship– and in quality –sincerity, full attendance, presence of heart, and observation of

Allah.

Amiral Mu'minin (a.s.) stated, "Some people worship the Almighty Allah in hope of reward; this is the worship of merchants. Some worship Allah for fear of punishment; this is the worship of servants. Still some others worship the Exalted Allah for thanking Him; and this is the worship of the tolerant."[21](#)

He has also stated, "O Allah! I do not worship you for fear of punishment or in hope of reward; rather, I know You worthy of worshipping so I worship You."[22](#)

Someone told Imam Ali (a.s.), "Have you seen your Lord that you worship Him?" Imam Ali (a.s.) answered, "Woe be on you! I do not worship the Lord Who I have not seen." The questioner asked, "How have you seen Him?" Imam Ali (a.s.) replied, "Human eye cannot see Allah, rather his heart can perceive Allah by real belief."[23](#)

Qushayri writes, "When the prayer time came Amiral Mu'minin's (a.s.) face discolored and his body shook. He was asked about the reason for this change of state. Imam Ali (a.s.) answered, 'It is the time for returning a trust, which the Almighty Allah presented to the Heavens and the Earth and the mountains, but they could not bear accepting it. The weak human, however, accepted that trust. I wonder if I could have returned the trust well.'"[24](#)

Imam Sajjad (a.s.) read the book in which Ali's worship was recorded. Then he put the book down and said, "Who can worship like Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.)?"[25](#)

Ibn Abbas says, "Two camels were granted to Prophet Muhammad (S). He told his companions, 'I will give one of these camels to the one who performs a two- rak'ah (unit) prayer, with complete attention to Allah and without thinking of worldly affairs.' Only Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) answered this request. Then Prophet Muhammad (S) granted both camels to him."[26](#)

Habbah Arani says, "One night Nuwf and I were sleeping in Darul 'Imarah yard. We saw Imam Ali (a.s.) who had put his hand on the wall while walking and said like a heartsick person, ***'Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, there are indeed Signs for men of understanding...'***"[27](#)

He repeated these Quranic verses, walking infatuatedly. Imam Ali (a.s.) told me, 'O Habbah! Are you awake?' I answered, 'Yes I am. You behave like this (out of Allah's fear). What should we do?' Imam Ali (a.s.) began weeping and said, 'O Habbah! The Almighty Allah is closer to you and I than our neck vessel; nothing hides us from Him.'"

Then Imam Ali (a.s.) told Nuwf, 'Are you awake?' Nuwf replied, 'O Amiral Mu'minin! I am awake. You made us cry tonight.' Imam (a.s.) stated, 'If you cry in darkness of night for fear of Allah, your eyes will be illuminated on the Last Day.

O Nuwf! Everyone who drips a tear from Allah's fear his sins will be forgiven. O Nuwf! Everyone who

weeps from Allah's fear and his loving and disliking is for Allah's sake will have a high position. O Nuwfi! Everyone whose affection is for Allah's sake will prefer nothing to that affection. Everyone whose hatred is for Allah's sake will not spend his hatred for his own sake. This way the real belief will be maintained and improved."

Then Imam Ali (a.s.) preached us and said at last, 'Fear Allah!' Then he said while leaving, "O Lord! I am wondering if you have ignored me or attended to me. I wish I knew how my stance is with these long sleeps and little thanking!"

Habbah has said, "By Allah that he was in the same state until the dawn."[28](#)

Mu'awiyah once told Dharar Ibn Dhamarah, "Describe Ali for me." He said, "I saw Ali (a.s.) in some occasions worshipping in darkness of night. He had grasped his beard, agonizing like a snake-bitten person, weeping, and saying, 'O world! Go away from me! Do you come to me? It is not your time. Deceive others, not me! I do not need you. I divorce you three times. Your period is short, your value is little, and my desire for you is scarce. Alas, my provisions are little, the travel is long, the destination is great, and the path is difficult!'"[29](#)

Imam Ali's Piety

Piety means no affection for or interest in worldly issues, such as property, positions, wives, and children. Imam Ali (a.s.) was one of the greatest pious men. Hasan Ibn Salih says, "In the circle of 'Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz, the pious people were discussed. Everyone introduced a pious person. 'Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz said, 'The most pious person in the world was Ali Ibn Abi Talib.'" [30](#)

Sufyan says, "Ali (a.s.) did not add a brick over another brick and did not make a shelter. His food came from Medina, too."[31](#)

Ibn Abbas says, "Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) bought a garment with three dirhams and wore it when he was caliph."[32](#)

'Asbagh says, "Ali (a.s.) went to the bazaar for buying cloths. He bought two pieces of clothes; one was three dirhams and the other two dirhams. He told his servant Qanbar, 'You wear the three-dirham garment and I wear the two-dirham one.' Qanbar said, 'The three-dirham one is more proper for you; you perform sermons for the people.' Imam (a.s.) stated, 'You are young and the more expensive garment is better for you. I am ashamed of Allah to wear a better cloth than you wear.'" [33](#)

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said, "Amiral Mu'minin (a.s.) was the most similar person to the Prophet (S) in eating. He ate bread, vinegar, and olives and fed the people on bread and meat."[34](#)

Imam Ja'far Ibn Muhammad (S) stated, "Some food was brought to Imam Ali (a.s.) made with dates, raisins, and oil, but he refused to eat. He was then told, 'Do you know this kind of food unlawful?' Imam

Ali (a.s.) replied, 'No, it is not unlawful, but I fear that I may like it and get used to it.' Then he recited this verse,

'And on the Day that the Unbelievers will be placed before the Fire, (It will be said to them): Ye received your good things in the life of the world.' [35](#)[36](#)

Imam 'Ali and Dividing War Booties

The method of Imam Ali (a.s.) in dividing war booties was this way:

First, he believed that war booties belong to all the people, who were generally poor at that time. For the same reason, when there were booties or other property in Muslims treasury, Imam (a.s.) divided them among the people at once, or else he was not calm.

Second, Imam Ali (a.s.) divided the existing property equally among all the people, not preferring the rich over the poor. He believed distribution of treasury property should not cause social gap.

On the second day after people's oath with him, Imam Ali (a.s.) performed a sermon, part of which was:

You are Allah's servants and this property is for Allah too. I will divide it equally among you. No one is preferred to another. The pious servants will get the best reward from the Almighty Allah in the Hereafter. The Exalted Allah has not set the reward of His pious servants in this world; rather the good people will have the best remuneration from Allah.[37](#)

He also stated elsewhere, "No one is preferred to another in dividing *Baytul mal* (Muslims' treasury). The method of dividing is clear. It is the property of Allah and you are His servants. Allah's Book is among us; we believe in it and are surrendered to it. We are well aware of the Prophet (S)'s method of dividing it, too. Anyone who is not happy with this method of dividing the *Baytul mal* can do whatever he wants to. Everyone who obeys Allah and follows His rule is not afraid of anything."[38](#)

Majma' says, "Ali (a.s.) swept the *Baytul mal* place every Friday. Then he performed two rak'ahs of prayer and said, 'Testify for me on the Last Day!'"[39](#)

He also stated, "The Messenger of Allah (S) never postponed dividing of the *Baytul mal* property to the next day."[40](#)

Abu Salih Samman says, "One day, Imam Ali (a.s.) entered the *Baytul mal* building and saw some property there. He said, 'I do not like to see any property here.' Then Imam (a.s.) ordered to divide it among the Muslims. And he swept the place and performed prayer there."[41](#)

Abu Hakim has quoted from his father that Imam Ali (a.s.) divided the treasury property three times in a year. Then some property was brought from Isfahan. He told the people, "Come to divide the property among you for the fourth time. I cannot be a treasurer."[42](#)

Some property was brought from Isfahan. Imam Ali (a.s.) divided all of it equally among the people and even divided a loaf of bread into seven pieces and gave it away.[43](#)

Abu Is'haq says, "Once two women were present when dividing the *Baytul mal*; an Arab woman and a non-Arab one. Imam (a.s.) gave each of them twenty five dirhams and a bowl of food. The Arab woman told Imam Ali (a.s.), 'O Amiral Mu'minin! Do you equal me with this non-Arab woman?' Imam (a.s.) stated, 'I found no preference for the progeny of Ismail to the progeny of Isaac in dividing the *Baytul mal* property.'" [44](#)

Sahl Ibn Hanif came to Imam Ali (a.s.) with his servant and said, "O Amiral Mu'minin! This has been my servant who I have freed; give his share from the *Baytul mal*." Imam (a.s.) gave both Sahl and his servant three dinars.[45](#)

A group of Imam Ali's (a.s.) companions went to him and stated, "O Amiral Mu'minin! Give more of the *Baytul mal* to Arab nobles, the Quraysh nobles, and those you fear of their opposition compared to the non-Arabs and freed servants." Imam Ali (a.s.) stated, "Do you recommend me to oppress some people for getting victory? By Allah, I will never do this. By Allah that if this was my own property and I wanted to divide it among the people, I observed equality, let alone the property is for the public."

After a while he said again, "Everyone who has a wealth should avoid corruption, because improper granting of property is extravagance. It will make him famous among the people, but little before the Almighty Allah. If someone spends some property improperly and for wrong people, Allah will deprive him of their gratitude and attract their affection to others. If some of them thank him apparently, it is merely false and flattery and for more benefit. If the granter needs the grantees one day, they will be his worst friends.

Therefore, if the Exalted Allah grants a property to someone, he should use it in strengthening kinship ties, hosting guests, freeing the servants, and helping the debtors, poor travelers and immigrants and be patient in bearing the hardships. Surely acquiring these good characteristics is getting virtues in this world and the Hereafter, too." [46](#)

Imam Ali (a.s.) complained about people's fleeing into Mu'awiyah when speaking with Maliki Ashtar. Malik told Imam Ali (a.s.), "O Amiral Mu'minin! We fought the people of Basrah and Kufah while we were united. But now people have disagreement, the intentions are weak, and justice is decreased. You want to behave justly and follow the truth. You retrieve the right of weak people from oppressor powerful ones and give no preference to the noble.

A group of your companions are afraid of the truth, because your conduct includes them too. They are afraid of your just performance, because it includes them too. Mu'awiyah, however, does not conduct so. He grants property and positions to the noble ones. Most of the people incline to worldly wealth. Most of them do not like the truth, tend to dishonesty, and prefer this world to the Hereafter."

O Amiral Mu'minin! If you grant money to the people too, they will incline to you, become benevolent, and like you. May the Almighty Allah prepare the conditions for you, defeat your enemies, and undo their plots; surely He is aware of their intrigues.”

After praising Allah, Imam Ali (a.s.) stated, “Regarding what you said about my justice, the Exalted Allah says in the Holy Quran,

‘Whoever works righteousness benefits his own soul; whoever works evil, it is against his own soul: nor is thy Lord ever unjust (in the least) to His Servants.’ [47](#) I am fearful of delinquency in establishing justice.”

Regarding what you said about people’s going toward Mu’awiyah –because accepting the truth is hard for them– Allah knows well that they do not do so due to my oppression and for Mu’awiyah’s justice. Rather their goal is obtaining the bliss of this transient world. The Exalted Allah will question them in the Hereafter if they have pursued worldly goals or conducted for Allah’s sake.”

Concerning your speech about preference of the noble in dividing the *Baytul mal*, I cannot give more than people’s right to them from the public property. The Almighty Allah says,

‘How oft, by God’s will, Hath a small force vanquished a big one? God is with those who steadfastly persevere.’ [48](#)

Prophet Muhammad (S) was appointed prophet when he was alone. Allah, however, changed his loneliness to honor and intensity later. If Allah wants to strengthen our guardianship, he will ease the hardships. I accept your words, if Allah is content with them. You are one of my most reliable and benevolent companions.”

Strictness in Defending the Truth

One of the major characteristics of Imam Ali (a.s.) is his strictness in opposing oppression and defending the oppressed people’s right. He believed that oppression cannot be resisted by leniency, rather by sternness.

He said in this regard, “Weak people are dear to me, so that I revive their rights and the powerful people are weak to me, so that I take back the right of weak people from them.” [49](#)

Mughayrat Ibn Sha’bah went to see Imam Ali (a.s.) and told him, “It is obligatory for us to advise you. The officials appointed by ‘Uthman are powerful in cities. If you dismiss them all together, a riot will break out, which cannot be suppressed easily. You’d better renew their missions for one year to foster your government. Then you can do whatever you want. One of these officials is Mu’awiyah who is very powerful and weighty in Sham.”

Imam Ali (a.s.) replied, “Do you guarantee that I will be alive to dismiss Mu’awiyah?” Mughayrah said, “No.” Imam (a.s.) stated, “If I give the guardianship of two Muslims to Mu’awiyah on a dark night, will I not be reckoned in the Day of Judgment? I will never ask help from the misled people. I frequently told ‘Uthman to dismiss these oppressor people. Now should I hire the same people?”⁵⁰

He also stated, “By Allah that I will take back the rights of the oppressed people from the oppressor ones. I will restrain the oppressor people and force them to commit to the truth.”⁵¹

Defending the oppressed deprived people was one of the major goals of Amiral Mu’minin (a.s.), which he never abandoned. He did not bear oppression even in unimportant events.

Imam Baqir (a.s.) stated, “One day Ali (a.s.) came home when it was so hot. A woman waiting for him said, ‘O Amiral Mu’minini! My husband has oppressed me, violated my right, and swore to bite me. I fear him. Help me!’ Imam Ali (a.s.) said, ‘O servant of Allah! Waite until it becomes a little cool, then we will go to your house.’ The woman said, ‘My husband was very angry. If I return home late, he will get angrier.’ Amiral Mu’minin (a.s.) thought for a while and said, ‘By Allah that I should get back the right of an oppressed one. Where is your house?’ Then Imam Ali (a.s.) accompanied that woman to her house, stood beside the door, and said, ‘Assalamu Alaykum!’

A young man came out and Imam (a.s.) told him, ‘Fear Allah! Why did you scare and expel your wife?’ The young man who did not know Imam (a.s.) told him, ‘It is not your business! By Allah that I will fire her!’ Amiral Mu’minin (a.s.) told him, ‘I enjoin you goodness and avoid from evilness. Do you threaten your wife in my presence?’ At this time, the passengers said hello to Amiral Mu’minin (a.s.). The young man knew the Imam (a.s.), feared, and said, ‘O Amiral Mu’minin! Excuse me! I will surrender to my wife’s wishes from now on.’ Imam Ali (a.s.) sheathed his sword and told the woman, ‘Go to your home! Do nothing that enrages your husband this much!’”⁵²

Equality before the Law

Imam Ali (a.s.) considered all people equal before the law, even a Christian citizen and himself.

Sha’bi says, “Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) found his armor with a Christian man and went to a judge called Shurayh. Imam Ali (a.s.) told Shurayh, ‘This is my armor. I have not sold it nor have I granted it.’ Shurayh told the Christian man, ‘What do you say?’ He replied, ‘The armor is mine, but I do not consider Amiral Mu’minin a liar.’ Shurayh asked Imam Ali (a.s.), ‘Do you have a witness for your claim?’ ‘No,’ Imam Ali (a.s.) answered. Shurayh voted for the Christian man and against Imam Ali (a.s.). The Christian man took the armor and went. But then he returned and said, ‘I testify that this kind of judgment is like the prophets’ verdicts. Amiral Mu’minin brought me before a judge appointed by himself and the judge voted against him. I testify that there is no deity but Allah and I testify that Muhammad (S) is His servant and messenger. O Amiral Mu’minin! This is your armor. When you went toward Siffiyn, I was moving behind your army. This armor dropped from atop your camel and I took it. This is yours;

take it!’”

Amiral Mu’minin (a.s.) stated, “Now that you embraced Islam, I give the armor to you.” Then Imam Ali (a.s.) rode the Christian man on his horse.

Sha’bi says, “Later on I was informed that this Christian man fought in Imam Ali’s (a.s.) army when fighting Khawarij.”[53](#)

Ja’dat Ibn Hubayrah went to Imam Ali (a.s.) and said, “Two persons are coming to you to judge among them; one of them likes you more than his life and property and the other one is your enemy and he kills you if he can. So judge for your fan!” Amiral Mu’minin (a.s.) pounded on Ja’dah’s chest and said, “My verdict will be Allah’s verdict and I should issue verdict based on the truth.”[54](#)

- [1.](#) A’lamul Wura, Vol 11, pp 306–307; Al-Irshad, Vol 1, p. 5.
- [2.](#) Manaqib ‘Ali Abi Talib, Vol 2, p. 205–206.
- [3.](#) Manaqib ‘Ali Abi Talib, Vol 2, p. 7.
- [4.](#) Manaqib ‘Ali Abi Talib, Vol 2, pp. 68–78.
- [5.](#) Manaqib ‘Ali Abi Talib, Vol 2, p. 210.
- [6.](#) Manaqib ‘Ali Abi Talib, Vol 2, p. 207.
- [7.](#) Manaqib ‘Ali Abi Talib, Vol 2, p. 94.
- [8.](#) Tadhkiratul Khawas, p. 56.
- [9.](#) Al-Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Vol 3, p. 63.
- [10.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 41, p. 14.
- [11.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 41, p. 110.
- [12.](#) Manaqib Kharazmi, p. 40; Al-Mustadrak Hakim Niyshaburi, Vol 3, p. 127.
- [13.](#) Tabaqat Ibn Sa’d, Vol 2, p. 339.
- [14.](#) Tabaqat Ibn Sa’d, Vol 2, p. 339.
- [15.](#) Tabaqat Ibn Sa’d, Vol 2, p. 338.
- [16.](#) Sharh Nahjul Balaghah, Ibn Abil Hadid, Vol 4, p. 96.
- [17.](#) Yanabi’ul Mawaddah, p. 80.
- [18.](#) Tabaqat Ibn Sa’d, Vol 2, p. 348.
- [19.](#) Dhakha’irul Uqba, p. 79.
- [20.](#) Dhakha’irul Uqba, p. 79.
- [21.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 41, p. 14.
- [22.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 41, p. 14.
- [23.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 41, p. 16.
- [24.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 41, p. 17.
- [25.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 41, p. 17.
- [26.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 41, p. 18.
- [27.](#) Surah ‘Ali ‘Imran 3, 190–200.
- [28.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 41, p. 22.
- [29.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 40, p. 345.
- [30.](#) Translation of Al-Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Vol 3, p. 202.
- [31.](#) Translation of Al-Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Vol 3, p. 188.
- [32.](#) Translation of Al-Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Vol 3, p. 191.
- [33.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 40, p. 324.
- [34.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 40, p. 330.

- [35.](#) Surah Al-‘Ahqaf 46: 20.
- [36.](#) Al-Gharat, Vol 1, p. 90.
- [37.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 32, pp. 17–18.
- [38.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 32, pp. 20.
- [39.](#) Al-Gharat, Vol 1, p. 46.
- [40.](#) Al-Gharat, Vol 1, p. 47.
- [41.](#) Al-Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Vol 3, p. 180.
- [42.](#) Al-Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Vol 3, p. 181.
- [43.](#) Al-Gharat, Vol 1, p. 51.
- [44.](#) Al-Gharat, Vol 1, p. 70.
- [45.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 41, p. 117.
- [46.](#) Al-Gharat, Vol 1, p. 75.
- [47.](#) Surah Fussilat 41: 46.
- [48.](#) Surah Al-Baqarah 2: 249.
- [49.](#) Nahjul Balaghah, Sermon 37.
- [50.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 32, p. 386.
- [51.](#) Nahjul Balaghah, Sermon 136.
- [52.](#) Biharul Anwar, Vol 41, p. 57.
- [53.](#) Al-Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Vol 3, p. 196.
- [54.](#) Al-Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Vol 3, p. 200.

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