



امير المؤمنين

**IMAM ALI**

IBN ABI

**TALIB** (PBUH)

The Commander  
of The Faithful

**FAWZI AL-SAIF**

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



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# preface

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In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The Revelation that descended upon the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) praised the Commander of the Faithful (Peace Be Upon Him). The very words of the Prophet himself explicitly declared that were all people to unite in the love of Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Almighty Allah would not have created the Fire. Some scholars have also asserted that his virtues (Peace Be Upon Him) were concealed by his allies out of fear and by his enemies out of envy. Despite all that, what remained unconcealed filled the horizon. Others, announcing their own inability to describe him, declared that he is a man to whom every virtue is ascribed, to whom every sect traces its origin, and whom every faction seeks to claim. He is the chief of all virtues, their very spring, their prime source, the unique in their arena, and the champion of their contest. All who excelled in

them after him took from him, followed his path, and measured themselves by his example.

Addressing the virtues of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) is like echoing the plea found in the Glorious Quran: They said: O exalted one! distress has seized us and our family: we have [now] brought but scanty capital: so pay us full measure, [we pray thee], and treat it as charity to us: for Allah doth reward the charitable.

In this book, as is the case in the other biographical works of the Infallible in this series, I begin with a brief overview of his life (Peace Be Upon Him), from the time before his birth until his martyrdom. I then expand upon his multifaceted roles during the days of those who preceded him in rule, a period of intertwined historical events. I also delve into his assessment of that era through Al-Shaqshaqiya. It is imperative to address the wars and battles waged against him (Peace Be Upon Him), covering his stances against the Allegiance-Breakers, the Unjust, and the Separatists. Light is shed on the well-known narration concerning his assassination and martyrdom in the Mosque of Kufa. Following that, I quickly touch upon his reformative program for the nation and his government. Muslims' oppression of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) is also addressed, both in his own days and that which continues to this very day. Though his virtues have filled books despite the concerted campaign to suppress them through concealment and false interpretation, they continue to shine like a guiding light to reach an understanding of his Imamate (Leadership). Finally, I briefly mention his scholarly heritage and offer a glimpse into his family life, all with the aim of introducing some facets of the biography of this Great Imam.

I must remind the esteemed readers of what is usually not hidden from them: that while citing texts from their sources, especially the books of the School of the Caliphs (Sunni sources), I have not altered anything, despite any reservations I may have, such as their adherence, regrettably, to the incomplete prayer lacking mention of the Prophet's Household, and similar issues. I leave it to the esteemed reader to understand that quoting these phrases and similar expressions does not imply my agreement with them. The esteemed reader will also notice the frequent citing of books and sources from the School of the Caliphs. I must point out that this is not because I deem them more authentic or credible, but for a different reason: in matters where there are two differing parties from the schools and sources, it is necessary, as far as possible, to cite the sources which the adversary accepts and which the proponent of the argument cannot reject, at least within the bounds of a compelling case.

The title Commander of the Faithful is chosen because it is the epithet that is most befitting for him alone, and it is the necessary outcome of his guardianship (Wilayah) imposed upon every believing man and woman, and every Muslim. Even though this title may have degenerated to the level that the Caliphate became a contest among deviants and singers, whereby the title Commander of the Faithful reached this low standard. Yet, the truth is that this title is tailored to the measure of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Peace Be Upon Him), so much so that a prohibition was narrated against addressing the Imams of Guidance from his progeny with this title, the reason being stated that it is exclusive to Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him).

I extend my thanks to all the brothers and sisters who collaborated with me in preparing this book and provided valuable assistance, thereby shortening the time of its completion. I ask Almighty Allah to grant them an immense reward and to resurrect them and us under the intercession of the Commander of the Faithful (Peace Be Upon Him) and his descendants. I also necessarily thank my beloved family for generously offering the time that could have been spent with and on them, thus providing a beautiful opportunity to be engrossed in preparation and writing. I ask Almighty Allah to include them in the reward for all of this. I also remember my parents (may Almighty Allah have mercy on them), for they have the greatest favor, after the grace of Almighty Allah, in all that I am. I ask Almighty Allah to grant them a share of the reward and recompense.

**Fawzi Ibn the Late Muhammad Taqi Aal Saif**

**On the Day of the Demise of the Chosen Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household)**

**28th Safar, 1445 AH.**

**Tarout, Qatif - Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

# Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him): Before Birth to Martyrdom

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## 1. The World Before Birth

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There is a misconception among many people that life, in all its stages, begins the day one emerges from the mother's womb and ends when one re-enters the depths of the earth. Religion corrected this misconception and informed people that just as life long precedes birth, it also does not cease simply with the return to the dust. There are numerous references to the biological life. In a similar way, there are numerous references to the world of the Return and the Afterlife. The focus here is made on the former world. It is sometimes referred to as the World of

Atoms/Particles (Alam Al-Dhar)<sup>[1]</sup>. At other times, it is referred to as the World of Lights (Alam Al-Anwar)<sup>[2]</sup> or the Pre-Adam world. Perhaps, due to this misconception, some people reject the narrations and traditions that recount the virtues connected to those prior worlds of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household).

Among the things rejected by the Umayyad approach, stemming from this premise, is the narration transmitted by

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[1] It is mentioned in the interpretation of the ayah "When thy Lord drew forth from the Children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, [saying]: "Am I not your Lord [who cherishes and sustains you]?"- They said: "Yea! We do testify!" [This], lest ye should say on the Day of Judgment: "Of this we were never mindful" (Surat Al-A'araf: 172). Al-Qurtubi said in his interpretation that Almighty Allah guided them through His creation to His Oneness. In the school of Ahl Al-Bait (Peace Be Upon Them), there are two opinions. The first opinion indicates that when Adam was created, his descendants appeared in the form of atoms, until his last human offspring. According to some narrations, this atom or atoms emerged from the clay of Adam himself. This atom had a mind and sufficient awareness to listen, speak, and respond. So Almighty Allah addressed the atom, saying, "Am I not your Lord?" The atoms all responded, "Yes, we testify." The second opinion states that what is meant by this world and this era is the world of preparation and "aptitude," and the "era of innate nature," formation, and creation. When the children of Adam emerged from the loins of their fathers into the wombs of their mothers, as sperm no more than small atoms, Almighty Allah granted them the readiness to accept the truth of monotheism.

[2] Al-Shaibani, Abu Bakr Ibn Abi Asim: Kitab Al-Sunnah, with Dhilal Al-Jannah by Al-Albani 1/179. Maysara Al-Ghajar said: I said: O Prophet, when were you made a prophet? He said: "And Adam was between the soul and the body." Al-Albani said about it: Its chain of transmission is authentic.

the Imam of the Hanbali School, Ahmed, in his book Fada'il Al-Sahabah: Salman said: I heard my beloved Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) saying: 'Ali and I were a Light, fourteen thousand years before Almighty Allah created Adam. When Almighty Allah created Adam, He divided that Light into two parts: one part is me, and the other part is Ali (Peace Be Upon Him).<sup>[1]</sup>

This meaning may have been distributed across many hadiths narrated from the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), including his saying: I and Ali were created from one Light four thousand years before Almighty Allah created Adam. When Almighty Allah created Adam, He placed that Light in his loins. It remained one until separating it in the loins of 'Abdul-Muttalib, assigning Prophethood to me and Caliphate to Ali.<sup>[2]</sup> Similarly, there are other narrations in Shia books<sup>[3]</sup>

From this narration and its counterparts, the beginning of the life of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) is linked to the life of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household); they are one light. Their light is prior to the creation of Adam. Based upon, they are from the same light, they are similar in flesh and blood. This reality persists until after their existence in this world. The only difference is the division of that light after 'Abdul-Muttalib, the Prophet's grandfather, into his two sons, Abdullah, the Prophet's father, and Abu Talib, Imam Ali's father (Peace Be Upon Them).

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[1] Al-Shaibani: Ahmed Ibn Hanbal, Fadhail Al-Sahaba, 2\662.

[2] Al-Dailami, Abu Shujaa, Al-Firdaws bi Mathour Al-Khitab, 2/191.

[3] In his Encyclopedia of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib 4/408, the late Al-Ray Shahri collected a large number of hadiths under the title: Ali and I are from one light, and under the title: From one tree.

Starting from this point will facilitate the observer's understanding of many of the stations and ranks that Imam Ali held in relation to the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household). Many aspects shape the value of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), including his birth inside Kaaba, the command to keep his door open to the Prophet's Mosque while all other doors were closed as both matters are integral to their purification from defilement, the Prophet's guardianship over him, their brotherhood, his marriage to Fatimah by divine command, his succession, and his authority over the people, making him more deserving of them than their own selves. All these aspects proceed along a natural and coherent line.

## 2. His Birth in Kaaba

He was born on the thirteenth of Rajab, 30 years after the Year of the Elephant, which corresponds to the tenth year before the Prophetic Mission. This blessed birth occurred inside the sanctified Kaaba in an unprecedented and unparalleled event in the human history. This event encompassed several distinct miraculous aspects, as figured out below.

Before delving into the core event, the miracle, I will briefly note that the merits and virtues mentioned for the Prophet, Imam Ali, or the other Imams, are not merely intended to proclaim the glory or greatness of station. Rather, they additionally serve to declare that they are uniquely distinguished with things that are not awarded to others. Based upon, it would not be deemed strange that the Prophet Muhammad becomes a Prophet or Imam Ali becomes his successor. These narrations pointing to high stations and exceptional degrees are signs for guidance

to the Divine Proof. An explanation of this meaning will follow when discussing the virtues of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him).

Late Shaykh Al-Saduq (May Almighty Allah Have Mercy on Him) mentioned the Imam's birth in Kaaba in a number of his works, with his chain of transmission leading to Saeed Ibn Jubair, who said: Yazid Ibn Qa'nab said:

I was sitting with Al-Abbas Ibn Abdul-Muttalib and a group from Abdul-Uzza opposite the Sacred House (Kaaba) when Fatima Bint Asad, the mother of the Commander of the Faithful (Peace Be Upon Him), approached. She was nine months pregnant with him in a state of labor. She said: 'My Lord, I believe in You, and in Prophets and Scriptures. I affirm the words of my ancestor Ibrahim (Peace Be Upon Him), who built the Ancient House. By the sacred right of the One who built this House and by the right of the infant in my womb, grant me an easy delivery, O, Lord.

Yazid Ibn Qa'nab said: 'We saw the House open from its rear. Fatima entered and disappeared from our sight, and the wall sealed shut. We attempted to open the lock of the door, but it did not open. We knew then that this was an affair from Almighty Allah.

Then she emerged after the fourth day, with the Commander of the Faithful (Peace Be Upon Him), in her hand. She then said: 'I have been favored over the women who preceded me. Asiya Bint Muzahim worshipped Almighty Allah secretly in a place where Almighty Allah is worshipped out of necessity. Maryam Bint Imran shook the dry palm tree with her hand until she ate fresh ripe dates from it. But I entered Almighty Allah's Sacred

House and ate from the fruits and provisions of Paradise. When I desired to leave, a caller heralded to me: 'O Fatima, name him Ali. Almighty Allah, the Most High, the Exalted (Al-Ali Al-A'la), says: 'I have derived his name from My Name, I have disciplined him with My discipline, and I have informed him of the hidden depths of My knowledge. He is the one who will smash the idols in My House. He is the one who will proclaim the Call to Prayer (Adhan) upon the roof of My House. He will sanctify and glorify Me. Bliss is for he who loves him and obeys him, and woe to he who disobeys him and hates him.<sup>[1]</sup>

Since we have addressed this topic in detail in our book, *Notables of the Prophetic Household*, within the topic on Fatima Bint Asad, the mother of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon them, I see no need to reiterate. Instead, I will quote what I wrote there, where I stated:

The traditionists and historians, including Al-Hakim Al-Naysaburi in his book *Al-Mustadrak 'ala Al-Sahihayn*, mentioned that the matter of her giving birth to him in Kaaba is among the consecutively transmitted narrations. He stated this in response to the claim of Mus'ab Al-Zubairi that no one was born before or after Hakim in Kaaba. Al-Hakim said that Mus'ab erred in this<sup>[2]</sup>.

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[1] Ibn Babawayh, *Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Al-Hussain*, Maani Al-Akhbar, p. 62; *Al-Amali*, 195.

[2] Anyone who looks at what was reported by al-Nishapuri, the author of *al-Mustadrak*, will notice three ways in which he addressed the issue of birth in Kaaba. In one of the narrations, he indicates that Hakim Ibn Hizam was born in Kaaba: "I heard Abu Al-Fadhl Al-Hassan Ibn Ya'qub say: I heard Abu Ahmed Muhammad Abdul-Wahhab say: I heard Ali Ibn Uthman Al-Amiri say: Hakim Ibn Hizam was born inside Kaaba. His mother entered Kaaba and went into

It has been consecutively transmitted in narrations that Fatima Bint Asad gave birth to the Commander of the Faithful Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Peace Be Upon Him) inside Kaaba.<sup>[1]</sup> For anyone desiring further verification and detailed scrutiny of the narrators of the narrations concerning Hakim and the standing of their chains of transmission, they should refer to the specialized books on this subject<sup>[2]</sup>. However, in another place, Al-Hakim stated that no one, save Imam Ali, was born in the House before him or after him! Al-Kanji Al-Shafi'i states that the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Peace Be Upon Him), was born in Mecca in the Sacred House of Almighty Allah on the night of Friday, the thirteenth night of Rajab, 30 years after the Year of the Elephant. No one, before or after him, was ever born in the Sacred House of Almighty Allah<sup>[3]</sup>.

This view has generally been adopted by Shi'a of Ahl Al-Bait and a large group of other Muslims. Meanwhile, another faction

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labor there, so she gave birth in the House." He then passes over it. Then another narration comes in another place in his book Al-Mustadrak, in which he denies that Hakim was the only one born there, but rather that there are many reports about Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). He considers Mus'ab Al-Zubayri to be mistaken in his statement that Hakim was the only one! Then in a third place, as Al-Kanji Al-Shafi'i reported from him in Kifayat Al-Talib /407, he states that the one born in Kaaba was Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) and no one was born there before or after him!! It is possible that this third narration is the one that agrees with what he believes.

- [1] Al-Naisabouri, Al-Mustadrak ala Al-Sahihain, 3/550.
- [2] Ali Walid Al-Kaaba by Allamah Al-Ardubadi; Fadhail Ameer Al-Muminin Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) Al-Mansouba li Ghairih by Dr. Jawad Kadhim Munshid Al-Nasr Allah.
- [3] Al-Shafi'i Al-Kinji, Kifayat Al-Talib fi Fadhail Ameer Al-Muminin Ali Ibn Abi Talib / 407.

attributed this merit to others. Just as they attributed killing Marhab to Muhammad Ibn Maslama Al-Ansari, they attributed this unique merit of being born inside Kaaba to Hakim Ibn Hizam Ibn Khuwaylid!

Muslim Al-Naisabouri is the only one to state that Hakim was born inside Kaaba, without providing any proof. Scholars state that no one else is known to have shared adopting this view with him!.

Two points should be noted here. The first point is that no one is found to have mentioned this virtue for Hakim Ibn Hizam prior to Muslim Ibn Al-Hajjaj Al-Naisabouri (who died in 261 AH), except Al-Zubair Ibn Bakkar. The second point is that Muslim's mention of it is without a chain of transmission (Isnad). Rather, it is an opinion or a conviction on his part, which weakens it. Even if Muslim is considered authoritative by some people, it is only by virtue of his being a Hadith scholar and a narrator.

Those who came after Muslim are even more explicit in loose transmission and lack of a chain<sup>[1]</sup>, such as Al-Nawawi, Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani, and others. In fact, Ibn Hajar clarified the source of this idea and where it originated. Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani (who died 852 AH) said: Al-Zubair Ibn Bakkar narrated that Hakim Ibn

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[1] Dr. Jawad Al-Nasrallah arrived at two conclusions after his detailed research. First, the narrations of Hakim's birth are entirely mursal (unsupported), as there is not a single narration with a complete chain of transmission. Second, even if we were to accept the authenticity of the birth despite the weakness of its narrations, it would have been a coincidence and not the result of intention on the part of Umm Hakim Ibn Hizam.

Hizam was born inside Kaaba. He said that Hakim was one of the notable men of Quraysh in the pre-Islamic and Islamic periods<sup>[1]</sup>.

Al-Zubair Ibn Bakkar Al-Asadi Al-Qurashi (descendent of Abdullah Ibn Al-Zubair), who died in 256 AH, could not have been transmitted from directly by Ibn Hajar. thus, the narration regarding him is mursal (lacking a narrator link). Likewise, Al-Zubair Ibn Bakkar himself, who is separated from Hakim Ibn Hizam by approximately 200 years until his death, also narrates his information about him as mursal (lacking a link to the narrator).

Indeed, because Hakim Ibn Hazim Ibn Khuwaylid was the paternal cousin of Al-Zubair Ibn Al-Awam Ibn Khuwaylid and Al-Zubair Ibn Bakkar is his descendant, this virtue was stolen, attributed to him, and subsequently became widespread and popular. It is not unlikely that Muslim Ibn Al-Hajjaj Al-Naisabouri narrated this from Al-Zubair Ibn Bakkar Al-Zubairi without explicitly attributing it to him, perhaps due to the possibility of accusation being leveled against him. This issue is due to the fact that Al-Zubair Ibn Bakkar was the paternal cousin of his grandfather, Al-Zubair. It is worth mentioning here that no one, neither during the Umayyad nor the Abbasid periods, was able to mention the established virtues of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him)<sup>[2]</sup>.

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[1] Al-Asqalani, Ibn Hajar, Tahdhib Al-Tahdhib 2/44.

[2] When Khalid Al-Qasri, one of the governors of the Umayyad period, asked Muhammad Ibn Shihab Al-Zuhri to write a biography of the Prophet and his battles. Muhammad Ibn Shihab Al-Zuhri knew Khalid Al-Qasri's stance towards Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). Ibn Shihab Al-Zuhri asked Khalid Al-Qasri, if something from the

## The Questionable Merits of Hakim Ibn Hizam

One may wonder about the distinction of Hakim Ibn Hizam over all others. The fact is that he only embraced Islam after the Conquest of Mecca. He converted about twenty years after the start of the Prophet's Mission (13 years in Mecca + 6 years until its conquest from Medina). He was counted among those who were given concessions to keep them ostensibly in Islam<sup>[1]</sup>.

Birth inside Kaaba is supposed to be a station of glorification and honor. It entails transcending the law of (Remember We made the House a place of assembly for men and a place of safety; and take ye the station of Abraham as a place of prayer; and We covenanted with Abraham and Isma'il, that they should sanctify My House for those who compass it round, or use it as a retreat, or bow, or prostrate themselves [therein in prayer]<sup>[2]</sup>. The House must remain pure. It is known that any woman who

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 life of Ali Ibn Abi Talib faces me, should I mention it? Khalid said, No, unless you see him in the depths of Hell. Al-Aghani by Abu Al-Faraj Al-Isfahani, vol. 22/281.

As for the Abbasids, the story of the hadith scholar Al-Jahdhami is sufficient. He narrated that whoever loves the Prophet, Ali, his two sons, and Fatima (Peace Be Upon Them) will accompany the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) in Paradise. He was to be whipped a thousand lashes, had it not been for intercessors who denied his allegiance to Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Peace Be Upon Him).

[1] In Al-Isti'ab 1/362, Ibn Abdulbarr said: Those whose hearts are to be reconciled refers to a group of Muslims whose inner belief in Islam was weak, so they were given sums of money in order to remain steadfast in the religion of Islam. It is not a virtue, but rather a blemish and a slander.

[2] Surat Al-Baqarah: 125.

gives birth must enter a post-natal bleeding state, which is a condition that is incompatible with both material and spiritual purity. This is one aspect. The other aspect is that Kaaba is the holiest spot, as is firmly ingrained in the minds of Muslims and even non-Muslims, so the one born inside it is presumed to possess qualities that qualify him for this distinction.

However, Hakim possessed a distinctive trait that may have worked in his favor, which is his relation to the Zubairi family. His ancestor, Al-Zubair Ibn Al-Awam Ibn Khuwaylid, and Hakim Ibn Hizam Ibn Khuwaylid were cousins. When the biography and Islamic history began to be written, a significant portion was authored by 'Urwa and Al-Zubair Ibn Bakkar. The first step they did was the denial of this distinction for the Commander of the Faithful by some obstinate predecessors, who attributed it to Hakim Ibn Hizam instead. The second step came from some later scholars. After failing in the first attempt, they sought to nullify it as a merit altogether. They questioned the value of being born in Kaaba, questioning the significance of a birth inside Kaaba that was filled with idols. They argued that it had no value, and that it was better for a person to be born in their own home than amidst idols.

If that is the case, then why were the predecessors desperately eager to establish this event for a specific person? Why did they insist that no one else, before or after him, was born there? Is being born in Kaaba, especially in the miraculous manner<sup>[1]</sup> concerning Fatima Bint Asad and the birth of the Commander

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[1] Refer to the idea conveyed by the narration of Sheikh Al-Saduq that was mentioned earlier.

of the Faithful, the same as a person being born in the middle of his house? Does the presence of idols, due to the actions of the disbelievers, truly render it valueless? Almighty Allah said about Al-Safa and Al-Marwah, which do not attain the sanctity of Kaaba: (Safa and Marwa are among the Symbols of Allah. So if those who visit the House in the Season or at other times, should compass them round, it is no sin in them. And if any one obeyeth his own impulse to good,- be sure that Allah is He Who recogniseth and knoweth<sup>[1]</sup>. This was a response to the hesitation of some Muslims to walk between them because of the idols at both ends. The Creator informed them that these are among His symbols and that the presence of those idols, placed there by the disbelievers, does not impair their symbolic status<sup>[2]</sup>.

### 3. His Father and Mother

His father is Abu Talib, the Sheikh of the Valley of Mecca and a believer among the Quraysh who concealed his faith, for which Almighty Allah granted him a twofold reward. While he stood as the very emblem of the Prophet's support and guardianship throughout his lifetime, he later became the target of those who revile Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful. These detractors insisted, and continue to insist, on his disbelief, an assertion that serves only to undermine the lofty standing of his son,

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[1] Surat Al-Baqarah: 158.

[2] Aal Saif, Fawzi: Figures from the Prophetic Family / 65. It is a beautiful blessing that I am writing these pages next to the Holy Shrine of the Commander of the Faithful (Peace Be Upon Him). I ask Almighty Allah to grant us his intercession (Peace Be Upon Him).

Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Them). Shia scholars, as well as the fair-minded scholars of the Caliphate School, have authored books establishing the clear proofs and evidence for Abu Talib's precedence in faith and the secrecy surrounding his conversion. We have alluded to some of these in the biography dedicated to him in Notables of the Prophetic Household.

The same holds true for his venerated mother, Fatimah Bint Asad (Peace Be Upon Her), who was also an early convert to Islam and acted as the Prophet's guardian during his youth. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) himself described her as his mother after his own. Anyone who seeks an account of her life, or that of her husband Abu Talib, should consult the aforementioned book.

#### **4. The Prophet's Concern for His Cousin, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Them)**

Even before receiving the Prophetic call at the age of thirty, the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) surrounded this Hashimi newborn with the fullest measure of care and attention. He would even carry him and seek his company in the assemblies of Quraysh, in a deliberate demonstration of the intensity of their relationship. Indeed, their profound closeness and the Prophet's tutelage are evident. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) himself spoke of this closeness, saying: You know full well my station with the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) through close kinship and a singular status. He placed me in his lap when I was a mere newborn, he would hug me to his chest, he sheltered me in his own bed, his body touched mine, and I inhaled his sweet fragrance. He would

chew food and then feed it to me. Never did he find me uttering a lie, nor making an error in any deed<sup>[1]</sup>. This early attention, even though no formal prophecy, mission, or call yet existed, can only be understood in light of the preceding mention that they were one single light, a concept that speaks to the early preparation of his personality (Peace Be Upon Him) until he became the disciple of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household)<sup>[2]</sup>. This text reveals the timeframe for these details to be, in my estimation, when Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) was under the age of four. The Prophet would take Imam Ali from his home and accord him this great care. It was perhaps in the fifth year of Imam Ali's life and the thirty-fifth year of the Prophet's life (Peace Be Upon Them and Their Household) that the Prophet fully adopted Imam Ali into his own household, approximately ten years after his marriage to Khadijah. A year of drought had struck Quraysh, and the Prophet, accompanied by Al-Abbas Ibn Abdulmuttalib, called upon Abu Talib and proposed that they lighten the burden of his dependents. Al-Abbas took Jaafar, and the Prophet took Imam Ali into his home.

Imam Ali talks about this phase, saying: I used to follow him wherever he went. Every day, he would raise a banner of his morality for me, commanding me to emulate it. He used to seclude himself for worship in Hira every year. I would see him, but no one else would<sup>[3]</sup>. At the threshold of the fortieth year of

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[1] Imam Ali: Peak of Eloquence, p. 300. Some people have benefited from these words to assert his infallibility Peace Be Upon Him.

[2] Al-Boroujerdi, Hussein: Collection of Shia Hadiths 13/615: Almighty Allah educated me and I educate Ali.

[3] Peak of Eloquence, P. 300.

the Prophet's life (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), and the tenth year of Imam Ali's life, the Prophet received the divine mission of Prophethood.

## 5. Imam Ali from the Prophetic Call to the Migration

No one can truly claim that Imam Ali converted to Islam or embraced the faith, as he was never a disbeliever. He was born believer. In any case, he was the first to whom the Prophethood of Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) was presented. Naturally, he was also the first to manifest his belief in the One, Unique Almighty Allah and in His Prophet sent to all mankind. Ahl Al-Bait (Peace Be Upon Them) have consistently employed an approach that emphasizes this absolute priority. The counter-strategy of the Umayyad approach, conversely, has been to devalue this absolute priority by making it merely relative. This Umayyad approach initially sought to outright deny that Imam Ali is the first. They subsequently tried to categorize his precedence, claiming that he was the first young boy to convert to Islam. They then sought to assign priority to others by classifying those who converted to Islam as a man, slave, and a person from Abyssinia. In this manner, they attempted to nullify his precedence in Islam and assign it to others<sup>[1]</sup>.

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[1] Usd Al-Ghabah, Vol. 1, Ibn Al-Athir, p. 91. It is interesting that this is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful (Peace Be Upon Him). They claim that on the day of Abu Bakr's death, Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib went running, crying, and saying, Today, the caliphate of the Prophet has been cut short. He stood at the door of the house in which Abu Bakr was, and then said, May Almighty Allah

This Umayyad current then advanced another step by arguing that there is a difference between the conversion of a mature, elderly person and the conversion of a boy, claiming that precedence should be granted to the conversion of the mature adult. In these two attempts, they sought to eliminate this special virtue of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). Conversely, Ahl Al-Bait (Peace Be Upon Them) focused on this aspect as was done by Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) repeatedly and firmly<sup>[1]</sup>. Ahl Al-Bait (Peace Be Upon Them) affirmed it on numerous occasions, as did the reliable historians.

**Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) Is the Caliph, the Imam, and the Successor of the Prophet Since the Day of the House (Yawm Al-Dar)**

In the third year of the Prophetic Call, the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) declared to his nearest relatives that Imam Ali is his Caliph, Successor, and the Imam over all

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 have mercy on you, O Abu Bakr. You were the first of the people to embrace Islam, the most sincere in faith, the most certain of faith, and the greatest in wealth.

[1] Encyclopedia of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), Al-Ray Shahri, 5/220: The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) said: The first believer in Islam and the most sincere in faith is Ali Ibn Abi Talib. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) said: I am Al-Siddiq Al-Akbar and Al-Farouq Al-Awal. I am a Muslim before the people converted to Islam. I prayed before they prayed. Imam Al-Sadiq (Peace Be Upon Him) addresses his grandfather, the Commander of the Faithful, saying: You were the first of the people in Islam, and the most sincere in faith. In Fadhail Al-Sahaba, Ahmed Ibn Hanbal, 2/590, states that Zaid Ibn Arqam and Ibn Abbas narrate that the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) said: Ali is the first Muslim and the first to pray with the Prophet.

creation after him. This announcement was a surprise to them, as there were older men of great age and high status among them. Yet, the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) assigned him over them all. This initial declaration was also an embarrassment to those who came later and alleged that the Islam of Ali Ibn Abi Talib was of a lesser degree than that of some of the elders. In this regard, the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) delivered a masterstroke, telling them that the Islam of this young boy<sup>[1]</sup> does not disqualify him from being assigned the authority, imamate, and successorship over the people after the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household).

This appointment was neither merely symbolic nor theoretical. Rather, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) immediately commenced his work of protecting the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), maintaining constant companionship, and praying<sup>[2]</sup>

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[1] It will be mentioned in the biography of Imam Al-Jawad (Peace Be Upon Him) that divine imamate is not restricted to age. A person may be seventy years old and not be qualified for it, while a seven-year-old person may be qualified. In this case, the Prophet appointed Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Them) and announced his appointment since that time.

[2] Al-Nasa'i; Ahmed Ibn Shu'ayb: The Characteristics of Imam Ali, p. 23 mentions the narration of Afif and his description of the prayer of the Prophet, Imam Ali, and Khadija facing Kaaba. Al-Abbas Ibn Abdulmuttalib said: Do you know who this man is? I said: No. He said: This is Muhammad Ibn Abdullah Ibn Abdulmuttalib. This is my nephew. He said: Do you know who this boy is? I said: No. He said: He is Ali Ibn Abi Talib Ibn Abdulmuttalib. This is my nephew. Do you know who this woman behind them is? I said: No. He said: This is Khadija Bint Khuwaylid, the wife of my nephew. He told me that the Lord of the heavens and the earth commanded him

alongside him under the sight and scrutiny of Quraysh. It is noted that the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) tasked Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Them) with arranging the affair of inviting Banu Abd Manaf and preparing food for them<sup>[1]</sup>. This was done despite the fact that his uncles, who possessed power and authority, were among them, while Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) was still young.

Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) continued to defend the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), especially in deterring the children whose fathers would incite them to harm the Prophet<sup>[2]</sup>. This role intensified with the death of his

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to follow this religion. There is no one on earth who follows this religion except these three.

[1] Al-Tabari, Muhammad Ibn Jarir, Tafsir Jami' Al-Bayan 19/409: Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib states: When the Ayah of inviting the Prophet's nearest relatives to Islam was revealed to the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), he called me and said: O Ali, Almighty Allah has commanded me to invite my nearest relatives to Islam." He said: I felt fed up with that. I knew that whenever I called them to this matter, I would see what I dislike, so I remained silent until Gabriel came and said: O Muhammad, if you do not do what you are commanded to do, your Lord will punish you. O Ali, prepare us a meal, put a sheep's mutton on it, and fill a bowl of milk for us, then ask the sons of Abdulmuttalib to gather so that I may speak to them and inform them of what I have been commanded to do. I did what he commanded me to do.

[2] Al-Amin, Sayyid Muhsin, Aayan Al-Shia 3/24: Ali Ibn Ibrahim Al-Qummi narrated that when Talha Al-Abdari asked to duel on the day of Uhud, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) went out to him. Talha said to him: Who are you, boy? He said: I am Ali Ibn Abi Talib. Talha said: I know that no one dares to face me except you. Then, he narrated that Imam Al-Sadiq (Peace Be Upon Him) said that the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) was in Mecca and no one dared to face him because of Abu Talib. Hence,

father, Abu Talib, in the tenth year of the Prophetic Call. Quraysh escalated their abuse of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) to the point where he said, Quraysh never afflicted me until my uncle Abu Talib died.

### **The First Exercise of Caliphate and Successorship**

Three years after Abu Talib's death (in the thirteenth year of the Mission), the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) resolved to emigrate. He then transferred his trusts and covenants to Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). Imam Ali then slept in the Prophet's bed, a virtue with which Almighty Allah told His great angels proudly<sup>[1]</sup>, so that the Prophet could depart safely along the route toward Madinah. The fierce young men selected by the Quraysh then stormed the house to spill the Prophet's blood (as they claimed), but Imam Ali confronted and defeated them, though they were around fifty fighters.

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they incited the children against him. Whenever he went out, they would throw stones and dirt at him. He complained about that to Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) He said: May my father and mother be sacrificed for you, O Prophet. When you go out, take me with you. So he went out with him. The children confronted him as was their habit. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) attacked them and bit them on their faces, noses, and ears. They returned crying to their fathers and said: Ali bit us.

[1] Al-Jazari; Ibn Al-Athir, Usd Al-Ghabah fi Ma'rifat Al-Sahaba 3/601: Almighty Allah revealed to them, saying: I made Ali Ibi Abi Talib a brother to My Prophet Muhammad. He slept in his bed, sacrificing himself for him and giving him his life. Almighty Allah commanded the Angels to descend to the earth and protect him from his enemy. They dismounted. Gabriel was at Ali's head. Michael was at his feet. Gabriel was calling, 'Blessed, blessed, O Ali. Almighty Allah boasts about you to the Angels.

The Prophet commanded Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Them) to depart from Quraysh some days after the Prophet's own departure for Madinah (to ensure his safe arrival). Imam Ali was to stand openly before the chiefs of Quraysh and inform them that he was leaving Mecca for Madinah shortly and that the trusts and deposits of Muhammad, the Prophet, (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) were in his possession. He instructed that anyone who had a trust or deposit with the Prophet should come and receive it from him, from Imam Ali, before he left for Madinah.

The slap delivered to the arrogance and tyranny of Quraysh was perhaps greater than the safe arrival of the Prophet to Madinah. The tyrannical Quraysh would not have objected to anyone secretly leaving for any place, as that would not have humiliated their arrogance or shattered their pride. Yet, for a twenty-three years old young man to inform them that he was leaving publicly, accompanied by Al-Fawatim (the women named Fatimah) and the Prophet's valuables, this was an extremely dangerous matter. It effectively meant saying: You are nothing to me.

This action by the Prophet served as the activation of Ali's successorship and the reality of what took place on the Day of the House: that he was his Successor, his Caliph, and his Heir.

## 6. Imam Ali's First Battle against Quraysh

History records Imam Ali's first combat against Quraysh. No sword is known to have been drawn in Islam against them before his. This happened in the same year as the Prophetic Migration (Hijrah). This is what Sheikh Al-Tusi mentioned in Al-Amali,

stating that the letter from the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) reached the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), ordering him to depart and emigrate. He informed the weak believers who were with him, commanding them to secretly slip away under the cover of night to Dhi Tuwa. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) then departed with Fatimah, the Prophet's daughter, his mother, Fatimah Bint Asad Ibn Hashim, and Fatimah Bint Al-Zubair Ibn Abdulmuttalib. They were followed by Ayman Ibn Umm Ayman, the Prophet's freedman, and Abu Waqid. The latter began to hastily drive the ridden animals, which Imam Ali censured, commanding him to be gentle. Abu Waqid excused himself by citing fear of pursuit.

The Commander of the Faithful (Peace Be Upon Him) said: Hold yourself in check. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) told me to be assured that they will not reach me from now on with anything I dislike.

The pursuers overtook them near Dhajnan. They were seven masked horsemen. The eighth was a freedman of Al-Harith Ibn Umayyah, called Janah. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) made the women dismount and turned toward the men, drawing his sword. They commanded him to return. He said, What if I do not? They replied: You shall return willingly or by force, or we shall return with your head's hair, and you will be deemed the easiest of the perished to be killed. The horsemen approached the mounts to incite them to bolt, but Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) positioned himself between them and the those he defends. Janah struck with his sword, but Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) evaded the blow and seized an opening, striking Janah on the shoulder. The sword passed swiftly through him until it touched

the hump of his horse. Imam Ali then attacked them with his sword, so the men scattered from him<sup>[1]</sup>.

After days of relentless and taxing travel, Imam Ali, accompanied by the caravan of Al-Fawatim and the weak Muslims who had joined him, arrived at Quba, on the outskirts of Madinah. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) had been waiting for him for days and would not enter the city center without him. Upon his arrival, Imam Ali, approximately 24 years, got busy with arranging a dwelling for himself and his mother, Fatimah Bint Asad. He worked to earn sustenance, not relying on his kinship with the Prophet, thereby leaving a lesson for all who wish to learn. He worked in the date palms and supported himself and his mother from his earnings.

## **7. The Marriage of Imam Ali to Fatimah Al-Zahra (Peace Be Upon Them)**

They got married in the second year of Hijra, when Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) was twenty-five. Following the divine victory granted to the Prophet in the Battle of Badr, where Ali's unparalleled heroism and valor were conspicuously demonstrated, he entered into a marital covenant with Fatimah. This event, narrated in a captivating account, shall be briefly touched upon here, though it warrants a more detailed exposition due to the significant obscuration of its important particulars.

In essence, after Fatimah became ten years old, an age at which marriage was customary, more than one of the Prophet's

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[1] Al-Tusi, Muhammad Ibn Al-Hassan: Al-Amali, p. 500.

companions sought her hand. Unquestionably, she was the aspiration of every man, owing to her perfection of character and her lineage as the daughter of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Them). Naturally, to become the son-in-law of the Prophet, the ruler of Madinah, would secure both religious and worldly eminence. Thus, in the month of Ramadan, the Prophet solemnized the marriage of Fatimah to Ali, acting upon a divine command. Their nuptial procession and consummation followed in the month of Dhul-Hijja. The following salient points are to be mentioned:

- A.** This marriage of the Prophet's daughter Fatimah to Ali was not merely based on his personal preference or the fact that Ali was her cousin. The crucial element was that it was a divine endowment<sup>[1]</sup>, making any comparison with other marriages, such as that some have drawn between Ali's marriage to Fatimah and Uthman's marriage to Ruqayyah, or similar instances, grossly inappropriate. The distinction is immense. On the one hand, it was celestially ordained. On the other hand, Imam Ali was the sole worthy match for Fatimah. Without him, Fatimah (Peace Be Upon Her) would have had no equal<sup>[2]</sup>.

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[1] Al-Yaaqoobi; Ahmed Ibn Abi Yaqoob: Tarikh Al-Yaqoobi 2/41: A group of the Muhajirin proposed marriage to the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household). When he married her to Ali, they were displeased. The Prophet said: I have not done it, but Almighty Allah decreed this marriage.

In Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir by Al-Tabarani 10/156, the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) said: Almighty Allah commanded me to marry Fatimah to Ali.

[2] Al-Tusi, Muhammad Ibn Al-Hassan: Tahdhib Al-Ahkam 7/470:

**B.** Proceeding from the same premise, the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) rejected all his companions who sought Fatimah's hand<sup>[1]</sup>, stating that he awaited Almighty Allah's command regarding her. Yet, when Imam Ali arrived later the very same day, the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) welcomed him and promptly arranged the marriage.

**C.** This marriage was an integral part of the Divine Plan linking Ali and the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Them). As

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Abu Abdullah (Peace Be Upon Him) said: Had Almighty Allah not created the Commander of the Faithful (Peace Be Upon Him), there would have been no equal to Fatima (Peace Be Upon Her) on earth, from Adam downwards.

[1] Al-Busti, Muhammad Ibn Hibban, Sahih Ibn Hibban: Al-Taqasim wa Al-Anwa' 4/204: Anas Ibn Malik said: Abu Bakr went to the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) and sat before him. He said: O Prophet, you know my sincerity and my long history in Islam. He said: What is that for?" He said: Marry me to Fatimah. The Prophet remained silent. Abu Bakr returned to Umar and said: I proposed marriage to Fatimah to the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), but he turned away from me. Umar said: Stay where you are until I go to the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household). Umar went to the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household). He sat before him and said: O Prophet, you know my sincerity and my long history in Islam. He said: What is that for? Umar said: Marry me to Fatimah. The Prophet remained silent. Umar went back to Abu Bakr and said to him: He is awaiting Almighty Allah's command regarding it. Let's go to Ali so that we can persuade him to request the same as we requested. They went to Imam Ali while he was treating his date palm and said: 'We have come to you from your cousin. Imam Ali went to the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) and sat before him and said: O Prophet, you know my long history in Islam. He said: What is that for? Imam Ali said: Marry me to Fatima. The Prophet said: Do you have anything?

previously stated, this plan preceded their birth when they existed as two luminous entities. Consequently, all subsequent events would align with this continuous line with the divine strategy. Through them, Almighty Allah decreed for the Prophet to have a continuation of his lineage and the perpetuity of the Prophetic household and descendants. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) states: every Prophet's descendants are from his loins, but my descendents are from the loins of Ali. In this regard, Ahl Al-Bait would be the inheritors of the Prophet's knowledge, in addition to the successive Imamate.

**D.** In the nuptial sermon, the Prophet indicates that Almighty Allah has commanded him to get Fatimah married to Ali. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) adds: I bear witness that I have married her to him for a dower of four hundred silver Dirhams, asking Imam Ali if he were content. Imam Ali responded: I am content. Jurists have cited Fatimah's dower as evidence for the recommendation of a modest dower, which is an unquestionable principle against the extravagance that impedes marriage. There is room for reflection on the evidence of the four hundred Dirhams. When calculated not by its numerical value but by its purchasing power at the time, the amount of four hundred Dirhams constitutes a substantial sum. Given that the value of a single sheep at that time was approximately one Dinar<sup>[1]</sup>,

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[1] Al-Bukhari, Muhammad Ibn Ismail: Sahih Al-Bukhari 4/207: Urwah Al-Bariqi narrates that the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His

which is equal to ten Dirhams, the purchasing power of her dower was equivalent to forty sheep, which is by no means insignificant. Of course, this is an inconceivable reality that utterly baffles the intellect.

- E. Ali and Fatimah (Peace Be Upon Them) experienced a marital life that lasted from the end of the second year of Hijra until approximately the middle of the eleventh year when Fatima (Peace Be Upon Her) was murdered. They gave birth to Hassan, Hussein, Zainab, and Umm Kulthum. As for Muhsin, he was miscarried during the assault on the house following the death of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household).

This family embodied the paragon of married life, especially both spouses were Divinely Protected (infallible). Imam Ali himself summarized it by stating: I swear by Almighty Allah, I never angered her, nor did I compel her to do anything, until she passed away. She did never anger me, nor did she disobey any of my commands. Verily, whenever I looked at her, all my worries and sorrows were dispelled<sup>[1]</sup>. This unambiguous declaration nullifies all Umayyad-influenced narratives that speak of problems or difficulties plaguing their marriage, a notion contradicted by the infallibility of the spouses, in addition to this explicit statement from Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him).

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Household) gave him a dinar to buy a sheep. So he bought two sheep. He sold one of them for a dinar, and went back to him with a dinar and a sheep. So he prayed for blessings in his sale. Hence, he would have made a profit of whatever he does.

[1] Al-Irbali, Ali Ibn Abi Al-Fath, Kashf Al-Ghumma fi Maarifat Al-A'imma: 1\383.

## 8. The Hero of Battles and the Man of Arduous Missions

In Madinah, the Commander of the Faithful (Peace Be Upon Him), assumed the most prominent role in the Prophet's battles. These confrontations served as the crucible demonstrating his distinction in Jihad, courage, self-sacrifice, and initiative. The Battle of Badr in the 2nd year of Hijra was the emblem of divine succor for Muslims and the opening chapter of victories. The battle commenced with Ali, Hamzah, and Ubaydah, sons and grandsons of Abdulmuttalib, killing the Umayyad leaders and the senior figures of Quraysh, including Shaybah and Utbah, sons of Rabi'ah, and Utbah's son Al-Walid. Imam Ali reportedly killed half of the polytheist casualties. It is narrated that out of a total of 72 casualties, Imam Ali killed half of them.

In the Battle of Uhud in the 3rd year of Hijra, Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib inaugurated the fighting by killing Talhah Ibn Abi Talhah Al-Abdari, the holder of the polytheists' banner, who had issued a challenge to Muslims to send someone to be murdered by his sword. Imam Ali killed him. Talhah was followed by his brother Uthman, whom Hamzah Ibn Abdulmuttalib killed, and their brother Abu Sa'id, until seven of the Banu Abd Al-Dar were killed by Imam Ali and Hamzah. It was as if the banner of the polytheists was a portent of doom, as none held it but was killed.

After Muslims suffered a reversal at the Battle of Uhud due to the archers disobeying the Prophet's command and descending from the mountain, following the killing of Hamzah and Mus'ab, the assault on the Prophet intensified. In that critical moment, Imam Ali stood as unshakeable as Mount Uhud, repelling the

attackers from the Prophet with a small remaining company. The Prophet called out to Ali, Confront them. Imam Ali dispersed them. Indeed, the angel Gabriel descended to commend his stand, declaring: verily, this is the ultimate sacrifice. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) replied: He is of me, and I am of him. Gabriel then affirmed: I am of you both<sup>[1]</sup>. A cry resounded in the heavens: There is no sword but Dhulfiqar and no brave young man but Ali<sup>[2]</sup>.

The Battle of Al-Ahzab in the 5th year of Hijra is sufficiently depicted in the Glorious Quran, particularly when Amr Ibn Abd Wudd Al-Amiri crossed and infiltrated the Trench: they came on you from above you and from below you, and behold, the eyes became dim and the hearts gaped up to the throats, and ye imagined various [vain] thoughts about Allah! In that situation were the Believers tried: they were shaken as by a tremendous shaking<sup>[3]</sup>.

Imam Ali's sword awaited Amr when he stepped forth, spurred by the encouraging words of his brother and cousin, the Prophet: The entirety of faith has gone forth to confront the entirety of polytheism. Imam Ali did not hesitate, but first severed Amr's

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[1] Ibn Hanbal, Ahmed, Fadhail Al-Sahaba, 2/657: Imam Ali said: On the day of Uhud, the people fled, so I said: The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) would not flee. So, I confronted the people. I saw the Prophet. Gabriel said: This is consolation. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) said: Ali is from me, and I am from him. Gabriel said: I am from you both.

[2] Al-Tabari, Tarikh Al-Rusul wa Al-Mulouk, 2/514: They heard a voice: There is no sword except Dhulfaqar, and there is no brave young man except Ali.

[3] Surah Al-Ahzab: 10-11.

legs and then decapitated him! This decisive act demonstrated that no polytheist could stand firm against Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib. This single blow, which heralded the defeat of the polytheists, was deemed equal to the worship of the two worlds of jinn and mankind.

In the Battle of Khaybar in the 7th year of Hijra, when Imam Ali was about thirty years old, some of the Prophet's companions went forth on successive days and stood before the Khaybar fortresses, unable to breach them. Each man returned accusing his comrades of cowardice, who in turn accused him. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) finally declared: Tomorrow, I shall give the banner to a man who loves Almighty Allah and His Prophet, and whom Almighty Allah and His Prophet love, a persistent attacker, not one who flees. He will not return until Almighty Allah grants the conquest through him. So, the Legatee, Imam Ali approached, with his eyes were inflamed with illness.

The Prophet applied his saliva to him, so he was healed. He advanced, seeking the battle lines. Their fighters escaped from him, knowing that his sword was the sharpest. He shattered Marhab with a hand of power, and opened the gate<sup>[1]</sup>.

In the Battle of Hunain in the 8th year of Hijra, Muslims were initially deluded by their great numbers but then turned and fled, while the Prophet called them back from behind. When Malik Ibn Awf, one of the leaders of the disbelievers, approached, demanding, Show me Muhammad, Imam Ali's sword was faster

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[1] Al-Azri, Sheikh Kadhim Al-Tamimi: Al-Azria, p. 62.

to his head, emerging shining from between the camel's legs. Furthermore, when Abu Jarwal lay in ambush, presuming to assassinate the Prophet, Imam Ali awaited him among Muslims. He struck the rear of his camel, threw him down, and split him, cleaving him in half<sup>[1]</sup>.

The only place where Ali's sword rested was the Battle of Tabuk in the 9th year of Hijra, the Prophet's final campaign. The Prophet appointed Imam Ali as his deputy over Madinah. The question to be raised in this regard is about whether this was to remind them of Imam Ali's authority over Muslims just one year before the Prophet's passing, placing him in his place before his departure. The enemies of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) spread the baseless rumor that the Prophet did not want Ali with him. One might ask why. Was it because he was the hero of all previous battles? Yet, Almighty Allah willed to make this a conspicuous virtue coveted by anyone who knew its value. When the Prophet heard their baseless rumors, he said to Ali (Peace Be Upon Them) before people: You are to me in the position of Aaron to Moses, save that there is no Prophet after me<sup>[2]</sup>.

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[1] Al-Naqdi, Jaafar: Al-Anwar Al-Alawiyya, p. 205.

[2] The hadith is too well-known to need a detailed citation of its sources. Al-Bukhari included it in his Sahih (5/19), Muslim (4/1870), and many others. As for the Shiite books, every book that discusses the virtues of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) mentions it. The important thing is to reflect and ponder over what that status is. The Glorious Quran has specified it in Surah Taha 29-36. Since Aaron was the best of his people, then the one who is in his station is also likewise. Another virtue is that he himself chose him and asked his Lord to make him his helper, minister, and partner in fulfilling his mission. So, the matter is divine. Another virtue is that there is no doubt that Aaron's words are proof against his people.

## 9. The Prophet’s Man of Arduous and Specialized Missions

Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib was not merely a military man and a courageous fighter, but he was also the one who could convey from the Prophet what no one else could, a task that is impossible for any other after the Prophet. The stories of the conversion of Yemen to Islam and the Surah of Bara'ah (Repudiation) are not far. As for Yemen, it had resisted those sent to it, refusing to surrender the keys of its hearts, peacefully or by force, to anyone except the Prophet or someone who was like the Prophet. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) sent Khalid Ibn Al-Walid, Al-Tufayl Ibn Amr, and Khalid Ibn Sa'id Ibn Al-As over multiple years, but the Yemeni tribes did not respond. When they attempted to fight, they were fought back. When the situation became difficult, the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) dispatched Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) to them in the month of Ramadan of the tenth year, the Hamdani tribes of Yemen and their neighbors eagerly embraced the Muhammadan call, like the parched earth receiving the rain of the heavens. They rushed to the Islamic faith like thirsty camels rushing to water! Indeed, Imam Ali is quoted in praise of them: Were I the gatekeeper upon the Gate of Paradise, I would say to Hamdan: Enter in peace.

If the covenant governing the relationship between the Muslim community of the Prophet and the disbelieving Quraysh

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Likewise, the words of anyone in his station are proof against the people of the Prophet. There are other aspects that we may discuss later.

community required an agent to represent the religion in its entirety, that agent had to be the Prophet himself or the very self of the Prophet, which is Imam Ali. Thus, when one of the Prophet's companions took surah Bara'ah to recite to Quraysh when it was revealed, the Trustworthy Spirit, Gabriel, descended to the Prophet and commanded him to retrieve it and give it to Ali Ibn Abi Talib, as none should convey it except the Prophet or a man from him, as his very self<sup>[1]</sup>. Likewise, the Prophet's other saying: Banu Wali'ah must desist, or I shall send them a man who is as my very self, whose obedience is as my obedience, and whose disobedience is as my disobedience, to strike them with the sword<sup>[2]</sup>.

### **Imam 'Ali's Countless Virtues**

From the first days of his birth, the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) showered Imam 'Ali with praise and commendation, crowning him with honor. The reason for this care was neither the tie of kinship and lineage nor the objective of seeking glory and boastfulness. Instead, the driving force and purpose was a clear explanation for the people, a guidance, and

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[1] Ibn Hanbal, Ahmed, Fadhail Al-Sahaba, 2/599: Habashi Ibn Junada Al-Saluli said: I heard the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) say: Ali is from me, and I am from him. No one can fulfill my duty on my behalf except me or Ali. Saad Ibn Abi Waqqas said: The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) sent Abu Bakr with Surah Baraah, then he sent Ali to take it from him. Abu Bakr returned depressed. The Prophet said: No one can fulfill my duty on my behalf except a man from me. Sunnah by Ibn Abi Asim and Dhilaal Al-Jannah by Al-Albani 2/609.

[2] Sheikh Al-Sadouq, Al-Khisal, P. 555.

an admonition for the righteous<sup>[1]</sup>. This served as a roadmap for guiding people to the most upright path and for acquainting them with the Imams who guide by Almighty Allah's command. Otherwise, the entire world is worth no more to them than a mere sandal thong, so how could they possibly be concerned with worldly pride, which is the most insignificant thing in it?

The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) explicitly declared: "Whoever desires to live my life, die my death, and enter the Paradise that my Lord has promised me—a branch of which He planted in the Garden of Eternity—let them take Ali Ibn Abi Talib and his descendants after him as guardians. They will neither lead them astray from a door of guidance nor usher them into a door of misguidance<sup>[2]</sup>. He also stated that 'Ali's peace is his peace, and his war is his war, and that 'Ali is the gate to his city of knowledge<sup>[3]</sup>. Thus, whoever seeks the city must come through its gate, or else he is counted as a thief.

Hundreds, or rather, thousands of hadiths were narrated from the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household). Sometimes, such hadiths were before a small gathering. Other times, they were at the vast gathering of Ghadir. Occasionally, they were in peacetime. Sometimes, they were during war. They were brief at one time and in detail at another.

However, we merely wish to point out certain aspects found in the Prophet's hadiths regarding his brother and cousin, Imam 'Ali, and postpone the detailed discussion for a later dedicated

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[1] Surah Al-A'raf: 138.

[2] Al-Tabari: Tarikh Al-Rusul wAl-Muluk, 11/589.

[3] Al-Hakim Al-Naysaburi: Al-Mustadrak 'ala Al-Sahihayn, 3/137.

topic. Firstly, we observe the sheer abundance of these hadiths. Hence, numerous attempts to obscure them or punish their dissemination, both during the Umayyad and 'Abbasid eras, failed to conceal them. One scholar remarked that Imam Ali is a man whose virtues were concealed by his friends out of fear and by his enemies out of envy. Yet, what emerged from between these two concealments filled the East and the West<sup>[1]</sup>. They are exceedingly numerous, defying enumeration or restriction. The purpose of this abundance is to ensure a clear path of guidance for the people, even if the deniers attempted to suppress it. Secondly, the themes and content are numerous. Although each one explicitly or implicitly points to the desired conclusion, the establishment of 'Ali's Imamate and authority over Muslims, they are not repetitive in their wording. Instead, they are conveyed through diverse styles and multiple formats, all converging on a single goal. These hadiths began by stating the Imam's virtues from the earliest days and continued until days before the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) passed away. The most explicit hadith was on the Day of Ghadir, approximately seventy days prior to the Prophet's passing away. Examples range from the hadith of The Day of the House (Yawm Al-Dar) to the one stating that his status is like Aaron's to Moses, to the statement: I shall surely give the banner, to the hadith of the most beloved of Your creation to You, the one stating I am the city of knowledge and 'Ali is its gate, and his being with the Truth, and the Truth is with him, to the hadith: Ali is with the Quran and the Quran is with 'Ali, and others. As mentioned, we shall address these hadiths and examine how Muslims recorded and wrote

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[1] Al-Tustari: Qamous Al-Rijal, 4/201.

about them. We shall also discuss the other characteristics of these hadiths in a subsequent study, Insha'Allah.

## 10. The Impact of the Passing Away of the Prophet on Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Them)

After the Prophet perfectly fulfilled his trust, delivered his message with a clear proclamation, and counseled the nation to a degree that even his Creator pitied him<sup>[1]</sup>, he was shown the signs of death that all living beings face. Whether this was due to the act of an enemy, or not, he had been addressed by his Lord: Indeed, you are to die, and indeed, they are to die<sup>[2]</sup>. While all creation was afflicted by the passing away of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), the impact of the catastrophe and loss upon Ahl Al-Bait and most of all upon their leader, Imam 'Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), was the greatest. He described the situation by saying: When the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) passed away, the family of Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Them) endured the longest night, until they thought no sky would shade them nor any earth bear them, because the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) had alienated all for the sake of Almighty Allah<sup>[3]</sup>. The tragedy was compounded by some companions' refusal to allow the Prophet to write a decree for them concerning the Imamate of 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib, which would have prevented them from ever going astray thereafter. The matter concluded with the marginalization

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[1] Surah Al-Kahf, P. 6.

[2] Surah Al-Zumar, P. 30.

[3] Al-Kulayni: Al-Kafi, 1/493.

of the Commander of the Faithful (Peace Be Upon Him), from his rightful leadership over the people.

It was as though misfortune arrived in a relentless procession, each tragedy pulling the next in its wake. Not only did the Prophet's family endure his passing away, a deprivation as vast as the earth being abandoned by its rain, but they also failed to uphold his instructions for the guides who were to follow him. The resulting injustice was agonizing. The Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) famously likened this exclusion to a splinter lodged in the eye and a bone stuck fast in the throat<sup>[1]</sup>. Imam Ali had been agonizing over whether to press forward unsupported or to endure the present chaos. He likened this situation to a blind man stumbling. He concluded that patience was the wiser and better course. He declared: You surely know that I am, among all men, the most entitled to rule. Yet, I swear by Almighty Allah, I will remain silent as long as the affairs of Muslims remain sound, and the only injustice falls upon me alone. In doing so, I seek the reward and merit of Almighty Allah, disdaining the glitter and ornaments of this world for which you vie<sup>[2]</sup>.

The patience and silence of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) were not out of cowardice to confront the situation. He is the hero who declared: Even if all Arabs united to fight me, I would fight them. It is also not due to a conviction in the sound governance of those who came after the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household). Instead, he withheld his hand, as he stated, until

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[1] Peak of Eloquence, P. 48.

[2] Peak of Eloquence, P. 102.

I saw that the people were reverting from Islam, calling for the destruction of the religion of Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household). I feared that if I did not assist Islam and its people, I might witness a breach or a destruction in it, the calamity of which would be greater on me than the loss of your authority<sup>[1]</sup>. The Caliphate of the first Caliph continued for nearly a quarter of a century, during which leadership and religious affairs drifted away from the guidance of Imam 'Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). The Commander of the Faithful summarized his assessment of those years in his famous sermon delivered after assuming outward authority, known as Al-Shaqshaqiyah Sermon.

## **11. The Relationship Between Imam 'Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) and the Early Caliphs**

Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) was affected by the movement orchestrated and executed by the Quraysh faction<sup>[2]</sup>, which resulted in his and his family's exclusion from leading the nation. This was a grievance he recorded even twenty-five years later in Al-Shaqshaqiya Sermon. He also recorded his complaint against the Quraysh faction even after the Caliphate reached him, despite their wishes: O Almighty Allah, I seek Your aid against Quraysh and those who assisted them. They have severed my kinship and belittled my great status. They conspired together to contest an affair that was rightfully mine<sup>[3]</sup>.

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[1] Peak of Eloquence, P. 451.

[2] It may not have been a party in the modern sense but certainly a gathering of like-minded individuals with shared aspirations and interests.

[3] Peak of Eloquence, 246.

Despite all this, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) displayed noble stances befitting his position as the heir of the Prophet, the trustworthy guardian of his Law, and the master of the affair after him. This was the case even though his wound concerning Fatima had not yet healed and his grief had not subsided. It is sufficient that he is 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib, the one regarding whom, were all creation to unite in loving and obeying him, Almighty Allah would not have created the Fire, as implied by numerous hadiths and narrations.

Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) offered them sincere counsel in their affairs. In matters of Jurisprudence, he is the most knowledgeable and best judge among them. They said many times afterward, Had it not been for 'Ali, the Caliph would have perished. Umar also said: May Almighty Allah not leave me for a difficult issue for which Abu Al-Hassan is not available. Furthermore, his counsel was essential in matters of critical military strategies. Upon being consulted by Umar regarding a campaign against the Persians, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) strongly advised him not to join the expedition. He warned that if Umar left, the peripheral Arab tribes might seize the opportunity to revolt. Additionally, his presence at the head of the army would likely inflame the hostility of the Persians, making them even more determined to assassinate him<sup>[1]</sup>.

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[1] Peak of Eloquence, P. 203. You must stand as the axis, turning the mill with the Arabs; for their very nature is the fire of war that precedes you. Should you withdraw from this territory, the Arabs will relentlessly assail you from every quarter, until the disgrace of what you left behind weighs more heavily than the power you retain. If outsiders see your retreat, they will say, 'This is the root of the Arabs' strength. If we sever it, we will find peace.' Such a sight will only ignite their ambition and increase their designs upon you.

He permitted his companions to work within the existing Caliphate apparatus, despite the discussion regarding its fundamental legitimacy. 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbas, his distinguished student, acted almost as the chief of the jurisprudential and advisory council, having earned the complete conviction of the second Caliph.

When the apostasy movement by Tulayhah Al-Asadi occurred, the tribe of Tay was the supporting environment. Hence, Imam 'Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) selected one of his sincere companions, Udai Ibn Hatim Al-Tai<sup>[1]</sup>, to assist the Caliphate in scattering the enemy's strength. Indeed, Udai went to them and succeeded in convincing many of them of the unsoundness of Tulayhah's call<sup>[2]</sup>.

Furthermore, some researchers<sup>[3]</sup> point out that a significant portion of the military commanders who participated in the Islamic conquests were devotees of the Commander of the Faithful (Peace Be Upon Him). It is inconceivable that they would have gone out without his consultation. The same applies to regional governors and judges. Similarly, he corrected the errors committed by the Caliphate apparatus in religious matters, many of which history has recorded. Suffice it to search for the phrase Had it not been for 'Ali, 'Umar would have perished or

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[1] Udai Ibn Hatim Al-Tai, one of the most loyal companions of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib. He converted to Islam in the year 9 AH and witnessed the conquest of Iraq. He then settled in Kufa and witnessed the Battle of the Camel, Siffin, and Nahrawan with Imam Ali. His eye was pulled out in Siffin. He is the son of Hatim Al-Tai, who is known for his generosity. It is said that he lived for more than a hundred years and died in Kufa in 68 AH.

[2] Al-Waqidi: Kitab Al-Riddah, p. 63.

[3] Al-Kurani: Jawahir Al-Tarikh, 3/324.

May Almighty Allah not leave me for a difficult issue for which Abu Al-Hassan is not available<sup>[1]</sup>. Adherents of the Caliphs' school also recorded this for a specific purpose, which is to demonstrate that the Commander of the Faithful was in complete harmony with the Caliphate and recognized its legitimacy. However, this was not the case; his aim was solely to preserve the overarching structure of Islam and correct what could be corrected, even though matters were not in their rightful place.

## 12. Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib: The Outward Caliph After 25 Years

The Shia school of thought believes that Imam 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Peace Be Upon Him) is the Imam of the Islamic Nation since the Prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household). They believe that the two are a single light in the eternal realm until it divided in 'Abdulmuttalib, with one part of that light going to 'Abdullah and the other to Abu Talib. Muhammad is the Prophet sent as a mercy to the worlds, while 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib is his Minister, Successor, and Imam over the creation thereafter. However, things did not go as the believers' desired. Imam Ali's ruling was delayed for twenty-five years. After tasting what they did, the people flocked to the Commander of the Faithful's source of wisdom like thirsty, bewildered camels, gathering around him thick as a mane and clinging to him like a tightly packed herd of sheep.

Imam Ali began his reform program, which was clear from the outset that there would be no compromise on implementing

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[1] Ibn 'Abdulbarr: Al-Isti'ab, 3/1103.

Almighty Allah's ordinances and no favoritism in the rights of Almighty Allah's creation. Both the young and old among Muslims understood this. He states candidly: I swear by Almighty Allah, even if I were to find the unjustly seized money used for the marriage of women or the purchase of slave-girls, I would surely restore it. There is ample scope in justice. Whoever finds justice confining will find injustice even more confining<sup>[1]</sup>. He is the one who proclaimed and applied the principle of justice among Muslims, Arab, free, and enslaved, with his slogan: I find no superiority in this wealth for the children of Isma'il over the children of Isaac<sup>[2]</sup>.

When a group of politicians attempted to persuade him to compromise and appease the influential figures and leaders to stabilize his rule before pursuing his core policy, he refused, saying: Do you ask me to seek victory through injustice toward those over whom I have been appointed? I swear by Almighty Allah, I shall not approach it as long as day and night follow each other and as long as a star follows another in the sky. If the wealth were mine, I would still distribute it equally among them, so how can it be, when the it is Almighty Allah's wealth<sup>[3]</sup>?

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[1] Peak of Eloquence, P. 57.

[2] Al-Thaqafi, Ibrahim Ibn Muhammad Al-Kufi, Al-Gharat, 1/70: Two women went to Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) during the division of the spoils, one of them is an Arab and the other is a freed slave. He gave each one twenty-five dirhams and a measure of food. The Arab woman said: O Commander of the Faithful, I am an Arab woman and this is a non-Arab woman. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) said: I swear by Almighty Allah, I do not find any advantage for the children of Ismail over the children of Isaac in this booty.

[3] Peak of Eloquence, P. 183.

He also began to teach the people what had been missed of the Prophet of Allah's Sunnah and to change the innovations that had been introduced after the Prophet. The Quraysh faction and its supporters understood the message entirely. They saw no alternative with 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib but war; otherwise, the wealth they had seized, the posts whose benefits they had milked, and the false leaderships they had assumed would be lost. Consequently, this faction took Syria, Al-Sham, as its fortress and declared rebellion against Medina and the true Caliph of the Prophet. Then, they incited some companions of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) and his wife. This led to the first clear military battle involving thousands between two camps of Muslims. On one side of the battle, there was the Treasonous and Transgressing Faction<sup>[1]</sup>. On the other side, there was Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him).

Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) had no choice but to fight after numerous correspondences in which he refuted their absurd arguments and baseless pretexts, in addition to dialogues, both his own and those of his companions, with them. Facing the insistence of those ambitious and greedy individuals, he was left with only fighting or people would disbelieve in what was

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[1] According to the title classification, they say: The People of Al-Jamal are the group that broke their oath of allegiance, since they pledged allegiance and then broke it. The People of Siffin are unjust and oppressive, and the Khawarij of Nahrawan are the apostates. He referred to them in Al-Shaqshaqiya sermon, saying: When I assumed the matter, a group broke their oath, another went astray, and others acted unjustly. It should be noted that there is a lack of chronological order.

revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household)<sup>[1]</sup>.

### 13. Imam Ali's Wars Against His Adversaries During His Caliphate

While war was familiar to Imam 'Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), who had practiced it around the age of twenty and had been the banner holder and principal hero with the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) in all his battles, these three wars that were imposed upon him during the days of his caliphate were completely different.

#### Al-Jamal Battle

Al-Jamal Battle broke out in Jumada of the year 36 AH. Its instigators, who fought against Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, were unable to find justifications for their actions. At times, they claimed they had not pledged allegiance. However, the truth is that they did pledge allegiance but then broke their oath. Even if they presumably had not given their oath, this would not justify engaging in a war that would claim Muslim lives, especially after the matter had been settled for Imam 'Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), and the people had sworn loyalty to him. The leaders of the opposing side against Imam 'Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) were Talhah Ibn 'Ubaydullah, Al-Zubair Ibn Al-Awam,

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[1] Al-Dinori, Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Akhbar Al-Tiwal, p. 188: Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) said: This matter worried me and kept me awake at night. I found no choice but to fight or people would disbelieve in what Almighty Allah revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household).

and Aisha Bint Abi Bakr. The battle was named Al-Jamal Battle because Aisha, the wife of the Prophet, was riding a camel during the engagement.

The Commander of the Faithful (Peace Be Upon Him) revealed<sup>[1]</sup> the true desires of the two original leaders, Talhah and Al-Zubair, when he said: Each of them hopes for the command for himself and draws it towards himself, away from his companion. They have no bond of connection with Almighty Allah, nor do they extend any tie to Him. Each of them bears a grudge for his companion. In a little while, its covering shall be disclosed by him. I swear by Almighty Allah, if they attain what they desire, each one of them will surely kill the other<sup>[2]</sup>. This became evident from the moment they arrived in Basra. Each of them sought to lead the prayer. They disputed until its time was delayed. Thus, they mobilized their crowds. They went out dragging the wife of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) just as a female slave is dragged when she is bought, heading with her towards Basra<sup>[3]</sup>.

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[1] Rather, the matter does not need to be discovered after they had declared it to him (Peace Be Upon Him). Ibn Qutaybah says: Al-Zubayr and Talhah went to Imam Ali after the pledge of allegiance was completed and said: Do you know what we pledged allegiance to you on, O Commander of the Faithful? Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) said: Yes, on obedience. They said: No, but we pledged allegiance to you on the condition that we would be your partners in the matter. Imam Ali said: No, but you are partners in assistance. Al-Zubayr dreamt of the governorship of Iraq, and Talhah dreamt of the governorship of Yemen. When realized that Imam Ali had not appointed them governor of anything, they expressed their animosity.

[2] Peak of Eloquence, P. 206.

[3] Peak of Eloquence, P. 247.

After Imam Ali's correspondence with them and his attempts to convince them to abandon the war, all he received was this reply: We have set forth on a journey from which there is no turning back; you shall not return with any of your needs fulfilled, nor shall you be content unless we enter into your obedience, which we shall never do. Do whatever<sup>[1]</sup>. The line of escalation towards war was clearly led by Talhah and 'Abdullah Ibn Al-Zubair<sup>[2]</sup>, who dragged his father (Al-Zubair) along and cut off every thought of retreat for him. He exploited the factor of kinship with the Prophet's wife, Aisha, since he was her nephew, placing her in the midst of the fray, with her entire will. The result was that the two armies clashed, defeat became manifest in the army of Al-Jamal, and the camel of the center of command was hamstrung, effectively toppling the leadership. Those whom the world and promises of spoils and positions had gathered dispersed in flight. Talhah was killed by friendly fire<sup>[3]</sup> from Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam.

It is said that with the onset of defeat in the army, Al-Zubair Ibn Al-'Awam decided to retreat and began to withdraw from the battle, but it was too late after all the bloodshed. 'Amr Ibn Jurmuz killed him individually, apart from his army. Thus, the first battle in Islam where both parties were Muslims ended. One group were

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[1] Al-Kufi, Ahmed Ibn Aatham, Al-Futooh 2/466.

[2] He even went so far as to address the people of Basra, saying: O people, Ali Ibn Abi Talib is the one who killed the Caliph Uthman Ibn Affan. Now, he has come to usurp your authority. Be angry for your Caliph, protect your women, and fight for your own sake.

[3] Al-Asqalani, Ibn Hajar, Al-Isabah fi Tamyiz Al-Sahaba 3/432: On the Day of Al-Jamal, Marwan looked at Talha and said: I would not seek my revenge after today. Marwan shot him with an arrow and killed him.

faithful, the other were oath-breaking. One side were constant, the other were rebellious. The price of the oath-breakers' desires and worldly ambitions was, at the very least, 2,500 casualties from the oath-breakers, with some sources suggesting double or even more than that number<sup>[1]</sup>. It is worth mentioning here that killing a single Muslim in pursuit of the ambitions of those aspiring to leadership, breaking their oath, and rebelling against the Imam of Truth is a great matter.

### **The Battle of Siffin (Safar 37 AH)**

This war, launched by Mu'awiyah Ibn Abi Sufyan with the army of Sham (Syria), broke out in the region of Siffin, near the Syrian city of Al-Raqqah. Its intermittent rounds continued until it was concluded with the arbitration in Ramadan of the year 38 AH<sup>[2]</sup>. This means that the Commander of the Faithful (Peace Be Upon Him) and his government lived under the atmosphere of war for one year and eight months. The circumstances of this war began when Imam 'Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) dismissed Mu'awiyah Ibn Abi Sufyan from the governorship of Sham as part of a campaign of purification, reform, and removal of governors appointed before his caliphate. While many<sup>[3]</sup> responded and relinquished their positions to the new governors, Mu'awiyah refused. Instead of stepping down, he rejected Imam Ali's allegiance, accused him of inciting the killing of 'Uthman Ibn 'Affan, and of concealing the murderers, demanding that they be handed over to him. He then

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[1] Al-Tabari, Tarikh Al-Tabari 4/539: The number of those killed in the Battle of Al-Jamal was 10000, half of them were from Ali's companions, and the other half were from Aisha's companions.

[2] Some scholars believe that arbitration happened in 37 AH.

[3] Jarir Ibn Abdullah Al-Bajali, governor of Hamadan.

suggested that Muslims should convene to agree on selecting a new caliph, as if all that had transpired since the year 35 AH, the consensus of the people in Medina on Imam Ali's oath of allegiance, was a waste and an irrelevance.

Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) sought to resolve matters with gentleness whenever possible. He replied to Mu'awiyah: My oath of allegiance in Medina is binding upon you even while you are in Sham. So, join what the Muslims have joined. The most desirable outcome for me concerning you is well-being, unless you expose yourself to tribulation. If you expose yourself to it, I shall fight you and seek Almighty Allah's aid against you. You have greatly exaggerated the matter of 'Uthman's killers. So, enter into what the people have entered, then bring the people to me for judgment. I shall hold you and them to the Book of Almighty Allah. As for that which you desire, it is like deceiving a child away from milk. I swear, if you look with your intellect, not your passion, you will find me the most innocent among Quraysh regarding 'Uthman's blood<sup>[1]</sup>.

However, Mu'awiyah believed that his isolation from Sham meant the end of his political future and that of Banu Umayyah. He was also afraid of being held accountable for funds spent unjustly. This was especially true since Imam Ali had clearly announced his pursuit of public wealth that had been plundered and usurped, regardless of its status. Therefore, the option of war was the only one left to him. For Muawiya, accepting dismissal implies all of the above. He began mobilization and psychological preparation of the people of Sham by circulating a shirt stained

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[1] Al-Manqari, Ibn Muzahim: The Battle of Siffin, P. 29.

with blood, which he claimed was 'Uthman's shirt, and fingers, which he claimed were those of 'Uthman's wife, Na'ilah, cut off when they attacked the Caliph in his palace. Naturally, he accused Imam 'Ali of both matters, even though he knew that Imam Ali had nothing to do with it, but this is the logic of politics. He also began to gather his close associates who shared his logic and were ambitious for the caliphate, just like him. He summoned 'Amr Ibn Al-'As to consult and seek his aid. 'Amr knew that he would gain nothing of 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib's hereafter, so why not gain from Mu'awiyah's worldly life? He agreed to cooperate on the condition that Egypt would be his as a fief if Mu'awiyah prevailed. He wrote this in a document and had witnesses attest to it. He also attracted 'Ubaydullah Ibn 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, 'Abdul Rahman Ibn Khalid Ibn Al-Walid, Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam, Mu'awiyah Ibn Hudayj, Busr Ibn Artah, and others like them.

It was then that he wrote a letter to the Commander of the Faithful (Peace Be Upon Him), stating: The people of Sham have refused to fight you until you deliver 'Uthman's murderers to them. If you do, the matter will be settled by shura among Muslims. I swear, the matter against me is not like the matter against Talhah and Al-Zubair. They gave you allegiance, but I did not. The matter against the people of Sham is not like the matter against the people of Basra. The people of Basra obeyed you, but the people of Sham have not obeyed you<sup>[1]</sup>.

After the Commander of the Faithful mobilized his supporters from Kufa, Basra, Mada'in, and elsewhere, and Mu'awiyah

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[1] Al-Mubarrad, Muhammad Ibn Yazid: Al-Kamil fi Al-Lugha wa Al-Adab 1/258.

gathered his soldiers from Sham and its vicinity and headed with them to Siffin, near the current Syrian city of Al-Raqqah.

The injustice of the Syrian army was evident; as soon as they arrived at the battlefield, they surrounded the river, preventing Imam Ali's army from reaching it, hoping they would die of thirst or be too weak to fight. Moreover, as soon as Imam Ali's army, led by Malik Al-Ashtar, arrived with strict instructions from Imam Ali not to initiate combat, the army of Sham immediately attacked them. Malik Al-Ashtar found no alternative but to fight. He managed to drive them away from the water. Despite this, he did not prevent them from drinking from it.

The course of the war was clearly heading toward a victory for the army of the Commander of the Faithful (Peace Be Upon Him). In addition to the soundness of the planning of Imam Ali and his leaders, his bravery, and theirs, anyone who was martyred from his army added moral strength to his fighters and negatively affected Mu'awiyah's army. When 'Ammar Ibn Yasir was martyred, people recalled the saying of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) to him that the rebellious party would kill him. A tremor occurred in the army of Sham, as the Prophet had named them the rebellious party! Mu'awiyah and 'Amr Ibn Al-'As's attempts to deceive their army, saying, He was only killed by the one who brought him out to fight, were in vain. If that were true, then the one who killed Hamzah Ibn 'Abdulmuttalib would have been the Prophet because he brought him out to fight, which is a false argument. However, another deceit would affect a section of Imam 'Ali's army. Umar Ibn Al-'As ordered the raising of copies of the Quran on spears, feigning a call for its arbitration.

The battle was on the verge of ending. Malik Al-Ashtar asked them for a moment's pause. He was close to reaching Mu'awiyah Ibn Abi Sufyan's tent, who had prepared his riding beasts for escape. But the discord reared its head, and the ignorance of those with long cloaks and short minds raged. They raised their swords against Imam 'Ali, who is the Speaking Quran, threatening that if he did not accept the arbitration of the Quran, they would turn their swords against him. Imam Ali's words to them were of no avail: Woe to you! I am the first to call for the Book of Almighty Allah and the first to respond to it. It is neither lawful for me nor is it permissible in my religion to be called to the Book of Almighty Allah and not accept it. I am only fighting them so that they submit to the rule of the Quran. They have disobeyed Almighty Allah in what He commanded them, broken His covenant, and cast aside His Book. I have informed you that they have deceived you. They do not intend to act according to the Quran<sup>[1]</sup>. Ignorance led twenty thousand astray because they lacked insight<sup>[2]</sup>. Imam Ali was forced to stop the fighting to prevent a civil war within his own army. The war ceased. Mu'awiyah's army and fighters returned to their positions. The leaders of the Commander of the Faithful's army returned regretting the loss of a rare opportunity. The fighting stopped.

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[1] Al-Manqari, Ibn Muzahim: Siffin, P. 77.

[2] A distinction must be made between Imam Ali's companions who followed him with insight and knowledge, and the common army that was inherited from predecessors. The Muslim state had an army and fighters who received stipends for that. It was the same army that was under the command and leadership of the caliphs who preceded Imam Ali. Among these people were the good and the bad. It was on such people that the ruse of raising the copies of the Quran, which was devised by Amr Ibn Al-Aas, worked.

The decisive engagement was postponed. It was agreed that the two armies would return while each side would send<sup>[1]</sup> its representative for an arbitration meeting. Muslims would await the results of that meeting.

After nearly seventy thousand casualties, including 25,000 martyrs with the Commander of the Faithful and 45,000 killed from Mu'awiyah's army, the matter was concluded with an arbitration that would be manipulated by the cunning of 'Amr Ibn Al-Aas against the beard of Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari, whom the aforementioned ignorant insisted upon, despite their piety, and rejected 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbas. The arbitration took place in Ramadan of the year 38 AH. It was, due to Al-Ash'ari's simple-mindedness, worse than stopping the fight with Mu'awiyah<sup>[2]</sup>. These people continued in their error and split away from the Commander of the Faithful (Peace Be Upon Him). They demanded that he repent for what they considered unbelief, which they claimed was his acceptance of the principle of arbitration, even though they were the ones who had raised their swords against him to accept it, or else they would strike him with them. Then, they rebelled against the result of the arbitration, even though they were the ones who insisted on Abu Musa Al-Ashari. Imam Ali had wanted his student, 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbas, but he had yielded to them out of fear of sedition and internal war. They compounded their error by declaring war on Imam Ali

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[1] It is frustrating that Imam Ali, who is the Prophet's soul, is put in such a situation. He says: When did doubt arise regarding me with the first of them? Time brought me down and then brought me down until it was said Ali and Muawiyah.

[2] It will be explained in a later chapter of this book.

and rebelling against him. From that day, they became known as the Kharijites. This set the stage for the third war against Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) , Al-Nahrawan Battle.

### **Al-Nahrawan Battle and the War Against the Kharijites**

Although the formation of the Kharijites as a group resentful of Imam Ali, criticizing his actions, and even declaring him an unbeliever at some times, had begun since the trick of raising the Quran at Siffin, they did not transition to preparing to fight the Commander of the Faithful until Shawwal of the year 37 AH after they had isolated themselves from Imam Ali and separated from the Kufa community, gathering in Harura, near Kufa. During this period, they engaged in sabotage, including the killing of believers<sup>[1]</sup> loyal to Imam Ali and disturbing the security in Kufa, all while mobilizing their supporters to fight Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him).

The Commander of the Faithful (Peace Be Upon Him) true to his custom of gentleness and averting war whenever possible, sometimes corresponded with them and other times presented arguments to them. He sent emissaries to debate with them, even on the very day they assembled for war at Nahrawan<sup>[2]</sup>. They were (12,000). Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) sent a banner of peace in the hand of Abu Ayyub Al-Ansari and declared that whoever took refuge under it would be safe and not held accountable for anything. Hundreds entered under that banner. He also sent 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbas to discuss and debate with them, which resulted in several hundred more defecting. Some of

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[1] This topic will be further elaborated later.

[2] 35 km from Baghdad.

them, like Farwah Ibn Nawfal Al-Ashja'i, withdrew from fighting because he had no justification or clear argument for fighting Imam Ali.

When their leader 'Abdullah Ibn Wahb Al-Rasibi saw his army weakening due to the departure of these groups, he feared that his army would dissipate. Thus, he attacked Imam Ali's supporters, plunging into them with his followers. Imam Ali's companions confronted them under the leadership of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) and defeated them. He did not finish off the wounded among them but commanded others not to. Instead, he had the wounded taken to their tribes for treatment. The others were killed. Fewer than ten men survived from that army, and the number of martyrs from Imam Ali's side was about the same<sup>[1]</sup>. Among those who escaped the battle was 'Abdulrahman Ibn Muljam Al-Muradi, who would bear the sin of assassinating Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him).

## 14. The Martyrdom of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) (40 AH)

Even though the enemies of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) preoccupied him with successive wars, diverting him from his reform program for the Islamic Nation, the short period that constituted his entire caliphate, which only lasted for four years

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[1] Peak of Eloquence, P. 93: It was said to Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him): The people crossed the Nahrawan Bridge. He said: Their deaths are before the river. I swear, not ten of them will escape, and not ten of you will perish. Al-Sharif Al-Radhi said that by the drop, he means the river water.

and nine months<sup>[1]</sup>, and the meager portion of it that was a period of peace, offered a sufficient model for any Muslim ruler who followed Imam Ali to contemplate and adopt as a program for just governance, should they desire it. The following chapters will clarify some features of that model. It was indeed a short and meager period, less than two years (from the end of the Kharijite war in Shawwal 38 AH to the Imam's martyrdom in Ramadan 40 AH).

The Kharijites, who were eliminated as a military force by their defeat at Nahrawan, did not end as an idea; they would persist for subsequent centuries<sup>[2]</sup>. The state of extremism arising from ignorance is not limited to one generation. We have witnessed their likes in this era who have damaged the image of Islam before Muslims and others, killing, violating, and destroying, all through their ignorance and what they call Islam, which is far from it. One of these individuals would commit the crime of assassinating the very soul of the Prophet, the Speaking Quran, the dearest of Almighty Allah's creation to Almighty Allah, and the one most entitled to the people after the Prophet, while proclaiming during the act: The judgment is Almighty Allah's, not yours, O 'Ali. Woe to this ignorance, indeed to this stupidity! And destruction upon this idea and its proponent. After the Kharijites' defeat at Nahrawan, several of them began to plot the assassination of the Commander of the Faithful (Peace Be

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[1] From Dhulhijjah 35 AH to Ramadan 40 AH.

[2] Peak of Eloquence, P. 93: When the Kharijites were killed, he was told: O Commander of the Faithful, the people are all destroyed. He said: No, they are just sperm in the loins of men and the receptacles of women.

Upon Him), as vengeance for their murdered companions and in execution of the idea of killing an unbeliever. Thus, 'Abdulahman Ibn Muljam Al-Muradi moved to Kufa with a poisoned sword. He seized the opportunity of the Imam's engagement in the Nawafil (supererogatory prayer) of Fajr and the mosque being empty of worshippers, and assassinated the Imam while prostrating in his prayer niche with a strike to his head (Peace Be Upon Him). The Imam attained victory in meeting the Lord of Kaaba. This was on Ramadan19, 40 AH<sup>[1]</sup>.

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[1] The martyrdom of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) will be mentioned in a later chapter.



# **Al-Shaqshaqiya: A Testament to Three Decades of the Islamic History**

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I swear by Almighty Allah, Ibn Abi Quhafah seized control of it, knowing full well that my place in it was akin to the central axis of a millstone, the flood of wisdom flowing from me, unattainable to any who sought to rise above me. Yet, I veiled myself before it, restrained my hand, and pondered whether to advance with a severed arm or endure the desolation of a barren, merciless land, where the elderly aged into frailty and the young grew weary before their time, toiling endlessly until they met their Lord. I discerned that patience in such a dilemma was the wiser path. Thus, I bore it, with a mote in my eye and a thorn lodged in my

throat, witnessing my inheritance being snatched away before the first passed it on to the second. Then, he handed it to Ibn al-Khattab. In that moment, he recited the words of al-Aasha:

How different is my day upon her sphere, From the day of Hayyan, my brother Jabir.

What a perplexing spectacle! He who renounced it in his lifetime, nevertheless bound another to it upon his death. How harshly was its essence torn apart! It fell into rough hands, its discourse austere, its grasp coarse, stumbling at every turn and fraught with perpetual excuses. The one who governed it was like a rider upon an unruly steed, should he tighten his grip, it would hurl him into ruin; should he loosen it, he would be driven recklessly forward.

I swear, the people were thrust into a sea of bewilderment, deception, fickleness, and discontent. Yet, I endured, bearing the length of this trial and the bitterness of its ordeal, until, when he too departed, he entrusted it to a council, one that presumed I was merely another among them! By Almighty Allah, when had there ever been doubt regarding my right? How was I suddenly measured against these equals? Yet, I conformed when they conformed, rose when they rose. Some among them diminished me out of spite, others for the sake of kinship.

Then, the third assumed it, a man whose greed sprawled across his domain, whose kin stood beside him, squandering the wealth of Allah like camels let loose upon spring pastures. He indulged himself until his own excesses ensnared him, his indulgence overwhelming him. I stood startled as the people,

like a surge of hyenas, rushed upon me from every direction, trampling my dignity and tearing at my sides, gathering around me like ravenous wolves upon a sheep.

But when I took up the mantle, some reneged on their pledges, others deviated, and some upheld righteousness, as though they had never heard the divine decree:

That is the home of the Hereafter. We assign it to those who do not seek dominance upon the earth, nor corruption. And the best outcome belongs to the righteous.

Indeed, by Allah, they heard it and understood it, yet the luster of worldly gains seduced them, its adornments bewitched their sight. By Him who splits the seed and forms the soul, had it not been for the presence of the faithful, the establishment of irrefutable proof, and the covenant imposed upon scholars, that they must not remain silent before the gluttony of oppressors or the deprivation of the oppressed, I would have cast aside its reins, let its final gulp mirror its first, and left your world to you, deeming it no greater than the discarded rags of a goat.

It is narrated that as the sermon unfolded, a man stood up and approached him, presenting a book reputed to contain inquiries he sought to have them answered. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) took it in his hands, his gaze lingering upon its pages, contemplating its contents with solemn deliberation. When he had read its entirety, Ibn Abbas turned to him and said, O Commander of the Faithful, would that your sermon had continued from the point where it began. But he replied, Far from it, O Ibn Abbas. That was but a tempestuous utterance, an outburst that surged forth and then subsided. Ibn Abbas,

overcome by regret, swore by Almighty Allah, declaring, Never have I mourned the loss of words as much as I lament these, for Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), did not attain that which he had intended.

Then, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) continued: By He who split the seed and gave breath to the soul, were it not for the presence of the present, the necessity of establishing proof through the presence of the Helper, and were it not for the solemn covenant Allah has placed upon the scholars, that they shall never yield to the excess of the oppressor nor abide the hunger of the oppressed, I would have cast its reins aside, leaving its course to unfurl as it may, giving its final sip the vessel of its first. And verily, you would find this world of yours more trivial to me than the chastity of the Goat<sup>[1]</sup>.

This sermon stands as a monument of significance, distinguished by several attributes:

First; It was delivered by Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), who is the principal figure, the heroic protagonist of the historical era it recounts. In accordance with conventional reasoning, he is an eyewitness, one who beheld the events of which he speaks. But by true logic, he is the infallible one, narrating reality with exactitude, unmarred by error, embellishment, or oversight, the afflictions that so often shadow the testimony of mere witnesses.

Second; The sermon is a masterpiece of succinct expression. In its eloquent brevity, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) distills the essence of thirty years, capturing within its words the

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[1] Peak of Eloquence: P. 50.

tribulations, causes, and consequences that followed the passing of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household). He speaks with purposeful restraint, neither indulging in flattery nor inflaming discord with unbridled frankness.

Third; The sermon unveils the unwavering stance of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) pronounced during the days of his apparent rule and caliphate. It stands as an unaltered testament to a conviction that has endured unchanged from the very moment those fateful events transpired.

As for its appellation, the sermon is known as Al-Shaqshaqiya, in reference to the final words of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) That was but a chatter that roared and then settled. In the lexicon of Arabic, Shaqshaqa signifies the foam that a camel expels from its stomach to its mouth. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) likened his utterance to Shaqshaqa, for it emerged from his conscience, without forethought or deliberation, like a revelation cascading upon the surface of speech.

## **The Authenticity of Attributing The Sermon to Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him)**

Owing to its powerful content, content that profoundly opposes the doctrinal assertions of the Caliphate School regarding the legitimacy of those who preceded Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) the scholars of that school have largely rejected its authenticity. For if its attribution were validated, they would stand before a stark choice: either to concede to its conclusions, thereby dismantling the theological edifice upon which they justified the early caliphates, or to affirm its authenticity while

paradoxically disavowing the words of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Peace Be Upon Him). Confronted by his status as a righteous caliph and a truthful speaker, they find themselves constrained, compelled to dismiss the sermon entirely. Some have gone so far as to dispute the attribution of Peak of Eloquence itself to him<sup>[1]</sup>, deeming this sermon, above all others, a catalyst for such denial<sup>[2]</sup>.

Others resorted to asserting that it was a fabrication falsely ascribed to Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Peace Be Upon Him). Yet none have identified the supposed forger, nor could they name the unparalleled stylist whose eloquence equaled that of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). Some even contended that its author was none other than Al-Shareef Al-Radhi<sup>[3]</sup>, the compiler of Peak

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- [1] Al-Dhahabi; Muhammad Ibn Ahmad: Mizan Al-l'tidal 3/124 in his biography of Al-Shareef Al-Radhi said: "Whoever reads his book Peak of Eloquence would be certain that it is a lie against Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) as it contains blatant insults and disparagement of Abu Bakr and Umar." The author states that this perspective aligns with Al-Dhahabi's own beliefs. However, if one adheres to the beliefs of Ahl Al-Bait, they would be certain of the truth of its attribution to Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him).
- [2] A central question arises: How can those who claim that Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) said: "The best people after the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) are Abu Bakr, then Umar," simultaneously accept what Imam Ali supposedly stated in Peak of Eloquence: "I am the greatest friend and the greatest distinguisher..."? How can they reconcile this with the contents of Al-Shaqshaqiya sermon?
- [3] This concern is particularly salient given that many of the sermons of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) were collected decades before the birth of Al-Shareef Al-Radhi. The researcher Agha Buzurg Al-Tehrani mentioned several individuals who preceded Al-Shareef Al-Radhi in collecting the Imam's sermons and words, including:

of Eloquence<sup>[1]</sup>, while others speculated that it was his brother, Al-Shareef Al-Murtadha. In Skepticism, Al-Dhahabi claimed that Al-Murtadha is accused of composing Peak of Eloquence<sup>[2]</sup>.

Yet, rigorous scholars, such as Sayyid Abdulzahra Al-Husseini Al-Khatib, in his seminal work *The Sources and Chains of Transmission of Peak of Eloquence*, refuted this claim with meticulous scrutiny. He cited sources that documented the sermon centuries before the birth of Al-Shareef Al-Radhi, who died in 409 AH. What he uncovered was merely the surviving evidence, what had not been lost, expunged, or censored.

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1. Zaid Ibn Wahb Al-Juhani; He participated in the Battle of Siffin and is considered by some to be the first to compile the Imam's sermons. He initiated this collection during the Imam's lifetime, and his work is known as *The Book of Sermons*.

2. Ismail Ibn Mahran: He also collected a number of sermons of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). His compilation is also known as *The Book of Sermons*.

It's important to note that Zaid Ibn Wahb is said to have died in 92 AH, and Ismail Ibn Mihran Al-Sakuni was a companion of Imam Al-Sadiq (Peace Be Upon Him). These figures lived much earlier than Al-Shareef Al-Radhi, who was born in 359 AH.

[1] Al-Shareef Al-Radhi (359-406 AH); Muhammad Ibn Al-Hussein Ibn Musa Al-Musawi, was one of the most prominent Shiite scholars of the fourth century and the most poetic among the Talibites. The leadership of the Talibite Ashrafs ended with him during his father's lifetime. His notable works include *The Metaphor of the Quran*, *The Prophetic Metaphors*, *The Truth of Interpretation in the Ambiguous Revelation*, *Peak of Eloquence*, which he compiled and selected from the sermons of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), and *The Characteristics of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib*. He also compiled collections of poetry by himself and other poets.

[2] Zarkali attributed this claim about Al-Dhahabi to his book *Al-A'lam* (4/278). This highlights how personal biases can significantly influence scholarly interpretations.

After examining approximately seventeen sources, encompassing various perspectives, Sayyid Al-Husseini observed that the battle over Peak of Eloquence, though appearing literary in its surface guise, is deeply sectarian at its core. Indeed, this sermon stands as one of the foremost reasons behind the emergence of doubt concerning Peak of Eloquence. As we have previously noted, its inclusion, alongside similar discourses, ignited a fiery controversy, whose flames rising ever higher in intensity<sup>[1]</sup>.

This sermon, venerable and profound, finds its roots in Shia sources from an era preceding the illustrious Al-Shareef Al-Radhi. Its presence is attested in the works of Sheikh Al-Sadouq, Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Al-Hussein Ibn Babawayh, born in 306 AH, and died in 381 AH, as well as in the writings of Sheikh Al-Mufid, the esteemed mentor of Al-Shareef Al-Radhi. Convention dictates that knowledge flows from teacher to student, not the inverse; yet here we encounter a transmission that defies such norms.

Another testament to its attribution is found within the annals of linguistic masters, who have meticulously cataloged words of profound eloquence. When encountering the expressions embedded within this sermon, scholars of language, many of whom do not adhere to Imam Ali's (Peace Be Upon Him) school, stand resolute in their certainty of its attribution to Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him)<sup>[2]</sup>.

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[1] For those seeking further details on this topic, refer to Sayyid Abdulzahra Al-Husseini Al-Khatib's Sources and Chains of Transmission of Peak of Eloquence (1/336). Additionally, the esteemed scholar Al-Amini May Almighty Allah Have Mercy on Him extensively discussed this in Al-Ghadeer (7/82).

[2] Majma' Al-Amthal by Al-Maidani, Lisan Al-Arab by Ibn Mandhour,

The third approach of verification lies in the revered practice of textual criticism, a discipline well understood by scholars and rhetoricians alike. In his esteemed commentary on Peak of Eloquence, Ibn Abi Al-Hadid recounts the words of his master, Ibn al-Khashab, who, reflecting upon the lament of Ibn Abbas and the unrealized fulfillment of his entreaty, remarked: There remains not a single word left unspoken by Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). When Ibn Abi Al-Hadid queried, Many assert that these words belong to Al-Radhi, Ibn Al-Khashab responded with unwavering conviction: How can Al-Radhi, or any other, possess such a soul, such a style? We have encountered Al-Radhi's letters, we are familiar with his prose, his art, this sermon bears neither his tincture nor his style!<sup>[1]</sup>

Swearing by Almighty Allah, Ibn Abi al-Hadid declared: I have beheld this sermon in manuscripts inscribed two centuries before Al-Radi's very birth. I recognized the script; I discerned the hand of scholars and men of letters whose ink graced the pages of history long before the coming of Al-Naqeeb Abu Ahmad, Al-Radi's father<sup>[2]</sup>.

Is it not the province of poets and men of letters to extract a single verse from a composition and, with unwavering discernment, declare it alien to the style of Al-Mutanabbi? If so, how much more certain must we be when confronted with an entire sermon, an oration wherein every phrase fortifies the

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 and Al-Nihaya by Ibn Al-Atheer.

[1] This statement serves as a metaphor, indicating that the style of satisfaction is incompatible with the discourse.

[2] Ibn Abi al-Hadid, 'Abdulhameed. Explanation of Peak of Eloquence, Vol. 1, p. 205.

next, its themes entwined with the corpus of sacred discourses? Within this text lies the unmistakable cadence, the singular artistry of its true author: Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). Yet, objections arise, casting doubts upon its provenance, as outlined in the preceding discourse.

## Al-Shaqshaqiya from a Literary Perspective

1. At the commencement of his sermon, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) asserts his indisputable preeminence and rightful precedence in the caliphate, a truth irreconcilable with the doctrine upheld by the School of the Caliphs. The latter adheres to a gradational hierarchy, wherein each successive ruler surpasses the last, with the first Caliph regarded as superior to the second, the second to the third, and finally, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) occupying the fourth rank<sup>[1]</sup>.

Yet Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) dismantles the edifice erected by those who have falsely attributed a preference for others over himself. Not content with merely establishing the legitimacy of prior rulers, the adherents of this doctrine sought to exalt their own standing above his, imputing to his tongue statements that allegedly conceded their superiority. Indeed,

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[1] This represents the moderate viewpoint when comparing the companions of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household). Conversely, followers of the Umayyad school of thought do not include Ali (peace be upon him) in such comparisons at all. Instead, they assert that the best of people are Abu Bakr, then Umar, and they make no further comparisons.

strangely enough, they fabricated claims so tenuous that even the most cursory glance reveals their absurdity<sup>[1]</sup>.

Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), however, unequivocally declares that the first Caliph was fully cognizant of Ali's supremacy, likening his own position to the steadfast central pole of a millstone, indispensable, irreplaceable, the true axis upon which all revolves. He further invokes a striking metaphor: the torrents of wisdom and leadership descend from him, yet no bird, no aspirant, can ascend to his towering heights. The imagery is deliberate; just as water cascades from the top of a mountain, and as a bird meets the limits of its ascension, so too does Imam Ali's (Peace Be Upon Him) spiritual eminence transcend the reach of others. In crafting this analogy, he bridges the metaphysical and the material, rendering his elevated status intelligible to his listeners.

Two fundamental assertions arise: first, that he is undeniably the most worthy, and second, that his superiority is not merely a matter of personal conviction but is known to the first Caliph himself. As he declares, And he knows that my place in it is like the position of the pole in the millstone<sup>[2]</sup>. The torrent descends from me, but the bird does not ascend to me.

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[1] Disrupting this established order of merit, they argue, would destabilize the caliphate system and create significant issues. Their reasoning is: how could the most virtuous be delayed while another precedes him? Although some Mu'tazilites permitted the prioritization of a less virtuous individual, this was not the prevailing approach within the Caliphs' school of thought.

[2] As documented in Ahmad ibn Hanbal's Virtues of the Companions (1/83) and numerous sources from the Caliphs' school, it is stated: "No one prefers me over Abu Bakr and Umar except that I will flog him with the slanderer's punishment."

2. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) employs a striking expression to describe the acquisition of power, declaring, I swear by Almighty Allah, so-and-so has put it on... Here, he likens the act of assuming the caliphate to forcibly donning a garment ill-suited to its wearer, a process requiring effort and coercion. The verb indicative of exertion and struggle, underscores the unnaturalness of the act. Through this imagery, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) presents the caliphate as a mantle unjustly seized, worn despite the wearer's tacit knowledge that it rightfully belongs to another.

The depth of this metaphor is further illuminated in the subsequent passage, wherein he states that the rightful claimant to leadership, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), was well known to those who claimed power. He reiterates the incontestable nature of his superiority, later questioning, O Allah, and consultation is for You alone! When did doubt arise concerning me with the first of them, howcome that I became equal to these peers? In this rhetorical challenge, he rejects any notion of parity with the likes of Uthman and his contemporaries, viewing his participation in their deliberations as a concession rather than an acknowledgment of equality.

Nonetheless, the adherents of the School of the Caliphs contrived a contradictory assertion, attributing to him the ludicrous statement: No one who is better than me will be brought to me ... except that I will flog him with the slanderer's flogging. How could such a declaration coexist with his unwavering proclamation of preeminence?

3. Imam Ali's (Peace Be Upon Him) position on the caliphate of the first ruler is neither passive nor indifferent. His

decision is one borne of grim necessity, a measured balance between two painful alternatives: to wield his sword against insurmountable forces with but a severed hand, or to endure with patience a blindness imposed upon the truth, a tyranny so relentless that the youth were aged by its weight, the faithful wearied until they met their Lord. Contemplating these paths, he deemed patience the wiser course, though its bitterness remained a thorn lodged in his throat, a speck clouding his sight, while the legacy rightfully his was wrested from his grasp.

This portion of the sermon dismantles the argument advanced by the adherents of the Caliphate School, who contend that Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) merely delayed his oath of allegiance until realization dawned upon him, compelling his submission. Some even claim he pledged allegiance only after the passing of Fatima Al-Zahra, yet his own words decisively refute this notion. He makes clear that his was not a hesitant acceptance, but rather a choice between two agonizing fates, combat in a struggle doomed by insufficient support or patient endurance amid injustice. He chose patience, though it brought him no solace, nor did it erase the deep wound of dispossession<sup>[1]</sup>.

4. In his sermon, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) emphatically asserts that denying him was not a mere governance, a transient seat passed from one leader to another. No, what was taken from him was his heritage, a sacred right that

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[1] Eye bug: A small, hard object that enters the eye and causes irritation or injury. Sore throat in this context is a bone or similar foreign object lodged in the throat, preventing it from being swallowed or expelled.

had been plundered before his very eyes. His lament is not one of political ambition, but of divine mandate overturned: I see my heritage as plunder.

His claim rests not upon popular opinion nor upon the fickle tides of human deliberation, but upon the indelible decree of the Prophet, who declared, Whosoever I am his master, Ali is his master. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) invokes the Prophet's own pronouncement, Am I not more worthy of you than yourselves? thereby affirming that the caliphate belonged to him not by the will of men, but by divine appointment. To seize it from him was not mere disinheritance, it was an act of outright usurpation.

5. In a single, resplendent utterance, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), whose eloquence bewildered even the most gifted orators, protested, refuted, and illuminated a prior covenant within the so-called Quraysh coalition. Such was his mastery that with but a single line, he laid bare the contradictions of an agreement. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) left the eloquent speakers in stunned silence, grappling with the profundity of his words!

He declared: How strange! While he was resigning from it in his lifetime, he concluded it for another after his death, how severe its two udders had been!

This alludes to the statement of the first Caliph, who during his tenure proclaimed: Remove me, for I am not the best among you. To resign and abstain from authority is to relinquish responsibility for its inevitable trials and errors. Here, he admitted his own inadequacy. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) rebukes him: If one recognizes himself as unfit to bear such a burden, how can he then transfer it to another? Was his resignation an illusion? Or

was this succession an act of contradiction? Perhaps, as the next passage suggests, it was an orchestrated arrangement from the outset: To tighten, they did not split her udder, meaning they had tacitly agreed upon its division from the beginning.

6. In assessing the second phase of the Caliphate, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) described it in scathing terms: A domain harsh and unyielding; its speech abrasive, its touch coarse, marred by ceaseless stumbles and forced excuses. Its companion is like a rider upon a wild and unruly beast, if he urges it on, he is thrown, and if he restrains it, it will bolt.

This was a reign governed by severity, devoid of grace, needing no evidence to prove its oppressive nature, for it was felt, seen, and suffered by all. Stumbles were frequent, interpretations convoluted, for legislation was twisted to serve an arbitrary will. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) likened its ruler to one astride a tempestuous beast: pressuring it too much would tear its mouth apart, yet easing its grip would lead to reckless descent. It was an era of unrelenting hardship, spanning a decade of turmoil, of which Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) lamented, I endured its long years and the severity of its trial.

7. At this pivotal juncture, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) expounds upon the manner in which the third Caliph ascended to the seat of power, declaring:

And when he ventured forth upon his path, he fashioned his claim within a congregation that professed my companionship. I swear by Almighty Allah, and by the pretense of consultation, when uncertainty hovered about me amongst the earliest of them, I stood before them as one of their peers. Yet, I bowed when they bowed, and soared when they soared. One among

them stooped in bitterness, while another inclined toward him by virtue of marriage.

In this declaration, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) unmistakably distances himself from this faction, asserting that he stands apart from their ranks, neither desiring nor assuming parity with the early Caliphs. What, then, must one make of these men? His words, layered with irony, are a clear repudiation of the mechanism by which the Caliphate was transferred, its questionable legitimacy brought forth in his mocking invocation: Oh Almighty Allah, and Shura!

Some might ask: If you held such disdain for the process, why then did you take part in it? Would it not have been more fitting to renounce it entirely? His answer unfolds in two dimensions. Firstly, when he says, Yet, I bowed when they bowed, and soared when they soared, he reveals that his participation was not one of conviction but of necessity, to silence those who would claim that his exclusion was proof of his illegitimacy. For often, when one abstains from political affairs, opponents seize upon such abstention as evidence of impotence or lack of entitlement. To remain outside the process would have armed them with arguments against him.

The second justification, discernible across his discourse, counters a widespread assertion propagated during the eras of the first and second Caliphs: namely, that prophethood and the Caliphate could not be housed within the same lineage. This notion was disseminated broadly, ingrained into collective thought. And yet, the very voices who once insisted upon this impossibility later put forth Imam Ali as a candidate for the Caliphate, conceding that power might indeed have rested in his

hands. What contradiction exists between the logic of yesteryear and the logic of today!

Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) elucidates that the process was not a simple election but rather an intricate arrangement that culminated in Uthman Ibn Affan's ascension. These maneuvers, he asserts, were neither just nor beneficial to Islam itself. The mechanism that vested Abdulrahman Ibn Awf with decisive authority in the event of a deadlock was, at its core, illegitimate. Beneath these machinations lurked ulterior motives: some driven by lingering resentment, their hearts still burdened by the wounds of pre-Islamic conflicts, angered by Ali's role in slaying their kin; others, swayed by the bonds of matrimony rather than any merit of wisdom or governance.

**8.** Thus, an enterprise founded upon such precarious ground could only yield a malformed progeny. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) captures this distortion in his piercing observation: When the third of them arose, his girth swollen from indulgence between watering and fodder, and his father's kin ascending with him, devouring the wealth of Almighty Allah like camels greedily feasting upon the bounty of spring. The metaphor reveals the Caliph's singular devotion to expansion of the treasury, his preoccupation with opulence rather than governance, likening his approach to that of a beast gorging upon sustenance without restraint. His kinsmen, the Banu Umayyah, consumed the public wealth without moderation, akin to ravenous creatures feasting unbridled<sup>[1]</sup>.

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[1] Al-Bahrani; Ibn Maitham; Selection of the Lamp of Wayfareres, p. 95.

Under this rule, as Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) describes, power became a fortress of monopoly, where public funds lay at the mercy of the few, safeguarded by hollow justifications, wealth siphoned under the guise of kinship, while the people languished in mounting hardship. This glaring disparity stoked embers of fury among the populace, as the Umayyad elite feasted upon riches while deprivation swelled among the masses. These injustices, among others, became the precursor to revolution, culminating in Imam Ali's (Peace Be Upon Him) foretelling: His schemes recoiled upon him, his own deeds unraveled his dominion, and his insatiable hunger led to his undoing.

9. The leadership, once divinely entrusted and wielded in the Prophet's noble hands, steadily declined over a span of twenty-five years, until its frailty became laid bare in full. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), seeing its corruption, felt no desire for it, yet the people clamored after him as wild beasts upon their prey, trampled upon by ambition<sup>[1]</sup>. Had he refrained from taking his stand, power would have fallen into the grasp of those whose hunger would soon ignite wars against him<sup>[2]</sup>.

Faced with this choice, he stepped forward, not out of personal longing, but out of necessity. As he would later recount in another sermon:

You rushed toward me with pledges, as the pure-hearted rush to cradle their children. I withdrew my hand, yet you extended yours. My hand recoiled, yet you wrestled with it.

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[1] This is a proverb used to indicate abundance and gathering.  
 [2] It is said that he meant his two sons, Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein (Peace Be Upon Them).

He describes their overwhelming force: I was startled by the people, who came upon me like beasts upon carrion, swarming me from every direction, until the righteous were trampled beneath their feet and my flanks were torn asunder, converging upon me like a herd in frenzy. When I rose to establish justice, a faction betrayed their oath, another turned renegade, and yet others merely stood idle<sup>[1]</sup>.

Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) addresses these treacherous factions with stark clarity, not as many historians have done, painting them in the veneer of noble intent, but by exposing their true nature.

Those who severed their oath of allegiance were none other than the faction of the Camel; the oppressors and tyrants, the people of Ash-Sham; the apostates from the faith, the Khawarij. He names them for what they are, making plain their motives, not a righteous struggle nor a pursuit of reform, but a greed-driven lust for dominion. The seductions of worldly power lay before them, and they succumbed to its dazzling allure.

Yet Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) asserts that his resistance did not stem from ambition but from religious obligation. In earlier days, he refrained from rising against corruption for lack of support, his hand severed by circumstance. But now, with loyal allies at his side, he bore the weight of divine duty, to counter injustice, to strike down tyranny, and to uplift the oppressed. Were it not for this sacred covenant upon the scholars of the nation, he declares, he would have cast power aside entirely, for in his eyes this world amounts to nothing more than a fleeting whisper.

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[1] Peak of Eloquence, p. 195.

So, his final words stand as testament to the conflict that shaped his era: Had they not heard the command of Almighty Allah: ‘The abode of the Hereafter We shall grant to those who seek neither arrogance upon the earth nor corruption. The best fate belongs to the righteous’? I swear by Almighty Allah, they heard and understood, yet they surrendered themselves to the gleaming mirage of worldly grandeur. But I swear by He who splits the seed and fashions the soul, were it not for the call of duty, the presence of loyalists, and the covenant that binds the scholars to defy oppression and uphold justice, I would have cast its reins to the wind, abandoning it without a second glance. To me, this world is no more significant than the refuse of a goat<sup>[1]</sup>.

Would such unflinching truth be embraced by the scholars of the Caliphate’s doctrine? Certainly not. To safeguard their narrative, denial is their refuge. Some reject the authenticity of these words, lest they be taken as an indictment of the Prophet’s companions. Others go further, renouncing the entire volume if need be, for truth stands as an unwelcome specter against the stronghold of their interpretation.

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[1] Like a human sneeze.

# The Roles of Imam Ali (PBUH) During the Caliphs' Era

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The era spanning from the Prophet's (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) passing until the inception of Imam Ali's Caliphate (from late Safar 11 AH to 35 AH) marks one of the most challenging, intricate, and interwoven periods in Imam Ali's (Peace Be Upon Him) life. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) succinctly described this time as "a long period and a severe ordeal"<sup>[1]</sup>. This "long period" encompassed 25 years of the Imam's life, constituting over a third of his entire lifespan. The gravity of this "severe ordeal" stems from several factors. On one hand, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) was compelled to endure

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[1] Peak of Eloquence; p. 49.

numerous personal afflictions. These began with the assault on his home, leading to Fatima's (Peace Be Upon Her) miscarriage and subsequent martyrdom. Simultaneously, he was tasked with overseeing the trajectory of the Islamic faith under the new administrations. This involved correcting errors, addressing flaws, and rectifying deficiencies. However, undertaking these actions could inadvertently create the impression that he endorsed these governments and accepted their legitimacy, merely offering corrections on minor details. This interpretation was, in fact, leveraged by the Caliphate School movement to substantiate the validity and legitimacy of these administrations.

Furthermore, it was evident that his loyal followers were often excluded from positions they were more qualified for, simply due to their allegiance to Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Peace Be Upon Him). This placed him in a precarious position: Should he completely boycott the political landscape? Such a move would only exacerbate errors and confusion. Or should he fully engage, thereby implicitly forsaking his rightful claim, the Prophet's will regarding him, and the Pledge of Allegiance at Ghadeer Khumm? This would validate the events at Saqifa, which he had vehemently opposed. The dilemma highlights the profound seriousness and complexity of his situation. Below, Imam Ali's (Peace Be Upon Him) role during this period will be delineated through several key points:

1. The initial challenge confronting Abu Bakr's caliphate was the widespread rejection of his leadership by various groups across different regions. Imam Ali's (Peace Be Upon Him) stance was consistently aligned with the motives and objectives of these dissenting factions. The faction loyal

to Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) openly opposed Abu Bakr’s caliphate, publicly challenging his assumption of a position they believed was not rightfully his. Members of this group vocally expressed their opposition to the Caliph in front of the congregation at the mosque, with historical records preserving their names and precise statements<sup>[1]</sup>. Naturally, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) supported their declarations and positions, even while endeavoring to prevent this political dissent from escalating into a volatile social confrontation.

In this context, Malik Ibn Nuwaira Al-Yarboui also voiced his objection<sup>[2]</sup>. He had heard directly from the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) that Ali Ibn Abi Talib was his designated successor. Upon arriving in Medina after the Prophet’s passing, and observing that the one occupying the pulpit was not whom the Prophet had designated, Malik Ibn Nuwaira refused to hand over the Zakat. Instead, he returned

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[1] As documented in Bihar al-Anwar (Vol. 28, p. 208) by Al-Majlisi, Muhammad Baqir, drawing upon the testimony of Zayd Ibn Wahb, a notable dissent emerged concerning the legitimacy of Abu Bakr’s ascension to the caliphate and his precedence over Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Peace Be Upon Him). This opposition comprised twelve distinguished individuals from both the Muhajireen and the Ansar. Among the Muhajireen were Khalid Ibn Saeed Ibn al-As, al-Miqdad Ibn al-Aswad, Ubayy Ibn Ka’b, Ammar Ibn Yasir, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, Salman al-Farsi, Abdullah Ibn Mas’ud, and Buraydah al-Aslami. The Ansar contingent included Khuzaymah Ibn Thabit (known as “the possessor of the two testimonies”), Sahl Ibn Hunayf, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, and Abu al-Haytham Ibn al-Tayhan. This account underscores the significant initial fracturing within the nascent Muslim community regarding leadership.

[2] Men Around the Household, Part1.

to his people to inform them of the situation, leaving them the freedom to decide the fate of their Zakat funds.

There was a deliberate conflation between those who had abandoned Islam and those who merely refused to pay Zakat, and subsequently, between those who refused to pay Zakat and those who insisted on remitting it solely to Ali Ibn Abi Talib, whom they considered the legitimate Caliph.

2. Simultaneously, Islam faced a significant apostasy movement among certain Arab tribes, spearheaded by individuals driven by ambition for power and weakened faith. Some viewed the Islamic message as a mere kingdom led by a man who had previously subdued them. With his demise, they sought to revert to their former ways. Notable figures in this movement included Tulaiha Ibn Khuwaylid in the north, Musaylima Al-Hanafi in the central region of Al-Yamamah, and Sajah, alongside their leader Al-Aswad Al-Ansi, in Yemen. The overall situation in this regard was dire.

Perhaps this is what Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) alluded to when he stated, "Until I saw that the people had turned away from Islam and were calling for the eradication of the religion of Muhammad. I was afraid that if I did not support Islam and its people, I would not see a breach or destruction in it, and the calamity would be greater for us and I would lose your authority"<sup>[1]</sup>.

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[1] Peak of Eloquence (p. 451); Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Peace Be Upon Him) articulated his profound astonishment and dismay at the events following the Prophet's demise: "By Almighty Allah, it never occurred to me, nor did it cross my mind, that the Arabs would

Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) could have, like many politicians, past and present, exploited this opportunity to weaken the existing authority by allying with the opposing forces or by blackmailing the government to achieve his demands. However, despite his earlier refusal to pledge allegiance, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) chose to extend his support to strengthen the Muslim state, which had been unjustly seized from him. He did so because the very existence of Islam and the survival of the Sharia were at stake. He articulated this by saying: "So I stood up in those events until falsehood was removed and vanished, and the religion was reassured and calmed down"<sup>[1]</sup>.

It is important to note that while some adherents of the official Caliphate trend exaggerated the Imam's support for the Caliphate, attempting to use it doctrinally to prove its legitimacy, we do not subscribe to such interpretations.

3. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) consistently viewed himself as more deserving of the Caliphate than others, a conviction rooted in the Prophet's (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) appointment, his personal virtues, and his

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be disturbed by this matter after him (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) nor that they would be granted it after him." He further expressed his apprehension regarding the swift allegiance pledged to Abu Bakr, stating, "What startled me was the people rushing to Abu Bakr to pledge allegiance to him, so I held back my hand until I saw the people returning. About Islam they call for the eradication of the religion of Muhammad, so fear I would not support Islam and its people if I saw in it a breach that would be a destruction that would be a greater calamity for us than the loss of your leadership." This passage reveals Ali's initial reluctance and his deep concern for the preservation of Islamic principles amidst the political shifts.

[1] Ibid.

profound religious knowledge. This belief was something he openly declared. Nevertheless, he actively cooperated with the Caliphate in numerous areas and refrained from adopting a path of hostility or obstruction. He did not prevent his close companions—who were among the elite companions of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household)—from limited interaction and cooperation with the Caliphate authority during its initial phase, given the brevity of the first Caliph's rule. However, this cooperation extended during the longer reign of the second Caliph (from 13 AH to 23 AH).

Several of the Imam's sincere companions accepted governorships of various regions. There is no indication that they acted contrary to his directives. Examples include Ammar Ibn Yasir, who governed Kufa under Umar Ibn Al-Khattab; Uthman Ibn Hanif, who was in charge of the land area; Salman Al-Farsi, who managed Al-Madain upon its initial conquest; and Hudhayfah Ibn Al-Yaman, who later governed Al-Madain during a different period. Additionally, some companions, like Abdullah Ibn Abbas, the Imam's special student<sup>[1]</sup>, actively participated in issuing fatwas and Islamic rulings.

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[1] Sources such as *Men Around the Household, Part 1*, and the analysis provided in *Figures from the Prophetic Family and Companions of the Prophet Muhammad*, delve into the intricacies of this period. These works explore the motivations and objectives behind various actions, including the dialogues between Abdullah Ibn Abbas and Caliph Umar, and Ibn Abbas's steadfast advocacy for the rights of the Commander of the Faithful. It is posited that Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) acquiesced to the continued relationship between Ibn Abbas and the Caliphate, recognizing Ibn Abbas's role in conveying crucial information and opinions, irrespective of their adoption by the ruling authority.

Indeed, the Imam himself prominently intervened to correct judicial errors, saving lives that might have been lost due to incorrect arbitration and ignorance of legal principles. Historians have reported that the second Caliph, Umar, repeatedly stated, “If it weren’t for Ali, Umar would have perished,” approximately seventy times. If this count is accurate for those specific instances, it raises the question of how many other instances went unrecorded.

It is also documented that Caliph Umar consulted the Imam (Peace Be Upon Him) about personally leading the fight against the Persians. The Imam advised him against it, urging him to remain in Medina: “So be a pole, and turn the millstone with the Arabs and their origin is the fire of war before you, for if you leave this land, the Arabs will revolt against you from its edges and regions”<sup>[1]</sup>.

**4.** The relationship between Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) and the Caliphate during its second era was dynamic, oscillating between internal objection and profound dissatisfaction over his exclusion and the injustices he endured<sup>[2]</sup>. Concurrently, he strived to safeguard the Islamic entity (the state) and resist attempts that could lead to its destruction, as this would imperil the religion and nullify the Prophet’s (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) efforts. This period also witnessed permitting his companions to

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[1] Peak of Eloquence (p. 203).

[2] Imam Ali probably had aversion to the actions of the Quraysh, implying their central role in the establishment of authority and the caliphate. His supplication, “O Lord, I seek Your help against the Quraysh...,” resonates with this sentiment.

contribute politically (as governors), militarily (as army leaders), or legally by clarifying the correct approach, all while continuously asserting his rightful claim over others. This active participation did not prevent him from offering mature counsel and clarifying accurate legal rulings, thereby saving the ruling apparatus from numerous judicial predicaments.

The second Caliph recognized Imam Ali's (Peace Be Upon Him) capabilities and understood that if he had appointed them, they would have led the community on a clear path. Simultaneously, he acknowledged the purity of the Imam's soul, knowing that despite feeling deeply wronged<sup>[1]</sup>, the Imam would not conspire, act with political malice, or seize opportunities to overthrow his opponents. The Caliph was content with this understanding and did not perceive any danger from Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). (If he had, the Imam would have surely advised him to engage in battle with the Persians, leaving Medina vulnerable.) Perhaps the Caliph appointed some of Imam Ali's (Peace Be Upon Him)

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[1] Ibn Abi Al-Hadid's Explanation of Peak of Eloquence (Vol. 12, p. 20) recounts a pivotal dialogue between Umar Ibn Al-Khattab and Abdullah Ibn Abbas. In this exchange, Umar probes Ibn Abbas about Ali's continued sentiments regarding the caliphate. When asked if Ali still harbored aspirations for leadership, Ibn Abbas unequivocally affirmed, "Yes," and further asserted that the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) had indeed appointed Ali. Umar's subsequent admission that the Prophet "had said something in his matter that was not a valid argument, nor an excuse," and his claim to have prevented the Prophet from explicitly naming Ali during his final illness "out of pity and caution for Islam," offers a contentious historical perspective on the succession. For a comprehensive understanding of this debate, Sayyid Abdulhussein Sharafuldin's *Al-Nass wa Al-Ijtihad* is highly recommended."

companions primarily for their competence and, secondarily, to alleviate tension. Despite this, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) did not hesitate to object to several matters<sup>[1]</sup> in which Umar Ibn Al-Khattab exercised his own judgment, deeming them contradictory to the noble Prophetic Sunnah.

5. Following the wounding of Caliph Umar by Abu Lu'lu'ah (an event with various interpretations regarding its motives, ranging from personal nationalist to internal political interests favoring the Umayyads, and religious sectarian motivations), Umar, in his final days, recommended that the matter of succession be decided by a Shura (consultative council). He appointed six members to this Shura. Some researchers contend that the structure of this Shura was designed to ensure the selection of a Qurayshi leader, rather than someone from the Prophet's household, akin to modern political gerrymandering aimed at securing the victory of specific individuals or predetermined movements.

Although Imam Ali's initial stance was that this Shura Council and its established laws were unsuitable, he mockingly remarked, "Oh Lord, What is this Shura! When was I doubted with the first of them so that I became like these peers?" Nevertheless, he participated to refute the arguments of his predecessors for his exclusion. They wrongly claimed, "Prophethood and Caliphate cannot be combined in one house!" His participation further illuminated the extent of the injustice against him, as "one of them became weak because of his grudge, and the other leaned

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[1] Al-Nass wa Al-Ijtihad, Sayyid Abdulhussein Sharafuldin.

towards his in-laws"<sup>[1]</sup>, referring to interventions and alliances that would later exact a price.

6. With the ascension of Caliph Uthman Ibn Affan (from 23 AH to 35 AH), the dynamics drastically shifted from the previous caliphates. The previous truce, the limited understanding and consultation, and even the cooperation of Ali's companions with the Caliphate dissolved. The situation evolved into what resembled a cold war initially, gradually escalating into open conflicts. This period was marked by the prominent rise of Umayyad control over the Muslim Caliphate and the implementation of financial policies that were unprecedented in previous eras, such as monopolizing Muslim wealth and favoritism towards relatives. Imam Ali alluded to this, saying: "The sons of his father supported him, devouring the wealth of Almighty Allah as camels devouring the spring plant." This simile eloquently captures the reality of the situation. Furthermore, Caliph Uthman failed to respect the Imam's rights and his stature within

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[1] Sad Ibn Abi Waqqas al-Zuhri was consumed by his animosity and grudge against the Imam. Ibn Maytham al-Bahrani, in his *\*Ikhtiyar Misbah al-Salikeen\** (p. 95), reported that Sad's mother was Hamna bint Sufyan Ibn Umayya. The Imam had killed prominent Umayyad leaders—Utbah, Shaiba, and al-Walid—during the Battle of Badr. It's also reported that Sa`d Ibn Abi Waqqas refused to pledge allegiance to the Commander of the Faithful, even after the Imam himself had done so. Abdulrahman Ibn Awf, on the other hand, favored his son-in-law, Uthman. This was because Uthman was married to Abdulrahman's maternal half-sister, Umm Kulthum Bint Uqbah Ibn Abi Muayt. The Shura (consultative council) was structured such that anyone who sided with Abdulrahman Ibn `Awf was considered "the chosen one" (implying a decisive influence or an advantageous position).

Islam. Some researchers believe this stemmed from Ali's (Peace Be Upon Him) role in rekindling the Umayyads' grievances by slaying their leaders and prominent figures early in Islam, given Uthman's blood ties to them. Moreover, their personal characters were distinctly different.

To exacerbate matters, around 29 AH, Caliph Uthman began implementing his own *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) that contradicted the Prophet's *Sunnah* and the teachings Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) had inherited from him. This included matters concerning triple ablution, prayer, and the rulings on shortening and completing the Hajj. Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) explicitly and practically demonstrated that these contradicted the Prophet's *Sunnah*.

All these factors led to an almost continuous state of tension, which impacted Ali's close companions like Abu Tharr Al-Ghifari and Abdullah Ibn Masoud. Abu Tharr was exiled first to the Levant and then to Rabadha, where he died. Abdullah Ibn Masoud was physically assaulted for objecting to Uthman's unsound financial policies. Uthman also suspended the legal punishment for his half-brother, Al-Walid Ibn Uqba, whom he had appointed governor of Kufa, and cursed those who testified to his drinking alcohol. He also granted Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam, an Umayyad, the village of Fadak and a fifth of Africa. Some even reported that Uthman threatened to exile Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) from Medina.

Nonetheless, the Imam's (Peace Be Upon Him) position remained that of a compassionate advisor to the nation, warning against the consequences of these actions. He sought to repel evil with good and calmed those who were eager to

forcibly depose the Caliph, all while advising the Caliph<sup>[1]</sup> to take measures to quell the widespread uprising, particularly among the Prophet's companions (who were Uthman's contemporaries).

With the Caliph's weakening authority and Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam's obstinacy (who effectively acted as the de facto Caliph), events spiraled towards what ultimately transpired: delegations of objectors arrived from Kufa and Egypt, joining forces with those in Medina, and even gaining support from some of the Prophet's companions and wives. They ultimately raided the Caliphate palace and assassinated Caliph Uthman, despite the Imam's pleas and the defense offered by his two sons, Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein, which proved ineffective in repelling the attack.

During this era, particularly after the first six years of Uthman's rule (beginning in 30 AH), the relationship between the official

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[1] Al-Tabari: History of the Prophets and Kings 4/337:

"The people gathered and spoke with Ali Ibn Abi Talib. So he went in to Uthman and said: 'The people are behind me, and they have spoken to me concerning you. By Allah, I don't know what to tell you. There's nothing I know that you don't, nor can I guide you to anything you're unaware of. You certainly know what we know; we haven't preceded you in anything to inform you about it, nor have we been alone with anything to convey it to you. We haven't been singled out for any matter over you. You have seen and heard, and you were a companion of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) and attained his son-in-law status. Ibn Abi Quhafah (Abu Bakr) is no more entitled to act righteously than you, nor is Ibn Al-Khattab (Umar) more entitled to anything good than you. Indeed, you are closer in kinship to the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), and you have attained a relationship through marriage that they did not, nor did they precede you in anything. So, by Allah, by Allah, take heed for yourself!" This continued to the end of his advice to him.

Caliphate and the Prophet's household and Ali's loyal followers completely deteriorated, reaching a zero point. There were no political or military consultations, nor any consultations on jurisprudential and religious matters. The Imam's followers were largely removed, replaced by the Umayyads and their allies.



# Imam Ali's (PBUH) Stance from Breakers of Allegiance

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In the annals of early Islamic history, the caliphate of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) was met with significant challenges, notably from factions whose allegiances proved ephemeral. These groups, often driven by worldly aspirations rather than steadfast adherence to divine principles, posed considerable opposition. The "People of the Camel," represented the inaugural group to challenge the authority of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). This faction, prominently led by Talha, Al-Zubayr, and Aisha, the esteemed wife of the Prophet, initiated hostilities against Imam Ali.

Imam Ali, in a profound articulation of their deviation, remarked:

“When I took up the matter, a group broke their promise, another group went astray, and others acted unjustly as if they had not heard Almighty Allah say: ‘That is the home of the Hereafter. We assign it to those who do not desire exaltation upon the earth or corruption. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.’ Yes, by Almighty Allah, they heard it and understood it, but the worldly glitter dazzled them.”

This excerpt, drawn from Al-Shaqshaqiya sermon, is invaluable not merely as a firsthand account but also as a definitive interpretation of the events. It elucidates the motivations of those who reneged on their pledges. The Imam’s characterization of each dissenting group underscores a clear understanding of their spiritual and moral failings. While numerous narrations from the Caliphs’ school selectively present parts of the Prophet’s prophecy regarding Ali’s battles against “faith-breakers, oppressors, and apostates,” the School of Ahl Al-Bayt comprehensively affirms these prophetic warnings. The acknowledgment of the Khawarij as apostates is widely accepted; however, recognizing the other two groups in a similar light would fundamentally challenge the doctrine of the Companions’ infallibility, a cornerstone of the other interpretative framework.

## **Allegiance and Breaking it**

The formal allegiance to Ali as Caliph occurred on Friday, 25 Thu Al-Hijjah, 35 AH. The populace’s pledge to Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) (the Dhahiri) was overwhelmingly enthusiastic, marked by widespread jubilation and profound happiness

throughout the City of the Prophet. Despite the Imam’s initial reluctance to assume the caliphate<sup>[1]</sup>, his subsequent descriptions vividly portray the fervent popular support. He recounted: “I was not startled except by the people like a hyena’s mane towards me, pouring on me from every side, until Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein were stepped and my sides were toured, gathering around me like a flock of sheep.”

At another juncture, he stated: “So you approached me like a flock of fowls approaching their young, saying: ‘Allegiance, so I clenched my hand but you extended it, and my hand disputed with you so you grabbed it.”

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[1] Here, a distinction must be made between two matters: the issue of Divine Imamate and the issue of Apparent Caliphate. Divine Imamate has no connection to the people’s pledge of allegiance (bay’ah), is not subject to their assembly, and is not affected by their acceptance or rejection. Thus, Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) is an Imam by virtue of Almighty Allah’s appointment and the Prophet’s (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) proclamation. This Divine Imamate becomes effective immediately upon the passing of the Prophet, whether anyone pledged allegiance to him or not. The pledge of allegiance does not alter the matter of Imam Ali’s (Peace Be Upon Him) Imamate, as it is a Divine Imamate. As for the Apparent Caliphate, it is linked to the matter of the people’s pledge of allegiance. Therefore, the Apparent Caliphate was not established for the Commander of the Faithful during the time of the first, second, and third Caliphs, even though he was a Divine Imam. However, he was not a Caliph in the sense of the Apparent Caliphate, because its conditions for action include the people’s acceptance and their pledge of allegiance to him, and their commitment to his commands. This did not occur until his time. The Imam (Peace Be Upon Him), by saying, “I am a better minister for you than an emir,” was referring to the Apparent Caliphate and not the Divine Imamate.

A third depiction further illustrates this fervor:

“Then you crushed me like stray camels crush their watering place on the day of their watering place, until I was cut off. The sandal fell, the cloak fell, the weak was trampled upon, and the people were so happy with their pledge of allegiance to me that the young rejoiced over it, the old rushed to it, the sick man struggled towards it, and the high-heels lowered their heads towards it.”

Crucially, these accounts emphasize the voluntary nature of the allegiance, devoid of coercion or duress. As Ali affirmed: “The people pledged allegiance to me, neither under duress nor compulsion, but willingly and freely.” He further stated: “There was not a man among them who did not obey me and allow me to pledge allegiance, willingly and not under duress.” The caliphate was not sought through prevailing authority or opportunism, nor was the pledge a “slip of the tongue.”

It is a scientifically reprehensible assertion, propagated by certain proponents of the Umayyad movement, that “half the nation—or more or less—did not pledge allegiance to him<sup>[1]</sup>.”

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[1] Ibn Taymiyyah, Ahmad Ibn Abdulhalim: Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah 8/338, claimed, “Indeed, a third of the Ummah—or less or more—did not pledge allegiance to Ali; rather, they fought him. The other third did not fight with him. Among them were those who also did not pledge allegiance to him.”

Consider this false statement and compare it with the truth mentioned by Abu Abdullah al-Qurtubi (d. 671 AH) in his book *Al-Tadhkirah fi Ahwal al-Mawta wa Umur al-Akhirah* (p. 1083), regarding Ali (Peace Be Upon Him): “His caliphate was established in the Mosque of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) the descent place of revelation, the abode

Such claims are demonstrably false. Historians, and indeed Imam Ali himself, consistently attest to the widespread and joyful allegiance of the Muslim populace in Medina. The comprehensive refutation of this slander is meticulously detailed in “The Pledge of Allegiance to Ali Ibn Abi Talib, in light of the authentic narrations<sup>[1]</sup>.” While a few individuals, such as Hassan Ibn Thabit, Muslima Ibn Mukhallad, Muhammad Ibn Muslima, Al-Numan Ibn Bashir, and Zaid Ibn Thabit, whose sympathies leaned towards the Umayyad (Ottoman) faction, withheld their allegiance, their numbers were negligible in comparison to the general consensus.

However, once these individuals, whose “world became beautiful in their eyes and its finery and glitter appealed to them,” failed to secure the positions and wealth they coveted, they swiftly violated their covenants and breached their pledges.

## Economic Reforms and Administrative Dismissals

Upon assuming leadership, Imam Ali promptly initiated a program designed to dismantle entrenched privileges, leaving no scope for the realization of self-serving ambitions. He immediately

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of prophethood, and the seat of the Caliphate. This was with the full consent, approval, and choice of all the Muhajireen and Ansar who were present there. They were innumerable communities and people of authority and influence. The pledge of allegiance is established by a group of the people of authority and influence.”

[1] Referred to in the website of Sheikh Nassir Makarim Al-Shirazi <https://makarem.ir/maaref/ar/article/index/401723/>, yet I could not review the book.

instructed Abu Al-Haytham Ibn Al-Tayhan, Ammar Ibn Yasir, and Ubayd Allah Ibn Abi Rafi' to audit the public treasury and distribute its contents equally. Each individual received a share of three dinars.

The narrative of this equitable distribution extends to Al-Zubayr, Talha, and Abdullah Ibn Omar, who, upon encountering this standardized allocation, questioned its source. Affirming its origin, they were directed to seek the Imam, whom they found diligently working at the king's well. They implored him to rest in the shade, where they then voiced their grievances, asserting their familial ties to the Prophet, their precedence in Islam, and their contributions to the early struggles. They lamented that unlike Umar and Uthman, who had favored them, Ali had afforded them equal shares.

In response, Ali engaged them in a Socratic dialogue, asking: "Which of them is better in your opinion: Omar or Abu Bakr?" When they replied, "Abu Bakr," he rejoined: "This is Abu Bakr's division, otherwise leave Abu Bakr and others. This is the Book of Almighty Allah, so consider what you have a right to and take it." When they inquired about special treatment due to their lineage or jihad, Ali countered, asserting his own superior kinship and greater participation in jihad. He declared unequivocally: "I swear by Almighty Allah, I am not equal in this money and in this wage<sup>[1]</sup>." Subsequently, they requested permission to perform Umrah, a thinly veiled pretext for departure.

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[1] Al-Aamili, Sayyid Jaafar Murtadha: (Al-Sahih min Sirat Al-Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him); 20/104.

The Imam explicitly affirmed that public funds were the property of Almighty Allah, and all individuals are His servants, reiterating his resolve to treat everyone equally. He abolished the stipend system established by the second caliph that had prioritized individuals, placing the Prophet's wives at the apex with a hundred dirhams, followed by the Companions of Badr with seventy, and non-Arab clients with a mere forty. He further mandated the return of all gifts and donations unjustly distributed by previous caliphs to their relatives to the public treasury, stating: "Beware, every gift that the caliphs had unjustly seized before me would be returned to the public treasury, and nothing would invalidate the right, even if you found it used to marry and own female slaves." This radical reform directly challenged individuals like Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam, who had received significant grants like Fadak and a fifth of Africa's wealth from the third caliph, thus explaining their inevitable dissatisfaction with Ali's just rule.

Concurrently, Ali initiated a policy of dismissing governors appointed without merit or competence. Ya`la Ibn Munabbih, the governor of Yemen, upon learning of his dismissal and the gathering of the People of the Camel in Mecca, absconded with the treasury, weapons, and animals, placing them under the command of Talha and Al-Zubayr for their perfidious expedition to Mecca, distributing the funds to their adherents. Similarly, Abdullah Ibn Omar Ibn Kuraiz, the governor of Basra and a relative of Caliph Uthman, likewise absconded with significant gold and silver. Abd Allah Ibn Saad from Abi Sarh of Egypt and Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari of Kufa were also dismissed. Ali subsequently appointed new governors, chosen for their integrity and moral rectitude.

During this period, a message arrived from Muawiyah Ibn Abi Sufyan, whom Ali had dismissed from the governorship of the Levant. Muawiyah defiantly refused the dismissal and commenced preparations for confrontation. Among his machinations, he dispatched a message to Al-Zubayr and Talhah, pledging allegiance to them and informing them that the Levant had been ceded to their control, urging them to secure Kufa and Basra.

## A Third Party in the Field

The third significant party in this unfolding conflict was Aisha, the Mother of the Believers. After performing Umrah in Mecca, she embarked on her return journey to Medina. She had departed Medina amidst escalating tensions against the third Caliph, whose conduct she had found unsatisfactory. Upon encountering messengers, she inquired about the events in the city and was informed of Uthman's demise. Her subsequent question, "Did things turn out well?" (anticipating the caliphate of Al-Zubayr or Talha), was met with the surprising news: "Yes, by Almighty Allah, they appointed Abu Al-Hassan Ali Ibn Abi Talib as successor." Her immediate reaction was: "Send me back to Mecca and I stay there<sup>[1]</sup>."

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[1] Ibn Al-Atheer, *Al-Kamil fi Al-Tarikh* 2/570; When she was at Saraf, a man from her maternal uncles of Banu Layth, named Ubayd Ibn Abi Salama, who was the son of Umm Kilab, met her. She asked him, "What's there?" He replied, "Uthman has been killed, and they remained (without a caliph) for eight days." She asked, "Then what did they do?" He said, "They gathered and pledged allegiance to Ali." She exclaimed, "I wish the sky had fallen upon the earth if affairs are settled for your companion! Take me back,

Abdullah Ibn Al-Zubayr<sup>[1]</sup>, a principal instigator of the mobilization against Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), undertook the task of persuading his aunt, Aisha, to embark on a mission for the purported “public interest,” arguing that this superseded the Quranic injunction for women to remain in their homes<sup>[2]</sup>. It appears that Ibn Al-Zubayr’s zealous advocacy for war significantly influenced her conviction. Aisha, in turn, attempted to persuade Umm Salamah, another wife of the Prophet, to join her. However, Umm Salamah adamantly refused, presenting compelling arguments against such an undertaking<sup>[3]</sup>.

During this critical period, the deposed governors, along with Al-Zubayr and Talhah, converged in Mecca. With the addition of the Prophet’s wife and various adversaries of Imam Ali, and after the distribution of wealth and gifts, this consolidated force then proceeded towards Basra<sup>[4]</sup>.

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take me back!” So she returned to Mecca, saying, “By Almighty Allah, Uthman was killed unjustly! By Almighty Allah, I shall seek vengeance for his blood!” He said to her, “Why? By Almighty Allah, you were the first to make him swerve from the truth! You used to say, ‘Kill Na’tal, for he has disbelieved!’”

- [1] Peak of Eloquence, p. 555; Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) said: “Zubayr had always been one of us, the People of the Household, until his inauspicious son Abdullah matured.”
- [2] Surat Al-Ahzab: Ayah 33.
- [3] Ibn Abi Al-Hadid; Explanation of Peak of Eloquence, 6/217.
- [4] Al-Baladhuri, Ansab Al-Ashraf 2/221: “Talhah and Al-Zubayr went to Mecca, where Ibn ‘Amir had arrived from Basra. Ya’la Ibn Munyah (whose mother is Munyah and father is Umayyah Al-Tamimi) was also there. He had brought considerable wealth from Yemen, in addition to over four hundred camels. They all gathered with Aisha to deliberate their course of action.”

## The Incident at Hawab and the Prophetic Warning

En route to Basra, the procession reached a well where the local dogs barked at the approaching multitude. Aisha inquired about the well's name and was informed it was Hawab. While the name held no significance for her companions, it profoundly impacted Aisha. She immediately demanded: "Take me back! Take me back!" She recalled a stark warning from the Prophet to her and his other wives: "Which one of you is the owner of the humped camel, at whom the dogs of Hawab will bark, and many will be killed on her right and left!"

Once again, Abdullah Ibn Al-Zubayr intervened, vehemently arguing that the "public interest" necessitated setting aside both the Quranic Ayah and the Prophet's hadith. He even presented fabricated witnesses to assert that this particular well is not the Hawab mentioned in the Prophetic tradition. He further propagated the false rumor that Ali was in pursuit and rapidly approaching, urging a swift departure to prevent further scrutiny of the well's identity<sup>[1]</sup>.

Upon their arrival in Basra, they launched a surprise attack on Uthman Ibn Hanif<sup>[2]</sup>, Imam Ali's governor. They apprehended

[1] Ibn Al-Atheer; Al-Kamil fi Al-Tarikh, 2/573.

[2] Uthman Ibn Hunaif Al-Ansari, from the Aws tribe, participated in all major events with Prophet Muhammad after the Battle of Badr. Umar Ibn Al-Khattab appointed him over the taxation of the Sawad region of Iraq. Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib later sent him as governor of Basra. He remained in this position until Talha Ibn Ubayd-Allah and Al-Zubayr Ibn Al-Awwam entered the city before the Jamal Battle and expelled him. He passed away during the reign of Muawiyah.

him, subjected him to physical assault, plucking every hair from his face<sup>[1]</sup>, and then expelled him with the directive: "Go to your friend Ali Ibn Abi Talib!" They subsequently seized control of the Basra treasury and the government headquarters, effectively neutralizing Imam Ali's supporters. These events transpired even before the Imam's arrival in Basra.

## Pre-Fight Debates

Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) never sought war at any point in his history<sup>[2]</sup>. Rather, wars were imposed upon him, and he fought with competence and valour. Thus, he dispatched Abdullah Ibn Abbas and Ammar Ibn Yasir to the Prophet's wife, who was the most prominent figure among the Jamel group. Ibn Abbas debated with her on all matters. She conceded, No one can counter the arguments of Ibn Abi Talib.

Imam Ali then requested Ibn Abbas to meet with Al-Zubayr, instructing him: Do not meet Talhah, for if you do, you will find him like a bull with horns coiled, and stubborn. Instead, meet

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[1] Ibn Al-Atheer: Al-Kamil fi Al-Tarikh 2/577; "When Uthman was apprehended, they sent for Aisha to consult her regarding his fate. She said, 'Kill him.' A woman then implored her, 'I beseech you by Almighty Allah concerning Uthman and his companionship with the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household). Aisha then told them, 'Imprison him.' Mujashi' Ibn Mas'ud then said to them, 'Beat him and pluck his beard, eyebrows, and eyelashes.' So they beat him forty lashes and plucked his beard, eyebrows, and eyelashes."

[2] Peak Of Eloquence, p. 509. Do not call for a duel, and if you are called to it, respond, for the one who calls for it is an aggressor, and the aggressor is doomed.

Al-Zubayr, for he is softer in disposition. Tell him: ‘Your cousin tells you: You knew me in Hijaz, but you disavowed me in Iraq. What has changed<sup>[1]</sup>?’

Before the two armies clashed, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) summoned Al-Zubayr and said to him: We used to consider you among the Banu Abd Al-Muttalib until your son Abdullah grew up. He continued: O Zubayr, you knew me in Medina and disavowed me in Iraq. Shall I not remind you of something?

Al-Zubayr replied: Yes.

Imam Ali then said: Do you remember standing with the Prophet when I approached, and you smiled and said, ‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib never abandons his pride’? The Prophet then told you, ‘Indeed, Ali is not arrogant, and you will fight him, and you will be unjust towards him.’ Do you recall that? Al-Zubayr said, Yes, and fell silent<sup>[2]</sup>.

Historical narrations indicate that Al-Zubayr Ibn Al-Awam, following these arguments, began to consider retreating from battle, at least personally. However, his son Abdullah, whom Imam Ali referred to as the ominous, intervened and reproached him, claiming that his retreat was due to fear of the swords of Banu Abdulmuttalib. This incensed him and cut off his path of

[1] Ibid: 507.

[2] Al-Hakim Al-Nishapuri: Al-Mustadrak ala Al-Sahihain 3: 366 Abu Al-Aswad Al-Du’ali said: I witnessed Al-Zubayr go out seeking Ali, so Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) said to him: I ask you by Almighty Allah, did you hear the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) say: You will fight him while you are unjust to him? He said: I forgot,. Then, Al-Zubayr went away. Al-Hakim said: This is a sound hadith.

return. Thus, the war broke out<sup>[1]</sup> in Jumada Al-Ula or, as some say, Al-Thani in 36 AH. It was named Al-Jamal Battle, in reference to the camel called Askar upon which Aisha rode.

## The War Breaking Out

When the school of the Caliphs becomes entangled in reconciling its doctrines with historical events, it sometimes resorts to attributing blame to jinn, and to secret conspiring factions at other times. Had the term Freemasonry been known at that time, they would have certainly held it responsible for Al-Jamal Battle! It is with such simplicity that the historians of the school of the Caliphs recount this deception: The entire tribe of Mudar descended, never doubting peace; Rabī'ah descended above them, never doubting peace; and Yemen descended below them, also never doubting peace... Ali, Talhah, and Al-Zubayr emerged and confronted each other, seeing no better course than reconciliation and cessation of war<sup>[2]</sup>. This narrative is presented because, had they not asserted this, what would they do with the doctrine of the Companions' justice, that they

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[1] Those who write fake history do not forget to say here that the enemies of Islam are the ones who infiltrated between the two lines and ignited the war! As if the army of Al-Jamal group had gone for a picnic, entered Basra to shop, and plucked the hair and eyebrows of its governor to apply makeup to him!

[2] Ibn Al-Atheer: Al-Kamil fi Al-Tarikh 2/599 It is strange that Ibn Al-Atheer himself said: When Ibn Al-Zubayr opposed his father's retreat from the fighting, and taunted him for fearing the banners of the family of Abu Talib and their blackened swords carried by the young men, his father told him: He has sworn to abandon the war! He advised him to atone for his oath by freeing one of his slaves, and to continue fighting!

were all in the right, that they were the best of Allah's creation, and that they would all enter Paradise, even while they killed one another?

The truth is that those armies were not assembled from Mecca, Basra, and other regions, nor were those funds and mounts distributed, merely for them to retreat. Nor was the cause of the war a few unknown individuals, who were creatures of the historians' minds. Rather, it was the repeated speeches of Al-Jamal group, the justifications they presented for that war, the distribution of wealth, the communications and correspondences with figures from all regions, the seizure of Basra, its treasury, and its seat of government, and the forceful expulsion of its governor, which naturally led to combat. Despite the Imam's pleas and dialogues, the efforts of his companions, and all attempts made to prevent the war, the other party was fully determined on war and combat.

As Imam Ali stated, Do not call for a duel, for the inviter is an aggressor, and the aggressor shall be vanquished. Things turned against Al-Jamal group. The camel was hamstrung and fell in the middle of the battlefield. Talhah was killed by friendly fire by Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam. Al-Zubayr was killed by the sword of Ibn Jurmuz, who would later become one of the Kharijites against Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). This is the secret behind the Prophet's prophecy that Talha and Al-Zubair would be among the people of Hellfire, as stated in the hadith.

## Unparalleled Nobility

If nobility were to manifest outwardly, it would find no form more perfect than that of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) who

confounded his enemies as he captivated his beloved ones. After his victory over Al-Jamal group, despite all the efforts expended and lives lost, his adversaries anticipated punishment. What did he do?

- 1.** Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) commanded Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr and a group of women soldiers to take the litter of the Prophet's wife, after the camel fell, and move it aside so that no danger or harm would reach her. He then sent her to the house of Abdullah Ibn Khalaf Al-Khuzai, where she stayed for several days, before sending her to Medina, accompanied by women wearing turbans and veils (a female guard). All this was out of respect for the sanctity and honor of the Prophet.
- 2.** Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) commanded that no fleeing enemy should be pursued, no wounded should be slain, whoever closed their door was safe, and whoever laid down their weapons was safe. He forbade looting and plunder, even though these were the very people who had plundered the treasury belonging to his Caliphate and had done what they did to his governor and his followers.
- 3.** At the end of the battle, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) entered Basra after the fighters had laid down their arms, not to declare victory and parade in triumph, but to proclaim that he had entered their city in his ordinary clothes and with his riding animal, and that if he were to depart otherwise, he would be a traitor to Almighty Allah and His Messenger.



# The Conflict Between Imam Ali (PBUH) and the Oppressors

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Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) states: When I undertook the affairs, a faction reneged, another oppressed, and others deviated, as if they had not heard the words of Almighty Allah: ‘ That Home of the Hereafter We shall give to those who intend not highhandedness or mischief on earth: and the end is [best] for the righteous.<sup>[1]</sup> Nay, they heard and understood it, but the world appeared beautiful to them, and its adornments and glitter pleased them. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) categorized the factions that rebelled against him and fought him into three types:

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[1] Al-Qasas: 83.

1. The Oath-Breakers: They are the people of Al-Jamal Battle, who had pledged allegiance to Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), but then they broke their oath.
2. The Oppressors: They are the unjust and tyrannical people of Syria, led by Muawiyah.
3. The Deviators: They are the Kharijites.

The oppressors or transgressors are mentioned in the Glorious Quran: ‘But those who swerve,- they are [but] fuel for Hell-fire’<sup>[1]</sup>. The followers of Muawiyah Ibn Abi Sufyan, who waged war, were known as the oppressors for this reason. We will briefly discuss them in the following lines. Since their geographical center was the lands of Syria (Al-Sham), it is appropriate to touch upon some of its history.

Syria (Damascus) was conquered during the time of the first Caliph (who ruled from 11 to 13 AH) by an army led by Yazid Ibn Abi Sufyan<sup>[2]</sup>, followed by other armies that conquered other cities in Syria, which consisted of four provinces or military districts: Jund Homs, Jund Damascus, Jund Al-Jordan, and Jund Palestine. After complete control was established and the Byzantine Romans were expelled, the second Caliph entrusted it to Abu Ubaidah Ibn Al-Jarrah. Upon his death in 17 AH, it was entrusted to Yazid Ibn

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[1] Al-Jin: 15.

[2] Caliph Abu Bakr had appointed Khalid Ibn Saeed Ibn Al-As, one of the followers of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Peace Be Upon Him), leader of the army. Omar Ibn Al-Khattab objected to this because of Khalid's public objection to Abu Bakr's caliphate, and he asked him to remove him from command of the army going to the Levant. This was done and Yazid Ibn Abi Sufyan was appointed.

Abi Sufyan, whose days there were not prolonged. Thus, Umar Ibn Al-Khattab appointed his brother Muawiyah Ibn Abi Sufyan. Since then, Syria, Damascus in particular, became a blend of Byzantine Roman heritage and system, and an Umayyad present. This connection and harmony between the two orientations would persist for decades to come<sup>[1]</sup>. Syria would gradually separate to become an Umayyad kingdom, not closely linked to the center (Medina). It would be governed in a manner where Muslims there knew no one but the Umayyads; there would be no discussion except about them and among them, and no loyalty except to them, to the extent that ten of their princes and commanders would claim: ‘They never knew any household of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) other than the Umayyads<sup>[2]</sup>.

The year 35 AH was the year when people in Medina gathered and pledged allegiance to Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). The Umayyad control over Syria had lasted for about eighteen years. The first of the Imam’s reform projects was to dismiss the corrupt governors (in their initial appointment or conduct) and to rectify the falsehoods they had established.

Muawiyah precisely understood Imam Ali’s agenda. On one hand, he sent a letter to Al-Zubayr and Talhah, indicating that he would accept them as Commanders of the Faithful and had

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[1] One of the important studies that, if conducted by a researcher, would yield valuable results, is the Roman-Christian communication and influence in the Umayyad state.

[2] Al-Amili: Al-Sahih min Sirat Al-Nabi Al-Aadham (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) 2/147.

made Syria subservient to them<sup>[1]</sup>. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) was aware of this letter<sup>[2]</sup>. Muawiyah also sent to Abdullah Ibn Umar, inciting him to seek the Caliphate, as he claimed he was qualified for it. He sent to Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas as well, and to Amr Ibn Al-Aas, urging him to demand retribution for Uthman's blood, under the pretext that he was killed unjustly.

Amr Ibn Al-Aas joined Muawiyah after stipulating that he would be granted governorship of Egypt if he emerged victorious over Imam Ali. Amr Ibn Al-Aas travelled from Medina to Syria. We believe Amr Ibn Al-Aas was the orchestrator of the play involving Caliph Uthman's blood-stained shirt, similar to the story of Joseph's brothers and his blood-stained shirt. With Imam

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[1] Ibn Abi Al-Hadid: Explanation of Peak of Eloquence 1/231: Muawiyah sent a man from Banu Umayyads with a letter to Al-Zubayr Ibn Al-Awwam, in which he said: To Abdullah Al-Zubayr, Commander of the Faithful, from Muawiyah Ibn Abi Sufyan, Al-Salam Alaik, peace be upon you. As for what follows, I have pledged allegiance to you from the people of Al-Sham, and they responded and were satisfied as sheep are satisfied. Kufa and Basra are yours, and Ibn Abi Talib should not precede you in reaching them, for there is nothing after these two cities. I have pledged allegiance to Talhah Ibn Ubayd Allah after you, so openly demand revenge for Uthman's blood and call the people to it. Be serious and work hard, may Almighty Allah grant you victory and defeat your opponents!! When this letter reached Al-Zubayr, he was pleased with it. He informed Talhah of it and read it to him. They had no doubt about Muawiyah's sincere advice to them, and they agreed at that time to oppose Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him).

[2] He mentioned it in his sermon before the Al-Jamal Battle, saying: Muawiyah had written to them from Syria a letter deceiving them, but they concealed it from me and went out, deceiving the ignorant masses into thinking that they were seeking revenge for Uthman's blood.

Ali, as the Caliph of the Muslims, deposing Muawiyah from the governorship of Syria, and Muawiyah's refusal, disobedience and preparation for confrontation began. However, he was awaiting the outcome of the war between Al-Jamal group and Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib.

During this period, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) attempted to resolve the matter peacefully to avoid war. He exchanged numerous letters with Muawiyah, a total of about thirteen letters that revolved around multiple topics. The topics include:

1. Muawiyah's insistence that Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) was the killer of Uthman or the protector of his killers because they were with him.
2. The demand that Uthman's killers be handed over to Muawiyah so he could exact retribution.
3. The claim that the Caliphate should be a consultative matter among Muslims. Muawiyah did not consider Imam Ali among the best companions of the Prophet, for Imam Ali had many enemies, and his relationship with the first and second Caliphs was not good.
4. The constant threat that Muawiyah would fight Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) with the heroes of Syria, whom he called fierce lions and deadly beasts.

It is clear that these excuses were an evasion of the core issue, which was the presence of a new Caliph elected by the general populace in Medina (thus possessing legitimate popular support, in addition to his religious legitimacy). This Caliph had moreover dismissed the governor of Syria, which belonged to the Muslim

state. As for the narrative of Ali killing Uthman, it is one of the falsehoods known by its originator to be a lie. It is known that Imam Ali defended Uthman, even if he did not approve of his policies, and that he put his sons, Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein (Peace Be Upon Them) at risk in defense of Uthman.

Similarly, there is no justification for asking for handing over Uthman's killers to Muawiyah. It is the right of the blood avenger, which is certainly not Muawiyah. The request of the blood avenger should be brought before the legitimate judiciary of the state, and the accused should be identified with evidence and proofs. All of this falls within the framework of Imam Ali's state, and Muawiyah has no concern with it. Whether it is proven or not, it does not grant legitimacy for Muawiyah to remain in power in Syria for a single additional day.

Even more astonishing is his statement that the Caliphate should be a consultative matter among Muslims! Who is Muawiyah, one of those who were freed after the conquest of Mecca, thus not eligible for the Caliphate, to dictate this method to the Muslims? Then, what else was happening in Medina besides this? Therefore, among the Imam's arguments was his statement: Indeed, my allegiance in Medina is binding upon you, even while you are in Syria; for I was pledged allegiance by the people who pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman on the same terms. Thus, the witness had no choice, nor the absent one the right to reject. Indeed, consultation belongs to the Muhajirin and Ansar. If they unite upon a man and name him Imam, that is pleasing to Almighty Allah<sup>[1]</sup>.

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[1] It should be noted that Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) here is in

Imam Ali's letters also contained allusions to his superiority and precedence in Islam, and that Ahl Al-Bait are the Prophet's household and the people closest to him. There were strong declarations refuting Muawiyah's claim regarding Imam Ali's responsibility for Uthman's killing, with the utmost denial that he bares any responsibility in the third Caliph's death. As for the demand for retribution, it was not Muawiyah's concern but the right of Uthman's guardians. Imam Ali's letters also mocked Muawiyah's call for battle and combat. He questioned when the Banu Hashim had ever been called to battle and recoiled from it, reminding him of his past deeds, saying: You know whom I have killed among the chieftains of Banu Abd Shams, and the pharaohs of Banu Sahm, Jumah, and Banu Makhzum. I have orphaned their children and widowed their women. I remind you of what you have not forgotten: the day I killed your brother Handhalah and dragged him by his leg to the well, and I captured your brother Amr and tied his neck between his legs. I summoned you, but you fled, and you had a swift flight. Had I not refrained from pursuing a fugitive, I would have made you the third of them<sup>[1]</sup>.

Muawiyah was determined to wage war and had made all preparations for it. He conveyed this determination in a letter using a poet's verse indicating that fighting is eminent. This was

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 a position to compel his opponent, not to legitimize those periods. It is unreasonable for him to argue against Muawiyah with the Pledge of Allegiance at Ghadir, for example, or with other hadiths that Muawiyah does not recognize. However, Muawiyah does recognize the validity of the pledge of allegiance to the two caliphs. So, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) compels him to do so.

[1] Ibn Abi Al-Hadid: Explanation of Peak of Eloquence 15/84.

because his alternative option meant being deposed from Syria, which meant certain death for him<sup>[1]</sup>.

## The Battle of Siffin

The Battle of Siffin happened at the beginning of the month of Safar in 37 AH. Muawiyah's army had reached the water first and set up a barrier to prevent the Imam's fighters from drinking. The Imam's army then dislodged them from the water and took their position, but did not prevent them from drinking. Some sources indicate that fighting erupted daily from morning until evening, only ceasing with the onset of darkness, and it continued for nine consecutive days. The war was a back-and-forth struggle, but the advantage was tilting towards Imam Ali's army, especially in the final days when Malik Al-Ashtar almost reached Muawiyah and Amr Ibn Al-Aas's tent, and signs of victory appeared for the Imam's army.

In contrast, Muawiyah resorted to Amr Ibn Al-Aas to devise a deceptive trick. The solution proposed was to raise copies of the Quran on spears and call for the arbitration of the Quran, declaring it to be the judge between them. It is narrated that this trick deceived about twenty thousand individuals among

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[1] Whether what Al-Baladhuri narrated in *Ansab Al-Ashraf* 2/293 is true, that Muawiyah said to the messenger of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him): "If he hands over to me the killers of my cousin and confirms my work, I will pledge allegiance to him. Otherwise, I will not abandon the killers of my cousin and become a commoner. This is something that will not happen, and I will not confirm it." Even if it is not true, this is Muawiyah's belief, and the second is the correct one... If he confirms my work... Otherwise, the killers of Uthman were not important to him.

those with dark foreheads and cloaks, referring to the devout worshippers who lacked discernment and insight. They insisted that the Imam halt the war, threatening to turn their swords against him if he refused. Although Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) explained to them that he knew Muawiyah and Amr Ibn Al-Aas better than they did. He informed them that Muawiyah did not desire the Quran but falsehood<sup>[1]</sup>. He added that if Muawiyah truly desired truth and the Quran, he would find it in Imam Ali about whom the Prophet said, Ali is with the truth, and the truth is with Ali. Truly it is not their eyes that are blind, but their hearts which are in their breasts<sup>[2]</sup>.

Indeed, sedition reared its head, and Amr Ibn Al-Aas, with his deception, led astray those naive simpletons! The battle, which ought to have continued, even for the time it takes to milk a ewe as it was said, to achieve a decisive victory, was halted. The cunning and deceit of Amr Ibn Al-Aas saved Muawiyah's army twice! The first time was when Ammar Ibn Yasir was martyred fighting alongside Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) on the third day of the battle. This caused a crisis in Muawiyah's army, as some remembered the Prophet's saying to Ammar: You will be killed by the transgressing group. Indeed, he was killed by

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[1] Al-Tabari: History of the Prophets and Kings 4/34 "Muawiyah, Amr ibn Al-Aas, Ibn Abi Mu'ayt, Habib Ibn Maslama, Ibn Abi Sarh, and Al-Dahhak Ibn Qays are not people of religion or Quran. I know them better than you. I accompanied them as children and as men, and they were the worst of children and the worst of men. Woe to you! They did not raise it, and they do not raise it, and they do not know what is in it. They raised it to you only as deception, flattery, and a plot"

[2] Surat Al-Haj: 46.

Muawiyah's army, which clearly identified the guided group and the transgressing one. However, Amr Ibn Al-Aas then argued: He was killed by whoever brought him out of his home! meaning Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him)<sup>[1]</sup>. The second time was this very act: raising the copies of the Quran on spears!

Victory was lost from Imam Ali's army due to the deceit of Amr Ibn Al-Aas and the foolishness of the indiscriminating dark-foreheaded ones<sup>[2]</sup>. It was agreed to end the war immediately and appoint two arbitrators to meet after a period of time to discuss the fate of the nation.

It is important to note here that Imam Ali's army was the army of the state, inherited from previous Caliphs. It was not a purely ideological army that fully believed in the Imam. Rather, the mobilization was based on it being the army of the state and of the general Muslim populace, with diverse opinions and orientations within it. This army had just emerged from Al-Jamal Battle, which had left its mark on it. It was not very keen on fighting further, especially as they found a suitable excuse:

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[1] According to this twisted logic, the one who killed Hamza, the master of martyrs, and Jaafar Ibn Abi Talib was the Prophet, Almighty Allah forbid, because he expelled them from their home, neither Wahshi nor the Roman army!

[2] Al-Tabari's History: They said to him, "We cannot be called to the Book of Almighty Allah and refuse to accept it." He said to them, "I only fought them so that they would adhere to the ruling of this Book, for they disobeyed Almighty Allah in what He commanded them, forgot His covenant, and abandoned His Book." Mis'ar Ibn Fadaki Al-Tamimi, Zaid Ibn Hussein Al-Ta'i, and then Al-Sanbasi said to him, along with a group of reciters who later became Kharijites: "O Ali, respond to the Book of Almighty Allah when you are called to it, or we will let you down!"

resorting to the Quran. Researchers have expressed this idea by stating that although there were individuals in the Imam’s army who were obedient to his command and wished for the battle to continue until the victory of the Kufa army, historical documents prove that the vast majority of the Imam’s army were weary of war first, and they knew that even if they won, they would not gain any spoils—as happened in Al-Jamal Battle—secondly; hence, they lacked the motivating drive to continue fighting. When Adī Ibn Hatim offered Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) to continue the war, saying: ‘O Commander of the Faithful, shall we not fight until we die? Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) said: ‘Come closer! So he drew near until he put his ear to the Imam’s nose, and he said: ‘Woe to you! The majority of those with me disobey me, while Muawiyah has those who obey him and do not disobey him<sup>[1]</sup>.

## The Arbitration Incident

In the month of Ramadan of 37 AH<sup>[2]</sup>, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) dispatched four hundred of his supporters, including Abdullah Ibn Abbas, Imam Ali’s candidate to confront Amr Ibn Al-Aas, under the leadership of Shurayh Ibn Hani. Among them was Abu Musa Al-Ash’ari<sup>[3]</sup>, whom Al-Ash’ath Ibn Qays Al-Kindi

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[1] Al-Raishihri: Encyclopedia of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib 6/250.

[2] Historians differ on the year when the two arbitrators met in Duma Al-Jandal. Some historians state that it was in the same year as the war, i.e. 37 AH. Others state that it was in 38 AH, approximately one year and seven months after the Battle of Siffin.

[3] Abu Musa Abdullah Ibn Qays Al-Ash’ari died around 42 AH. The opinions of the two schools differ regarding him. While he is held in high esteem in the Caliphs’ school, as Umar Ibn Al-Khattab

insisted upon, followed by the ignorant devotees and those with dark foreheads, to be the negotiator with Amr Ibn Al-Aas. This insistence was partly due to tribal motivations, claiming that two arbitrators from Mudhar should not arbitrate, referring to Ibn Abbas and Amr Ibn Al-Aas, suggesting that if it is a must, one of them should be a Yamani. Another reason was the false claim that Abu Musa had not participated in the sedition, which they considered a strong point in his favor.

Similarly, Muawiyah sent four hundred of his supporters, at the forefront of whom was his representative for negotiation, Amr Ibn Al-Aas Al-Sahmi, who acted as Muawiyah's general deputy. All these individuals gathered at Duma Al-Jindal<sup>[1]</sup>. It was evident, even before the negotiations began, that Amr would deceive Abu Musa.

We will present the historical events as narrated in the history of Al-Tabari and others, even if their expressions differ, and the intended meaning will be clear to the reader simply by reading these events and their details.

Abu Mikhnaf narrated: Abu Janab Al-Kalbi told me that when Amr (Ibn Al-Aas) and Abu Musa (Al-Ash'ari) met at Duma Al-

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 appointed him governor of Basra, and Uthman Ibn Affan appointed him governor of Kufa, and that he memorized the Quran, Ahl Al-Bait school believes that he opposed Imam Ali, and that he did not desire the succession to the Imam even afterward. Therefore, he quickly removed him from office in front of the people in the arbitration case. Imam Ali removed him from the governorship of Kufa at the beginning of his caliphate because he discouraged people from going out with Imam Ali to fight Al-Jamal group.

[1] A city in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia located west of Tabuk and about 100 kilometers from the Jordanian border.

Jindal, Amr began to give precedence to Abu Musa in speech, saying: You are a companion of the Prophet, and you are older than me. So, you speak, and I will speak. Amr had accustomed Abu Musa to giving him precedence in everything, and he exclusively intended for Abu Musa to begin by deposing Imam Ali.

He said: They deliberated on their matter and what they had agreed upon. Amr wanted him to support Muawiyah, but he refused. He then wanted him to support his son (Abdullah Ibn Amr), but he refused. Abu Musa wanted Amr to support Abdullah Ibn Umar, but he refused. Amr then said to him: ‘Tell me your opinion.

Abu Musa replied: My opinion is that we should depose these two men, and leave the matter to consultation among Muslims, so that Muslims may choose for themselves whoever they wish.

Amr then said: Indeed, your opinion is similar to mine. So they approached the people, who were gathered, and Amr said: O Abu Musa, inform them that our opinion is alike. Abu Musa then spoke, saying: Indeed, my opinion and Amr’s opinion have agreed upon a matter by which we hope Almighty Allah will rectify the affairs of this nation. Amr said: He is telling the truth. O Abu Musa, step forward and speak.

Abu Musa stepped forward to speak. Ibn Abbas said to him: Woe to you! By Allah, I think he has deceived you. If you have agreed upon a matter, let him speak about it before you, then you speak after him. For Amr is a treacherous man, and I do not trust that he has given you satisfaction between you and him, but when you stand before the people, he will contradict you. But Abu Musa was naive, and he said to him: We have agreed.

So, Abu Musa stepped forward, praised Almighty Allah and extolled Him. Then he said: O people, we have considered the affairs of this nation, and we have found nothing better for its affairs, nor more conducive to mending its divisions, than a matter upon which my opinion and Amr's opinion have agreed. It is that we depose Ali and Muawiyah, and this nation should take charge of this affair, and appoint over themselves whoever they deem worthy of this matter. Indeed, I have deposed Ali and Muawiyah. So, take charge of your affair, and appoint over yourselves whoever you deem worthy of this matter.

Then he stepped aside, and Amr Ibn Al-Aas approached and stood in his place. He praised Almighty Allah and extolled Him, saying: Indeed, this man has said what you heard and has deposed his companion. I depose his companion as he has deposed him, and I affirm my companion, Muawiyah, for he is the guardian of Uthman Ibn Affan and the demander of his blood, and the most rightful person to his position.

Abu Musa exclaimed: What is wrong with you? May Allah not grant you success! You have betrayed and acted wickedly! You are like the dog: if you chase it, it pants; if you leave it, it pants. Amr retorted: You are like the donkey carrying weights<sup>[1]</sup>.

Ibn Abbas said: May Allah curse Abu Musa's opinion! I warned him and advised him, but he did not understand.

Abu Musa used to say: Ibn Abbas warned me of the treacherous man's deceit, but I trusted him and thought he would not prefer anything over the nation's interest<sup>[2]</sup>.

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[1] Al-Tabari: History of the Prophets 5/71. Ibn Saad quoted something similar with slightly different wording in Al-Tabaqat Al-Kubra 5/78.

[2] Ibid.

The error, in which opportunistic villains like Amr Ibn Al-Aas, hypocrites like Al-Ash'ath Al-Kindi, and ignorant devotees like Ibn Al-Kawwa'—who would later become the Kharijite sect—colluded, gave birth to the deformed offspring of arbitration, born of one who knew not how to play tricks. Strangely, these ignorant devotees, after witnessing the outcome of their insistence first on the principle of arbitration, and second on Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari, and how Ibn Al-Aas mocked him, came to demand that Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) acknowledge his error for accepting the arbitration, as if they were not the ones who had brandished their swords against him, threatening to kill him if he did not order a halt to the fighting! A discussion about them will follow, describing them as those who deviated from religion as an arrow pierces its target.



# The Conflict Between Imam Ali (PBUH) and the Deviators

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By Imam Ali classifying the factions that rebelled against him as: When I undertook the affairs, a faction reneged, another oppressed, and others deviated, he assigned to each faction its primary designation and the distinguishing characteristic separating it from other factions. Some discussion about the Oath-Breakers and the Oppressors has already preceded. Now we address the third faction: the Deviators.

They are the Kharijites, who seceded from Imam Ali after the arbitration incident and transformed into an armed rebellious and destructive military faction during Imam Ali's days. They then continued, with some variation, as a theological and perhaps

jurisprudential sect in Muslim history, in addition to undertaking military actions opposing authorities at different times. Our discussion specifically addresses their situation during the time of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him).

## Why Deviators?

Naming them as the Deviators goes back to the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) approximately three decades before their emergence. This naming persists because the seed of religious extremism exists and periodically produces individuals and movements. The Hadith sources of Muslims have narrated the story of Dhu Al-Khuwaysirah with the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household). We quote from Sahih Al-Bukhari, in an abridged form, Abu Saeed Al-Khudri said: While we were with the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) and he was distributing a share, Dhu Al-Khuwaysirah, who was from Banu Tamim, came to him and said: ‘O Prophet, be just!’ The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) replied: ‘Woe to you! Who is just if I am not? I would have failed and lost if I were not just! Umar then said: O Prophet, allow me to strike his neck! The Prophet said: Leave him, for he has companions whose prayers you would belittle compared to theirs, and their fasting compared to yours. They recite the Quran, but it does not go beyond their throats. They deviate from religion as an arrow deviates from its target... Their sign is a black man, one of whose upper arms is like a woman’s breast or like a piece of flesh that shakes. They will emerge at a time of division among people. Abu Saeed said: I bear witness that I heard this narration from the Prophet (Peace Be Upon

Him and His Household) and I bear witness that Ali Ibn Abi Talib fought them, and I was with him. He commanded that man to be sought, and he was brought until I looked at him according to the description the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) had given<sup>[1]</sup>.

We observe the Prophet's (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) eloquent similitude comparing their relationship with religion to that of an arrow passing and deviating from its target without adhering to it. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) used the same expression. We can reflect on some historical characteristics of the deviators to see that they may apply to certain groups among Muslims today, even if not explicitly called Kharijites. This is because the issue is not about labels, but rather the actual reality. It is possible to find someone classified as a Kharijite whose actions do not align with them. Conversely, one may find someone who disavows the Kharijites day and night yet holds the same ideology and methodology.

Among their characteristics is excessive outward worship. They are very keen on memorizing the Quran, reciting invocations, and performing numerous cycles of prayer. However, all this remains in its superficial form and external appearance. There is no contemplation in it, no reflection on its objectives and goals, and no integration between it and other aspects of the worshipper's life. Perhaps the Hadith, Indeed, there is no good in worship that lacks contemplation, refers to this type of worship, which is immersed in forms, numbers, and outward

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[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari 4/200, Malik in Al-Mudawwana 1/530, and in Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah 7/562.

appearances. They compete with others in this, to the extent that you would belittle your prayers compared to theirs. Among their characteristics is a lack of discernment and contentment with superficialities: they overlook that the praise of those who remember Allah standing, sitting, and on their sides is linked to their contemplation on the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying]: Our Lord! not for naught Hast Thou created [all] this! Glory to Thee! Give us salvation from the penalty of the Fire<sup>[1]</sup>! Therefore, these devotees see no impediment to unsheathing their swords against the Imam of the people of the earth and the very soul of the Prophet, saying: If you do not respond to Allah's command, we will turn our swords against you! When Imam Ali responds to them that he knows Muawiyah and Ibn Al-Aas better than they do, because he accompanied them in their youth and knew them in their maturity, and that they do not desire Allah's command or the arbitration of the Quran, he received nothing from them but turning away from his words and threatening to kill him<sup>[2]</sup>!

They surprisingly awoke from their slumber, realizing how Ibn Al-Aas had mocked them and their chosen representative whom they had imposed on the Imam—and whom the Imam had reluctantly accepted to avert sedition. When they awoke and realized the deception, they cast blame upon Imam Ali and said to him: You have disbelieved by accepting that arbitration,

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[1] Surat Aal Imran: 191.

[2] Ibn Abi Al-Hadid; Explanation of Peak of Eloquence 2/265: "I had prevented you from this government, but you refused, as would those who oppose, until I turned my opinion to your desires. You are a group of people with naive brains and foolish minds."

so you must revoke it, otherwise you are a disbeliever! They demanded: Testify to your disbelief before the people and repent publicly so that we may excuse you! Woe to those minds that are inferior to shoes! And damnation to that ailing logic which is worse than muteness!

Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) replied to them, saying: May a hailstorm strike you, and may no one of you remain<sup>[1]</sup>! After my faith in Allah and my struggle with the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) should I bear witness to my disbelief? ‘Then indeed I would be astray, and not of the guided ones<sup>[2]</sup>! So return to the worst of destinations and revert on your heels – indeed, after me you will meet widespread humiliation and a cutting sword – and oppression that the oppressors will make a custom among you<sup>[3]</sup>. Because they do not think or use their intellect, they deemed Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) and his followers, and anyone who did not declare him a disbeliever, as infidels! They began to prepare for battle, gathered in Harura<sup>[4]</sup>, and started openly declaring Ali’s disbelief in the midst of Kufa and before the people. They boycotted the Imam’s speeches and openly threatened to assassinate him, so much so that his companions feared for him and suggested that he take measures against them, such as imprisonment or preventing them from attending the mosque and the Imam’s sermons, which they

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- [1] In this quote, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) refers to the strong, destructive wind that raises pebbles, which are small stones, and the farmer who pollinates palm trees.
  - [2] Surat Al-Anaam: 56.
  - [3] Peak of Eloquence: 93.
  - [4] An area located on the outskirts of Kufa. The name Kharijites is associated with it, so they are also called Haruri.

would disrupt and interrupt<sup>[1]</sup>. But Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) had chosen to manifest the reform program of the Muslim state. He firmly stated: Indeed, one of your rights upon us is that we shall not initiate war against you, nor shall we withhold incomes from you, nor shall we prevent you from Allah's mosques<sup>[2]</sup>. Ten percent of what the Kharijites did in Kufa before their military action, if done by an opponent in a Muslim country, would lead to perpetual imprisonment! How then does Imam Ali speak of his opponents' rights? But he is Ali, and that is enough!

Had matters ceased there, the situation would have been normal for Imam Ali. However, the Kharijites resorted to armed rebellion, beginning to cut off the road to Kufa and subjecting people to a test of loyalty and disavowal. Those who did not disavow Ali Ibn Abi Talib and did not bear witness to his disbelief were put to death! They killed Abdullah Ibn Khabbab Ibn Al-Aratt and his pregnant wife, subjecting them to that question. When

[1] For details on these matters, what the Khawarij did, how the Imam responded to them, and the development of events, we recommend reviewing the book "Research on Religions and Sects" by Ayatollah Sheikh Jaafar Al-Subhani, pp. 83-92.

[2] Ibn Abi Shaybah: Al-Musannaf 8/741: Katheer Ibn Namir said: While I was on Friday and Ali Ibn Abi Talib was on the pulpit, a man came and said: Judgement is to Allah. Then another stood up and said: Judgement is to Allah. Then they stood up from the corners of the mosque, seeking Allah's judgement. He pointed to them with his hand: Sit down. Yes, Judgement is but to Almighty Allah. A word of truth by which falsehood is sought. Allah's judgment is awaited regarding you. Now you have three things with me as long as you are with us: We will not prevent you from the mosques of Almighty Allah so that His name may be mentioned in them, nor will we prevent you from incomes as long as your hands are with ours, nor will we fight you until you fight.

he replied that he did not consider Ali a disbeliever, they killed him and slit open his wife's belly and her child<sup>[1]</sup>

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- [1] Al-Tabari said in his history (5/82) - the gist of which is: When the Kharijites approached Basra and approached Nahrawan, a group of them saw a man leading a woman on a donkey. They called him and reprimanded him, frightening him and asking him: Who are you? He said: I am Abdullah Ibn Khabbab, the companion of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household). They asked him: Did we frighten you? He said: Yes. They said: Do not be frightened. They said: What do you say about Ali before and after arbitration? He said: He is more knowledgeable about Almighty Allah than you, more devout in his religion, and more penetrating in his insight. They said: You follow your desires and befriend men based on their names, not their deeds. We swear, we will kill you in a way we have never killed anyone before. So they seized him, bound him, and brought him and his pregnant wife... They laid him down and slaughtered him, so his blood flowed into the water. They went to the woman, and she said: I am a woman. Do you not fear A Al-Tabari said in his history (5/82) - the gist of which is: When the outcasts approached Basra and approached Nahrawan, a group of them saw a man leading a woman on a donkey. They called him and reprimanded him, frightening him and asking him: Who are you? He said: I am Abdullah ibn Khabbab, the companion of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace. They asked him: Did we frighten you? He said: Yes. They said: Do not be frightened. Until he says: They said: What do you say about Ali before and after arbitration? He said: He is more knowledgeable about God than you, more devout in his religion, and more penetrating in his insight. They said: You follow your desires and befriend men based on their names, not their deeds. By God, we will kill you in a way we have never killed anyone before. So they seized him, bound him, and brought him and his pregnant wife... They laid him down and slaughtered him, and his blood flowed into the water. They went to the woman, and she said: I am a woman. Do you not fear God? They ripped open her stomach, killed three women from Tayy, and killed Umm Sinan al-Saydawi. Almighty Allah? They ripped open her stomach, killed three women from Tayy, and killed Umm Sinan Al-Saydawi.

The development that occurred was that the Kharijites began to block the road to Kufa. Anyone wishing to go to Kufa would be questioned about their belief and allegiance to the Caliph. Based on their answers, they would either be left alone or punished. They also killed women on the same issue.

It then became necessary to deter the Kharijites from this corruption. So, Imam Ali initially sent a messenger to them, asking them to cease killing Muslims and to hand over the killers of Abdullah Ibn Khabbab and his wife. However, they proceeded to kill the Imam's messenger as well!

They gathered in Nahrawan, led by Abdullah Ibn Wahb Al-Rasibi, and invited their supporters from Madain, Basra, and Kufa. Imam Ali then addressed the people of Kufa, urging them to go out with him to fight them, and sent to Ibn Abbas in Basra to rally his fighters to support Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). Thus, the two parties confronted each other.

Imam Ali sent Abdullah Ibn Abbas to debate with them, and his arguments overpowered their nonsensical claims. Imam Ali also sent letters to their leaders, clarifying the confusing matters for them, but they responded with the rudest reply and prevented Ibn Abbas from continuing his debates because he had managed to convince several thousands of them.

Thus, war erupted. In the manner of the Inghimasiyyin (suicide attackers) whom we have witnessed in recent times, where the minds of some deluded fools are filled with fantasies of dining with the Prophet and entering Paradise, they plunged into battle, content that they would fall into the embrace of the Houris, while the angels of Hellfire awaited them for their rebellion against

the divider of Paradise and Hellfire, the Imam of their time. The outcome was as the Imam of the Pious said: Their battlefields are short of a drop of water. I swear by Almighty Allah, not ten of you will be killed, and not ten of them will escape.

Among those who survived was Abdulrahman Ibn Muljim Al-Muradi, who fled the battle and began planning to assassinate Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him).



# Narrations of Imam Ali's Assassination and some Analysis

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In the preceding pages, we briefly discussed how the Kharijites came into being and ended up fighting Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) at Nahrawan. We also mentioned how some of them were persuaded to abandon their misguided path before the battle, and how Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) predicted that not ten of them would survive. Indeed, only nine individuals survived the battle, among whom was Abdulrahman Ibn Muljim Al-Muradi<sup>[1]</sup>,

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[1] Al-Asqalani; Ibn Hajar: Al-Isabah fi Tamyiz Al-Sahaba 5/85: Abd Al-Rahman ibn Muljam Al-Muradi lived during the pre-Islamic era and migrated during the caliphate of Umar. He studied under Muadh ibn Jabal, then became one of the leading Khawarij. He is the most wretched of this nation, according to the established text

who would later commit the crime of assassinating Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) treacherously in the Kufa Mosque at dawn on the nineteenth of Ramadan in 40 AH.

Here are several issues related to the assassination:

First; The manner and time of the assassination: was it during the Fajr prayer or its supererogatory (nafila) prayer? Each of these raises certain questions.

Second; Did the people of Syria and their leadership play a role in planning or funding that operation? Indeed, there are compelling indications suggesting Muawiyah's involvement, driven by his ambition for the Caliphate, which he could not attain while Ali was alive.

Third; Did the Imam know the time of his death? If he knew, would that not be considered throwing oneself into destruction, which is forbidden?

The general narration concerning the Imam's assassination is that on the night of the nineteenth of Ramadan, he (Peace Be

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from the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, for killing Ali ibn Abi Talib. Al-Asqalani added in "Lisan Al-Mizan" 3/440: "It is said that Amr ibn Al-Aas ordered him to stay near it because he was one of the reciters of the Qur'an and he was a knight of his people who were counted among them in Egypt. He had recited to Muadh ibn Jabal and he was one of the worshippers. It is said that he had sent Dhubay' ibn Asal to Omar to ask about the problems of the Qur'an. It is said that Omar wrote to Amr ibn Al-Aas to move the house of Abd Al-Rahman ibn Muljam closer to the mosque so that he could teach the people the Qur'an and jurisprudence. So he expanded it for him and his house was next to the house of Ibn Udays."

Upon Him) was at the house of one of his daughters and had broken his fast there with a simple meal. He spent the entire night repeating, Indeed, to Allah we belong, and to Him we shall return, and foretelling that it was the promised night, and that he had not been lied to concerning it, thus preparing himself to meet death. After spending his night in worship and prayer, he prepared to depart for the Kufa Mosque. As the geese in the courtyard of the house cried out to him, as if sensing a coming tragedy, he opened the door, and his waist-wrap came undone<sup>[1]</sup>.

After he arrived at the mosque and raised adhan from the minaret, he went down to awaken those sleeping in the courtyard of the Kufa Mosque. Among them was Ibn Muljim Al-Muradi, who was hiding his sword under his cloak. When Imam Ali reached his prayer niche and began to pray (either a supererogatory or obligatory prayer), Ibn Muljam stood up and hid behind a pillar of the mosque. When Imam Ali bowed for the prostration of the first sajdah and raised his head, Ibn Muljam struck him with his sword, splitting his head.

The narrations in Shiite sources mention that supernatural events accompanied that blow, among them was a cry heard between the heavens and the earth: By Almighty Allah, the pillars of guidance have been demolished, and the firmest handhold has been severed! The cousin of the Prophet has been killed.

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[1] He read out a poem indicating getting ready to death.

As for the first issue, whether it was during the obligatory or supererogatory prayer, it might be argued against the assassination occurring during the obligatory prayer that how could that be possible with hundreds, if not more, praying behind Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him)? This person could hide among these crowds, especially if it is known that Ibn Muljam shouted before striking him with the sword: Judgment belongs to Almighty Allah, not to you, O Ali!

It appears from the scene of the operation, its events, and the historical narrations, especially the old ones, that Ibn Muljam's blow to Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) happened during the dawn supererogatory prayer, which is before the obligatory prayer, for the following reasons:

1. Ibn Muljam wanted to kill Imam Ali and escape. He did not want to carry out a suicidal operation in which he would be killed, especially if we accept the narrations that point to the role of Qatam, his wife or fiancée, in the matter. What would be the benefit of killing Imam Ali then being apprehended and killed? There is no doubt that killing him during the obligatory dawn prayer, with crowds of people present, would not afford him an opportunity to escape! This is unlike striking him when the mosque was almost empty of worshippers, which is the time of the supererogatory prayer before the congregational prayer is established.
2. This hypothesis answers all the questions that the other hypothesis cannot answer, such as the question of where Al-Hassan, Al-Hussein, Banu Hashim, and the Imam's most prominent companions were. Their delay from the

supererogatory prayer is not unusual, unlike their delay from the obligatory congregational prayer. This explains what the narrations state: that when Banu Hashim and others heard the heavenly cry, they rushed to the mosque quickly and found Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) struck with the sword. There is no explanation for this if it is said that he was struck during the obligatory prayer, as there is no meaning for them to have rushed and hurried to come. Whereas, with the other idea, it is clear.

3. There are some historical narrations that explicitly state that the blow happened during the supererogatory prayer. Among these is what Ibn A'tham (died 314 AH) narrated in Al-Futuh: Ali, may Almighty Allah have mercy on him, came to an open door of a house to exit, and the door caught his waist wrap, so he untied it, saying: 'Tighten your waistbands for death, for death will meet you.' He said: Then he proceeded towards the mosque, saying: 'Clear the way for the struggling believer, he worships none but the One.' He said: Then he came and stood at the place of adhan, and he raised adhan and entered the mosque. He began to awaken those sleeping in the mosque, then he went to his prayer niche and stood in it, and he began the prayer and recited. When he bowed and prostrated once and sat up, and intended to prostrate the second time, Ibn Muljam struck him a blow on his head. The blow fell on the same spot as the blow Amr Ibn Abd Wadd had struck him on the Day of the Trench in the presence of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household). Then he quickly ran out of the mosque, fleeing, and Ali, may Almighty Allah have mercy on him, fell due to what afflicted him. The people heard about it and said: 'The Commander of the Faithful

has been killed, and the prayer is due.' So Al-Hassan Ibn Ali stood forward and led the people in two short rak'ahs of prayer<sup>[1]</sup>.

4. Based on the foregoing and what follows, the narrations that mentioned Ibn Muljam and Shabib intercepting Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) as he entered the mosque, and that Shabib struck the Imam with his sword but missed him and the blow hit the wall, and then Ibn Muljam struck him on the head and felled him, should not be heeded. These narrations do not speak of the Commander of the Faithful whose mere shadow terrified dozens like Ibn Muljam! Did Imam Ali wait for them to strike him, one of them missing him with his sword, and then the other coming forward and striking him with another sword, while he stood hand-tied, motionless until they finished him off? This is in addition to what is almost a consensus among historians and narrators that he (Peace Be Upon Him) was a martyr of prayer and the mihrab.

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[1] Al-Allama Al-Majlisi mentioned in Bihar Al-Anwar 42/281, saying: "So he waited for him until he prayed the first rak'ah, bowed, and performed the first prostration of it, and raised his head. Then he took the sword and shook it, then struck him on his head, the honorable and noble one, and the blow fell on the same blow that Amr Ibn Abd Wudd Al-Amiri had struck him, then the blow went to the parting of his head to the place of prostration. When Imam Ali felt the blow, he did not groan, but was patient and accepted it. He fell on his face. No one was with him. He said: In the name of Almighty Allah, by Almighty Allah, and on the religion of the Prophet. Then he cried out and said: Ibn Muljam killed me, the accursed son of the Jewess killed me, by the Lord of the Kaaba."

## The Second Issue: Did Mu'awiya and the Leaders of Sham Have Any Role in the Imam's Assassination?

Some researchers have answered this question, including Sheikh Baqir Shareef Al-Qurashi, who stated in his book, *The Life of Imam Al-Husayn (Peace Be Upon Him)*<sup>[1]</sup> that, in summary:

The assassination plot was not limited to the Kharijites; the Umayyad party had a significant role in it, which is supported by:

1. Abu Al-Aswad Al-Du'ali attributed the responsibility for the Imam's assassination to the Umayyads in his elegy for Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). It is natural that Abu Al-Aswad would not have attributed this crime to Mu'awiya without certainty, for the man was extremely cautious in what he said.
2. Judge Nu'man Al-Misri, one of the ancient historians, stated: It was said that Mu'awiya dealt with him – meaning Ibn Muljam – for that, meaning for the assassination of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). He secretly arranged it for him and gave him money for it.
3. What confirms the Umayyad party's involvement in the plot is that Al-Ash'ath Ibn Qays supported Ibn Muljam and accompanied him during the assassination. He told him: Escape, for the morning has exposed you. When Hujr Ibn Adi heard him, he shouted: You killed him, O one-eyed! Al-Ash'ath was one of the strongest supporters of the Umayyad

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[1] Al-Qurashi: *The Life of Imam Al-Hussein*, 104-106.

party; he was the one who forced Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) to accept arbitration and threatened Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) with death a short time before his assassination. He was also a spy for Mu'awiya in Kufa.

The plot, as narrators say, was surrounded by much secrecy and concealment. What compelled Al-Ash'ath to understand and support it unless he was instructed from outside?

4. The Kharijite conference was held in Mecca during the Hajj season, which was undoubtedly full of many members of the Umayyad party who had migrated to Mecca to spread hatred and resentment towards Imam Ali's (Peace Be Upon Him) government. It is highly likely that they met the Kharijites, who were among the Imam's staunchest enemies, and fully supported them in assassinating Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him).

What further supports this is that the Kharijites remained in Mecca until Rajab after the Hajj season, performed Umrah, and then set out to execute their plan. It is probable that they were in constant contact with the Umayyad party and other parties opposing the Imam's rule during this entire period.

5. What leads to confidence that the Umayyad party had a major role in this plot is that Ibn Muljam was a Quran teacher and received his sustenance from the public treasury. He did not have any financial means, so how did he get the money to buy his sword – with which he assassinated the Imam (Peace Be Upon Him) – for a thousand [dirhams] and poison it for a thousand? How did he get the money he paid as dowry to Qatam, which was three thousand

[dirhams], a slave, and a singing girl? All of this suggests that he received financial support from the Umayyads in exchange for assassinating Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him).

6. What confirms that Ibn Muljam was an agent for the Umayyad party is that he had close contact with Amr Ibn Al-Aas and was his companion from a long time ago. When Ibn Al-Aas conquered Egypt, Ibn Muljam was with him and was favored by him, as he ordered him to stay near him. It is highly probable that he informed Ibn Al-Aas of what he had agreed upon with his two companions regarding the assassination of Imam Ali and Mu'awiya. This is why Ibn Al-Aas did not go out for prayer but appointed someone else. His survival was not a coincidence but the result of a conspiracy whose origins were woven with Ibn Al-Aas. These are some of the matters that suggest the Umayyad party's involvement in planning and supporting the plot.

Similarly, Sheikh Al-Ray Shahri mentioned in his book Encyclopedia of Imam Ali<sup>[1]</sup> that there is no historical evidence indicating Mu'awiya's role in the Imam's assassination, but there are circumstantial evidences that a researcher cannot deny in light of Mu'awiya's role in it. He was intent on killing Imam Ali

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[1] Al-Rai Shihri: Encyclopedia of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib 4/252 Online on the Website. It appears from his quotation of Dr. Jaafar Shahidi's opinion that he holds this view and perhaps even believes that the original planner of the assassination of Imam Ali was Muawiyah. Everything mentioned in history about the perpetrators is nothing but fabrication intended to exonerate Muawiyah from the crime of assassinating the Commander of the Faithful. He and some contemporary historians tend to support this hypothesis and fundamentally deny the role of the Kharijites in this assassination.

because he would not reach the caliphate as long as Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) was alive! This is on the one hand. On the other hand, killing the Imam in battle was not an easy matter, so the best way to remove the Imam from the path was to assassinate him. Mu'awiya had tried this before with Malik Al-Ashtar. The best people to carry out the assassination were former supporters of Imam Ali. They were the remnants of the Kharijites who had recently fought Imam Ali and were thinking of avenging their slain.

Al-Ray Shahri, like Sheikh Al-Qurashi, pointed to the role of Al-Ash'ath Ibn Qays Al-Kindi, who had threatened the Imam with death and whom the Imam described as a hypocrite. He had secret relations with Mu'awiya. His prior knowledge of the operation and Ibn Muljam's relationship with him before the operation suggest a Damascene role in it.

The following can be concluded:

1. What Allama Al-Ray Shahri indicated, that there is no historical evidence pointing to an Umayyad role in the assassination of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), is absolutely correct! The justification provided by the late Al-Qurashi, that the absence of such evidence is because historians concealed it, is not helpful.
2. It is necessary to differentiate between planning the operation and benefiting from it! It is possible for a single incident to be carried out by one person or entity, but many individuals or multiple parties may benefit from its outcome. This incident is of this kind. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) had many enemies, to varying degrees, the most fierce of

whom may have been the Kharijites. They were the ones who carried out the assassination. However, Mu'awiya and his followers would benefit from its result. Even those who remained from the Al-Jamal Battle would rejoice when it happened, despite the end of their political ambitions. Some of them would prostrate to Almighty Allah (!! in gratitude for the assassination!

3. The late Al-Qurashi's reference to Abu Al-Aswad Al-Du'ali accusing Mu'awiya of the assassination is baseless. Perhaps his poetry indicates the opposite, for the gloater is usually not the perpetrator. The phrase If you killed addressed to Mu'awiya is clearly incorrect due to the lack of any historical evidence, as mentioned earlier. Rather, it is addressed to the Kharijites, and the attack on Mu'awiya and his followers is due to their gloating and misuse of the Imam's (Peace Be Upon Him) assassination. As for what he mentioned about Judge Nu'man Al-Misri (who died 363 AH), in addition to its chronological distance, meaning three centuries after the incident, it conveys his opinion, not a narration or historical evidence, so its status is like that of other opinions and it has no distinction. Perhaps it can be pointed out that since he was in the atmosphere of the Fatimid state and its chief judge, he was in an environment that operated in an atmosphere of secret operations and the like, so his view of the assassination may have been influenced by this approach.
  
4. The statement that there was no role for Mu'awiya and his followers in the assassination of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) does not imply praise for them, for they had

previously mobilized armies against him and caused the death of thousands of believers because of that. They later assassinated Imam Al-Hassan Al-Mujtaba (Peace Be Upon Him).

5. We believe that among the mistakes in this opinion and its evidence is regarding the role of Al-Ash'ath Ibn Qays Al-Kindi, who was a partner in the assassination plot, as proven by Ibn Muljam meeting him, his encouragement to carry out his mission before dawn, and Hujr Ibn Adi's statement on the day of the assassination an hour after it, and his follow-up that morning<sup>[1]</sup>. All of this is undeniable, but it was attributed to Mu'awiya's instigation and planning. We believe that Al-Ash'ath's project was a personal one, an exceptional obsession with power since the days of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household). We can observe that all his movements targeted this goal, starting from his conversion to Islam, his apostasy, his alliance with the first caliph, and his conspiracies until the idea of the Kharijites was formed. All his alliances and enmities were within his own personal project, not within the Umayyad project! Therefore, we do not believe what the late Al-Qurashi and the late Al-Ray Shahri mentioned, that his prior knowledge of the operation and Ibn Muljam's relationship

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[1] Ibn Saad: Al-Tabaqat Al-Kabir 3/36: "Al-Ash'ath Ibn Qays sent his son Qays Ibn Al-Ash'ath on the morning of the attack on Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) and said: O my son, look at how the Commander of the Faithful has become. So he went and looked at him, then came back and said: I saw his eyes sunk into his head. Al-Ash'ath said: I swear by the Lord of Kaaba, his brain has come out."

with him before the operation indicate a role for Damascus in it! Also, what was mentioned about Amr Ibn Al-Aas's relationship with Ibn Muljam, which refers to the days of his Quran teaching in Egypt during the time of the second Caliph, i.e., at least twenty years earlier, proves nothing. One may ask: How did he witness Siffin as one of the soldiers of the Muslim state<sup>[1]</sup> against the transgressors, including Amr Ibn Al-Aas? Therefore, what the late Al-Qurashi said that Ibn Muljam was an agent of the Umayyad party and that he had close contact with Amr Ibn Al-Aas and was his companion from a long time ago indicates that it is highly probable that he informed Ibn Al-Aas of what he had agreed upon with his two companions regarding the assassination, we find no evidence for this whatsoever!

6. Finally, what do the proponents of this opinion do with the historically known fact that the three Kharijites agreed to assassinate the Imam, Mu'awiya, and Amr Ibn Al-Aas? And that one of them struck Mu'awiya and hit his buttock, and the second struck someone praying, thinking it was Amr, but it turned out to be Judge Kharijah! And Ibn Muljam struck Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him)? Did Mu'awiya or Amr agree with the Kharijites that the Kharijites should kill

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[1] We have already mentioned that it is necessary to differentiate between the companions and followers of Imam Ali on the one hand, and those who were in his army during the fighting, which was the army that the Imam inherited from the previous caliphs, the army of the state, which did not necessarily pledge allegiance to the Imam, and may even have been hostile to him. However, the laws of mobilization, fighting, and the pursuit of incomes required them to join the army! Assuming that Ibn Muljam witnessed the Battle of Siffin, he was only within this framework.

them both? The answer of the late Al-Rai Shahri in the Encyclopedia acknowledges that the blow that hit Mu'awiya was a political game like other indirect conspiracies hatched and carried out by opposing elements whose fire might reach the original planners! This is not useful. No sane person would dance with snakes or play this game with the Kharijites, especially since they consider him worse than they consider the Commander of the Faithful and hate him more than they hate the Imam!

### **The Third Issue; Did the Imam Know the Time of His Assassination? If He Did, Would That Not Be Throwing Oneself into Destruction, Which Is Forbidden?**

The numerous narrations indicate that the Imam (Peace Be Upon Him) knew that he would be killed, not die a normal death, he would be struck by a sword, the blow would be on his head, his killer is more wretched than the one who hamstringed the she-camel, and that this would be on the dawn of the nineteenth of Ramadan. Ibn Muljam was known to the Commander of the Faithful and his companions as his killer<sup>[1]</sup>.

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[1] Al-Rai Shahri collected a number of historical narratives in the Encyclopedia of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (4/229). These narratives support this meaning, including the following:

Musnad Ibn Hanbal: Fadala Ibn Abi Fadala Al-Ansari: I went out with my father to visit Ali Ibn Abi Talib, who was suffering from a severe illness. My father said to him: What keeps you in this place? If your time comes, none will be with you except the Bedouins of Juhayna, carrying you to Medina. If your time comes,

The hadiths of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) anticipated the event by more than thirty years and foretold it!

We have provided an answer to such a question in our book: Issues of the Husayni Uprising, concerning Imam Al-Husayn (Peace Be Upon Him), as they fall under the same category. We quote some of what was mentioned there, as the focus of the question and answer there was the issue of Al-Husayn:

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your companions will be your guardians and pray for you. Ali said: The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) made a covenant with me that I would not die until I was appointed commander, and then this (meaning his beard) would be dyed with the blood of this (meaning his crown) and I get killed. Abu Fadala was killed with Ali on the day of Siffin.

Al-Mu'jam al-Kabir narrates from Suhaib: The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) said one day to Ali (Peace Be Upon Him): Who is the most wretched of the first?

He said: The one who hamstrung the she-camel, O Messenger of Almighty Allah.

He said: That is true. So who is the most wretched of the last? He said, "I have no knowledge, O Messenger of Almighty Allah." He said, "The one who struck you here." The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) pointed to Imam Ali's forehead. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) used to say to the people of Iraq, "By Allah, I wish that he had sent the most wretched of you to dye this (meaning his beard) with this." He then placed his hand on the front of his head. From Al-Yaqubi's History: Abdulrahman Ibn Muljam Al-Muradi came to Kufa on the twentieth of Sha'ban in the year (40 AH). When Ali heard of his arrival, he said: Has he arrived? There is nothing left for me but him. This is his time. So he stayed with Al-Ash'ath Ibn Qays Al-Kindi for a month sharpening his sword.

That explaining the issue by denying the Imam's knowledge of his martyrdom does not align with what is chosen and well-known regarding their knowledge (Peace Be Upon Them). Explaining it by the absence of news or traces also does not agree with what is historically known. So, the explanation remains with the assumption of knowledge of martyrdom. The application of the term destruction to it is negated, for destruction in the otherworldly sense means following a path that Almighty Allah does not approve. It is known that the path followed by Imam Al-Hussein (Peace Be Upon Him) is approved by Lord. Even destruction in the worldly sense, meaning the loss of life, is not rejected if great benefits result from it. It is not considered a loss by rational people or by Islamic law if something great is gained in return. It is known how great the benefits that resulted from the Imam's martyrdom (Peace Be Upon Him) were.

Indeed, Almighty Allah tests people with a greater trial so that they may attain ranks<sup>[1]</sup> that others do not attain. Thus, they face death if it is in the pleasure of Almighty Allah, with their knowledge that this path leads to their death. This is clear in matters of jihad, where a person going to fight gathers circumstantial evidence that makes him know with ordinary, common knowledge that

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[1] Sheikh Al-Saduq narrated in Al-Amali that when Imam Al-Hussein fell asleep on his grandfather's grave and saw him in a dream, the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) said to him: You have ranks in Paradise that you will not attain except through martyrdom. Sheikh Al-Tusi narrated in Al-Amali: Abu Abdullah and Abu Jaafar said: Almighty Allah compensated Imam Al-Hussein for getting killed by placing the Imamate in his progeny, healing in his soil, and answering prayers at his grave. This meaning is frequently mentioned in the Ziyarat of Imam Al-Hussein (Peace Be Upon Him).

he will be killed, yet he goes. There are even cases where others know of his death as well, let alone himself, as it was narrated that when the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) directed the Muslims to fight the Romans in Mu'tah, he said: If Zayd Ibn Harithah is afflicted, then Jaafar Ibn Abi Talib is in charge of the people, and if Jaafar is afflicted, then Abdullah Ibn Rawahah is in charge of the people... So the Muslims knew that they would be killed.

It is a great station for a person to know that he will be killed in the path of Almighty Allah and yet choose what is with Almighty Allah<sup>[1]</sup>.

As for the first of Sheikh Al-Mufid's two justifications (May Almighty Allah Have Mercy on Him) in this matter, it contradicts the well-known opinion of scholars. He summarized his view by stating that we cannot definitively assert the Imam's (Peace Be Upon Him) knowledge of the details of his death and the hour of his demise. Rather, it is unanimously known that he had knowledge of the rulings in their details, and he knew generally about his death. Perhaps he knew his killer in detail. However, there is no evidence that he knew the details of the assassination in terms of the specific time and similar aspects.

The correct approach is his second justification, where he states: It is not impossible for Almighty Allah to obligate him to endure martyrdom and surrender to being killed, so that through this, He may elevate him to high ranks that he would not attain otherwise. Due to His knowledge that he would obey Him in

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[1] Aal Saif, Fawzi: Issues from the Hussein Uprise.

this with an obedience that if He had tasked anyone else with it, they would not have desired it, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) would not be throwing himself into destruction, nor aiding in his own demise in a way that is deemed reprehensible by reason<sup>[1]</sup>.

It is established among scholars that if a Prophet or Imam knew something through extraordinary means, it is not permissible for him to act upon that knowledge. If he were to do so, the system would be disrupted. For example, the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) knew that the nation would turn against Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). He could have tracked down those who would revolt and kill them, or not make any recommendations. With his knowledge of the revolt and its occurrence, the will, the speeches, Ghadir, and everything else would be futile! Similarly, with his knowledge that defeat would befall the Muslims in the Battle of Uhud, or that his uncle Hamza would be killed in it, the Prophet should not have gone out to battle, and so on!

The solution to all these issues is by stating: The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) and the Imam are only obligated by ordinary knowledge, and they must act upon it. As for special knowledge, which they possessed through Almighty Allah's grace and His teaching them, they should not act upon it. Otherwise, the social system would be disrupted. Perhaps this is one of the reasons behind the Commander of the Faithful's (Peace Be Upon Him) response to some who suggested that he kill Ibn Muljam if he knew he would kill him in the future, or at least imprison him! His answer to them was: He would then be

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[1] Al-Raishihri: Encyclopedia of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib 7/245.

killing someone who was not his killer or imprisoning someone who was not his killer, which means he had not committed the murder by that time, so he had not become a killer. How then could he be punished? That would be an instance of punishment before the crime, which is not permissible according to Islamic law and legal principles. Moreover, it might open a door to evil, which we see among some oppressive rulers with what they call pre-emptive strikes, so you see them imprisoning someone because they suspect he might commit a dangerous act in the future, and so on.

All this indicates that the infallible Imams, whom Almighty Allah granted special knowledge from His presence, thus having knowledge of the future, do not act upon it.



# A Five-Year Reform Program

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1. The Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) did not begin his reform program at the start of his apparent caliphate, but rather before that! He refused to assume this position—even though it was his right religiously, as he was truly the successor of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), he refused the logic of political compromises approximately twelve years before this date. He insisted that if he were to take the position, he would do so with his own program, not that of others.

This is why, just as his caliphate was not a fluke<sup>[1]</sup>, it was also not achieved through penalty kicks like in football. Instead, it came about through a general and unparalleled popular election that the history of the Islamic nation has never witnessed, neither among those who preceded him, nor among the sultans of the Umayyads, or the rulers of the Abbasids, nor even the Turks or those who came after them.

While those who were unworthy of leading two people in prayer were fighting for the Grand Caliphate, shedding people's blood to be proclaimed caliph and sign decrees, even at the cost of tens of thousands of Muslims, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) was proclaiming, I am better for you as a minister than as a commander.

While compromises were being made before him, with one person manipulating another today for what he would be paid tomorrow, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) said: We are approaching a matter with many faces and colors, for which hearts cannot stand firm, nor can minds remain steadfast. The horizons have become cloudy, and the clear path has become unrecognizable. Know that if I respond to you, I will lead you according to what I know, and I will not listen to the words of critics or the blame of the blamers. But if you leave me, I am like one of you.<sup>[2]</sup>

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[1] Peak of Eloquence: 194; Al-Busti, Muhammad Ibn Hibban, Al-Thuqat 2/268. "Your pledge of allegiance to me was not a slip of tongue. My affair and your affair are not one and not the same. I work for Almighty Allah, but you want me for yourselves. I swear by Almighty Allah, I will advise the opponent and support the oppressed."

[2] Ibid: 136/49.

2. Similarly, the distinction and difference were not only in the Imam's method of assuming the caliphate but also in the motivations for it. This is what Imam Al-Hussein (Peace Be Upon Him) expressed by saying: O Lord, You know that what we did was not a competition for authority nor a search for material gain, but rather to show the landmarks of Your religion, to manifest reform in Your lands, to ensure the safety of Your oppressed servants, and to implement Your obligations, traditions, and rulings<sup>[1]</sup>.
3. When people pledged allegiance to him in an oath that made the young rejoice, the old hasten towards it, and the infirm struggle towards it, he immediately began a comprehensive reform program, starting from the top of the pyramid, with the corrupt head or heads. He rejected the approach taken by some governments which, when they want to combat corruption, start with the tea-pourer in the office and stop there, as if corruption were only due to these small-fry! They keep the big sharks who will support the state's policy in fighting corruption!! And the issue ends there!

Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) began with the treacherous governors whose appointments were based on unclean motives and whose conduct and administration were even fouler than the motives behind their appointments. He removed these governors and sent governors whom he believed to be pious in religion and competent in their work.

He dismissed Mu'awiyah Ibn Abi Sufyan from Sham, Ya'la Ibn Munabbih from Yemen, Abdullah Ibn Amir Ibn Kurayz from Basra, and Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari from Kufa.

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[1] Al-Faidh Al-Kashani, Al-Wafi: 15/179.

It was natural for these individuals, who lived off their positions and governorships, to object and join the Imam Ali's opponents, preparing for war, as mentioned when discussing the Oath-Breakers and the Unjust.

4. Just as the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) did not acknowledge the political games in the caliphate of his predecessors, he also did not accept them during his own days. He rejected all suggestions made to him regarding keeping some governors in their positions for a period and then dismissing them once he became strong and established! He also refused to favor some by granting them special allowances and wealth for the purpose of gaining their support! He told them explicitly that this is injustice and oppression, and he cannot seek victory through unjust means<sup>[1]</sup>. He came to remove oppression and eliminate injustice. Would he then resort to them?

5. He did not leave his governors and officials relying on his previous knowledge of them, for gold has a glitter that blinds the eyes, and as long as one is far from it, he is safe, but once it is under his hand, it corrupts him! Al-Munthir Ibn Al-Jarud Al-Abdi was appointed over Istakhr by Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). He betrayed some of what he was

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[1] Peak of Eloquence, p. 183. "Do you command me to seek victory through injustice, regarding those I have been appointed over? I swear by Almighty Allah, I will not allow it as long as a talkative person speaks, and as long as a star follows another star in the sky. If the wealth were mine, I would treat them equally. So how can that be when wealth is Lord's wealth?"

entrusted with. So, Imam Ali sent him a letter, rebuking him and asking him to attend for to be questioned<sup>[1]</sup>.

Just as he started with the heads, because they are the center of corruption, he also turned his attention to the family. Some of his predecessors had given free rein to their families with the Muslims' money. He was extremely sensitive to family corruption or the thought of exploiting their kinship with the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). He set the highest example in his story with his elder brother, Aqil Ibn Abi Talib, to cut off the path for anyone from Banu Hashim hoping to become part of the ruling family! He spoke about this to send a message to relatives before strangers<sup>[2]</sup>. When Abu Rafe' lent a necklace

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[1] From a letter from Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) to Al-Mundhir Ibn Al-Jarud Al-Abdi, who had betrayed some of the tasks he was entrusted with: As for what follows, your father's righteousness deceived me about you. I thought that you would follow his guidance and take his path. I have heard that you submit to your desires, and you do not maintain provisions for your afterlife. You build your worldly life by ruining your afterlife, and you connect with your clan by severing your religion. If what I have heard about you is true, then the camel of your family and the thong of your sandal are better than you. Whoever is of your kind is not worthy of filling a breach, of carrying out a responsibility, of raising his status, of being shared in a trust, or of being trusted with treachery. So come to me when this letter of mine reaches you, Insha'Allah.

[2] Peak of Eloquence p. 183: I swear by Lord, Aqil had become so poor that he asked me for some wheat. I saw his children with disheveled hair and dusty complexions out of poverty, as if their faces had been blackened with bone. He reiterated this to me repeatedly, so I listened attentively to him. He thought that I would contradict my religion to save him and follow his lead, deviating from my path. I heated an iron rod for him and brought it close to his body so that he might consider it, but he made a deep groan from the pain of its sharpness, and he was about to be burned by

from the public treasury to the daughter of the Commander of the Faithful, he severely rebuked him and her.

6. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) removed injustice in the distribution from the general populace, which stemmed from a misguided principle of categorizing Muslims into classes and favoring them in grants based on these classes. He believed that this method was not based on religious grounds and needed to be changed. We have seen in the previous pages how he rejected the logic of favoritism and equalized people based on Islam, and did not accept distinguishing some of them in grants. In addition to other matters, this prompted Talha, Al-Zubayr, and their likes to oppose Imam Ali and later fight him.
7. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) was firm in fighting corruption and its symbols. He was also fair with his opponents. In other words, he was the complete opposite of what Muslims experience today. While every dissenting voice is harshly suppressed and sent to prison, and sometimes to the grave, those who oppose and dissent are treated with extreme gentleness, even icons of corruption and symbols of public fund embezzlement. They might not suffer anything more than a quiet, silent removal from their positions!

The policy of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) is completely the opposite. While he dismissed the corrupt, monitored officials, warned agents, and pressured those

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 its brand. I said to him, "May the bereaved be bereaved of you, Aqil! Do you groan because of an iron rod that a human has heated for play, and you are dragging me to a fire kindled by Lord out of anger?" "Do you groan from the harm, but not from the flame?"

who tried to benefit from their kinship to the Commander of the Faithful, he allowed those who objected and advised, and even acted upon it. Sawda Bint Ammarah Al-Hamdaniya complained to him about one of his governors. He dismissed him with an open letter he gave her. This is considered impossible in these times<sup>[1]</sup>. When the Kharijites objected to him, he granted them their established rights, as long as they did not take up arms and corrupt society.

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[1] Al-Abbas Al-Dhabi mentioned this in his book, "Akhbar Al-Wafidat Ala Mu'awiyah Ibn Abi Sufyan," p. 68, in which she said, after complaining about Ibn Artah and his injustice and threatening her: "She raised her head and read some poetry in which she praises Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). He asked her: "Who is that?" She said: "Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Peace Be Upon Him)." He said: "What do you know about him?" She said: "I went to him regarding a man whom he had appointed to collect our zakat. There was nothing between us and him except what was between the good and the bad. I found him standing praying." When he looked at me, he turned from his prayer and said to me with compassion and tenderness, "Do you have a need?" I told him the story. He wept and then said, "O Lord, You are the witness over me and over them. I did not command them to oppress Your creation or to abandon Your right." Then he took out of his pocket a piece of leather the shape of the edge of a bag and wrote on it: "In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. {There has come to you clear evidence from your Lord, so give full measure.} {And the balance is just. Do not deprive people of their due rights and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption. What remains with Allah is better for you, if you are believers.}" And I am not a guardian over you. If this letter of mine reaches you, then keep what is in your hands of our work until someone comes to you to take it from you. Peace be upon you. So I took it. He did not seal it with a seal nor did he seal it with clay.

8. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) did not stop his reformist decisions and actions. He presented the highest model in applying Islamic values, despite the short period he ruled, which was four years and nine months, and despite the obstacles imposed on him by his enemies, who waged three wars against him that consumed most of that short period. A single war causes extensive social problems, including orphans, widows, tragedies, and economic crises for the members of society and for society as a whole. Despite all that, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) did not stop his reformist steps to present his model of Islamic governance. He succeeded in this, so much so that this model has remained, and still remains, capable of introducing people to just governance.
9. In addition to the direct practical experience in applying justice and presenting the virtuous model of governance, he also provided an advanced theoretical program and a comprehensive constitution for the administration of society. This later became known as: The Covenant of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) to Malik Al-Ashtar Al-Nakha'i, when he entrusted him with the governorship of Egypt. Many scholars and researchers have written about this covenant and its contents<sup>[1]</sup>, which is highly recommendable to be read.

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[1] Al-Lankarani, Sheikh Fadil: The Islamic State: An Explanation of the Covenant of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) to Malik Al-Ashtar Al-Nakha'i); Al-Fakiki, Tawfiq: Al-Ra'ee wal-Ra'eeah: An Explanation of the Covenant of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him); Al-Shahrastani, Sayyid Hibat Al-Din: The Chain of Transmission of the Covenant of Imam Ali to Malik Al-Ashtar and an Explanation of its Text; Ismail Mohammadi: Bibliography of the Covenant of Imam Ali to Malik Al-Ashtar. In this article, he recorded the books

It is enough for you to look at this paragraph from his words in it, to fall to the ground in humility, sanctifying this great Imam, to see how he explains to the ruler what he owes to his subjects: Infuse your heart with mercy for the subjects, and love and kindness for them. Do not be like a wild beast preying on them, for they are of two types: either your brother in religion or your equal in creation. They may err, be afflicted with ailments, and commit mistakes intentionally or unintentionally. So grant them of your pardon and forgiveness as you would love and wish Lord to grant you of His pardon and forgiveness, for you are above them, and the ruler over you is above you, and Lord is above the one who appointed you! He has entrusted you with their affairs and tested you through them<sup>[1]</sup>.

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written about the aforementioned covenant in Arabic and Persian, including explanations and confirmation of the covenant itself. They are around eighty books.

[1] Peak of Eloquence: 427.



# The Islamic Nation's Oppression of Imam Ali

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The Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) repeatedly spoke of the nation's oppression to him, using different expressions<sup>[1]</sup> in multiple instances, stating: I have been oppressed ever since the Prophet passed away until this very day<sup>[2]</sup>. Similar statements are well-known and documented in books. One might say: What is the benefit of discussing this topic at this time? It only creates more resentment and enmity, so it is better to leave it and not stir it up! That was a nation that has passed; it will have what it earned, and you will have what you earned, and You will not be questioned about what they used to do!

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[1] Ibid: 9/416.

[2] Al-Kufi, Ibrahim Ibn Muhammad Al-Thaqafi: Al-Gharat 2/768.

Before delving further into the discussion, we will first answer this statement by refutation from the Glorious Quran. The Glorious Quran discusses these historical issues in its ayahs, such as the story of Ibrahim and Nimrod, what Nimrod plotted against Ibrahim, stances of their supporters, and society at that time. Similarly, the story of Noah and his people, his dialogues with them and vice versa, their protest against him and their denial of what he said, the outcome of that, and the story of their drowning in the flood... etc. Moreover, the stories of Musa, Issa, and all the other prophets are examples of what has been mentioned. The environment of these stories and events is foreign to the nation.

These stories are distributed over an area that perhaps constitutes a third of the Glorious Quran. They are recited day and night by Muslims. Did no one say: What does that have to do with me? That was a nation that has passed; it will have what it earned, and you will have what you earned. Sometimes, the same story is repeated many times from different angles!

As for the direct answer, regarding both the question at hand and the stories of the Glorious Quran, it is to be known that the Glorious Quran presents them to illustrate the point of admonition and lesson, so that the present generations do not fall into what the past generations fell into. These later generations must pay attention to the mistakes of the former. This is in the first place. Second, who says that the issue is historical? The truth is that it is a continuous and present issue. Those who pledge allegiance to Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) still suffer from oppression because of this allegiance. In some places, they are excluded from the economy and livelihoods. They are also culturally boycotted because of this allegiance. Indeed, in some

cases, they are imprisoned and killed for this allegiance<sup>[1]</sup>! This is felt by those who believe in his guardianship from a generation to another.

Since this topic is lengthy and emotional, we will limit ourselves to main headings and limited examples that are commensurate with the nature of this book, the structure of which is based on brevity.

## 1. Oppressing Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) in His Time

Driven by various motives, the Quraishi line collaborated to antagonize Imam Ali and deprive him from his right. Imam Ali frequently and openly complained about this matter, saying: O Lord, Punish Quraysh on my behalf! They severed my kinship, conspired against me, deprived me of my right, stripped me of the authority of my maternal cousin, and handed it over to the one who is not my equal in kinship to the Messenger nor in my precedence in Islam<sup>[2]</sup>! In another instance, he said: O Lord, I seek Your help against Quraysh and those who assisted them! They severed my kinship, belittled my great status, and conspired to dispute with me a matter that is rightfully mine<sup>[3]</sup>.

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[1] We do not want to reinforce the extremist tendency of the feeling of victimhood among the followers of Imam Ali, but it is a present reality.

[2] Al-Huseini Al-Khatib; Sayyid Abdulzahra' Sources and Chains of Transmission of Peak of Eloquence 1/337, and he attributed it to multiple sources, including Al-Aghani by Abu Al-Faraj Al-Isfahani, Al-Gharat by Al-Thaqafi Al-Kufi, and Explanation of Peak of Eloquence by Ibn Abi Al-Hadid.

[3] Peak of Eloquence: 246.

Its manifestations are numerous, beginning with the downplaying of his right and status, and the practical implications resulting from that. They denied his precedence and equated him with those of lesser standing. While this might be tolerable despite its negativity, worse than that is the consequential arrangement: he is delayed in the caliphate because he is considered less than the others! Indeed, it reached a point where he was equated not only with the first three caliphs but even with the likes of Mu'awiyah and Amr Ibn Al-Aas, so he (Peace Be Upon Him) said: In the days of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), I was like a part of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household). People looked at me as they look at stars in the horizon of the sky. Then time diminished me, and the others were equated with me. Then I was equated with five, the best of whom was Uthman. So I said: Woe to foul odor<sup>[1]</sup>! Then time was not content with that for me until it degraded me, making me an equal to Ibn Hind and Ibn Al-Nabigha. Indeed, the young camels have fattened, even the bald ones<sup>[2]</sup>.

Worse than that is that they fabricated false hadiths as if they were said by him, suggesting that others were better than him! Even though this contradicts the truth, they were not content with preferring others over him, nor with their precedence in the caliphate, nor with usurping his right. Instead, hadiths were attributed to him such as: I will not be brought anyone who

[1] A strong, foul odor, said with disgust and annoyance.

[2] Al-Khalil Al-Farahidi, Ahmed: Al-Ain 1/155. That is, he became fat. It is used as an example for someone who has overstepped his bounds and claimed what is not his.

prefers me over Abu Bakr except that I will flog him with the Hadd (punishment) of a slanderer<sup>[1]</sup>.

In the same vein of preference: The school of the Caliphs—more recently—agreed that the preference among the Caliphs is according to the order of their caliphate. So, the best is the first, followed by the second, and so on, and the fourth in virtue is Imam Ali, according to them! Even though he said: When did doubt ever arise about me in comparison with the first of them? Indeed, there was a trend, which we will refer to as the Umayyad trend, that did not see Imam Ali at the level of comparison among the Caliphs. Rather, it saw the best people as the first, then the second, and then there was no preference, but people, including Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) were equal without any special virtue!

It is strange that some of them, when speaking about the period of caliphate for each of the caliphs, mention it as a normal governorship, but when they reach the time of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), they refer to it as the tribulation<sup>[2]</sup>! What preceded it was a governorship, but

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[1] Ibn Hanbal, Ahmed: Virtues of the Companions 1/83 and dozens of other sources.

[2] Some of them, such as the author of Minhaj Al-Sunnah, based their opinion on that as long as the matter is a tribulation, then the most correct, safest and most deserving thing is to sit back and avoid it, as Ibn Umar and Abu Musa did! I say: It is a clear contradiction to the statement of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) regarding their consideration of the rebellious group. Consequently, those who rebel must be fought according to the text of the Glorious Quran. Due to the consensus of the Muslims, except for those who follow the line of the aforementioned author of Minhaj, that Imam Ali is more deserving of the truth than all his opponents.

Imam Ali's period is considered a tribulation by them<sup>[1]</sup>. Hence, he (Peace Be Upon Him) says: I am the first to kneel in dispute before Lord on the Day of Judgment<sup>[2]</sup>.

As for the talk of cursing and reviling him on the pulpits of Muslims<sup>[3]</sup>, that is a bitter taste that remains in the mouth of time<sup>[4]</sup>.

[1] Al-Bukhari in Al-Tarikh Al-Awsat 1/93: I heard Qatada say: Abu Bakr ruled for two years and six months, Umar ruled for ten years, six months and eighteen days, Uthman ruled for twelve years minus twelve days, the turmoil lasted five years, Muawiyah ruled for twenty years, and Yazid Ibn Muawiyah ruled for three years. So even Yazid was a rule, but as for Imam Ali, it was a turmoil! Those who came after him and those who were his contemporaries followed him in this. Musnad Ahmed 1/554, Al-Risalah edition, Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir by Al-Tabarani 3/26, Tarikh Dimashq by Ibn Asakir 39/512, and others.

[2] Al-Nishapuri, Abu Abdullah Al-Hakim: Al-Mustadrak ala Al-Sahihain 2/419.

[3] Ibn Abi Al-Hadid: Explanation of Peak of Eloquence 4/57. Muawiyah would say at the end of his Friday sermon: "O Lord, Abu Turab has deviated from Your religion and obstructed Your path, so curse him with a terrible curse and punish him with a painful torment." He wrote this to the horizons. These words were pointed out from the pulpits until the caliphate of Umar Ibn Abdulaziz. Khalid Ibn Abdullah Al-Qasri, Hisham ibn Abdulmalik's governor of Iraq, would say in his sermon: "O Lord, curse Ali Ibn Abi Talib Ibn Abdulmuttalib Ibn Hashim, the son-in-law of the Prophet, and the father of Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein!" Then he would turn to the people and say: "Have I given a nickname?» A group of the Umayyads said to Muawiyah, years into his rule: "You have achieved what you hoped for, so why don't you stop cursing this man!" He replied: "No, by Lord, not until the young grow up, the old grow older, and no one remembers his virtues!"

[4] Al-Amini, Sheikh Abdulhussein: Al-Ghadir 2/103. The scholar Sheikh Ahmed Al-Hafdh Al-Shafi'i in his poem.

## 2. Ongoing Oppression Until Now

The generation that lived with Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) and those close to his era and after, were not content with what has been mentioned. Rather, the subsequent generations of hadith narrators and jurists followed the same path in perpetuating his oppression through several matters, including completely denying his virtues, obscuring them, either by not mentioning them at all, or even deleting them from books in later editions, or if anything of that survived, it is discredited and weakened<sup>[1]</sup>.

That is specially evident with the formation of a movement within the Islamic Nation whose fundamental characteristic was hatred for the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). Their core pillar was enmity towards Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). This was known as the Nasibis, a movement that was strengthened by some rulers of the Umayyad state, and then by some rulers of the Abbasid state. This movement settled especially in the Levant and Persia, in Sistan and Juzjan and other lands. Narrating the virtues of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib in some regions cost the narrator his life and led to his death, as happened to the Hadith scholar Al-Nasa'i<sup>[2]</sup> in Sham and Al-

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[1] The followers of the line of animosity to Imam Ali weaken the most famous hadiths narrated by some of the imams of hadith in the school of the caliphs.

[2] Al-Hafidh Abu Abdulrahman Ahmed Ibn Shu'ayb Al-Nasa'i (215 AH - 303 AH), author of Sunan Al-Nasa'i, is one of the martyrs of the virtues of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Peace Be Upon Him). After being born in his hometown of Nasa in Khorasan and educated in Egypt, he knew that there was a deviation in Damascus from the path of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Peace Be Upon Him) and his

Kanji Al-Shafi'i<sup>[1]</sup>.

I wish that one of the researchers could trace the Nasibi trend in the science of Rijal (biographical evaluation) and Hadith to see how it worked within the nation. Anyone openly declaring enmity towards Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib became reliable, trustworthy, and a memorizer, and his open declaration of enmity towards Imam Ali, who is the very soul of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), did not harm him even a bit! While the Shiism of some and their love for Imam Ali would be a defect for

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recognition due to the influence of Umayyad culture. He traveled to Damascus and began teaching the virtues of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) in its public mosques. He authored a book titled "The Characteristics of the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib." This angered the followers of the Umayyad line. They asked him, "Will you not tell us about the maternal uncle of the believers, Mu'awiyah?" He replied, "Did not Mu'awiyah get satisfied until we mention his virtues?" When they insisted, he replied, "I do not know of any authentic hadith from the Prophet, except for the hadith, 'May Almighty Allah not fill his stomach with satiation.'" They continued to beat and kick him until he developed a hernia, his intestines ruptured, and he subsequently died.

- [1] Al-Hafidh Muhammad Ibn Yusuf Ibn Muhammad Al-Kanji was a Shafi'i scholar in the seventh century AH. He was killed in Damascus in 658 AH for publishing accounts of the virtues of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Peace Be Upon Him) and stories of Imam Al-Mahdi (May Almighty Allah Hasten His Reappearance) in his books *Kifayat Al-Talib* and *Al-Baya*. Discussing Ghadir, he cited a hadith of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) and a poem by Hassan Ibn Thabit about the day of Ghadir. Someone objected to him, claiming that this hadith is weak!! So he decided to compile a book on the characteristics of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) based on authentic hadiths. He wrote the book *Kifayat Al-Talib fi Manaqib Ali Ibn Abi Talib*. Later, he was found murdered!

which one accused of it would be criticized, and thus disqualified from having his narrations used as evidence<sup>[1]</sup>. Perhaps Almighty Allah will grant some scholars success in this regard to reveal to people how narrations of Ali's virtues and merits were discredited by various means and methods.

When they cannot delete some virtues of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) because the virtue is the core of the historical event, as is the case in the Hadith of Warning on the Day of the House, they distort the narrated text. For instance, Al-Tabari (who died 310 AH) narrated in his history: The Prophet said: 'Which of you will assist me in this matter, on the condition that he be my brother, my successor, and my caliph among you?' He said: So the people held back from it all, and I said: 'I, O Prophet, will be your minister in this.' So he took my hand and said: 'Indeed, this is my brother, my successor, and my caliph among you, so listen to him and obey...<sup>[2]</sup>' Similarly, Ibn Al-Athir (who died 637 AH)<sup>[3]</sup> narrated it, and showing the Prophet's explicit declaration of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib's brotherhood, successorship, and caliphate. Is there a stronger text after this?

However, the same narration, when narrated by Ibn Kathir Al-Dimashqi (who died 774 AH), who was from the Umayyad

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- [1] That is evident in what happened to Thawir Ibn Abi Fakhita, Abdullah Ibn Musa, Ali Ibn Ghurab, and others.
  - [2] Al-Tabari: History of the Prophets and Kings, 2/321. However, the organization that printed Al-Tabari's interpretation, Jami' Al-Bayan, was not satisfied with this text, so they changed it to the text found in the Umayyad-oriented books and used such-and-such instead of the original text: "my brother, my successor, and my Caliph", in a clear pursuit of the virtues of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) by erasing and canceling them even after the book was printed.
  - [3] Ibn Al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi Al-Tarikh: 1/661.

trend, and lived four hundred and sixty-four years after Al-Tabari, we found him narrating it from another angle in disregard for Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) and his virtues, replacing it with so-and-so. He said: 'Which of you will assist me in this matter, on the condition that he be my brother, 'and so-and-so.' He said: So the people held back from it all, and I said: 'I, O Prophet, will be your minister in this.' So he took my hand and said: 'Indeed, this is my brother 'and so-and-so,' so listen to him and obey.<sup>[1]</sup>'

They made great efforts to nullify virtues and merits, especially those can be used in beliefs and the Imamate, as Ibn Abi Dawud Al-Sijistani did in his denial of the Hadith of the Bird<sup>[2]</sup>. This is

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[1] Al-Dimashqi; Ibn Kathir: The Prophetic Biography, From the Beginning and the End 1/459. He surprisingly insisted on attributing some things to Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) despite the fact that they cannot be found elsewhere, which proves that they are the outcome of Ibn Kathir Al-Dimashqi's hatred to Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). However, the important point, namely the reference to Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) as a brother, successor, and guardian, he omitted it both times! In his book, Tafsir Ibn Kathir 6/170, he reproduced it differently from the two phrases: "Which of you will pay off my debt and be my successor over my family?" He said: "So they remained silent, and Al-Abbas remained silent, fearing that this would encompass his wealth." What is important to them is that it deviates from its original text.

[2] Al-Nasa'i; Al-Hafidh Ahmed Ibn Shu'ayb: The Characteristics of Ali, p. 29: "Anas Ibn Malik narrated that the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) was brought a bird to eat, so he said, 'O Lord, send me the most beloved of Your creation to You to eat from this bird with me.' Abu Bakr came but he rejected him, Umar came but he also rejected him, and Ali came and the Prophet gave him permission." Do you see a hadith with this wording that the school of the caliphs could accept? Even if it were consecutive? In the transmission of Al-Hakim Al-Nishapuri in Al-Mustadrak ala

because the implication of the Prophet's saying, O Lord, send me the most beloved of Your creation to You, is undeniable, and there remains no room for argument regarding Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib's precedence over all creation after the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household). Those who hate Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) cannot bear this, therefore, they discredited it. Ibn Abi Dawud claimed that if the Hadith of the Bird were authentic, then the prophethood of the Prophet would be false!! He presented a reason no more absurd than saying that it narrated a betrayal from the Prophet's doorman, and the Prophet's doorman cannot be a traitor! I say: I do not know which is more absurd than the other: the claim or the evidence.

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Al-Sahihain 3/141: Anas Ibn Malik said: I was serving the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) and a roasted chicken was brought to him. He said: "O Lord, send me the most beloved of Your creation to eat with me from this bird." He said: So I said: O Lord, I wish he were a man from the Ansar. Then Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) came. I said: The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) is busy. Then he came. I said: The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) is busy. Then he came, and the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) said: "Open up." So he entered, and the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) said: "What kept you away from me?" He said: This is the third time that Anas rejects me to enter, claiming that you are busy. So he said: "What made you do this?" I said: O Prophet, I heard your supplication, and I would have liked it to be a man from my people. The Prophet said: "A man may love his people." This is a sound hadith according to the conditions of the two sheikhs, but they did not include it. It was narrated from Anas by a group of his companions, more than thirty people. Then the narration was authenticated by Ali, Abu Saeed Al-Khudri, and Safina. In the hadith of Thabit Al-Bunani from Anas, there are additional words!

For this reason, some followers of the Caliphs' school<sup>[1]</sup> rebutted him and rejected his statement, invalidating it, even though the rebuttal was not strong. However, it is a familiar tune. Ibn Abi Dawud was known for his animosity and hatred<sup>[2]</sup> towards the most beloved of Lord's creation to Lord. Another point is the weakening and disparagement of traditions concerning his virtues (Peace Be Upon Him). Initially, they would omit their mention and not narrate them in compliance with the Umayyad Sultanic decree<sup>[3]</sup>, which remained a permanent policy over time. Moreover, if such hadiths were narrated and published in a book, they would be printed in another edition after deleting these narrations. The great scholar Al-Amini (May Almighty Allah Have Mercy on Him) traced this in some parts of Al-Ghadir, so subsequent generations do not lose the opportunity to obtain the original version that contained these hadiths. If these hadiths survived omission and deletion after transmission, due to their widespread fame, for instance, then the other stage of weakening

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[1] Al-Dhahabi said: This is a poor statement. Indeed, the prophethood of Muhammad is a definite truth. If the story of the bird is true, and if it is not, what is the connection? Anas served the Prophet before he reached puberty, and before the pen wrote, so it is possible that the story of the bird occurred during that period. Assuming he had reached puberty, he is not infallible from treachery. I say: After this, he began to corrupt later on more than what he corrected at first.

[2] He denied the Hadith of Ghadir Khumm! This led Ibn Jarir Al-Tabari to compile a book on the chains of transmission of Ghadir Khumm, about which Al-Dhahabi, despite his sectarian fanaticism, said: "He collected the chains of transmission of the Hadith of Ghadir Khumm in four parts. I saw half of it and was amazed by the breadth of its narrations, and I was certain that it had happened."

[3] The decree issued by Muawiyah Ibn Abi Sufyan prohibiting the mention of the virtues of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) will be mentioned later in this book.

their chains of transmission and disparaging their paths by various means would be applied, just as Ibn Hazm Al-Andalusi and Ibn Taymiyyah Al-Harrani did with the Hadith of Al-Ghadir<sup>[1]</sup>! Al-Albani was surprised by Ibn Taymiyyah's rejection of the Hadith of Ghadir and his haste in doing so. After presenting the evidence for the hadith's authenticity, he said: "I do not know the reason for his denial of the hadith except haste and exaggeration in refuting the Shi'a<sup>[2]</sup>. I say: We are also surprised by Al-Albani's surprise. Was the book Minhaj Al-Sunnah written for any other purpose than this?"

Another point is distortion and interpretation that spoils its true meaning. If the meaning of a narration were clear in terms of doctrine, they would distort its meaning and interpret it in a way that leaves nothing of its original sense. There are many such examples that indicate this idea. One such example is about Ibn Kathir's action when he changed the narration of the warning on the Day of the House from being a clear text about brotherhood, guardianship, and successorship to him changing it to "Who

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[1] In Minhaaj Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawiyyah 7/319, Ibn Taymiyyah states that as for "Whoever I am a master, then Ali is his master," it is not in the Sahih, but it is among what the scholars have narrated. People have disputed its authenticity. It has been reported from Al-Bukhari, Ibrahim Al-Harbi, and a group of scholars of hadith that they have criticized it. As for Ibn Hazm, he says that it is not authentic from trustworthy sources at all. I say: Al-Dhahabi said, although he is Ibn Taymiyyah's brother in this regard, that he had read the four-volume work of Muhammad Ibn Jarir Al-Tabari, the author of Al-Tarikh, on the chains of transmission of the hadith of Ghadir. He was amazed by the breadth of its narrations, so he was certain that this hadith is true.

[2] Al-Albani; Muhammad Nasir: The Series of Authentic Hadiths and Some of Their Jurisprudence and Benefits 5/264.

among you will pay off my debt and be my successor among my family?" I do not know what the Prophet's purpose was in that! Was he going to die tomorrow? Or was he in debt, begging someone to pay his debts? Was the ayah "And admonish thy nearest kinsmen"<sup>[1]</sup> revealed for him to say these words to them?

In this regard, they showed astonishing wonder. In the hadith, "You are to me as Aaron was to Musa...", which the Glorious Quran explained by saying: "And give me a Minister from my family. "Aaron, my brother. "Add to my strength through him. "And make him share my task. "That we may celebrate Thy praise without stint. "And remember Thee without stint. "For Thou art He that [ever] regardeth us." [Allah] said: "Granted is thy prayer, O Moses!"<sup>[2]</sup>.

They claimed that the Prophet only said that to comfort Ali Ibn Abi Talib! as if they were in the heart of the Prophet, knowing why the Prophet said that.

As this was not accepted, they came with another idea, saying that this does not prevent others besides Ali from being in the position of Aaron to Moses! If they are asked about a proof for this, and why there is no one to whom the Prophet said that, they will never answer! The important thing is interpretation, explanation, and distracting attention from the original meaning

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[1] Surat Al-Shuaraa: 214.

[2] Surat Taha: 29-36. These ayahs emphasize the position of the minister, brotherhood, strengthening the support with him, and partnership in the matter, until when he reached here he began to speak with the tongue of the two: so that we may glorify You much and remember You much, and Almighty Allah responded to him and said: Your request has been granted, O Musa.

that the ayah explained and to which the Prophet referred. Even if the Prophet's words were distorted, the wording of the Glorious Quran would not be distorted.

In the Hadith of the Bird, "Send me the most beloved of Lord's creation to you, Anas Ibn Malik understood from this what a person with a sound disposition would understand that the Prophet was praying for the person most beloved to Lord, after the Prophet, to be with him at the meal. For this reason, Anas tried his best to prevent Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) from entering. If this meaning is established by this hadith, nothing remains for them to prefer their characters over Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). So, they began with pale interpretations and false distortions. Some said that the intention was for a group of people beloved by Lord to come, not just one individual! Yet, was this fulfilled? Did the Prophet insist on Ali's coming? When Imam Ali arrived, did the Prophet wait for anyone? What makes a bereaved woman laugh is that some of them claim that the intention was the one who eats the most,<sup>[1]</sup> not the most beloved of creation to Lord!

In Al-Ghadir Hadith, the Prophet asked them: Am I not closer to the believers than their own selves? referring to the ayah "The Prophet is closer to the Believers than their own selves"<sup>[2]</sup>. They said, "Yes." He said, "To whomsoever I am Mawla (meaning with that absolute authority), Ali is his Mawla.

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[1] Sayyid Hamid Al-Naqawi, May Almighty Allah Have Mercy on Him, answered this claim in his book, Abqat Al-Anwar, with "70" points of view!

[2] Surat Al-Ahzab: 6.

Here, they invented a fabricated, false story from Yemen and claimed that the Prophet, after some discussion between Ali Ibn Abi Talib and some of those with him, wanted to "comfort" Ali and to show people that he loved Ali and Ali loved him! As if the Prophet's only job was to manage this person and comfort him from time to time and from place to place. What about Hadith Al-Manzila then? Did the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) want to comfort Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) too? Did he only want to show people that he loves Imam Ali, so he stopped thousands of men and women in the middle of the desert, in the intense heat of the sun, to the extent that a person would place his cloak under his feet because of the heat, just to exchange feelings of love and affection with him? This is a very low level of degradation when they attribute this meaning to the Prophet and to Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Them). If they lack interpretation and distortion, they mention that this merit is not exclusive to Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib. They claim that others share it with him. Regarding his early conversion to Islam, where there are explicit undeniable narrations, they claim that he was the first among children, and so-and-so was the first among adults. They even add that Ali's conversion as a child is invalid because a child's conversion is not sound! Then, the problem should be directed to the Prophet, Lord forbid, how did he invite him to Islam and then accept it from him, if a child's conversion is not valid?

Another point is the attribution of his virtues and merits to others. They attributed his birth in the Kaaba to Hakim Ibn Hizam Ibn Khuwaylid. They also attributed the killing of the Jewish Marhab in Khaybar to Muhammad Ibn Maslamah Al-Ansari! More astonishing is that his virtues are attributed to others by

his own tongue (Peace Be Upon Him)! They mentioned that when Abu Bakr passed away, Medina was shaken with weeping, and people were stunned as on the day the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) passed away. Ali Ibn Abi Talib came weeping and rushing, saying, ‘Today the prophethood’s caliphate has ended, until he stopped where Abu Bakr was laid out! He said: ‘May Lord Have Mercy on You, O Abu Bakr! You were the first of the people to embrace Islam, the most complete in faith, the most fearful of Almighty Allah, the strongest in conviction, the greatest in wealth, the most protective of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), the most affectionate towards Islam, the most secure for his companions, the best in companionship, the most virtuous in merits, the most numerous in precedents, the highest in rank, and the closest to the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household)...

This narration is a “copy-paste,” as they say these days, of coherent words spoken by Al-Khidr in eulogizing the Commander of the Faithful (Peace Be Upon Them) when he met his demise by the sword of Ibn Muljam Al-Muradi. We will now quote those eulogizing words of Al-Khidr concerning Imam Ali, and then comment on the previous narration.

Al-Kulaini narrated it in his book Al-Kafi with his chain of transmission from Usayd Ibn Safwan, who said: “When the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) passed away, the place was shaken with weeping, and people were stunned as on the day the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) passed away. A man came weeping, rushing and saying, ‘To Allah we belong and to Him we shall return,’ saying: ‘Today the prophethood’s caliphate has ended,’ until he stopped where the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali

(Peace Be Upon Him) was, and said: ‘May Almighty Allah Have Mercy on You, O Abul Al-Hassan! You were the first of the people to embrace Islam, the most sincere in faith, the strongest in conviction, the most fearful of Almighty Allah, the greatest in hardship, the most protective of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), the most secure for his companions, the most virtuous in merits, the most noble in precedents, the highest in rank, the closest to the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), the most similar to him in guidance, character, demeanor, and action, the most honorable in status, and the most esteemed by him. May Almighty Allah reward you the best on behalf of Islam, His Messenger, and the Muslims. You were strong when his companions were weak, you stood out when they were subdued, you rose when they faltered, and you adhered to the path of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) when his companions hesitated. You were truly his successor, never disputing nor humbling yourself despite the hypocrites, the rage of the disbelievers, the hatred of the envious, and the insignificance of the wicked. You took charge when they failed, you spoke when they stammered, and you proceeded with the light of Almighty Allah when they stopped. So they followed you and were guided. You were the lowest in voice, the highest in devotion, the fewest in words, the most correct in speech, the greatest in opinion, the bravest in heart, the strongest in conviction, the best in action, and the most knowledgeable in affairs<sup>[1]</sup>.

Some observations on the first narration should be stated

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[1] It seems that the first person to transmit it from Usaid Ibn Safwan was Al-Bazzaz in his Musnad, Al-Bahr Al-Zakhar 3/139, then others such as Al-lqd Al-Farid and others, and it was not transmitted in their basic books.

here as follows:

- A.** What makes us reject it is that the Commander of the Faithful in very many instances<sup>[1]</sup> explicitly stated that he was the first to embrace Islam and the earliest to believe before others and prayed with the Prophet. So it is not logical that he says, "You were the first of the people to convert to Islam"? He who says in those instances, "No one after me or other than me should say it, except a liar.»
- B.** It is not logical that Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) to say, as they claim in the first narration, "Today the prophethood's caliphate has ended." Based on the

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[1] Al-Raishihri collected in the Encyclopedia of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Peace Be Upon Him) 9/111 126 hadiths from sources from both groups, confirming his precedence over all people in his conversion to Islam. Some of them are based on his explicit statement that he (Peace Be Upon Him) preceded Abu Bakr and prayed before him by seven years. Some other statements are based on the Prophet's (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) explicit statement that Imam Ali was the first to believe in him and confirm his authenticity. Among his many sayings is his statement from the pulpit of Basra: "I am Al-Siddiq Al-Akbar. I believed before Abu Bakr did, and I converted to Islam before he did." Others include his statement: "I am Abdullah and the brother of His Messenger, and I am Al-Siddiq Al-Akbar. No one after me would say this except a liar. I believed before the people for seven years." Others include what was narrated by Abu Dharr and Salman: The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) took Ali's (Peace Be Upon Him) hand and said: "This is the first to believe in me, and he is the first to shake my hand on the Day of Resurrection. This is Al-Siddiq Al-Akbar." Others include his famous poem: "I preceded you in Islam when I was a young boy, and I had not yet reached the age of maturity."

approach of the Caliphs' school, the caliphate did not end. Rather, the caliphate after Abu Bakr became stronger and longer, lasting. So there is no meaning to his saying, as they claimed, "the prophethood's caliphate has ended. This means that the one who transmitted these words did not pay attention to this aspect when changing the name. However, if one says that the prophethood's caliphate ended with the martyrdom of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), it is correct according to the saying of Ahl Al-Bait, where the caliph after the Prophet is Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib, and with his martyrdom, the prophethood's caliphate ended. According to the opinion of the Caliphs' school, they consider the Prophet's caliphate to be for the fourth caliph. Then, the oppressive monarchy begins.

- C. What indicates that the words (and the eulogy) are not for Abu Bakr but rather for Ali Ibn Abi Talib is that they contain a direct criticism of the companions and a statement of the Imam's distinction over them. According to this text, the Prophet's companions became weak, subdued, and feeble, and intended to deviate from the Prophet's path. In contrast, the addressed person was strong, rising, and adhered to the path. He took charge when they failed, spoke when they stammered, and proceeded with the light of Almighty Allah when they stopped. This discourse regarding the companions is not accepted by the Caliphs' school. They consider all of the Prophet's companions to be upright and the best of creation after the Prophet. Rather, this style of

discourse is what distinguishes the school of Ahl Al-Bait that evaluates each of the companions according to their contribution and role in supporting the religion. It also considers that just as there are sincere and strong ones among them, there are also hypocritical and evil ones. Some of them also deviated from the Prophet's path. The best in everything among them is Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him).

- D.** Ayatollah Al-Tustari commented on this narration, which was transmitted as a eulogy for Abu Bakr. In his commentary on Peak of Eloquence, he said: "They changed what was narrated: that when the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) passed away, Kufa was shaken like Medina on the day the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) passed away. A man was weeping, rushing and saying 'To Allah we belong and to Him we shall return. He said: 'May Almighty Allah have mercy on you, O Abul Al-Hassan, you were the first of the people to embrace Islam. In Al-'Iqd Al-Farid, they claim that when Abu Bakr passed away and was covered with a cloth, Medina was shaken as on the day the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) passed away. Ali was weeping, rushing and saying 'To Allah we belong and to Him we shall return, until he stood at the door, saying: May Almighty Allah have mercy on you, O Abu Bakr, you were the first of the people to convert to Islam. You were like a mountain, unmoved by storms.

I do not know where all this dignity was, whether on the day of Khaybar or in his other battles. In short, we do not know of the man except that he did not witness war, or if he witnessed it, he would flee, until the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) said when he and his companion fled on the day of Khaybar: "Tomorrow I shall give the banner to a man who loves Lord and His Messenger, and Lord and His Messenger love him, one who attacks repeatedly and does not flee. A question to be raised here is about his no action toward Khalid Ibn Al-Walid who killed Malik Ibn Nuwayra, a Muslim, and committed adultery with his wife. Even Omar criticized him for not punishing Khalid<sup>[1]</sup>.

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[1] Al-Tastari, Sheikh Muhammad Taqi Bahj Al-Sabbagh in his explanation of Peak of Eloquence 9/492.

# Imam Ali's Merits: A Roadmap to His Imamate

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Much has been written about the merits and virtues of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him)<sup>[1]</sup>. However, even collectively, these writings have not covered all that has been said about him, nor have they encompassed all his characteristics. This is not because those efforts were meager, but because of the vastness of this divine personality and its multiple dimensions. Among the topics concerning his virtues and merits (Peace Be Upon Him) that have been little researched is studying them externally and reflecting upon them as a single system. In these pages, we will try to do so as much as possible and record them in points for easy reference and retrieval.

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[1] In Taj Al-Arus 7/88, Al-Zubaidi said: A man of merits is a man of good deeds.

1. It is necessary to ask what is the purpose of mentioning these merits and referring to these virtues by the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), and even by the Glorious Quran? We will observe that the Glorious Quran referred to the virtues of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) and revealed ayahs concerning him that are recited day and night. So what is the purpose of that? Similarly, hundreds, if not thousands, of hadiths about Ali Ibn Abi Talib have been narrated from the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), from the beginning of his call to Almighty Allah until the days of his death. So what is the goal of those hadiths?

Some people imagine that the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) did what every ordinary person does. When someone sees something good, they point it out and introduce it. Just as he saw good qualities in Imam Ali, he saw them in others too and pointed them out, but Imam Ali had the most. This idea might dwell in the minds of many, even scholars from the school of the Caliphs who mentioned the "merits of the Ten Promised Paradise," as they said, including Imam Ali, who had the most merits! Or when they mentioned the virtues of the Companions or Banu Hashim and so on. However, we believe is that the role of explaining merits and virtues is part of the clear proclamation that the Prophet made to the Nation so that it may find its way after him and follow his path in its future days. This meaning may be guided by the fact that the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) began mentioning Ali's positions directly from the beginning of his call and his warning to his closest relatives, which is known as the Hadith

of Warning on the Day of the House. He explained to them that he was his brother, guardian, heir, and successor, so they should listen to him and obey him. This is the purpose of mentioning merits and virtues; their mention was not for Ali to boast over others or to be arrogant! Just as the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) had deeds and roles that did not allow him to explain that this one is more knowledgeable or that one is his brother or the divider of Paradise... especially with this overwhelming multitude of hadiths from the earliest until his last days. This points to the paramount importance that the Prophet attached to explaining these merits and virtues. Indeed, when the Glorious Quran records them, it is for a purpose consistent with this importance, and that purpose is the imamate and leadership of the people, which the Glorious Quran clearly states: If thou didst not, thou wouldst not have fulfilled His Mission. And Allah will defend thee from men<sup>[1]</sup>. For this tone from the words of Almighty Allah is consistent with the subject of imamate and guiding people to it, and a correct roadmap for direction after the Messenger. It is also attested to by the fact that the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) used to utter these words and explain these virtues usually in the presence of others, so that they might witness it and transmit it to others. In this regard, his words were in accordance with the clear proclamation that was the Prophet's duty. The most prominent event was the Ghadir event, concerning the number of attendees therein. The first event that witnessed the declaration of Imam Ali's Imamate

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[1] Surat Al-Ma'eda: 67.

and Caliphate was the Day of Warning. Between the two days, many events happened. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) utilized those events to explain that important matter.

2. We believe that the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) conveyed a clear proclamation and a distinct explanation. He also fulfilled his responsibility as Almighty Allah obligated him: "Say: The Messenger's duty is only to preach the clear [Message]."<sup>[1]</sup> In another ayah, the Glorious Quran states: "Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and beware (of evil): If ye do turn back, know ye that it is Our Apostle's duty to proclaim (the Message) in the clearest manner"<sup>[2]</sup> And that is the duty of all Messengers: that there be a proclamation, and that the proclamation be clear: "But what is the mission of messengers but to preach the Clear Message?"<sup>[3]</sup>

Within this frame, the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) clarified to the people and delivered to them guidance and clear proofs. He also conveyed to them the clear path for what their lives should be like during his presence and after his death as well. Therefore, there are various and multiple methods of clear proclamation according to the levels of people, their circumstances, and how they are affected. Sometimes it is by directness, other times by implication, sometimes in a small gathering, and in a large gathering at other times.

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[1] Surat Al-Noor: 54.

[2] Surat Al-Ma'eda: 92.

[3] Surat Al-Nahl: 35.

Perhaps someone might say – as some deniers have maintained – if there were a clear proclamation and an explicit text concerning the Imamate of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Muslims would not have failed to adhere to it, whereas they did not accept his Imamate, which indicates that there was no clear proclamation and no explicit text! The answer to this can be presented on different levels. Firstly, Quranic ayahs indicate that the Prophet is not obligated to make people believe. People’s belief and acceptance have various reasons, just as their disobedience and rejection of faith do. Rather, the Messenger’s responsibility is to convey what has been revealed to him. Secondly, the one who claims the above assumes that all Muslims in the Prophet’s time did not disobey their Lord or violate His commands. If the Messenger had conveyed a clear proclamation regarding this, they would not have disobeyed their Lord! So, either the claimant must admit that there was no disobedience to Lord in the Messenger’s time and that no Muslim committed a sin in his time, or that the Messenger did not convey the clear proclamation. The correct view is that the Messenger conveyed the clear proclamation in matters of creed and rulings. Some Muslims obeyed in both aspects, believing in Ali as the Prophet’s successor, and avoiding sins to the best of their ability. Just as there were some Muslims who disobeyed Almighty Allah in one or both aspects. Thirdly, the Messenger conveyed the clear proclamation regarding the Imamate of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), but some Muslims had a misunderstanding and could not reach the desired outcome, not due to a problem in the proclamation, but due to dullness in comprehension. What could the Prophet do when he is only a reminder, and not a controller over them? Other

Muslims deliberately distorted the meaning out of their own error and misleading others. What could the Prophet do with those who had sickness in their hearts? One of the problems that faced the Prophet with those who were given the Scripture was that: "Even if thou wert to bring to the people of the Book all the Signs [together], they would not follow Thy Qibla"<sup>[1]</sup>. That is: "Those against whom the word of thy Lord hath been verified would not believe"<sup>[2]</sup>. The first group can return to guidance through discussion and clarification of facts, unlike the second group. For every hadith you bring to them, they deny it. If they cannot deny it, they interpret it differently. If they cannot interpret it, they claim that it is not an explicit text about the Imamate.

3. The mentioned merits regarding the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) reveal a complete perfection in character, which is required for the Imam of Muslims, according to Shia belief in the Imam appointed by Almighty Allah. These virtues and merits point to a person specifically chosen by Almighty Allah even before his birth:

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Hadith of the light that reached Abdulmuttalib then split into his two sons Abdullah and Abu Talib.

Hadith of the tree: "I and you are from one tree... and others are from various trees.

Hadith of he was "the most knowledgeable among you," and "the gate to the prophetic city of knowledge..."

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[1] Surat Al-Baqara: 145.

[2] Surat Yunus: 96.

Hadith of he himself was the first to believe in me.

Hadith of he was my heir and my trustee.

Hadith of he was the one who did not uproot the gate of Khaybar with physical strength but with divine power.

Hadith of he was the inheritor of the prophets.

Hadith of whoever wishes to look at Adam in his knowledge, at Ibrahim... and Noah...<sup>[1]</sup>

Almighty Allah willed for this person to be in the Prophet's place after his death, guiding his nation and leading it. This approach is completely different from what is mentioned about some individuals' virtues, which are inconsistent with their other qualities and not substantiated by reality.

4. A profound interconnectedness permeates the hadiths, where each narrative serves as a beacon for another, elucidating and interpreting the divine ayahs revealed regarding the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household). It is noteworthy that the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) did not utter a hadith in isolation.

Consider the revelation of the ayah of Mubahala ("Then say, 'Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves; then supplicate, and let us invoke the curse of Allah upon the liars. In its wake emerged hadiths proclaiming, "You are from me and I am from you," and

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[1] Ibn Abi Al-Hadid in Explanation of Peak of Eloquence, p. 27.

"He is from me and I am from him." This profound connection found further elucidation in the incident of the delivery of Surah Bara'ah, when the Prophet declared, "Gabriel came to me and said, 'No one delivers on your behalf except you or someone from you.'" His words were further underscored by his statement, "Banu Wali'ah must desist, or I will send to them a man from me, like myself.»

Similarly, with the advent of the ayah of purification ("Indeed, Allah intends only to remove from you the impurity [of sin], O people of the household, and to purify you with [complete] purification"), the hadith of closing the doors materialized as a practical application. The rationale is clear: there is no purpose in opening one's door to the mosque if one is in a state of major ritual impurity, especially within the sacred confines of the Prophet's mosque. This directly refutes the attribution of other doors to the mosque for others, and to any who objected, the Prophet firmly stated, "I did not prevent you, but Allah did.»

The hadith, "You are to me as Aaron was to Moses," is illuminated by the blessed ayahs: ("Succeed me among my people and rectify,") and saying: "And give me a Minister from my family. "Aaron, my brother. "Add to my strength through him. "And make him share my task.") These ayahs provide the divine context and affirmation of the special status bestowed upon Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him).

Furthermore, the sacred ayah confining guardianship to Allah, the Prophet, and Imam Ali, the one who bestows charity while bowing ("Your protector is none but Allah, His Messenger, and those who have believed - those who establish prayer and give zakah while they are bowing"), found its profound explanation

in the Prophet's pronouncement at Ghadir: "Am I not closer to you than yourselves?" To which they affirmed, "Yes." He then declared, "To whomsoever I am Mawla, Ali is his Mawla. O Allah, befriend whoever befriends him, and be hostile to whoever is hostile to him." His statement, "You are the guardian of every believer after me," further solidified this divine decree.

When the ayah, "And with whom is the knowledge of the Book," was revealed, it was accompanied by the hadith, "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate; so whoever desires the city and wisdom, let him come through its gate." Imam Ali himself elucidated this truth with his unequivocal declaration: "Ask me before you lose me; ask me about the paths of the heavens, for I am more knowledgeable about them than about the paths of the earth. Ask me, for there is no ayah revealed by night or day but I have known it and known its interpretation." He further unveiled the source of this profound knowledge, stating, "The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) taught me a thousand doors of knowledge, each door opening to a thousand doors, and he did not teach that to anyone else but me.»

The hadith, "O Ali: Were it not for you, the hypocrites would not have been known from the believers," is illumined by another from the Prophet: "O Ali, none loves you except a believer, and none hates you except a hypocrite." This distinction was made even more resoundingly clear by another prophetic utterance: "O Ali, you are the divider of Paradise, for on the Day of Resurrection, you will say to the Fire: 'This one is for me, and this one is for you.»

Finally, the prophetic hadith, "O Ali, you and I are from one tree, and the rest of the people are from various trees," does not

refer to familial lineage, for then all the children of Abu Talib would share in this distinction. Rather, it alludes to a unique divine light, a truth confirmed by the revelation: "I and Ali were a light in the loins of Abdulmuttalib." This intrinsic connection is further emphasized by the understanding that the command in Surah Bara'ah, "No one delivers on your behalf except someone from you," is intrinsically linked to the pronouncement, "You are from me and I am from you," and the declaration, "Or I will send to them a man from me, like myself." From this confluence, it is conclusively understood that "Whoever hates Ali has hated me, and whoever separates from Ali has separated from me. Indeed, Ali is from me and I am from him, created from my clay, and I was created from Ibrahim's clay."

5. These profound merits and virtues, drawing their essence directly from the divine revelation of the Quran and the venerable teachings of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), stand self-affirmed, requiring no further validation for their truth and acceptance. Yet, where external corroboration was deemed necessary, these very attributes found resounding echoes in the tapestry of historical fact. Consider, for instance, the boundless expanse of his knowledge – a testament to his being the very "gate to the prophetic city of knowledge." It was he, and he alone, who boldly proclaimed, "Ask me," a challenge none dared to issue without consequence. In every answer, his brilliance shone, illuminating the obscure. His interpretations of the Quran were so voluminous as to burden seventy camels, merely for Surah Al-Fatiha alone. He untangled the most intricate threads of jurisprudence and, in his vivid descriptions of the natural world's creatures, astonished even the most astute zoologists.

When Gabriel, the trustworthy messenger, conveyed from Almighty Allah the resounding declaration, “There is no sword but Dhul-Fiqar, and no hero but Ali,” the very annals of battle rose to attest to this truth. His unparalleled heroism, indelibly etched in the records of history, remains an undeniable fact, hidden from no sincere seeker of truth.

6. Even more astonishing than the aforementioned is the revelation that the virtues and merits we hold today are but the “remainder of the sword” and the “dregs of the cup” – a mere fraction that miraculously eluded the vigilant gaze and grasping hands of authorities and their inspection police over fourteen long centuries, a period during which his virtues were relentlessly pursued. For approximately eighty-five years, from the Prophet’s passing until the caliphate of Umar Ibn Abdulaziz, a Sultanic decree, strictly enforced, prohibited the writing and dissemination of Hadith. This draconian policy led to the irretrievable loss of countless prophetic traditions concerning the virtues and merits of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). Indeed, some researchers contend that the primary objective of this prohibition was the outright eradication of these merits and virtues, ensuring their demise through the extinction of their bearers. This decree became unyielding during the reign of Mu’awiyah Ibn Abi Sufyan<sup>[1]</sup>,

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[1] Ibn Abi Al-Hadid: Explanation of Peak of Eloquence 11/44 Muawiyah wrote a single copy to his workers after the Year of the Congregation: “I am absolved of responsibility for anyone who has narrated anything about the virtues of Abu Turab and his family.” So the preachers stood up in every district and on every pulpit, cursing Ali, disowning him, and attacking him and his family. The

reaching its most abhorrent intensity under Al-Mansur and Al-Mutawakkil Al-Abbasi<sup>[1]</sup>. Despite such relentless persecution, the sheer volume of narrations detailing his merits and virtues that have nonetheless endured speaks to two profound truths:

Firstly, it underscores the divine will of Almighty Allah to manifest this profound truth and to safeguard the Prophet's clear proclamation (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) regarding the establishment of Allah's Wali's imamate and His Messenger's succession. These Hadiths, therefore, persist as guiding beacons for all creation until the Day of Judgment. The war waged against these Hadiths was so fierce that, had it not been for the Almighty's will for their revelation and preservation, they would have vanished entirely, defying all human logic and leaving no trace. For the official war against them, employing the various methods alluded to in the chapter on the Islamic

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 people who suffered the most at that time were the people of Kufa, due to the large number of Shiites of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) there.

[1] Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi mentioned in his book *Tarikh Baghdad* (13/289) in the biography of Ali ibn Nasr al-Jahdhami that he narrated, "The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) took the hands of Imam Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein and said, 'Whoever loves me and loves these two and their father and mother will be with me in my station on the Day of Resurrection.'" Abu Abdulrahman Abdullah said, "When Nasr Ibn Ali narrated this hadith, Al-Mutawakkil ordered him to be flogged a thousand times!! Jaafar Ibn Abdulwahid spoke to him and said, 'This man is from the Sunnis. He let him go. He had provisions, but Musa had provided them for him. I said, 'Al-Mutawakkil ordered him to be flogged because he thought he was a Rafidi, but when he learned he was from the Sunnis, he let him go.'"

Nation's oppression of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), spanned nearly fourteen centuries, unfolding precisely as Mu'awiyah Ibn Abi Sufyan intended, until the young aged and the old withered under its weight<sup>[1]</sup>. Yet, Almighty Allah willed otherwise, and none can repel His divine decree. Secondly, it unequivocally demonstrates that the original quantum of these merits, virtues, and the narrations that bring them to light, was so immense. Despite an unrelenting campaign of deletion, cancellation, distortion, reinterpretation, book proscriptions, harm inflicted upon narrators, and all other unjust policies, a substantial number miraculously survived. Hence, it becomes patently clear that the original corpus far surpassed what has reached us today.

7. Furthermore, righteous scholars from both schools of thought have dedicated their efforts to documenting the merits and virtues of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), thereby contributing significantly to the preservation of what endured. May Almighty Allah reward them generously for their arduous endeavors, for many endured considerable hardship due to their scholarly pursuits. Within the Shia school, this dedication is entirely natural, springing from their unwavering belief in the Imam's imamate, their conviction in his inherent superiority over all of Almighty Allah's creation, save for His chosen Prophet, and their fervent desire to guide humanity towards him. These profound convictions

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[1] Ibn Abi Al-Hadid: Explanation of Peak of Eloquence 4/57 Abu Uthman also narrated that some of the Umayyads said to Muawiyah: You have achieved what you hoped for, so why don't you stop cursing this man? He said: No, by Lord, not until the young grow old and the old grow older and no one remembers his virtue!

spurred their diligent documentation of his virtues. As for the school of the Caliphs, some of their scholars meticulously chronicled his merits, perhaps driven by a noble aspiration to counter the pervasive propagation of hatred and animosity towards the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). This animosity was, regrettably, sown and nurtured by certain jurists aligned with the Umayyad trend, acting out of sheer malice and rage towards him (Peace Be Upon Him). Alternatively, these individuals may have been in the employ of oppressive caliphs, their livelihoods predicated upon slandering and cursing Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). In such instances, some were moved by profound religious zeal and an abiding love for him (Peace Be Upon Him), compelling them to author these books, even if they did not subscribe to his imamate in the precise sense understood by the Twelver Shi'a. This perspective is also shared by some Zaydis and Ismailis.

On the Electronic Reference Information website<sup>[1]</sup>, referencing the Encyclopedia of Imam Ali's Biography, I have observed an enumeration of approximately 260 books, in both Arabic and other languages, dedicated to the merits and virtues of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). The author drew extensively from the invaluable work of the late Sheikh Aqa Buzurg Al-Tehrani in his seminal book, *\*Al-Dhari'ah ila Tasanif Al-Shi'ah\**. From the school of the Caliphs, the renowned book by the Hadith scholar Ahmed Ibn Shu'ayb Al-Nasa'i<sup>[2]</sup>, focusing on the special characteristics of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), stands as a notable example. Within its pages, he meticulously narrated

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[1] <https://almerja.com/reading.php?idm=126812>, 23/ 12/ 1444.

[2] In previous pages, we mentioned something about his biography and his death.

190 Hadiths regarding the virtues and unique attributes of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him).

We previously noted that every author who composed a biography of the Prophet's companions included, to varying degrees, his merits and virtues. A recurrent issue with some of these compilations lies in their adherence to a framework of "balances." For instance, it would be deemed inappropriate for an author to enumerate ten Hadiths about a particular companion, half of which might lack authenticity, while simultaneously presenting five hundred Hadiths about Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). This perceived imbalance often compels authors to severely abbreviate the Imam's virtues (Peace Be Upon Him). Moreover, some compilations are shaped by the authors' personal beliefs and sectarian affiliations, leading to the deliberate exclusion of Hadiths that, despite their academic soundness in chain and text, contradict their theological tenets regarding Imam Ali's virtues (Peace Be Upon Him). Furthermore, certain works bear the indelible imprint of the prevailing inclinations of the ruler or caliph under whom the author lived. Should the ruler be oppressive and overtly hostile towards Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), the author would invariably omit many of the Imam's virtues (Peace Be Upon Him). It is for this reason that some writers have sought to excuse Al-Bukhari's drastic abridgment of the Imam's virtues (Peace Be Upon Him), considering his milieu under Al-Mutawakkil Al-Abbasi, who was widely regarded as one of the *Nasibis*, those who bore hatred for Imam Ali. For example, in *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, a mere seven Hadiths are included in the chapter on the merits of Ali Ibn Abi Talib. Even these seven hadiths suffer from distorted wordings. Some of them bear no relation to his merits whatsoever. As for the foundational

and monumental virtues, they are conspicuously absent. For instance, he cites the Prophet's saying to Ali: "You are from me and I am from you" (without an *\*isnad\**, leaving one to ponder if this omission was to facilitate its challenge?). The Hadith of Sahl Ibn Sa'd concerning the Khaybar incident is presented "stripped of its essence," reduced to a simplistic narrative: "I will give the banner to a man through whom Allah will grant victory," presented in such a bare-bones fashion. The subsequent Hadith initially posits that Ali lagged behind the Prophet, only to then state that he eventually joined him. In the crucial phrase "Allah and His Messenger love him, and he loves Allah and His Messenger," he employs "or," and conspicuously omits the renowned phrase: "attacking repeatedly, not fleeing." He further excises the detail of others' defeat.

The fourth Hadith presented was not a declaration from the Prophet regarding Imam Ali's virtue but rather an account from Ibn Omar, who, when questioned about Ali, merely alluded to his "good deeds of his actions." What these were, however, remains unmentioned. The fifth hadith is from the Commander of the Faithful himself, narrating the story of the Prophet teaching Fatima and Ali the Tasbih of Zahra. The sixth hadith is the Hadith of Manzilah. The seventh hadith is a claim attributed to Imam Ali that he said: "Judge as you used to judge, for I dislike disagreement until the people have a consensus!" Consequently, Ibn Sirin often remarked: "Most of what is narrated about Imam Ali is false!» This particular Hadith, far from being a merit, serves instead to condemn him (Peace Be Upon Him)! For if the Prophet declares to the Muslims: "The best judge among you is Ali," and then Ali himself says, "Judge as you used to judge," then either the Prophet erred in his statement, or Ali erred in his specific

judgment. Rather, according to this Hadith, Imam Ali deferred to their prior judgments, preferring them over his own, as if his judgment would incite disagreement and division! Are these, O author of the Sahih, truly merits? These are the seven Hadiths, and you – dear reader – can discern their content, especially when contrasted with twenty-three Hadiths for the first Caliph and fifteen Hadiths for the second Caliph.

In Sahih Muslim, the “share” of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), in virtues amounted to a mere eight Hadiths. These are largely repetitions due to the multiplicity of transmission chains, with some minor additions and omissions. However, the entirety of what was mentioned comprised the Hadith of Manzilah, positioning him “in the station of Aaron to Moses,” and Sa’d’s Hadith, which enumerates the Imam’s qualities: “the Hadith of Manzilah, Mubahalah, and ‘I will give the banner’ in the story of Khaybar.” When it came to the Hadith of Ghadir, only its initial portion, a summary of the Hadith of Thaqalayn, was included, while the pivotal phrase, “To whomsoever I am Mawla, Ali is his Mawla,” was conspicuously omitted. The final mention was the Hadith concerning his appellation “Abu Turab.” This paltry representation stands in stark contrast to thirteen Hadiths for Abu Bakr, eleven for Umar, and four for Uthman. This severe curtailment of the Imam’s virtues (Peace Be Upon Him) is undoubtedly influenced by one or more of the reasons previously elucidated, or perhaps it merely reflects the insidious inclination of some to harbor animosity towards him (Peace Be Upon Him).



# The Illustrious Merits of Imam Ali (PBUH)



## Divine Testimonies from the Glorious Quran

1. Almighty Allah declares: Your protector is none but Allah, His Messenger, and those who have believed - those who establish prayer and give zakah while they are bowing<sup>[1]</sup>. This sacred ayah descends upon us in direct relation to Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), who, in a profound act of devotion, bestowed charity with his ring whilst prostrating in prayer. This celebrated incident, widely acknowledged by esteemed commentators and immortalized by the poetic verses of Hassan Ibn Thabit<sup>[2]</sup>, resounds with timeless

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[1] Surat Al-Ma'eda: 55.

[2] Sibt Ibn Al-Jawzi: Tadhkirat Al-Khawass, p. 25.

significance. The implication of exclusivity within this ayah is unmistakable. Its meaning permits no interpretation save that of the unique guardianship proclaimed by the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) on the Day of Ghadir. This does not pertain to the general bonds of love and loyalty, for in that sense, all believers are guardians unto one another, and such a connection is not confined to a single individual. Rather, the guardianship herein denotes a singular authority, reserved solely for Almighty Allah, His Messenger, and the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him).

2. Almighty Allah proclaims: Then say, ‘Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves; then supplicate, and let us invoke the curse of Allah upon the liars<sup>[1]</sup>. This ayah unveils itself amidst the momentous Mubahalah, an occasion of solemn imprecation between the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), Imam Ali, Fatima, Al-Hassan, and Al-Hussein on one side, and the Christians of Najran on the other. Its profound clarity lies in demonstrating the perfect congruence, in both knowledge and action, between the Prophet and Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Them). Indeed, it posits Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) as the very self of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household).
3. Almighty Allah affirms: Indeed, Allah intends only to remove from you the impurity [of sin], O people of the household, and to purify you with [complete] purification<sup>[2]</sup>.

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[1] Surat Aal Imran: 61.

[2] Surat Al-Ahzab: 33.

This ayah unequivocally affirms the absolute purification of the Household (Ahl Al-Bait) (Peace Be Upon Them) from all spiritual and material defilement. It underscores the unparalleled purity of their master—after the Prophet, namely, Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Peace Be Upon Them). From this profound ayah, scholars have drawn numerous theological tenets, including the complete infallibility of those encompassed by the ayah, and the historical account of all companions' doors to the mosque being closed, save for Imam Ali's door.

4. Almighty Allah declares: And those who disbelieve say, 'You are not a messenger.' Say, 'Sufficient is Allah as a witness between me and you, and he who has knowledge of the Book<sup>[1]</sup>. Innumerable texts have been meticulously compiled, documenting the Quranic revelations pertaining to Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). These include ayahs whose revelation was directly occasioned by him or those interpreted to refer to him. Among these profound works are:

What Was Revealed in the Quran Regarding Ali Ibn Abi Talib by Muhammad Ibn Imran Al-Marzubani (died 384 AH).

Al-Nur Al-Mushta'il fima Nazala min Al-Quran fi Ali by Abu Nu'aym Al-Isfahani (died 430 AH).

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[1] Surat Al-Ra'ad: 43. Those seeking details can refer to the Encyclopedia of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib, 8/16, by Sheikh Muhammad Al-Raishahri. He stated seventeen ayahs that have been interpreted as referring to Imam Ali or whose revelation was prompted by an issue related to Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). He also cites their sources.

Fadhā'el Amir Al-Mu'minin fi Al-Quran Al-Karim by Sayyid Abu Ma'ash in ten volumes.

## Prophetic Narrations

The narrations concerning Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) from the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) are as boundless as the Imam's own virtues, a truth affirmed by the Prophet himself. As previously noted, the extant corpus of these narrations pales in comparison to the vast multitude lost or obliterated due to the oppressive decrees of rulers and the malevolent intransigence of adversaries. In his comprehensive work Encyclopedia of Imam Ali<sup>[1]</sup>, the esteemed late Sheikh Muhammad Al-Raishahri meticulously assembled approximately 430 narrations concerning Imam Ali from the Prophet, drawing from the sources of both major Islamic schools. These narrations are systematically categorized under various headings, from which we shall present a selected few narrations:

1. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) declared: I and Ali were created from one light<sup>[2]</sup>.
2. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household)

[1] This is from the perspective of enumeration. As for the perspective of evidence and meticulous scholarly research into the well-known hadiths between the two groups, the great scholar, Sayyid Mir Hamid Hussein Naqvi Lucknowi Al-Hindi, has made this clear in his book, *Abqat Al-Anwar*, which was abridged by the contemporary scholar, Sayyid Ali Al-Husseini Al-Milani, into ten volumes. We remind our dear readers that we have already included a detailed biography of Sayyid Mir Hamid Hussein Naqvi in our book, *Shia Scholars*. We have referred to this valuable work.

[2] *Ibid*: 66.

stated: I and Ali were a light in the forehead of Adam (Peace Be Upon Him), and we transferred from pure loins to purified and sanctified wombs until we became in the loins of Abdulmuttalib. The light then divided into two parts, one part was into Abdullah and the other into Abu Talib. So, I emerged from Abdullah, and Ali emerged from Abu Talib.

3. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) affirmed: I and Ali are from one tree, while people are from various trees.
4. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) revealed: Indeed, Almighty Allah made the progeny of every prophet in his loins, and made my progeny in the loins of Ali Ibn Abi Talib<sup>[1]</sup>.
5. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) said: Ali is to me as my head is to my body.
6. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) declared: Ali is from me, and I am from Ali, and none will deliver on my behalf except me or Ali.
7. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) commanded: Banu Wulai'ah must desist, or I will send them a man who is to me like myself, who will kill their fighters and take their offspring captive, and he is this one. Thereupon, he struck Ali Ibn Abi Talib's shoulder with his hand.
8. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) addressed Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him): I and you, O

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[1] Ibid: 75.

Ali, are the fathers of this creation, so whoever disobeys us, the curse of Allah be upon him. Say ‘Amen,’ O Ali. Imam Ali responded: Amen, O Messenger of Allah. Then the Prophet continued: O Ali, I and you are the masters (mawla) of this creation, so whoever denies our mastery and rejects our right, the curse of Allah be upon him. Say ‘Amen,’ O Ali. Imam Ali again replied: Amen, O Messenger of Allah<sup>[1]</sup>.

**9.** The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) recounted: Indeed, Almighty Allah revealed to me three things regarding Imam Ali on the night of Isra’: that he is the master of the believers, the Imam of the pious, and the leader of the ‘Ghurr Al-Muhajjalin’ (those with radiant faces and limbs).

**10.** The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) proclaimed: O Ali, indeed, Almighty Allah chose me over the men of the worlds. Then, He chose you over the men of the worlds after me.

**11.** The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) stated: I say as my brother Moses said: “O my Lord! expand me my breast, “Ease my task for me, “And remove the impediment from my speech, “So they may understand what I say, “And give me a Minister from my family, Ali, my brother, “Add to my strength through him.

**12.** The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) declared: The most beloved of my Household to me, and the best of those I leave behind, is Ali Ibn Abi Talib.

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[1] Ibid: 92.

- 13.** The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) instructed Ammar: Indeed, after me, there will be some afflictions<sup>[1]</sup> in my nation. The sword will be the judge among them. Some of them kill others. Some of them disavow others. When that happens, adhere to this bald-headed man on my right, Ali Ibn Abi Talib. If all people take one path and Ali takes another, then take Ali's path and leave the people, for Ali will not turn you away from guidance, nor will he lead you to ruin. O Ammar, obedience to Ali is obedience to me, and obedience to me is obedience to Almighty Allah.
- 14.** The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) pronounced: The most truthful (Siddiq) of this Nation is the Commander of the Faithful, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, and he is the Greatest Siddiq and the Greatest Faruq (Distinguisher between truth and falsehood).
- 15.** The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) affirmed: I have been given nine qualities regarding Ali: three in this world, three in the Hereafter, two that I hope for him, and one that I fear for him. As for the three in this world, he is the one who supports me, the one who takes care of the affairs of my household, and my trustee among my family. As for the three in the Hereafter, I will be given the banner of praise, and I will give it to him to carry, I will lean on him at the time of intercession, and he will help me with the keys to Paradise. As for the two that I hope for him, he will not return as a disbeliever after me, nor as one who goes astray. As for the one that I fear for him, it is the treachery of Quraysh against him after me.

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[1] Great matters and hardships.

16. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) said: O people! I am the bearer of good tidings and I am the warner, and I am the unlettered Prophet. I am conveying to you from Almighty Allah regarding a man whose flesh is from my flesh, and whose blood is from my blood. He is the container of knowledge, and he is the one whom Allah has chosen from this nation, selected, guided, and taken as a guardian. He created me and him, preferred me with the mission, and preferred him with conveying from me. He made me the city of knowledge and made him the gate. He made him the treasurer of knowledge and the one from whom rulings are derived. He singled him out with the testament, clarified his matter, warned against enmity towards him, brought close whoever befriended him, forgave his followers, and commanded all people to obey him. Indeed, Almighty Allah says: ‘Whoever shows enmity to him has shown enmity to Me, whoever befriends him has befriended Me, whoever opposes him has opposed Me, whoever contradicts him has contradicted Me, whoever disobeys him has disobeyed Me, whoever harms him has harmed Me, whoever hates him has hated Me, whoever loves him has loved Me, whoever desires evil for him has desired evil for Me, whoever schemes against him has schemed against Me, and whoever supports him has supported Me.
17. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) declared: Indeed, Almighty Allah has granted my brother Ali Ibn Abi Talib virtues that no one except Almighty Allah can enumerate<sup>[1]</sup>.

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[1] Ibid: 175.

18. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) stated: O Ali, none has truly known Allah but me and you, and none has truly known you but Allah and me.

## Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) Describing Himself

As Al-Ray Shahri mentioned in his encyclopedia (112), there is a hadith narrated by the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) in which he describes himself and introduces his virtues and noble qualities. While some descriptions are limited to a single quality, other hadiths mention seventy distinct merits and virtues that he possessed exclusively<sup>[1]</sup>.

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[1] Makhool, Al-Khisal, p. 234: The Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Peace Be Upon Him) said: The companions of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) knew that there was not a man among them who had a virtue except that I shared it with him and surpassed him. I have seventy virtues that none of them shared with me. I said: O Commander of the Faithful, tell me about them.



# The Scientific Heritage of Imam Ali (PBUH)

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Perhaps it is futile to try to encompass the knowledge of the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), because it would mean encompassing the knowledge of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), which is impossible. This is true whether considering the author, who would admit his inability, the book, which is based on brevity, or the subject itself. Nevertheless, an attempt should be made to gain knowledge from this unique source.

The first thing that comes to mind is the saying of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household): I am the city of knowledge, and Ali is its gate. Here, we observe that the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) likens his sacred self to the city of knowledge, and Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) to the

gate of that city. Thus, there are three elements: the similes (the Messenger and Ali), the things likened to (the city and the gate), and the aspect of resemblance. From this aspect, we can infer several points:

1. Any city, especially an ancient one, must have gates. The rule requires that cities, and houses, be entered through their gates. This meaning is clarified in the Glorious Quran through indicating that it is not righteousness that houses are entered from their backs, but righteousness is to fear Almighty Allah and enter houses from their doors. So, if anyone desires knowledge from the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), they must enter through the gate of that city and take knowledge from Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Peace Be Upon Him). If they contravene this Prophetic guidance and enter from another way, they would be considered trespassers and thieves! Indeed, they might even be considered liars, for how would we know they are truly taking from the Prophet's knowledge unless they enter through his gate? Perhaps this is the meaning indicated by hadiths stating that no correct knowledge emerged except from Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). Through him, the true knowledge of the Prophet reached people<sup>[1]</sup>. In contrast, the

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[1] Al-Hurr Al-Amili: The Twelvers, p. 199. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) said: No one has knowledge except something that resulted from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) so let people go wherever, they want gain anything, as knowledge is only from here, and he pointed with his hand to his house.

Prophet warned: Whoever intentionally lies about me, let them get ready for their seats in the Hellfire<sup>[1]</sup>.

2. This knowledge stored in the city is not readily available to everyone; rather, it requires a bearer who fulfills its right and a discerning person who knows where to place it! Thus, religion should not be used for worldly gain.
3. After knowing that the Prophetic knowledge is the origin and Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib is its gate, it is no wonder that Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), and no one else, said: Ask me before you lose me! Ask me, for there is no ayah revealed by night or day but I know it and know about whom it was revealed. Ask me, for there is no banner that guides a hundred or misleads a hundred but I know its driver and its caller. Ask me about the paths of the heavens, for I know them better than the paths of the earth. Saeed Ibn Al-Musayyab narrated: No one among the companions of the Prophet could say, 'Ask me before you lose me,' except Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib<sup>[2]</sup>. In another incident, it is narrated in Kanz Al-Ummal from Muslim Ibn Aws and Jariyah Ibn Qudamah Al-Sa'di that they were present when Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib was delivering a sermon, saying: Ask me before you lose me! For I will not be asked about anything below the Throne except that I will inform about it<sup>[3]</sup>.

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[1] This is the most illustrious hadith in both schools of thought.

[2] Ibn Abi Shaybah, Abdullah Ibn Abi Muhammad: Al-Musannaf 14/451.

[3] Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Ali Ibn Hussam Al-Din: Kanz Al-Ummal 13/165.

## Examples of The Knowledge of the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him):

### Peak of Eloquence

The first thing we encounter is the title Peak of Eloquence, compiled by Sharif Al-Radhi, Ali Ibn Al-Hussein Al-Musawi<sup>[1]</sup>. The book includes the sayings of The commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). He explained the idea of the book in its introduction, stating that when he began his book *Imams' Attributes* and started with the characteristics of The commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), he included a section containing the beautiful sayings narrated from him, comprising short words of admonition, wisdom, proverbs, and etiquette, excluding lengthy sermons and extensive letters. A group of friends found the aforementioned section appealing, admiring its originality and marveling at its brilliance. They then asked me to begin compiling a book that would contain a selection of the words of our master The commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), encompassing all its genre branches, including sermons, letters, admonitions, and etiquette, knowing that this would contain wonders of eloquence, marvels of rhetoric, jewels of Arabic, and piercing religious and worldly words that are not found collected in any other speech or comprehensively compiled in any book<sup>[2]</sup>.

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[1] His biography was mentioned when we talked about Al-Shaqshaqiya.

[2] Peak of Eloquence, P. 34.

This book contains three sections: 241 sermons, 79 letters, and 480 short sayings. Looking at the topics of these sermons, letters, and sayings, we find a vast world of religious, administrative, and political knowledge and understanding of life. It is not feasible at this juncture to list the titles of these sermons, but we can generally say that many of them were expounding his view on what transpired after the passing of the Prophet up to the days of his apparent caliphate and the wars waged against him, in addition to the stance of the Quraishi faction in that regard. The crown jewel in this respect is the Al-Shaqshaqiya Sermon, which has been previously discussed. In addition, his sermons on the knowledge of Almighty Allah and His Oneness, and His attributes, are mind-boggling due to the precision and loftiness of their content, as well as their eloquence and rhetoric. This was something no other companion of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) could achieve, not even if they were all united! It also contains admonitions that penetrate heedless hearts, and descriptions of this world and the hereafter, of the wicked and the pious. It also mentions epics and future events. It guides people to believe in the greatness of Almighty Allah's creation and wisdom, describing some existing things with precise and eloquent descriptions.

As for the letters, they are mostly directives to governors of regions on the optimal way to preserve people's religions and honors and to provide for their livelihoods, outlining what the ruler must do for his subjects. Among the most important and longest of these is his covenant to Malik Al-Ashtar Al-Nakha'i. Similarly, his various letters to his enemies and those who fought him, establishing the argument against them and presenting proof.

We advise the dear reader to directly consult this book to find themselves in a lush garden, enjoying its shade and benefiting from its fruits. We believe they will sense the breath of The commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) between the lines of its words.

Unfortunately, the official stance of the scholars of the Caliphate school was to disavow this valuable book and its exquisite sermons. This is due to the clear stances he (Peace Be Upon Him) expressed towards his opponents among the companions of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), and his frank evaluation of the caliphs who preceded him, a matter that these scholars cannot tolerate. Their best method is to claim that it is a fabricated book by Sharif Al-Radhi, even though most of its sermons are found in various books compiled hundreds of years before Sharif Al-Radhi's birth!

### **Ali's Book**

The second example is the Comprehensive Scroll, which is sometimes referred to as Ali's Book. As Imam Al-Sadiq (Peace Be Upon Him) described it to Abu Basir when he showed it to him, it consists of scrolls written by the dictation of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) in the handwriting of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). Its length is 70 cubits (approximately 35 meters). Its width is the width of a skin. It contains the rules and principles that enable a person to comprehend matters of Halal and Haram until the Day of Judgment. Unfortunately, this scroll is not currently available among people. Rather, it is considered one of the inheritances of the Imamate. It is with the last Imam (Peace Be Upon Him). However, what has been transmitted from it and about it during the various eras of the

Imams, especially Imam Al-Baqir and his son Al-Sadiq, indicates that it contains what suffices to dispense with false analogies and flawed opinions. It confirms the meaning of what was narrated from The commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) when he said: The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) taught me a thousand doors of knowledge, from each door, a thousand doors opened for me<sup>[1]</sup>. We have traced the subject of Ali's Book (Peace Be Upon Him) and its narrations in a brief study in our discussion of Imam Al-Baqir (Peace Be Upon Him), so please refer to it<sup>[2]</sup>.

### **Ask Me Before You Lose Me**

The third example is that he explicitly declared that he is knowledgeable about the details and intricacies of the legislative rulings in previous divine religions before they were corrupted and distorted. It is reported that he said: If I were given the opportunity, I would judge the people of the Torah according to their Torah and the people of the Gospel according to their Gospel<sup>[3]</sup>. Indeed, he spoke freely and asked his listeners to

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[1] Al-Saduq, Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Babawayh: Al-Khisal, p. 572.  
 [2] Aal Saif, Fawzi: Baqir Al-Ilm, Imam Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Al-Hussein 116.  
 [3] It is surprising that some followers of the Umayyad movement respond to this statement by saying that it is not an honor to issue fatwas based on their distorted books! I say: This is due to blindness of insight, because the intended meaning is his comprehensive knowledge of the heavenly books before they were distorted, which is undoubtedly an honor that no one else can claim. In addition, Almighty Allah gave His Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) the choice to judge among them or leave them alone. If he chooses to judge, then let him judge with justice, which is the same in both the Torah and the Glorious

ask him anything, whether in religious matters or otherwise, saying, Ask me before you lose me, without specifying anything. In previous narrations, he completed the statement by asking them to inquire about the paths of the heavens, and about the guiding and rebellious factions on earth, present and future, in addition to the ayahs of the Glorious Quran, when and where they were revealed, and whom or what they intended, and even about what is below the Throne.

Despite the widespread fame of these sayings among both factions, it is strange that some have manipulated them as evidence of their fabrication and attribution to him. Their evidence for this is that no such words were narrated from the other caliphs and companions. Subhan Allah! Instead of realizing that this is evidence of Imam Ali's superiority over others, his excellence over them, and the necessity of following and obeying him after the Prophet, and that it is an injustice to compare others to him, these individuals deviated from the path, rejected the evidence, and broke the lamp that illuminated the way for them to the guardianship of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him).

## Supplications of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him)

The fourth example is the supplications of The commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), which are treasuries of knowledge, oceans of wisdom, and an enlightenment of the mind

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Quran, since the principles of religion are the same. Almighty Allah confirms that those books, before they were distorted, contained guidance and light. Ayahs 42 and 43 of Surat Al-Ma'eda.

for those who reflect upon them, weep, purify their souls, and ascend through them. Shaykh Abdullah Ibn Salih Ibn Abdullah Al-Samahiji Al-Bahrani compiled a number of the supplications of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) under the title Al-Sahifah Al-Alawiyah wa Al-Tuhfah Al-Murtadawiyah. Shaykh Hussein Al-Nouri Al-Tabarsi later supplemented it, collecting what Shaykh Al-Samahiji had not gathered from the supplications, along with their sources. He named his book Al-Sahifah Al-Alawiyah Al-Thaniyah, and it contains 103 supplications of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him).

Among the supplications narrated from him are:

### **1. Dua Al-Jawshan Al-Kabir**

This supplication is well-known among scholars. Some of the scholars have dedicated special treatises to explaining and elucidating it. It is a complete course in the knowledge of Almighty Allah and His Oneness. It contains one hundred chapters of Almighty Allah's attributes and His beautiful names. Each chapter has ten qualities, making the total around one thousand attributes and names of Almighty Allah. In any religious text, including other narrations and supplications, there is no mention of a thousand attributes and names in a single, coherent text.

Although some have mentioned that the chain of transmission for this supplication is not very strong<sup>[1]</sup>, it is an instance of the

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[1] In Al-Wasa'il, Chapter 29 of the Chapters on Shrouding 2, Al-Hurr Al-Amili narrated that Imam Al-Sajjad Zayn Al-Abidin narrated that his father narrated that his grandfather narrated that the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) said: Gabriel descended

saying, Its text is its chain of transmission. According to what is mentioned in Al-Wasa'il, Imam Al-Hussein (Peace Be Upon Him) narrates the supplication from his father The commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), who narrates it from the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household).

Many jurists have mentioned it<sup>[1]</sup> in their practical treatises. It is recommended to be written on the shroud. Since the supplication is long, there is no space to mention it here. We refer those who seek it to books of supplications.

## 2.Dua Kumayl

This is a supplication that the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) taught to one of his closest companions, Kumayl Ibn Ziyad Al-Nakha'i. Shaykh Al-Tusi mentioned it in his book. Kumayl Ibn Ziyad Al-Nakha'i saw the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) prostrating and reciting this supplication on the night of the fifteenth of Sha'ban, saying,

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 upon the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) during one of his battles while he was wearing a heavy coat of mail which pained him because of its weight. He said: O Muhammad, your Lord sends you His peace and says to you: Take off this coat of mail and recite this supplication, for it is a protection for you and your nation. He continued the hadith until he said: Whoever writes it on his shroud, Almighty Allah will not torment him with fire. He continued the hadith until he said: Imam Al-Hussein (Peace Be Upon Him) said: My father (Peace Be Upon Him) advised me to memorize this supplication and to venerate it and to write it on his shroud.

[1] Al-Khoi, Sayyid Abu Al-Qassim: Sirat Al-Najat 7/113. Al-Lankarani, Sheikh Fadhil: Al-Ahkam Al-Wadhiha, p. 71. Sayyid Ruhollah Khomeini in Tahrir Al-Wasilah 1/76. Al-Ruhani in Fiqh Al-Sadiq 2/422.

O Almighty Allah, I ask You by Your mercy which encompasses all things, and by Your power by which You overpower all things... He then asked him to teach it to him<sup>[1]</sup>. We are not surprised by its being called Dua Al-Khidr and how it reached Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). The Imam's knowledge encompasses the sciences of previous prophets and successors, which explains this. Whoever examines and reflects on this supplication will find a spiritual elevation and connection with the Creator that they will not find in others. This supplication, by the grace of Almighty Allah, has become a weekly practice that the followers of the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) diligently observe every Friday night. It clearly impacts souls and behavior.

### 3. Dua Al-Sabah

In turn, this is one of the supplications narrated from Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). It contains a significant treasure of ways to know Almighty Allah and His Oneness. Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) says: O One who guides to His essence through His essence, who is transcendent beyond being akin to His creations, and who is too majestic to be compatible with their qualities. Grand Ayatollah Shaykh Muhammad Hussein Kashif Al-Ghita' mentioned words that apply to this supplication and its likes, by which he validates its issuance from the infallible Imams (Peace Be Upon Them)<sup>[2]</sup>.

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[1] Al-Tusi: Misbah Al-Mutahajid, 844-850.

[2] Kashif Al-Ghita, Sheikh Muhammad Hussein: Al-Firdaws Al-A'la, p. 51. The Imams (Peace Be Upon Them) have a special style in praising Almighty Allah, thanking Him, supplicating to Him, and asking Him for something. This is known to those who have studied

#### 4. Al-Munajat Al-Shabania

This Munajat begins with the words: And hear my supplication when I supplicate You, hear my call when I call upon You, and turn towards me when I address You in intimate prayer, for I have fled to You and stood before You, hoping for Your reward. You know my need and know my inner thoughts, and the matter of my returning and my abode is not hidden from You.

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their hadiths, become familiar with their words, and delved into the oceans of their supplications. Whoever has attained that skill and familiarity will not doubt that this supplication came from them. It is most similar to the supplications of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), such as the Supplication of Kumayl and others. Each Imam has a special tone and a special style, despite their closeness and similarity. This supplication is at the highest levels of eloquence, rhetoric, solidity, and strength, with complete desire, submission, and wondrous metaphors.

# Imam Ali's Family Life

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The topic of the Imam's family life addresses what relates to his family, including wives and children (sons and daughters), and what branches off from that. Despite the personal aspect of individuals' family lives, for role models among people, there can be a public dimension, and even clearer when the discussion is about one of the Infallible. This is because some details of their lives help in understanding aspects of their public biography and life history. Additionally, there are certain aspects related to beliefs. For example, regarding the marriage of the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) to Khawla Bint Jaafar (the mother of Muhammad Ibn Al-Hanafia), the jurists and theologians of the Caliphate school attempted to use its specific confirmation to legitimize the caliphate of the first Caliph. They inferred from this that the Imam was content with that caliphate

and even acted upon it by deeming it permissible to marry one of their captives (who was Khawla). If that caliphate were not legitimate in his view, it would not have been permissible for him to possess her and marry her in that manner. The error of this inference will be discussed shortly. The same applies when we discuss his sons. We find that one of his sons was named ('Umar) who is known as Al-Atraf<sup>[1]</sup>. Some from the Caliphate school attempted to manipulate this to indicate that this naming signified harmony between the Imam and the caliphate establishment. Their evidence was that he named one of his sons after the second Caliph. Although the subject here is personal and detailed in his family life, the naming of his son, it is linked to a historical, even doctrinal, issue. The same applies to what was said about another son named (Abu Bakr), although researchers believe it was a kunya (agnomen) for one of his sons, not a name. A third piece of evidence for the connection of some family and marital issues to historical, even doctrinal, matters, is the marriage of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) to Umm Al-Banin Fatima Bint Hizam Al-Kilabia, the mother of Imam Al-Abbas Ibn Ali and his brothers (Peace Be Upon Them). It is mentioned that Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) went to his brother Aqil Ibn Abi Talib and asked him to propose for him a woman born of the courageous men of the

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[1] Some have questioned whether his name was Omar, claiming it was Amr. However, this appears to be contrary to popular belief and a way to resolve the issue. However, it appears that the approach taken by Al-Muhaqqiq Al-Shahrastani in his book, "Titles Between Alawite Tolerance and Umayyad Employment," is more acceptable.

Arabs! So, he proposed for him. Here, some question how the Imam, who is the most knowledgeable of people in all matters, would seek guidance from his brother Aqil's words? This would imply that Aqil was more knowledgeable than him, at least in this aspect, which contradicts what is known in the field of beliefs. The answer to these questions will be stated later.

## **The Wives of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him)**

### **His wives by permanent marriage contract**

It is said that his wives (Peace Be Upon Him) by permanent marriage contract were eight women:

First; Lady Fatimah Al-Zahra Bint Rasul Allah. She is the best of them, indeed the best of all women in the world. He married her (Peace Be Upon Them) in the second year of Hijra. Their marriage was celestial after the Prophet rejected all who proposed to her before him. Her age was ten years and his was about twenty-five years. Some hadiths from Ahl Al-Bait state that women were forbidden<sup>[1]</sup> to Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) during Lady Fatima's lifetime (Peace Be Upon Her). Therefore, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) did not marry until the eleventh year. Any such news should not be considered. We

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[1] Shia scholars have adhered to this and similarly refuted what the followers of the Umayyad movement fabricated, that Imam Ali proposed to Abu Jahl's daughter or someone else, and that he angered Lady Fatima as a result of that. They mentioned a long, broad, fabricated story in which they insulted the Prophet, Fatima, and Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Them).

have mentioned some aspects related to their marriage (Peace Be Upon Them) in the first chapter, so it is good to refer to it.

Second; Umamah Bint Al-As Ibn Abi Al-Rabi'. Her mother is Zainab<sup>[1]</sup>, the daughter of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), making her the daughter of Lady Fatima Al-Zahra's sister. Some narrations<sup>[2]</sup> indicate that Imam Ali's marriage (Peace Be Upon Him) to her was a recommendation from Lady Fatima (Peace Be Upon Her), out of consideration for the young age of the children of the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), Al-Hassan, Al-Hussein, Zainab, and Umm Kulthum during the period when Lady Fatima Al-Zahra' (Peace Be Upon Her) was martyred. The eldest among

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[1] There is debate among researchers as to whether Zainab, Ruqayyah, and Umm Kulthum were the daughters of the Prophet through Khadija, or whether they were daughters of someone other than the Prophet but raised by Khadija and thus were the Prophet's stepdaughters. In our belief, the former is the correct opinion. We have pointed out the evidence from both sides in our book *Prominent Figures from the Prophetic Family* and strengthened, with evidence, the claim that they were the daughters of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household).

[2] Usd Al-Ghaba: Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Peace Be Upon Him) married her after the death of Lady Fatima (Peace Be Upon Her). Lady Fatima (Peace Be Upon Her) had advised Imam Ali to marry her. When Lady Fatima (Peace Be Upon Her) died, he married her. Al-Zubayr Ibn Al-Awam held her marriage to him because her father had advised him to take care of her. When Imam Ali was wounded, he feared that Muawiyah would marry her, so he ordered Al-Mughirah Ibn Nawfal Ibn Al-Harith Ibn Abdulmuttalib to marry her after him. When Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) died and the waiting period was over, Al-Mughirah married her, and she bore him Yahya, with whom he was nicknamed. She died while Al-Mughirah was still alive.

them was Al-Hassan Al-Sibt, whose age at that time was about seven years, and the youngest was Umm Kulthum, perhaps around four years old or less.

Umamah remained with the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) until his martyrdom. He advised her to marry Mughirah Ibn Nawfal Ibn Al-Harith Ibn Abd Al-Muttalib. It is said that she gave birth to two sons who died in infancy. It is presumed that Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) married her a short time after the martyrdom of Lady Al-Zahra' (Peace Be Upon Her). If she were martyred seventy-five days later, i.e., in the month of Jumada Al-Ula of the year 11 AH, then it might have been in the month thereafter.

Third; Khawla Bint Jaafar Ibn Qays Al-Hanafia (mother of Muhammad Ibn Al-Hanafia). Muhammad is usually mentioned by his mother's name to distinguish him due to the multiplicity of the name (Muhammad) among the children of the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him).

Most sources<sup>[1]</sup> from the Caliphate school indicate that she was from the captives of Yamamah and that Caliph Abu Bakr gave her to Imam Ali from his share of the incomes. Imam Ali then married her and fathered his son Muhammad with her. If

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[1] Tahdhib Al-Kamal fi Asma' Al-Rijal 26/148: "Khawlah Bint Jaafar Ibn Qays... she was among the captives of Yamamah who were taken captive by Abu Bakr. It was also said that she was a slave of Banu Hanifa, and she was not one of them."

Sifat Al-Safwa 1/344: "Khawlah Bint Jaafar Ibn Qays. She was a slave among the captives of Yamamah.

Ma'rifat Al-Sahaba by Abu Nu'aym, Tahdhib Al-Tahdhib... and others.

this is true, then the argument of those who claim the legitimacy of his caliphate in the eyes of Imam Ali is complete, as it would not be permissible to consider her lawful and accept her as an income unless that battle and capture were legitimate.

In contrast, Shadhan Ibn Jibril narrated a long tradition in his book *Al-Fadha'el* from Imam Al-Baqir (Peace Be Upon Him), the gist of which is: Two men asked him: If The commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) was not pleased with the caliphate of those who preceded him, then why did he marry Khawla Al-Hanafia, who was from their captives? He asked Jabir Ibn Abdullah Al-Ansari to answer. Jabir replied that he was sitting when the captives of Bani Hanifa were brought, among whom was a teenage girl. She asked about the Prophet, and they informed her that he had passed away. She then asked about his grave, and they pointed to it. She greeted him at his grave, recited the two testimonies of faith, and said that they had been taken captive after him, and they bore witness that there is no Lord but Almighty Allah and that he is the Prophet! When some of the Muhajirin wanted to marry her, she refused and indicated that she would only accept someone who could tell her what her mother had said when she was pregnant with her. If she were forced to marry someone she did not choose, she would kill herself! While everyone was helpless in this matter, as they did not know the unseen, the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) directly told her what her mother had said to her after her birth and explained the details to her. At that time, she said that she had married herself to him. Thus, she became part of the share of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him)<sup>[1]</sup>.

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[1] *Al-Fadha'el*, Shadhan Ibn Jibra'il Al-Qummi, p. 99.

Another narration states that Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) took her to his home and sent for her family. Her brothers came, and he proposed to her from them and gave her a dowry, and married her with that dowry<sup>[1]</sup>, as she was not rightfully a captive!

This marriage is presumed to have taken place during the days of the first Caliph's caliphate, i.e., before 13 AH.

Fourth; Asma Bint Umays Al-Khath'amiyya: She was among those whom the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), along with her sisters, described as being among the people of Paradise<sup>[2]</sup>. Asma was the wife of Jaafar Ibn Abi Talib (Peace Be Upon Him) and emigrated with him as a believer

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[1] Al-Namazi Shahroudi; Sheikh Ali: Mustadrak Ilm Rijal Al-Hadith 8/569, and Al-Sharif Al-Murtadha referred to it. He said: The wife of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). Her name is Khawlah Bint Jaafar Ibn Qais. She was not really a captive, and the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) did not make her permissible to take her as a captive, because through Islam she became free and in control of her affairs. So he freed her from the hand of the one who enslaved her, then he concluded the marriage contract with her.

[2] Al-Saduq; Muhammad Ibn Ali Babawayh: Al-Khisal 1/363 Abu Baseer narrated that Abu Jaafar (Peace Be Upon Him) said: I heard him say: May Almighty Allah have mercy on the sisters from the people of Paradise. He named them: Asma Bint Umays Al-Khath'amiyyah, who was married to Jaafar Ibn Abi Talib (Peace Be Upon Him) and Salma Bint Umays Al-Khath'amiyyah, who was married to Hamza, and five from Banu Hilal: Maymunah Bint Al-Harith, who was married to the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), Umm Al-Fadhl, whose name was Hind, who was married to Al-Abbas, Al-Ghamisa', the mother of Khalid Ibn Al-Walid, Uzza, who was in Thaqif, Al-Hajjaj Ibn Ghulath, and Hamida, who had no offspring. Some of these sisters are from the father and mother, and some are from the mother only.

from Mecca to Abyssinia, remaining with him for fifteen years<sup>[1]</sup>. She gave birth to his children there and returned with him to Medina in the year 7 AH with the conquest of Khaybar. Upon his martyrdom in the Battle of Mu'tah in the year 8 AH, she married Abu Bakr Ibn Abi Quhafah and gave birth to his son Muhammad. Then, after Abu Bakr's death in the year 13 AH, the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) married her. She remained with him until 38 AH, when she passed away two years before his martyrdom, as some historical narrations indicate. Her age at that time was close to 58 years. She gave birth to several children for Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). Interestingly, her children Abdullah Ibn Jaafar and his brothers, Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr, and Awn Ibn Ali Ibn Abi Talib, were half-siblings with different fathers. Given their upbringing in one household, it is not surprising that Abdullah Ibn Jaafar was very close to and influenced by Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein (Peace Be Upon Them), acting as their right hand. Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr was my son from Abu Bakr's loins, as narrated from the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him).

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She was the one who nursed Lady Al-Zahra' (Peace Be Upon Her) and to whom Lady Al-Zahra' entrusted her bequests. Among what she said to her was: 'Do you not see how I have become? Do not carry me on an uncovered bier. Asma replied: 'No, by my life, but I will make a litter like I saw being made in Abyssinia. Lady Fatima said: 'Show it to me. So, she sent for some fresh palm branches and cut them, then made a litter on the bed. This was the first litter of its kind, and Lady Fatima smiled. She also instructed Asma that no one should wash her

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[1] We mentioned some of her circumstances when talking about the personality of Jaafar Ibn Abi Talib Al-Tayyar in our book: Figures from the Prophetic Family.

after her death except Asma and Imam Ali, so Asma assisted Imam Ali in washing her. When Lady Fatima passed away, Aisha came to enter, but Asma prevented her. Aisha complained to Abu Bakr, and Asma told Abu Bakr: ‘She instructed me that no one should enter upon her<sup>[1]</sup>.

Fifth; Umm Al-Banin; Fatima Bint Hizam Al-Kilabia. She is the mother of Al-Abbas and his brothers. We have written something about Umm Al-Banin in our book on the men and women of Karbala<sup>[2]</sup> as follows:

There are two opinions regarding her birth date: The first is that she was born five years before the Hijra, which is adopted by the researcher Shaykh Al-Karbasi in his book (Mu’jam Ansar Al-Hussein). He stated that she married the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) after the martyrdom of Lady Fatima Al-Zahra (Peace Be Upon Her) in the twelfth year of Hijra. According to this viewpoint, her age at the time of her marriage to the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) was around seventeen years.

The second opinion is that she was born five years after the Hijra. This is what the researcher Al-Suwayj pointed to in his book (Umm Al-Banin Sayyidat Nisa’ Al-Arab). According to this, she was close to the age of Al-Aqila Zainab (Peace Be Upon Her). He stated that she married the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) in the year 25 or 26 AH. According to both estimations, she lived with him until his martyrdom and

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[1] Al-Karbasi: Mu’jam Ansar Al-Hussein (Peace Be Upon Him Al-Hashimiyin) 1/150.

[2] The book has not been printed yet.

remained until the martyrdom of Imam Al-Hussein (Peace Be Upon Him). She passed away after his martyrdom.

The first opinion is less likely because if she married Imam Ali in 12 AH, and the birth of her son Abu Al-Fadhl Al-Abbas (Peace Be Upon Him), who was her eldest son, was in 27 AH as is well-known, then this means she remained childless for fifteen years. This is unusual, especially since the purpose of the marriage was to have children who would defend Imam Al-Hussein (Peace Be Upon Him) in Karbala, according to the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), who stated that he wants her to give birth to a boy who will be a helper to my son Hussein in Karbala.

This contradicts the second opinion: her birth five years after the Hijra and her marriage to the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) in the twenty-fifth or twenty-sixth year of Hijra, which means she gave birth to Abu Al-Fadhl Al-Abbas a year or two after her marriage, which does not require forced interpretation because it is natural.

### **Choose Me a Woman Born of Valiant Men**

There is a common opinion, often narrated from a genealogist, Sayyid Ibn 'Inaba Al-Hassani Al-Dawudi, in his book *Umdat Al-Talib fi Ansab Al Abi Talib*, in which he narrates that the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) asked his brother Aqil to propose for him a woman born of valiant men among the Arabs. This is the first text that most scholars have accepted. He says: It has been narrated that the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) said to his brother Aqil - who was a genealogist knowledgeable about Arab lineages

and their histories -: ‘Look for a woman who has been born of valiant men among the Arabs, so that I may marry her and she may give birth to a courageous knight. He said to him: ‘Marry Umm Al-Banin Al-Kilabia, for there is no one among the Arabs braver than her forefathers. So he married her.

There is another text also narrated<sup>[1]</sup>, regarding the incident of Karbala, stating that Zuhayr Ibn Al-Qayn narrated to Abu Al-Fadhl Al-Abbas the conversation between Aqil and the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him). It is narrated that Zuhayr Ibn Al-Qayn went to Abdullah Ibn Jaafar Ibn Aqil before he was killed and said to him: ‘O my brother, hand me the banner. Abdullah said to him: ‘Am I lacking in carrying it?!’ He said: ‘No, but I have something to do with it. So, he handed it to him. Zuhayr took it and suddenly went to Al-Abbas Ibn Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) and said: ‘O son of the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), I want to tell you a hadith that I have remembered. He said: ‘Speak, for the time for speaking has become suitable. He said to him: Know, O Abu Al-Fadhl, that when your father the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) wanted to marry your mother Umm Al-Banin, he sent to his brother Aqil, who was knowledgeable about Arab lineages, and said: ‘O my brother, I want you to propose for me a woman from families of status, lineage, and courage, so that I may have a brave son from her who will be a strong supporter to my son here, and he pointed to Al-Hussein (Peace Be Upon Him) to stand by him in the plain

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[1] Al-Raishahri quoted it in the Encyclopedia of Imam AlHussein (Peace Be Upon Him) in the Book, Sunnah, and History 4/327 from the book Secrets of Testimonies by Al-Darbandi.

of Karbala. Your father has saved you for such a day, so do not fall short in protecting your brother's wives and your brothers. He (the narrator) said: 'So Al-Abbas trembled and stretched in his stirrups until he broke them, and said: 'O Zuhayr, are you trying to encourage me on such a day? By Allah, I will show you something you have never seen.

Here arises a question: How could the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), who is the most knowledgeable of people after the Prophet and the gate of the city of knowledge, go and ask his brother Aqil? Is Aqil more knowledgeable than him in this aspect? The answer to that is from several perspectives:

### **The First Perspective; Guiding People to Refer to Specialists**

When Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) asked his brother Aqil, he intended to guide people to a general rule: referring to experts in their respective fields<sup>[1]</sup>. The infallible Imam, as we, Shia, believe, is the most knowledgeable person of his time in all sciences. However, he wanted to teach people the idea of referring to specialists. This is why when the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) was wounded and spent the night of the twenty-first (of Ramadan), with the poison having spread through his body, he asked for (Athir Ibn Amr Al-Sakuni), who was the most prominent surgeon of his time. This does not mean that Athir was more knowledgeable than the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon

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[1] The first and third aspects were referred to by the late Sayyid Jaafar Murtadha Al-Amili in his book, *The Authentic Biography of Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him)*.

Him). Rather, the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) was more knowledgeable than him. But he wanted to teach people the concept of referring to specialists. In addition, the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) wanted to inform us of the Legislator's endorsement of referring to specialists in every field. In medicine, one refers to a doctor; in engineering, to an engineer; and in genealogy, to a genealogist like Aqil Ibn Abi Talib, who was an expert in the science of lineages.

### **The Second Perspective; Teaching People the Principle of Consultation**

When Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) asked his brother Aqil, he intended to establish the principle of consultation, which is that when a person wishes to embark on a matter in their life, they should consult those around them and listen to others to weigh opinions and sayings and be guided to what is right, as stated in the Prophetic hadith: No people consult each other except that they are guided to the most righteous of their affairs. Aqil was the most knowledgeable among Quraysh regarding Arab lineages and the flaws of Quraysh, which is why he was subjected to an opposing campaign by the Quraishi group to tarnish his reputation and stances. There are many historical narrations that distort his reputation, but they have no basis, more than being fabricated out of spite for him.

### **The Third Perspective; Informing about the Event of Karbala**

One of the methods adopted by Ahl Al-Bait (Peace Be Upon Them) to highlight the injustice toward Imam Al-Hussein was to inform about it decades before its occurrence. This is what

the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) intended. If Imam Ali had proposed to Umm Al-Banin and married her directly, the injustice toward Imam Al-Hussein and what would happen in Karbala would not have been discussed before his martyrdom. However, by this method, he informed about the event of Karbala and what would happen there since the year 25 or 26 AH, when he proceeded to propose to this woman.

### **The Fourth Perspective; Demonstrating the Virtue of Umm Al-Banin (Peace Be Upon Her)**

Among the reasons that led the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) to ask his brother Aqil was that he wanted to show people the virtue of this woman who would give birth to these luminaries for him. This is like the saying of Almighty Allah: What is that in your right hand, O Moses? Almighty Allah knows what is in our Prophet Moses' hand, but He wanted Moses to talk about it so that the miracle would be clear to those who listen and read. In addition, he wanted to inform about her role and the role of her children.

Sixth; Muhayyah Bint Imru' Al-Qays Al-Kalbia; Her father, Imru' Al-Qays, was among those who embraced Islam along with his tribesmen in the year 10 AH. A group from them had visited the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), accepted Islam, and returned to their people, spreading Islam. During the events of the year 11 AH, when Abu Bakr took power and some tribes refused to pledge allegiance, armies were sent to fight them. These were called the apostasy wars. In these events, Bani Kalb split into two factions: one opposed and one accepted the reality. Days and nights passed, and Imru' Al-Qays came to Medina with three of his daughters: Muhayyah, Salma, and Al-

Rabab, during the days of Umar Ibn Al-Khattab (13-23 AH). He entered upon Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, who asked him, Who are you? He said: I am Imru' Al-Qays Ibn Adi Al-Kalbi. Umar did not recognize him, so a man from the people said to Umar, This is the companion of Bakr Ibn Wa'il who raided them on the day of Falaj.

He intended to pledge allegiance to Umar Ibn Al-Khattab after those events, so he pledged allegiance and presented his creed. Umar then appointed him as emir over Quda'ah. Then he met Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Peace Be Upon Him). By the end of that day, his three daughters were proposed for the family of the Messenger (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household). Muhayyah was proposed for the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him)<sup>[1]</sup>. The researcher Al-Karbasi speculated that the marriage of the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) to her might have occurred in the year 19 AH, and her death, as stated in the book's table, was in the year 20 AH. I found no information about her other than what was mentioned in some books, that she gave birth to a daughter who died young.

Seventh; Layla Bint Mas'ud Al-Nahshaliyya: The commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) married her when he arrived in Basra in the year 36 AH. The commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) stayed there for seventy-two days, then returned to Kufa. She gave birth to two sons who were martyred in Karbala with Imam Al-Hussein (Peace Be Upon Him).

Eighth; Umm Shu'ayb Al-Makhzumiyya; She gave birth to Umm Al-Hassan and Ramlah... This is how it was mentioned regarding her.

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[1] Al-Kurbasi: 160.

He also had approximately (17) or (19) women through milk Al-yamin (concubinage). The researcher Al-Karbasi tracked their names and circumstances in his book *Ansar Al-Hussein (Al-Hashimiyyun)* when discussing the martyrs among the children of the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him).

### **Two Observations**

First; The reader might wonder about the large number of the wives of the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) and its justification. The answer is that he (Peace Be Upon Him), like all other Muslims, was not permitted to marry more than four wives under a permanent contract at one time. However, he was allowed to marry as many as he wished through ownership. The limit of (Marry women of your choice, Two or three or four)<sup>[1]</sup> applies to all Muslims, including Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him), while there is no specified limit for ownership. We point out that marriage, as a social issue, is influenced by the social situation and prevailing culture depending on the circumstances lived. Marrying two might be considered a lot under certain social circumstances, while marrying ten might be considered normal in other environments or different geographies. Indeed, under some circumstances and environments, it might even be necessary and provide a form of livelihood and social security for some women.

In these times and within the prevailing culture, having two wives, let alone three, under one man's authority might be considered excessive. However, this was not the case in the Arab

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[1] Surat Al-Nisa: 3.

environment before Islam. Rather, polygyny was widespread and common. The number (many or few) should be evaluated within the prevailing social conditions at the time of the event. Islam set an upper limit for the number of women a man can marry at one time, which is four women (with the exception of the Prophet, Peace Be Upon Him and His Household), as will be discussed later. This applies to marriage by permanent contract. As for marriage through ownership, since its purpose was to gradually abolish the phenomenon of slavery and concubines, outside of authoritative imposition, one of the ways was this form of marriage. Some of those who owned concubines would emancipate them and then marry them by permanent contract. Also, if a concubine who was not emancipated in this manner gave birth to a child (son or daughter) to her husband, and then her husband died, she would become free thereafter and move from slavery to freedom; she is called *umm walad* (mother of a child). Therefore, we believe that this number of wives by permanent contract, which never exceeded four (at the same time), and if one died, he would marry a fourth, was not large according to the prevailing social conditions and circumstances at that time. Rather, most men married in this manner, which is legally sanctioned. Marriage in those times was similar to social security for many women.

The same applies to marriage by ownership, as it was a way to free slave women from bondage, so there was no limit to their number.

Second: Although the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) is the very soul of the Prophet according to the ayah of Mubahalalah, the Chosen Prophet (Peace Be Upon

Him and His Household) had well-known and explicitly stated characteristics among Muslims. These include the permissibility of marrying more than four wives, up to nine women, and that it is permissible for him to marry women who offered themselves to him<sup>[1]</sup> without a dowry. Moreover, it is not permissible for the Prophet's wives to marry anyone after him ever<sup>[2]</sup>. In these rulings, the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household) is distinguished from all other creation, including the infallible Imams, as such things are not permissible for them.

Because it was not permissible for Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him) to combine more than four wives by permanent contract, there has been disagreement regarding the order of his wives, which ones were with him simultaneously, which ones passed away before him, and which ones remained with him until his martyrdom. The important point is that he could not have had more than four permanent wives at any given time.

## **The Children of The commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (Peace Be Upon Him)**

As for his children: historians have differed in their number to the same extent they differed in their names, the number of males and females, and the mothers of these children. Perhaps the middle ground is what Shaykh Al-Mufid (May Almighty Allah Have Mercy on Him) mentioned: (27) children, both males and females. The most virtuous of them are:

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[1] Surat Al-Ahzab: 50.

[2] Surat Al-Ahzab: 53.

1. Abu Muhammad Al-Hassan Al-Sibt (Peace Be Upon Him). We have discussed his biography and affairs in our book Sayyid Al-Jannah (Master of Paradise) in this series.
2. Abu Abdullah Al-Hussein Al-Shahid (Peace Be Upon Him). His circumstances are too obvious to be hidden from believers. We have covered his biography and martyrdom in our book I am Al-Hussein Ibn Ali in this series.
3. Al-Aqila Zainab Bint Ali (Peace Be Upon Her). Her role, whether during her father's days or in Karbala, is crucial and requires a dedicated book. We have written something about her biography in our book on the heroes of Karbala, both women and men. We ask Almighty Allah to grant success in its printing.
4. Umm Kulthum (or Zainab Al-Sughra). She was with her in Karbala and was captured, just like her elder sister. She delivered a sermon in Kufa.
5. Al-Muhsin, who was martyred during the attack on the house of Lady Fatima Al-Zahra (Peace Be Upon Her) after the passing of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Household). These five are Ali's children from Lady Fatima Al-Zahra (Peace Be Upon Her). Through Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein, the lineage of the Prophet continued and remained, despite the wishes of Al-As Ibn Wa'il, who claimed that the Prophet's lineage would be cut off. Thus, he was the abtar (one whose lineage is cut off). In Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein, the Messenger had the Kawthar (abundance).
6. Abu Al-Fadhl Al-Abbas Ibn Ali (26-61 AH), whose mother is Umm Al-Banin. We have mentioned some aspects of

his biography and qualities in our book on the heroes of Karbala, both women and men.

**7-9.** Abdullah, Uthman, and Jaafar, who were martyrs in Karbala alongside their brother Imam Al-Hussein (Peace Be Upon Him).

**10.** Muhammad Ibn Ali, known as Ibn Al-Hanafia (16-81 AH). He was known for his strength and courage and is sometimes called Muhammad Al-Akbar. He participated alongside his brothers in the battles of Jamal and Siffin and carried his father's banner in the Battle of Jamal. He had commendable stances in it. He followed his brothers after his father, but he did not witness Karbala. It is said that his brother Imam Al-Hussein left him in Medina to carry out certain tasks. It is also said that he was unable to fight. We have covered this aspect in our book *Issues of the Husseini Uprising*. He was a prominent figure during the movement of Mukhtar Al-Thaqafi and was the Hashemite face in his support, due to Imam Ali Ibn Al-Hussein Al-Sajjad's aversion to it. There are some narrations indicating that he claimed the Imamate after his brother Al-Hussein, and that he informed Imam Al-Sajjad of this. However, after their recourse to the Kaaba and the Black Stone's testimony to Al-Sajjad's Imamate, as those narrations state, he withdrew that claim. While some scholars denied the seriousness of his claim to the Imamate, seeing it as a way to show those who believed in his Imamate that the true Imam was his nephew, Imam Ali Ibn Al-Hussein (Peace Be Upon Him).

**11.** Umar Ibn Ali (known as Al-Atraf), whose mother is Al-Sahbaa' Al-Taghlibiyya. His name is clearly present in the

sources of the Caliphate school, due to the historical, and even doctrinal, implications they derive from this name<sup>[1]</sup>. The same applies to the one named Abu Bakr. Although we have referred to this topic when discussing Umar Al-Ashraf Ibn Imam Ali Ibn Al-Hussein Al-Sajjad, and we referred to the valuable research written by the researcher Al-Shahristani in his book: *Al-Tasmiyat bayna Al-Tasammuh Al-Alawi wa Al-Tawdhif Al-Umawi*, we will also point to another aspect here. This is how they construct an argument:

Ahl Al-Bait named their children after the three Caliphs, and naming is evidence of love and harmony. Therefore, Ahl Al-Bait were harmonious with and loving of the Caliphs and recognized their caliphate!

Researchers from the Shi'a have taken multiple approaches to refute this conclusion. Some of them: rejected the naming, just as some, and they relied on sources for this, said that the names narrated from the children of Ahl Al-Bait are corrupted, so 'Umar' here is a corruption of 'Amr', and the grandfather of Bani Hashim was named 'Amr Al-Ula'! So, no naming! And Abu Bakr in the other son is not a name but a kunya (agnomen), and the name is different.

Others said that these namings were not serious. Rather, they were imposed by special circumstances, including taqiyya

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[1] This includes what was reported in Fatwas of the Islamic Network 8/352, with the automated numbering of Al-Shamilah: "We emphasize an important observation, which is that Ali, may Almighty Allah be pleased with him and satisfy him, named many of his children after the Companions Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman. This indicates his love for them and their great status with him, contrary to what the people of innovation promote."

(dissimulation) and other reasons. Therefore, they have no significance.

Some denied the connection between naming and harmony and acceptance of the legitimacy of the Caliphs, arguing that there is no link between the two matters, as these names are not the property of the Caliphs such that no one can use them except with their permission and on the condition of loving them. Rather, they are like other names with different purposes and multiple goals. Unless the person who named explicitly states that I named him with this name for this specific purpose, such a claim cannot be made!

I believe the third approach is the best.

I believe that in addition to what has been mentioned, that this type of argumentation practiced by some scholars of the Caliphate school is a superficial form of argumentation used to mislead simple minds. Therefore, its acceptance in these circles is quick, but a careful observer can ask: What is the necessary correlation between the two matters? Is it a rational, linguistic, or conventional correlation? Or is there no correlation at all?

This reminds me of some of what was said about Umar Al-Atraf Ibn Imam Ali himself, considering that his stance in supporting his brother Al-Hussein in Karbala was negative, and his biography in general was not a subject of praise among the Hashemites. Some said that this is because of his name! Here, too, it is said to him: And what is the necessary correlation between the two matters: bad conduct and being named with a specific name?

**12-14.** The martyrs of Karbala, Abu Bakr, Ubayd Allah, and Muhammad Al-Asghar.

There is no significant information about his remaining male children.



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In this book unfolds a luminous journey through the life of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Alī (pbph)- from before his blessed birth to the moment of his noble martyrdom.

With eloquence and depth, the author explores the Imam's pivotal roles during the turbulent eras that preceded his own rule, his profound reflections in the Sermon of al-Shaqshaqiyyah, and his unwavering stance in the battles against the oath-breakers, the unjust, and the renegades.

The narrative casts a reverent light upon the moving account of his martyrdom in the Mosque of Kufa, his reformative vision for the Muslim community, and the enduring injustice he bore - a sorrow that still resonates through the ages.

The book concludes with glimpses into his vast wisdom, his family life, and his timeless spiritual legacy - inviting the reader to encounter the greatness, serenity, and grace of this extraordinary Imam, whose light continues to guide hearts across generations.

