



IMAM ALI IBN ABI TALIB (A.S.)

Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) is our first Imam among the twelve Imams of Ahlul Bayt.

On Friday, 13th Rajab, 10 years before the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.w.) was chosen to be the Prophet, a unique incident took place in Makka. Fatimah binti Asad, wife of the Holy Prophet's uncle, Abu Talib, came to the Holy Kabah and prayed to Allah. Suddenly the wall of Kabah split open and she entered; then the wall closed behind her. The Holy Prophet's uncle Abbas ibn Abdul Muttalib and his companions who were sitting nearby witnessed this miracle. They tried to open the door of the Kabah but could not do so. News of this incident spread throughout Makka. Soon people came to know that a child had been born in the house of Allah. Such an event had never taken place before.

The people of Arabia had put up 360 idols in the Kabah, which they worshipped. The boy born

in the house of Allah did not open his eyes for 3 days. He did not look at the idols.

On the fourth day when Fatimah binti Asad stepped out of the Kabah, carrying her child, she found the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) waiting anxiously to receive the new born child in his arms. He recited *azan* and *iqama* in the child's ears.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) named him Ali after receiving instructions from Allah through Jibrail. Ali is one of the beautiful names of Allah. It means high, sublime, strong. Abu Talib called him Zayd, Fatima binti Asad called him Asad. They held a great feast in honour of the blessed child.

Once a python creeped into his cradle. He held its upper jaw in one hand, the lower jaw in the other hand and tore it apart into two from the jaw to the tail. His mother on the spur of the moment said: "My son is *haydar*." It means lion.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) was very fond of his cousin. He looked after him, fed him and taught him one moral lesson every day, which Ali (a.s.) learnt and followed. The Holy Prophet fed Ali (a.s.) with knowledge just like a pigeon feeds her nestling. The bond of love between Muhammad (s.a.w.w.) and Ali (a.s.) was very firm. Ali (a.s.) followed the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) wherever he went.

One day, when the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) went to mount Hira to pray, angel Jibrail appeared before him and gave him Allah's message that he had been chosen for prophethood. When he returned home, his wife Khadija al-Kubra and Ali (a.s.) were the first ones to accept his prophethood.

ZUL ASHIRA

After 4 years Allah commanded the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) to preach Islam to his kinsmen (family). A grand feast for 40 people was arranged at the Holy Prophet's house. After the meal was over, the Holy

Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.w.) told them, “O people, there is no God except Allah and I have been chosen as His messenger. Whoever helps and supports me will be my brother and successor.” He repeated this message thrice.

Nobody from the audience stood up or answered except for a young boy of 10 years. It was Ali (a.s.) who said: “O prophet of Allah I will help you.” The Holy Prophet said: “O Ali, you are my brother, minister and successor after me.”

The people of Makka got annoyed at the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) because he asked them to pray to ONE Allah, not to worship idols, to do good and not to fight. They also made fun of Abu Talib because he supported the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.). But both Abu Talib and his son, Ali (a.s.), remained as firm as before in their support of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.).

From then on the non-believers thought of many ways to harm the believers. At last, when

the true believers could no more bear the hardships, Allah ordered the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) to leave Makka.

HIJRAT

The Quraysh of Makka had planned to kill the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.). It was decided that one man from each tribe would take part in his murder, so that no one person could then be blamed.

It was a dark night. The enemies surrounded the Holy Prophet's house. They had sharp swords. But Allah warned his beloved Prophet through angel Jibrail. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) told Ali (a.s.) about the evil plan and requested him to sleep in his bed. Ali (a.s.) asked, "O Prophet! If I sleep in your bed, will you be saved?" The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) replied, "Yes!"

Without any further question Ali (a.s.) lay on the Prophet's bed and slept peacefully. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) also instructed Ali (a.s.) to return the people their things which they kept as

amanat (trust) with the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.), and then join him in Quba.

At day-break when the disbelievers broke into the Holy Prophet's house, they were shocked to see Ali (a.s.) in place of Muhammad (s.a.w.w.) All through the night they thought that Muhammad (s.a.w.w.) was sleeping in his bed.

“Where is Muhammad?” they asked.
Ali replied, “Did you ask me to watch him?”
The disbelievers left in a rage.

After returning the people's *amanat* (deposits for safe custody), Imam Ali (a.s.) started his journey to meet the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) with Sayyida Fatimah Zahra (s.a.), daughter of our Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.), his mother Fatimah binti Asad, Asma binti Hamza and Fatimah binti Zubayr and other ladies of the Bani Hashim.

Ali (a.s.) took good care of the ladies. He endured many difficulties during the long

journey. His feet were swollen and bleeding because he had to walk bare-foot on the hot desert sand. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) prayed for him and soon Ali (a.s.) recovered.

After reaching Madina the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) declared brotherhood between *ansar* and *muhajirs* and he himself chose Ali (a.s.) as brother.

According to Allah's will the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) married his daughter Sayyida Fatimah Zahra (s.a.) to Ali (a.s.) in a very simple ceremony in 2 *hijra*.

Ali (a.s.) and Sayyida Fatimah Zahra (s.a.) always shared the house-work. He earned money with hard work and she worked hard inside the house. Ali (a.s.) loved and respected Sayyida Fatimah Zahra (s.a.) very much. They had two sons and two daughters - Hasan and Husayn, Zaynab and Kulsum.

The Quraysh of Makka did not like to see the

Muslims settled peacefully in Madina, so they started armed attacks against them.

BATTLE OF BADR

The first battle fought between the followers of Islam and the enemies of Islam was on 7th Ramazan 2 hijra. Only 313 true Muslims fought strong army of 1000 Makkans in the fertile valley of Badr.

Imam Ali (a.s.) was the flag bearer of the Muslims. He killed 35 out of 70 non-believers, whose leader was Abu Jahl.

BATTLE OF UHAD

In the 3rd year of *hijra* on 7th Shawwal the soldiers of Islam fought the infidels on the hills of Uhad.

Again, Imam Ali (a.s.) was appointed flag-bearer of the Muslim army which consisted of 700 soldiers.

Abu Sufyan was the leader of the infidels, who

outnumbered the Muslims. Yet, Imam Ali (a.s.) and Hamza, the champions of Badr, killed many Makkans and created chaos in their army. Victory was close at hand. But, some warriors who had been ordered by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) to guard the rear of Mount Uhad saw the defeat of the disbelievers and made a rush to get their share of the booty. As soon as they left their posts the infidels attacked the Muslims from behind. This mistake and greed of a few Muslims caused them heavy losses. Many were killed and the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) was wounded. There was utter chaos in the battlefield. Once again history witnessed Ali (a.s.) as the hero of Islam. He defended the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) and Islam in such a gallant manner that angel Jibrail's voice was heard:

“There is no warrior but Ali.

There is no sword but Zulfiqar.”

Ali (a.s.) himself suffered 16 wounds in this battle.

BATTLE OF KHANDAQ

Two years later, in Shawwal 5 hijra another war was fought between the Muslims of Madina and the non-believers of Makka, who were joined by the neighbouring Jews and some bedouin tribes.

A new idea was given by Salman Farsi, a devoted friend of Ahlul Bayt. He told the Muslims to dig a trench (*khandaq*) and lit the fire in it. It was 15ft. wide and 15 ft. deep. When the enemy approached they were surprised to see this new mode of defence. Madina was surrounded by 10,000 idolaters for 15 days.

Amru bin Abdwud who was a brave warrior, after crossing the ditch, challenged the Muslims. Ali (a.s.) accepted the challenge. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) dressed him in his own armour and put a turban on Ali's head. Then he said, "O Lord! This is my brother and cousin, so my Lord, do not leave me alone. You are the best of inheritors."

Ali (a.s.) went to the battlefield. He called Amru and said, "I call upon you to believe in Allah, His Messenger and Islam." But Amru refused.

Then Ali invited him to battle.

At first Amru refused. He said, "There was great friendship between your father and me. I do not want to kill you."

But Ali (a.s.) said, "By Allah! I want to kill you!"

Amru got angry and leapt at Ali (a.s.) but Ali (a.s.) killed him, raising the slogan 'ALLAHU AKBAR'.

This was an announcement of victory.

When Ali (a.s.) returned, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) greeted him warmly saying: "Ali's battle with Amru in Khandaq is greater than the worship of the entire universe."

Amru's death terrified the infidels. They left the battlefield. Their hopes were shattered. Never again did they dare to attack Madina again. It was now made clear to all that with a selfless supporter and brave warrior like Ali (a.s.), who protected the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) at each step, the mission of Allah i.e. Islam had come to stay.

BATTLE OF KHAYBAR

Khaybar, a fertile valley full of date palms is located 100 miles north-east of Madina. It had about 10 strong forts, occupied by Jews. They waged war against Muslims.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) sent an army to conquer the Jews. For 40 days the Muslims could not overcome the Jews, who were now in the strongest fort 'Al-Qamus.' The soldiers of Islam were repeatedly repulsed.

At last, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) announced: "Tomorrow I shall give the flag (of Islam) to the man who attacks the enemy bravely. He does

not flee the battlefield. He loves Allah and His Prophet and Allah and His Prophet loves him. He will return only when Allah grants him victory.”

People were quite anxious to know who this great man would be. Nobody thought of Ali (a.s.) who was in Madina, suffering from an eye infection. But one call from the Holy Prophet (*nadi Ali*) brought Ali to Khaybar instantly . This was enough to amaze all. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) applied his saliva to Ali’s eyes, and his pain was relieved.

Then Ali (a.s.), the hero of Islam, armed with Zulfiqar set out to conquer the Jews. Marhab, a renowned Jew champion warrior, came forward to kill Ali (a.s.), but in no time Ali (a.s.) floored him and sat on his chest to cut his throat. Marhab spat on Ali’s face. Ali (a.s.) did not kill him and stood up. He did not kill Marhab because when Marhab spat on his face anger seized him; and Ali (a.s.) never killed people save in the cause of Allah. Afterward Ali

(a.s.) killed Marhab in single combat and also his brother who came to take revenge of his brother. Then he uprooted the door of the fort of Khaybar, which 40 strong men used to open and close. It seemed that Allah did not want anyone but Ali (a.s.) to bring victory to Islam.

In 8th hijra, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) set out to conquer Makka with a strong Muslim army. It was a unique sight. There was no blood-shed. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) pardoned all his enemies. Then he entered the Kabah. Ali (a.s.) stood on his shoulders and broke all the 360 idols which had been put in the holy house.

LAST HAJJ AND GHADIR KHUM

Two years later, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) alongwith 124,000 Muslims, performed *hajj*.

On the way back when they were at Ghadir, angel Jibrail brought him an important command of Allah. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) asked all the people to assemble on the ground beside the pool of Ghadir. He informed them

that soon he would die, and Allah had asked him to tell the people to obey Ali (a.s.) after him. It was 18th Zilhaj 10 *hijra*. We celebrate this day as *id al-ghadir*.

Once Imam Ali (a.s.) was offering prayers in the *masjid nabawwi*, then a beggar appeared there and loudly said: "Would any one give me charity in the name of Allah in His house?" None listened to this repeated calls. Then in frustration he spoke in a very loud voice: "O Allah! Be witness that I am returning with empty hands from Your house (*masjid*)."

Surprisingly the beggar saw the outstretched hand of Ali (a.s.) while he was in *ruku*, inviting him to take a ring from his finger. The beggar took the ring.

In view of such a charity the Almighty Allah praised Ali (a.s.) through His glorious Quran: *Verily, verily, Your guardian is Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad) and those who believe and establish the prayers and give the poor-rate*

while they are (in the state of ruku) bowing down.
[5:55)

MUBAHILA

A deputation of 14 Christian scholars of Najran came to discuss Islam with the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.), but they did not listen to reason. The verses 58 to 60 of Ali Imran were revealed. Allah asked the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) to tell the Christians :

Come, we will summon our sons and you your sons, our women and your women, our “selves” and your “selves”, and then pray humbly (to the Lord) and invoke the curse of Allah upon those who lie.

Although in the verse the words “women” and “selves” had been used the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) brought Ali (a.s.) as his “self”, Sayyida Fatimah Zahra (s.a.) as his “woman” and Hasan (a.s.) and Husayn (a.s.) as his “sons.”

As soon as the Christian saw the faces of the pure five (*panjatan pak*) they decided not to hold the contest

DEATH OF THE HOLY PROPHET (S.A.W.W.)

After some days, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) fell ill. He summoned Ali as and lay down, resting his head on Ali's lap. Then he confided some important matters to Ali (a.s.). Sayyida Fatimah Zahra (s.a.), Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) were present. The Holy Prophet expired on 28th Safar 11 *hijra*.

According to his will, Ali (a.s.), Imam Hasan (a.s.), Imam Husayn (a.s.), alongwith Bani Hashim, Salman, Abu Zar, and a few other companions bathed, shrouded and buried the Holy Prophet, while other companions were holding conferences in Saqifa bin Sada as to who would be the *Khalifa* after him.

Soon after the Holy Prophet, Sayyida Fatimah Zahra also left this world.

As Aqil ibn Abu Talib, Ali's brother, was an expert genealogist, Imam Ali (a.s.) asked him to select a woman from a brave and noble Arab family so that she might give birth to a brave

and fearless son. Aqil selected Ummul Banin Kalabiya. Ali (a.s.) married her. She gave birth to four sons - Abbas, Abdullah, Uthman and Jafar.

CALIPHS OF ISLAM

On many occasions the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) had nominated Ali (a.s.) as his immediate successor. Unfortunately, soon after his death, some influential people held a meeting and nominate Abu Bakr as the caliph of Muslims. Ali (a.s.) protested, but his protestation went unheard.

In order to avoid civil war and blood-shed among the Muslims, Ali (a.s.) resigned quietly. He led a life of seclusion for 25 years during which he served Islam quietly. Many times he was called upon to solve difficult situations pertaining to the Islamic shariah, and during this time Ali (a.s.) gave lectures which had been collected alongwith his letters and sayings in a book called *Nahj al-Balagha* which is next to the Holy Quran. There is also a collection of duas,

known as *sahifa al-alawiyyah*, a sure means of getting the nearness of Allah.

After Abu Bakr, Umar and then Uthman became the caliphs. Finally, in 36 *hijra*, Ali (a.s.) became the fourth caliph of the Muslims after a great demand of the people. He accepted the office of *khilafat* reluctantly.

Ali (a.s.) ruled strictly according to the laws of Islam as taught by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.). He wanted to root out all the social evils which had erupted in the Islamic society. As a result many people became his enemies. Also this led to wars e.g. the battles of Nahrwan, Jamal and Siffin.

DEATH OF ALI (A.S.)

Finally, the great Ali (a.s.) fell prey to the shrewd plan of Muawiyah who hired Abel ul Rehman Ibni Muljim to assassinate him.

On 19th Ramzan 40 *hijra* when Ali (a.s.) was offering his morning prayers at masjid Kufa,

Ibni Muljim attacked him with a sharp and poisonous sword. When Ibn Muljim was brought before Ali (a.s.), he told Imam Hasan: “If I survive it is my choice to punish him or forgive him. If I die then in retribution kill him. Strike one blow only. Do not cut his hands and legs.” Ali (a.s.) succumbed to his injuries and died on 21st Ramazan at the age of 63 years.

CHARACTER

Ali (a.s.) was a great man of noble character. He led a very simple life. His meals often comprised of dry barely bread and hot water. Thus he set an example for all people.

Ali (a.s.) mostly prayed 1000 rakats salat at night. He did not pray out of fear of punishment or desire for paradise, but he found the almighty Allah worshipable.

Ali (a.s.) always prayed the salat with full concentration and said:

- i) Some people offer salat in greed of janat (paradise);

- ii) others pray to avoid the hell-fire;
- iii) while I (Ali) pray because I found Him worthy of worship.

In a battlefield an arrow pierced into the leg of Ali (a.s.). Many of his friends tried to pull it out but failed, then the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) advised his companions to pull the arrow while he was praying.

As per the advice of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.), the arrow was taken out of the leg of Imam Ali (a.s.) while he was offering his prayer but Ali did not feel any pain at all.

He did not feel any degradation in doing manual work. He would chop wood and mend his own clothes and shoes. He bought better clothes for his slaves than for himself.

He was most forgiving, tolerant and patient. He strictly followed the rules of Islam.

His knowledge and wisdom were vast. The

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) was his teacher. On several occasions he invited people to “ask” him questions. He had knowledge of the past, present and future. He said, “The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) taught me 1000 chapters of knowledge, and I created 1000 chapters anew from these.”

Ali (a.s.) was fair and just to all his subjects. He held open courts to settle disputes. He was an honest man.

Inspite of living a poor man’s life, Ali (a.s.) was very generous.

Ali (a.s.) was a true picture of chivalry and gallantry.

NAHJ AL-BALAGHA

The sayings and sermons of Ali (a.s.) have been compiled in a book called *Nahj al-Balagha*. After the Holy Quran this is the greatest source of knowledge for all Muslims.

Sahifa al-Alwiyyah is a collection of prayers and duas of Ali (a.s.)

SAYINGS OF ALI (A.S.)

1. Prayer is a believer's weapon.
2. If you get an opportunity and power over your enemy, then in gratitude to Allah for this, forgive him.
3. The days of life pass away like clouds, so do good deeds during your life.
4. Knowledge is better than wealth, for you have to protect wealth whereas knowledge protects you.
5. The contented live in peace.
6. Take advantage of opportunities before they turn their back upon you.
7. Money does not benefit its possessor except when he parts from it.
8. When anyone hopes well of you, do not disappoint him.
9. Speech is like medicine, a small dose of which cures and excess kills the patient.
10. A sweet tongue begets many friends Your tongue will speak out what it is accustomed to.

THE HOLY QURAN SAYS

Verily, verily Allah intends but to keep off from you (every kind of) uncleanness, O you Ahlul Bayt (the people of the house), and purify you (with) a thorough purification.

THE HOLY PROPHET SAID

My Ahlul Bayt are like the ark of Nuh.
Whoever comes on it is saved, whoever stays back is drowned.

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