

The final caliph of the age of happiness: the blessed Ali (as)

The final caliph of the Age of the Four Caliphs, one of the most magnificent periods in Islamic history, was the blessed Ali (as). By swearing allegiance to our Prophet (saas) and the Islamic caliphs who preceded him, he bound himself to them with absolute obedience and is a role model for all Muslims with the elevated moral values he possessed.

The blessed Ali (as), the son of Abu Talip, uncle of our Prophet (saas), became one of the first Muslims to adopt Islam, at a very young age. As stated by historical sources, he grew up alongside our Prophet Muhammad (saas) and was brought up and educated by him.

The blessed Ali (as) was born in Mecca some 23 years before the Hegira, and was a holy Islamic caliph whom our Prophet (saas) described as a role model with his adherence to Qur'anic moral values. Despite the cruelty and oppression of the pagans of Mecca who displayed enormous hostility towards the Muslims, he was one of our Prophet's (saas) closest assistant from when he accepted Islam at an early age.

Following the martyrdom of the blessed Uthman (as), the third caliph of Islam, he became caliph in the month of Zilhicce, in the year 656 AD. His caliphate lasted approximately four years and nine months, coming to an end with his martyrdom, which happened in 661 AD, according to historical sources. 1

Our Prophet's (saas) Words Regarding the Blessed Ali (as)
- "He who loves Ali, loves me. Hostility towards him is hostility towards me. He, who offends him, offends me. And he who offends me, of course offends Allah." (Taberani) 13
- "All things have a wing, and that of this community are Abu Baqr and Omar. All things have a shield, and that of this community is Ali." (Hatib) 14

An Islamic Caliph Pre-eminent in Knowledge

One of the features of the blessed Ali (as) that makes him pre-eminent is the wisdom he possessed by the leave of Allah. He is unanimously regarded as one of the foremost men of knowledge of his day. That knowledge was not limited to texts of canonical jurisprudence and regulations, since he was also one of the leading figures of the age in mathematics and similar branches of science. 2 Our Prophet (saas) praised this important characteristic of the blessed Ali (as) in a hadith:

"I am the city of knowledge, and Ali is the gate." 3

The blessed Abu Baqr (as) consulted the blessed Ali (as) concerning the management of affairs of state during his caliphate. At that time, the blessed Ali (as) was serving as

a religious judge. The blessed Ali (as) also served the blessed Omar (as) as advisor and judge and as vizier of caliphate affairs during the caliphate of the blessed Uthman (as).

The blessed Ali (as) was close to the Prophet (saas) beginning from his childhood. Ali learned the moral values and wisdom of the Qur'an from him, and served as the scribe for his revelation. He remained alongside our Prophet (saas) until his death. He thus attained a high level of knowledge in religious matters. That is why the blessed Abu Baqr (as), the blessed Omar (as), and the blessed Uthman (as) asked for advice from the blessed Ali (as) first.



The Blessed Ali's (as) Conception of Just Administration

The blessed Ali (as) established a military base in every region under his administration. The point he most emphasized with regard to administration was that every decision taken should be just and aimed at achieving a definitive solution.

The blessed Ali (as) followed the path of the blessed Omar (as) in terms of state administration, and Ali (as) took his conception of the superior justice in the Qur'an as his guide. The blessed Ali (as) was always most affectionate towards the people under his rule and demanded that administrators occupying important positions should be scrupulous with regard to justice. For that reason, the advice of the blessed Ali (as), who advised his administrators, has come down to the present day and is still regarded as a major guide in state administration all over the world. This

important counsel can be summarized under the following headings:

1. Always feel love and kindness for the people. Do not imagine that your success lies in scolding and treating them harshly.
2. Treat everyone fairly.
3. Do not take sides or favor certain people. Such behavior will lead to oppression and despotism.
4. In choosing your officials, be careful not to include those who have committed crimes against the state or who are responsible for the oppression of the innocent.
5. Choose honest, true, and kind individuals, and prefer those who do not seek their own interests.
6. Pay your officials enough so they do not turn to unjust earnings and immorality.
7. Supervise your officials and be open to consultation with sincere individuals you trust.
8. Earn the trust of the people and seek their well-being, and do not let your actions leave a person feeling obligated.
9. Never break your word. Do not promise things you will not be able to perform.
10. Control your anger. Do not issue punishments when angry. You can make favorable judgments to calm your wrath.

The Blessed Ali's (as) Exemplary Courage

In addition to his superior knowledge and just conception of administration, another feature of the blessed Ali (as) that raised him to pre-eminence as a result of Qur'anic moral values was his exemplary courage. According to the moral values of the Qur'an, true courage consists of the full and perfect maintenance of the bounds set by Allah, fearing none other than Allah and displaying complete and fearless determination, and making no concessions under whatever circumstances and conditions with regard to Qur'anic moral values. The true source of a believer's courage is faith in and deep love of our Almighty Lord, fear of Allah, and the longing for Paradise.

With his superior moral values, the blessed Ali (as) exhibited an exemplary courage for all believers, both in the battles in which he participated together with our Prophet (saas) and during the Hegira.

Apart from the battle of Tebuk, the blessed Ali (as) stood by the Prophet (saas) in all his battles and exhibited the moral values and courage that a believer must display in all events.

According to historical sources, the migration of the blessed Ali (as), who was appointed army commander in the Yemen war, took place after he handed over to our Prophet (saas) the goods that had been entrusted to him to be returned to their owners.

There are many instances of the blessed Ali's (as) submission to Allah and the unconditional loyalty Ali had to our Prophet (saas).

Our Prophet (saas) Told of the Martyrdom of the Blessed Ali (as)
- The Prophet of Allah (saas) showed his cheek to the blessed Ali (as) and said:
"You will be dealt a blow here, and your blood will flow down to your beard!"

Allah Stands Alongside Believers

The most important cause of the courage of the blessed Ali (as), who possessed justice, knowledge, generosity, compassion, and many other virtues as a mercy from Allah, was his knowing that the Almighty Allah stands alongside believers at all times.

The Blessed Ali (as) Said:
- Science elevates the lowly, and ignorance lowers the elevated.
- The closest people to the Prophet (saas) are those who abide by him. His enemies are those who oppose Allah.
- Devout labor is that which expects praise and reward from Allah alone.
- Do not lose the feeling of approaching the Hereafter and departing from this world! Do not despair at worldly losses and always seek to do good! 7
- A true friend is one who sees a fault and gives advice, who defends you in your absence, and who prefers you over himself. 8
- Fortitude in the face of trouble is more virtuous than good appetite in times of plenty. 9



By Allah's leave, those who lack faith can never harm believers. One of the clearest proofs of this is the way that our Prophet (saas) and the blessed Ali (as) came to no harm during the honorable journey of the Hegira, despite their being surrounded by pagans. Allah always foiled all the snares and traps of the unbelievers to oppress and even slaughter believers. This important secret is revealed as follows in one verse.

They concocted their plots, but their plots were with Allah, even if they were such as to make the mountains vanish. (Surah Ibrahim, 46)

There is no doubt that these superior moral virtues of the worthy caliph of Islam, the blessed Ali (as), must serve as a role model for all believers because Allah issues the same guarantee to all devout believers who cling to His mercy. Our Lord promises in verses that He will protect believers against the deniers, and that He will make the former victorious. It must not be forgotten that, as revealed in another verse:

...Allah will not give the unbelievers any way against the believers. (Surat an-Nisa', 141)

The Blessed Ali's (as) Advice to Rulers

* Never regret forgiveness; and never rejoice when you punish. Conceal the people's transgressions as much as possible so that Allah should conceal what you would wish to remain hidden from the public gaze. Feel hatred for no-one! Sever the threads of vengeance.

* Take loyal men with solid opinions as your confidants. If these do not applaud you and accuse you over various things you have not done, treat this with understanding. Because tolerating applause and inappropriate praise leads to pride.

* Do not regard good and bad people as one and the same. Because by regarding them as equal discourages the good from goodness and encourages the wicked in their tendency to wickedness." 12

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