بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

HEROES OF ISLAM

SERIES 2

‘ALI IBN ABI TALIB

Bearer of the Banner of Khaybar and the Fourth Caliph, According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith

وَٱلسَّٰبِقُونَ ٱلْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ ٱلْمُهَٰجِرِينَ وَٱلْأَنصَارِ وَٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّبَعُوهُم بِإِحْسَٰنٍ رَّضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا۟ عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّٰتٍ تَجْرِى تَحْتَهَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَآ أَبَدًا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ ٱلْفَوْزُ ٱلْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٠٠﴾

“And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the Muhajireen and the Ansar and those who followed them with good conduct - Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment.”

Surah At-Tawbah 9:100

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who chose the Companions to accompany His Prophet, and who is pleased with those who were first in faith. May blessings and peace be upon our master, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and upon his family and Companions — and especially upon his cousin and son-in-law, ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib رضى الله عنه.

This book is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF;

my dear children,

MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL and **FIRWAN**.

This second book of Heroes of Islam tells the story of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib رضى الله عنه: the first child to believe, the bearer of the banner at Khaybar, the scribe of the Treaty of Hudaybiyah, the scholar whom the caliphs consulted, and the fourth caliph, who was martyred in Kufah. May this knowledge be ‘ilmun yuntafa‘u bih — knowledge that brings benefit.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

This eBook's cover does not depict any human being or animal. It shows the ***fortress of Khaybar***, built of black stone, standing on a rocky hill at dawn, under a blue sky with golden light on the horizon.

Around the fortress spread green ***palm groves***, and in front of it lie ***black lava rocks (harrah)***, a feature of the Khaybar region north of Madinah.

On the left, ***a white banner*** flies from a wooden spear. It recalls the words of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ

at Khaybar: "Tomorrow I will give this banner to a man at whose hands Allah will grant victory" — and the banner was given to 'Ali (Sahih al-Bukhari 3701).

In the foreground, on a large rock, lie ***a parchment scroll and a pen***. They stand for 'Ali's knowledge and his role as the scribe of the Treaty of Hudaybiyah (Sahih al-Bukhari 2699). Together, the banner and the pen show two sides of 'Ali: a hero on the battlefield and a scholar in knowledge.

The ***dark blue band*** at the bottom, framed by ***fine gold lines***, is where the author's name appears — the same as on the cover of Series 1, so that all the covers of Heroes of Islam match.

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Colour guide: green box = verses of the Qur'an; gold box = Hadith; brown box = sirah note (report from the books of sirah); blue table = comparison.com.

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‘ALI IBN ABI TALIB

There was a Companion of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who grew up in the Prophet’s own home from childhood, heard the revelation as it first came down, and was among the very first to believe. That Companion was ***‘Ali ibn Abi Talib*** رضى الله عنه — the cousin of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, his son-in-law, the husband of Fatimah az-Zahra’, and the father of al-Hasan and al-Husayn.

‘Ali is known as the hero who carried the banner at Khaybar, the Companion trusted to write the Treaty of Hudaybiyah, the scholar to whom the caliphs turned, and the fourth of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to him: ***“You are from me and I am from you.”***

This eBook is the second in the ***Heroes of Islam*** series. As in the first, the story of ‘Ali رضى الله عنه is gathered first from the Qur'an and authentic Hadith, and then from the trusted books of sirah. The source of every report is given. Famous stories with weak chains are explained honestly.

‘Ali’s life also passed through the most difficult period of civil strife in the history of the Ummah. The chapters on that period are written according to the way of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jama‘ah: stating the facts fairly, respecting all the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and holding back the tongue from reviling any of them.

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WHO WAS ‘ALI?

His full name was ***‘Ali ibn Abi Talib ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hashim*** al-Qurashi al-Hashimi. His father, Abu Talib, was the uncle of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who raised him after the death of his grandfather, ‘Abd al-Muttalib. So ‘Ali was the ***cousin*** of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

His mother was ***Fatimah bint Asad ibn Hashim***, a woman of Banu Hashim who also cared for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as a child in the house of Abu Talib. She later embraced Islam and emigrated to Madinah.

According to the well-known view, ‘Ali was born in Makkah about ***ten years before the prophethood*** (around 600 CE). He was the youngest son of Abu Talib. His brothers were Talib, ‘Aqil and Ja‘far.

NAME, KUNYAH AND TITLES

NAME OR TITLE	EXPLANATION
‘Ali	The name given by his father, Abu Talib
Haydarah	The name given by his mother, meaning “lion”. ‘Ali mentioned it himself at Khaybar (Sahih Muslim 1807)
Abu al-Hasan	His best-known kunyah, after his eldest son al-Hasan
Abu Turab	“Father of Dust”, a title from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself (chapter 11)
Amir al-Mu’minin	His title as the fourth caliph (35–40 AH)

RAISED IN THE HOME OF THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ

SIRAH NOTE: ‘ALI LIVES WITH THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ

Ibn Ishaq reports that Quraysh were once struck by a severe drought. Abu Talib had many children and his life was hard. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to his uncle al-‘Abbas: “Your brother Abu Talib has a large family. Let us lighten his burden.”

So al-‘Abbas took Ja‘far, and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ took ***‘Ali***. ‘Ali stayed with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ until Allah sent him as a Prophet; then ‘Ali followed him, believed in him and affirmed his truth.

REFERENCES:
Ibn Hisham, as-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah, chapter on ‘Ali as the first male to embrace Islam.

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LESSONS

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ repaid the kindness of Abu Talib, who had raised him, by raising Abu Talib’s son in turn. Kindness was returned with kindness. And Allah made this care the means by which ‘Ali grew up under the guidance of the best of mankind, until he became one of the first to believe.

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THE FIRST CHILD TO BELIEVE

When the first revelation came, ‘Ali was living in the house of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Ibn Ishaq says that ‘Ali embraced Islam at about ***ten years of age***, making him the first child to believe in the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

SIRAH NOTE: WHO WAS THE FIRST TO EMBRACE ISLAM?

Reports differ on who was the first person to embrace Islam: Khadijah, Abu Bakr, ‘Ali or Zayd ibn Harithah. At-Tirmidhi narrates from Anas that the Prophet ﷺ was sent on a Monday and ‘Ali prayed on the Tuesday (Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi 3728); some scholars grade this Hadith weak.

The scholars reconcile these reports in a well-known way: ***among women, Khadijah; among grown men, Abu Bakr; among children, ‘Ali; and among freed slaves, Zayd ibn Harithah.*** Each of them came before others in faith.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Hisham, as-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah; Ibn Hajar, al-Isabah.

The books of sirah also say that Abu Talib once saw ‘Ali praying with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in the valleys of Makkah. Abu Talib asked about this religion, then said to his son: “He calls you to nothing but good, so follow him.”

Because ‘Ali embraced Islam as a child, he never bowed to an idol. From childhood his heart was shaped by tawhid. Allah speaks of the rank of those who were first in faith:

SURAH AT-TAWBAH 9:100

وَٱلسَّٰبِقُونَ ٱلْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ ٱلْمُهَٰجِرِينَ وَٱلْأَنصَارِ وَٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّبَعُوهُم بِإِحْسَٰنٍ
رَّضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا۟ عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّٰتٍ تَجْرِى تَحْتَهَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ خَٰلِدِينَ
فِيهَآ أَبَدًا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ ٱلْفَوْزُ ٱلْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٠٠﴾

And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the Muhajireen and the Ansar and those who followed them with good conduct - Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/9:100

LESSONS

Age is no barrier to believing and taking an honoured place. 'Ali believed as a child, and his faith stayed firm to the end of his life. Parents should pay attention to the religious education of their children from an early age, because the seed planted early grows the strongest.

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THE NIGHT OF THE HIJRAH: SLEEPING IN THE PROPHET’S PLACE

In the thirteenth year of prophethood, the leaders of Quraysh gathered in Dar an-Nadwah and agreed to kill the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Each clan would send a young man, so that his blood would be shared among all the clans and Banu Hashim would be unable to seek revenge.

SIRAH NOTE: ‘ALI’S SACRIFICE ON THE NIGHT OF THE HIJRAH

Ibn Ishaq reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to ‘Ali: ***“Sleep on my bed and cover yourself with this green cloak of mine. Sleep in it, for nothing you dislike will reach you from them.”***

The young men of Quraysh surrounded the house of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ all night. They saw someone sleeping under a cover and thought it was the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He went out past them. When morning came and they went in, they found that the sleeper was ‘Ali.

‘Ali was also given the task of staying in Makkah for a few days to ***return the trusts*** that the people of Makkah had left in the house of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Even though they were his enemies, they still trusted him with their wealth. After that, ‘Ali emigrated and joined the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at Quba’.

Status of the report: This story is narrated by Ibn Ishaq and is well known in the books of sirah and tafsir. It is also narrated by Ahmad with a chain that has been discussed. It is widely accepted by the scholars of sirah as part of the events of the Hijrah.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Hisham, as-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah, chapter on the Hijrah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah.

Allah mentions the plot of Quraysh on that night in His words:

SURAH AL-ANFAL 8:30

وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ ۚ وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ ٱللَّهُ ۖ وَٱللَّهُ خَيْرُ ٱلْمَٰكِرِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾

And [remember, O Muhammad], when those who disbelieved plotted against you to restrain you or kill you or evict you [from Makkah]. But they plan, and Allah plans. And Allah is the best of planners.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/8:30

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LESSONS

‘Ali slept in the very place that was the target of murder, calmly, because he trusted the words of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. This is courage born of faith. The story also teaches about trust: even in danger, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not leave Makkah without making sure that other people’s property was returned to its owners.

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MARRIAGE TO FATIMAH AZ-ZAHRA’

In Madinah, ‘Ali asked for the hand of ***Fatimah*** رضى الله عنها, the youngest daughter of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. According to the books of sirah, the marriage took place in the second year after the Hijrah, around the time of the Battle of Badr.

‘Ali was poor at the time. Ibn ‘Abbas رضى الله عنهما reports that when ‘Ali married Fatimah, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to him: “Give her something.” ‘Ali replied: “I have nothing.” He asked: ***“Where is your Hutamiyyah coat of mail?”*** That coat of mail became the dowry (Sunan Abi Dawud 2125; graded sahih by al-Albani).

To prepare for the wedding feast, ‘Ali planned to carry fragrant *idhkhir* grass with a goldsmith of Banu Qaynuqa‘ and sell it. The story of his two camels, slaughtered by Hamzah before wine was forbidden, took place at that time (Sahih al-Bukhari 3091), and was told in Series 1.

THE CHILDREN OF ‘ALI AND FATIMAH

NAME	EXPLANATION
al-Hasan ibn ‘Ali	Born 3 AH; grandson of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; later reconciled the Ummah in 41 AH
al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali	Born 4 AH; grandson of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; martyred at Karbala in 61 AH
Zaynab bint ‘Ali	Married ‘Abdullah ibn Ja‘far
Umm Kulthum bint ‘Ali	Married ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab رضى الله عنه

After Fatimah passed away in 11 AH, ‘Ali married several other women. Among his children was ***Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah***, who narrated several Hadith from his father.

LESSONS

The best home in Islam was built on a simple dowry: a single coat of mail. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not choose a son-in-law for his wealth, but for his faith and character. This simplicity is an example for every Muslim family that wishes to begin a marriage with blessing.

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BADR, UHUD AND THE TRENCH

BADR (2 AH)

At the Battle of Badr, ‘Ali stepped forward with ***Hamzah*** and ***‘Ubaydah ibn al-Harith*** to answer the challenge of single combat from three leaders of Quraysh. ‘Ali killed his opponent. Allah revealed a verse about the two groups who fought that day:

SURAH AL-HAJJ 22:19

۞هَٰذَانِ خَصۡمَانِ ٱخۡتَصَمُواْ فِي رَبِّهِمۡۖ فَٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ قُطِّعَتۡ لَهُمۡ ثِيَابٞ مِّن نَّارٖ يُصَبُّ مِن فَوۡقِ رُءُوسِهِمُ ٱلۡحَمِيمُ ١٩

These are two adversaries who have disputed over their Lord. But those who disbelieved will have cut out for them garments of fire. Poured upon their heads will be scalding water.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/22:19

‘Ali himself said: ***“I will be the first to kneel before the Most Merciful to dispute on the Day of Resurrection”*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3965). Abu Dharr رضى الله عنه swore that this verse was revealed about them (Sahih al-Bukhari 3969). The story of this single combat is told in full in Series 1: Hamzah.

UHUD (3 AH)

At Uhud, ‘Ali was among the Companions who stood firm with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when the Muslim ranks broke. After the battle, it was ‘Ali who brought water in his shield, while Fatimah washed the wound on the face of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. When the bleeding would not stop, Fatimah burned a piece of matting and put its ashes on the wound (Sahih al-Bukhari 2903).

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THE TRENCH (5 AH)

SIRAH NOTE: ‘ALI AND ‘AMR IBN ‘ABD WUDD

During the siege of the Trench, a few horsemen of Quraysh managed to leap across the trench at a narrow point. Among them was ***‘Amr ibn ‘Abd Wudd***, a Qurayshi champion famed for his strength. He challenged the Muslims to single combat.

‘Ali ibn Abi Talib, still a young man, answered the challenge. ‘Ali first invited him to Islam, but ‘Amr refused. They fought, and ‘Ali killed ‘Amr. The other horsemen fled back across the trench.

Status of the report: This story is narrated by Ibn Ishaq and is well known in the books of sirah. It is not found in Sahih al-Bukhari or Sahih Muslim. Some popular additions, such as a saying that compares ‘Ali’s blow to the worship of the whole Ummah, are weak or fabricated.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Hisham, as-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah, chapter on the Battle of the Trench; al-Hakim, al-Mustadrak; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah.

LESSONS

In every major battle, ‘Ali was in the front line. Yet his courage came with good manners: he invited his opponent to Islam before fighting. The aim of jihad is not to kill, but to establish the truth and open the way to guidance.

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HUDAYBIYAH: THE SCRIBE OF THE TREATY

In the month of Dhul-Qa‘dah, 6 AH, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ set out with about 1,400 Companions to perform ‘umrah. Quraysh blocked them at Hudaybiyah. The Companions pledged allegiance to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ beneath a tree, and Allah declared His pleasure with them:

SURAH AL-FATH 48:18

۞لَّقَدْ رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ ٱلشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنزَلَ ٱلسَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَٰبَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا ﴿١٨﴾

Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [O Muhammad], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquillity upon them and rewarded them with an imminent conquest.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/48:18

In the end a peace treaty was agreed. The scribe of that treaty was ***‘Ali ibn Abi Talib***. The following Hadith tells what happened when the treaty was written, and how the story continued a year later:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 2699

حَدَّثَنَا عُبَيْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُوسَى، عَنْ إِسْرَائِيلَ، عَنْ أَبِي إِسْحَاقَ، عَنِ الْبَرَاءِ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ اعْتَمَرَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم فِي ذِي الْقَعْدَةِ، فَأَبَى أَهْلُ مَكَّةَ أَنْ يَدَعُوهُ يَدْخُلُ مَكَّةَ، حَتَّى قَاضَاهُمْ عَلَى أَنْ يُقِيمَ بِهَا ثَلاَثَةَ أَيَّامٍ، فَلَمَّا كَتَبُوا الْكِتَابَ كَتَبُوا هَذَا مَا قَاضَى عَلَيْهِ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم. فَقَالُوا لاَ نُقِرُّ بِهَا، فَلَوْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ مَا مَنَعْنَاكَ، لَكِنْ أَنْتَ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ. قَالَ " أَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَأَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ". ثُمَّ قَالَ لِعَلِيٍّ " امْحُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ". قَالَ لاَ، وَاللَّهِ لاَ أَمْحُوكَ أَبَدًا، فَأَخَذَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم الْكِتَابَ، فَكَتَبَ هَذَا مَا قَاضَى عَلَيْهِ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، لاَ يُدْخِلُ مَكَّةَ سِلاَحٌ إِلاَّ فِي الْقِرَابِ، وَأَنْ لاَ يَخْرُجَ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا بِأَحَدٍ، إِنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَتَّبِعَهُ، وَأَنْ لاَ يَمْنَعَ أَحَدًا مِنْ أَصْحَابِهِ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُقِيمَ بِهَا. فَلَمَّا دَخَلَهَا، وَمَضَى الأَجَلُ أَتَوْا عَلِيًّا، فَقَالُوا قُلْ لِصَاحِبِكَ اخْرُجْ عَنَّا فَقَدْ مَضَى الأَجَلُ. فَخَرَجَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَتَبِعَتْهُمُ ابْنَةُ حَمْزَةَ يَا عَمِّ يَا عَمِّ. فَتَنَاوَلَهَا عَلِيٌّ فَأَخَذَ بِيَدِهَا، وَقَالَ لِفَاطِمَةَ عَلَيْهَا السَّلاَمُ دُونَكِ ابْنَةَ عَمِّكِ، احْمِلِيهَا.

فَاخْتَصَمَ فِيهَا عَلِيٌّ وَزَيْدٌ وَجَعْفَرٌ، فَقَالَ عَلِيٌّ أَنَا أَحَقُّ بِهَا وَهْىَ ابْنَةُ عَمِّي. وَقَالَ جَعْفَرٌ ابْنَةُ عَمِّي وَخَالَتُهَا تَحْتِي. وَقَالَ زَيْدٌ ابْنَةُ أَخِي. فَقَضَى بِهَا النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم لِخَالَتِهَا. وَقَالَ " الْخَالَةُ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الأُمِّ ". وَقَالَ لِعَلِيٍّ " أَنْتَ مِنِّي وَأَنَا مِنْكَ ". وَقَالَ لِجَعْفَرٍ " أَشْبَهْتَ خَلْقِي وَخُلُقِي ". وَقَالَ لِزَيْدٍ " أَنْتَ أَخُونَا وَمَوْلاَنَا ".

TRANSLATION:

Al-Bara’ رضى الله عنه said: The Prophet ﷺ set out for ‘umrah in Dhul-Qa‘dah, but the people of Makkah refused to let him enter Makkah, until he made peace with them on condition that he would (come back and) stay there for three days. When they wrote the agreement, they wrote: “This is what Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, has agreed to.” They said: “We do not accept this. If we knew you were the Messenger of Allah, we would not have stopped you. But you are Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullah.” He said: “I am the Messenger of Allah, and I am Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullah.” Then he said to ‘Ali: “Erase (the words) ‘Messenger of Allah’.” ***‘Ali said: “No. By Allah, I will never erase you.”*** So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ took the document and wrote: “This is what Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullah has agreed to: No weapons shall be brought into Makkah except in their sheaths; none of its people shall be taken out even if he wishes to follow him; and none of his companions who wishes to stay there shall be prevented.” When he entered it (the following year) and the term had passed, they came to ‘Ali and said: “Tell your companion: Leave us, for the term has passed.” So the Prophet ﷺ left. Then the daughter of Hamzah followed them, calling: “O uncle! O uncle!” ‘Ali took her and held her hand, and said to Fatimah: “Take your cousin; carry her.” Then ‘Ali, Zayd and Ja‘far disputed over her. ‘Ali said: “I have more right to her; she is the daughter of my uncle.” Ja‘far said: “She is the daughter of my uncle, and her maternal aunt is my wife.” Zayd said: “She is the daughter of my brother.” The Prophet ﷺ ruled that she should go to her maternal aunt, and said: “The maternal aunt has the same standing as the mother.” ***He said to ‘Ali: “You are from me and I am from you.”*** He said to Ja‘far: “You resemble me in appearance and in character.” And he said to Zayd: “You are our brother and our mawla.”

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from ‘Ubaydullah ibn Musa, from Isra’il ibn Yunus, from Abu Ishaq as-Sabi‘i, from al-Bara’ ibn ‘Azib رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Peacemaking (as-Sulh), Hadith No. 2699.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: sunnah.com/bukhari:2699

The words “took the document and wrote” are understood by most scholars to mean that he ordered it to be written, or that he himself erased the words after ‘Ali showed him where they were. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was the *ummi* Prophet, who did not read or write.

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'Ali's refusal to erase the words "Messenger of Allah" was not disobedience, but deep love and respect. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ understood his feelings and settled the matter himself.

LESSONS

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ chose 'Ali to write the most important document of that time, a sign of trust in his knowledge and integrity. His words, ***"You are from me and I am from you"***, show how close they were. The Hadith also teaches that in an agreement, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was willing to give way on wording in order to achieve a greater good.

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KHAYBAR: THE BANNER IN ‘ALI’S HANDS

In Muharram, 7 AH, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ led the Muslim army to ***Khaybar***, a fertile area of palm groves and strong Jewish fortresses about 150 km north of Madinah. Some of the fortresses held out for several days. Then one evening the Messenger of Allah ﷺ announced something that kept the Companions awake that night:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3701

حَدَّثَنَا قُتَيْبَةُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْعَزِيزِ، عَنْ أَبِي حَازِمٍ، عَنْ سَهْلِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ " لأُعْطِيَنَّ الرَّايَةَ غَدًا رَجُلاً يَفْتَحُ اللَّهُ عَلَى يَدَيْهِ " قَالَ فَبَاتَ النَّاسُ يَدُوكُونَ لَيْلَتَهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ يُعْطَاهَا فَلَمَّا أَصْبَحَ النَّاسُ، غَدَوْا عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم كُلُّهُمْ يَرْجُو أَنْ يُعْطَاهَا فَقَالَ " أَيْنَ عَلِيُّ بْنُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ ". فَقَالُوا يَشْتَكِي عَيْنَيْهِ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ. قَالَ " فَأَرْسِلُوا إِلَيْهِ فَأْتُونِي بِهِ ". فَلَمَّا جَاءَ بَصَقَ فِي عَيْنَيْهِ، وَدَعَا لَهُ، فَبَرَأَ حَتَّى كَأَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ بِهِ وَجَعٌ، فَأَعْطَاهُ الرَّايَةَ. فَقَالَ عَلِيٌّ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أُقَاتِلُهُمْ حَتَّى يَكُونُوا مِثْلَنَا فَقَالَ " انْفُذْ عَلَى رِسْلِكَ حَتَّى تَنْزِلَ بِسَاحَتِهِمْ، ثُمَّ ادْعُهُمْ إِلَى الإِسْلاَمِ، وَأَخْبِرْهُمْ بِمَا يَجِبُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ حَقِّ اللَّهِ فِيهِ، فَوَاللَّهِ لأَنْ يَهْدِيَ اللَّهُ بِكَ رَجُلاً وَاحِدًا خَيْرٌ لَكَ مِنْ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَكَ حُمْرُ النَّعَمِ ".

TRANSLATION:

Sahl ibn Sa‘d رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ***“Tomorrow I will give this banner to a man at whose hands Allah will grant victory.”*** Sahl said: The people spent the night discussing which of them would be given it. In the morning they went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, each of them hoping to be given it. He asked: “Where is ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib?” They said: “His eyes are sore, O Messenger of Allah.” He said: “Send for him and bring him to me.” When he came, he spat (lightly) into his eyes and prayed for him, and he was healed as if he had never been ill. Then he gave him the banner. ‘Ali said: “O Messenger of Allah, shall I fight them until they become like us?” He said: ***“Go calmly until you reach their courtyard. Then invite them to Islam, and tell them what is obligatory upon them of the right of Allah in it. By Allah, that Allah should guide a single man through you is better for you than having red camels.”***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Qutaybah ibn Sa‘id, from ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ibn Abi Hazim, from Abu Hazim Salamah ibn Dinar, from Sahl ibn Sa‘d رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Virtues of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ, Hadith No. 3701.

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GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: sunnah.com/bukhari:3701

“Red camels” (*humr an-na‘am*) were the most precious wealth of the Arabs at that time. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ reminded ‘Ali, at the very moment he held the banner of war, that the true goal was ***guidance***, not victory alone.

‘ALI AND MARHAB

In the report of Salamah ibn al-Akwa‘ رضى الله عنه, the champion of Khaybar, ***Marhab***, came out with a challenge, reciting verse. ‘Ali answered with verse of his own: ***“I am the one whom my mother named Haydarah (lion)…”***, then struck Marhab on the head and killed him. Victory then came through his hands (Sahih Muslim 1807).

SIRAH NOTE: THE STORY OF ‘ALI LIFTING THE GATE OF KHAYBAR

The books of sirah say that ‘Ali lost his shield, so he lifted a gate of the fortress and used it as a shield, and that eight men afterwards could not lift that gate.

This story is popular in talks and storybooks. But its chain is weak: Ibn Ishaq reports it from an unnamed person. ‘Ali’s strength and the victory of Khaybar through his hands are already well established in authentic Hadith, without any need to rely on a weak story.

Status of the report: WEAK — its chain is broken (it contains an unknown narrator).

REFERENCES:

Ibn Hisham, as-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah, chapter on Khaybar; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah.

LESSONS

The banner was not given to the one most eager to ask for it, but to the one who “loves Allah and His Messenger, and is loved by Allah and His Messenger”, as another report says (Sahih al-Bukhari 3702). Honour comes from Allah, not from the desire to be famous.

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THE STANDING OF HARUN TO MUSA

In Rajab, 9 AH, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ set out for ***Tabuk*** to face the threat of Rome with the largest army of his lifetime. This time he did not take ‘Ali. He left him in Madinah to look after his family.

The hypocrites began to say that ‘Ali had been left behind because he was considered a burden. ‘Ali was saddened and caught up with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. His answer remains one of the best-known virtues of ‘Ali:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4416

حَدَّثَنَا مُسَدَّدٌ، حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى، عَنْ شُعْبَةَ، عَنِ الْحَكَمِ، عَنْ مُصْعَبِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم خَرَجَ إِلَى تَبُوكَ، وَاسْتَخْلَفَ عَلِيًّا فَقَالَ أَتُخَلِّفُنِي فِي الصِّبْيَانِ وَالنِّسَاءِ قَالَ " أَلاَ تَرْضَى أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنِّي بِمَنْزِلَةِ هَارُونَ مِنْ مُوسَى إِلاَّ أَنَّهُ لَيْسَ نَبِيٌّ بَعْدِي ". وَقَالَ أَبُو دَاوُدَ حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ عَنِ الْحَكَمِ سَمِعْتُ مُصْعَبًا.

TRANSLATION:

Sa‘d ibn Abi Waqqas رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ set out for Tabuk and appointed ‘Ali as his deputy (in Madinah). ‘Ali said: “Are you leaving me behind with the children and the women?” He said: ***“Are you not pleased to be to me what Harun was to Musa? Except that there is no prophet after me.”*** Abu Dawud (at-Tayalisi) said: Shu‘bah told us from al-Hakam: I heard Mus‘ab (narrate it).

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Musaddad, from Yahya ibn Sa‘id al-Qattan, from Shu‘bah, from al-Hakam ibn ‘Utaybah, from Mus‘ab ibn Sa‘d, from his father, Sa‘d ibn Abi Waqqas رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Military Expeditions (al-Maghazi), Hadith No. 4416.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: sunnah.com/bukhari:4416

When the Prophet Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ went to speak with his Lord on Mount Tur for forty nights, he left his brother, the Prophet Harun عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, to look after his people (Al-A‘raf 7:142). In the same way, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ left ‘Ali to look after his family.

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NOTE: THE MEANING OF “NO PROPHET AFTER ME”

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself made clear the limit of the comparison: ‘Ali was like Harun in closeness, trust and the duty of care, ***but not as a prophet***, because prophethood ended with the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

The scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah explain that this Hadith shows a great virtue of ‘Ali, but it is not a text on the caliphate after the Prophet ﷺ, since the Prophet Harun عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ himself died before the Prophet Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari, commentary on Hadith No. 4416; an-Nawawi, Sharh Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 2404.

LESSONS

Sometimes a task that looks small — staying behind to look after a family — is in fact a great trust. ‘Ali was sad that he could not join the jihad, but the Messenger of Allah ﷺ comforted him by showing the true value of his task. Every role in the struggle for Islam has its own honour.

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THE AHL AL-BAYT: THE VERSE OF MUBAHALAH AND THE HADITH OF THE CLOAK

In 9 AH, a Christian delegation from ***Najran*** came to Madinah and debated with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about the Prophet ‘Isa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. Allah then commanded him to invite them to *mubahalah*, a mutual prayer that the curse of Allah fall on whichever side was lying:

SURAH ALI ‘IMRAN 3:61

فَمَنْ حَآجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَكَ مِنَ ٱلْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا۟ نَدْعُ أَبْنَآءَنَا
وَأَبْنَآءَكُمْ وَنِسَآءَنَا وَنِسَآءَكُمْ وَأَنفُسَنَا وَأَنفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَل
لَّعْنَتَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَى ٱلْكَٰذِبِينَ ﴿٦١﴾

Then whoever argues with you about it after [this] knowledge has come to you - say, "Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves, then supplicate earnestly [together] and invoke the curse of Allah upon the liars [among us].

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/3:61

Sa‘d ibn Abi Waqqas رضى الله عنه narrates that when this verse was revealed, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ called ***‘Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn***, and said: ***“O Allah, these are my family”*** (Sahih Muslim 2404). The Najran delegation declined the mubahalah and chose to make peace by paying the jizyah.

THE HADITH OF THE CLOAK (AL-KISA’)

Another authentic Hadith shows ‘Ali’s place among the Ahl al-Bayt of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2424

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، وَمُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ نُمَيْرٍ، - وَاللَّفْظُ لأَبِي بَكْرٍ - قَالاَ حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ بِشْرٍ، عَنْ زَكَرِيَّاءَ، عَنْ مُصْعَبِ بْنِ شَيْبَةَ، عَنْ صَفِيَّةَ بِنْتِ شَيْبَةَ، قَالَتْ قَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ خَرَجَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم غَدَاةً وَعَلَيْهِ مِرْطٌ مُرَحَّلٌ مِنْ شَعْرٍ أَسْوَدَ فَجَاءَ الْحَسَنُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ فَأَدْخَلَهُ ثُمَّ جَاءَ الْحُسَيْنُ فَدَخَلَ مَعَهُ ثُمَّ جَاءَتْ فَاطِمَةُ فَأَدْخَلَهَا ثُمَّ جَاءَ عَلِيٌّ فَأَدْخَلَهُ ثُمَّ قَالَ { إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا}

TRANSLATION:

‘A’ishah رضى الله عنها said: The Prophet ﷺ went out one morning wearing a patterned cloak (*mirt murahhal*) of black hair. Then al-Hasan ibn ‘Ali came, and he took him in (under the cloak). Then al-Husayn came, and he went in with him. Then Fatimah came, and he took her in. Then ‘Ali came, and he took him in. Then he recited: ***“Allah only intends to remove impurity from you, O people of the household, and to purify you with a thorough purification.”***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah, from Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullah ibn Numayr, from Muhammad ibn Bishr al-‘Abdi, from Zakariyya ibn Abi Za’idah, from Mus‘ab ibn Shaybah, from Safiyyah bint Shaybah, from ‘A’ishah رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of the Virtues of the Companions, Hadith No. 2424.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, one of the two most authentic books of Hadith (as-Sahihayn).

Source: sunnah.com/muslim:2424

The verse that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ recited is part of a verse in Surah Al-Ahzab:

SURAH AL-AHZAB 33:33

وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ ٱلْجَٰهِلِيَّةِ ٱلْأُولَىٰ ۖ وَأَقِمْنَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ
وَءَاتِينَ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَأَطِعْنَ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥٓ ۚ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمُ
ٱلرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ ٱلْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا ﴿٣٣﴾

And abide in your houses and do not display yourselves as [was] the display of the former times of ignorance. And establish prayer and give zakah and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah intends only to remove from you the impurity [of sin], O people of the [Prophet's] household, and to purify you with [extensive] purification.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/33:33

NOTE: WHO ARE THE AHL AL-BAYT?

Verse 33:33 was revealed within a passage addressed to the wives of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. So the scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah explain that ***his wives are included in the Ahl al-Bayt***, and the Hadith of the Cloak shows that ***‘Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn are also included in the Ahl al-Bayt***.

Loving the Ahl al-Bayt is part of faith. At the same time, Ahl as-Sunnah do not raise them above the rank that Allah and His Messenger gave them, nor do they revile the other Companions.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-‘Azim (Al-Ahzab 33:33); an-Nawawi, Sharh Sahih Muslim.

LESSONS

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ gathered his family under one cloak and prayed for their purity. A family built on faith is an honoured family. Every Muslim should love the family of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, pray for them in the salawat, and take their character as an example.

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HERALD OF SURAH BARA’AH AND JUDGE IN YEMEN

In the Hajj season of 9 AH, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ appointed ***Abu Bakr as-Siddiq*** رضى الله عنه to lead the pilgrims. After that, the opening of Surah At-Tawbah (Bara’ah) was revealed, announcing the end of the treaties with the idolaters:

SURAH AT-TAWBAH 9:3

وَأَذَٰنٌ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦٓ إِلَى ٱلنَّاسِ يَوْمَ ٱلْحَجِّ ٱلْأَكْبَرِ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ بَرِىٓءٌ مِّنَ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ وَرَسُولُهُۥ ۚ فَإِن تُبْتُمْ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۖ وَإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَٱعْلَمُوٓا۟ أَنَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُعْجِزِى ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٣﴾

And [it is] an announcement from Allah and His Messenger to the people on the day of the greater pilgrimage that Allah is disassociated from the disbelievers, and [so is] His Messenger. So if you repent, that is best for you; but if you turn away - then know that you will not cause failure to Allah. And give tidings to those who disbelieve of a painful punishment.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/9:3

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent ‘Ali after them to announce these verses to the people at Mina. The following Hadith tells the story:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4656

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، حَدَّثَنَا اللَّيْثُ، حَدَّثَنِي عُقَيْلٌ، قَالَ ابْنُ شِهَابٍ فَأَخْبَرَنِي حُمَيْدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، أَنَّ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ بَعَثَنِي أَبُو بَكْرٍ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ فِي تِلْكَ الْحَجَّةِ فِي الْمُؤَذِّنِينَ، بَعَثَهُمْ يَوْمَ النَّحْرِ يُؤَذِّنُونَ بِمِنًى أَنْ لاَ يَحُجَّ بَعْدَ الْعَامِ مُشْرِكٌ، وَلاَ يَطُوفَ بِالْبَيْتِ عُرْيَانٌ. قَالَ حُمَيْدٌ ثُمَّ أَرْدَفَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم بِعَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ، فَأَمَرَهُ أَنْ يُؤَذِّنَ بِبَرَاءَةَ. قَالَ أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ فَأَذَّنَ مَعَنَا عَلِيٌّ فِي أَهْلِ مِنًى يَوْمَ النَّحْرِ بِبَرَاءَةَ، وَأَنْ لاَ يَحُجَّ بَعْدَ الْعَامِ مُشْرِكٌ، وَلاَ يَطُوفَ بِالْبَيْتِ عُرْيَانٌ.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: Abu Bakr رضى الله عنه sent me during that Hajj among those making the announcements. He sent them on the Day of Sacrifice to announce at Mina: “No idolater may perform Hajj after this year, and no one may circle the Ka‘bah naked.” Humayd said: Then the Prophet ﷺ sent ***‘Ali ibn Abi Talib*** after him, and ordered him to announce (Surah) Bara’ah. Abu Hurayrah said: So ‘Ali made the

announcement with us to the people at Mina on the Day of Sacrifice about Bara’ah, and that no idolater may perform Hajj after this year, and no one may circle the Ka‘bah naked.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from ‘Abdullah ibn Yusuf, from al-Layth ibn Sa‘d, from ‘Uqayl ibn Khalid, from Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri, from Humayd ibn ‘Abd ar-Rahman, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Tafsir, Hadith No. 4656.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: sunnah.com/bukhari:4656

Abu Bakr remained the leader of the pilgrims, and ‘Ali’s task was to announce Bara’ah under his leadership. Scholars explain that, by Arab custom, the ending of a treaty was announced by a close relative of the one who made it. Two great Companions worked together on a single task.

JUDGE IN YEMEN (10 AH)

In 10 AH, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent ‘Ali to ***Yemen*** as a judge. ‘Ali said: “O Messenger of Allah, you are sending me while I am young and know nothing of judging.” He said: ***“Allah will guide your heart and make your tongue firm.”*** He also advised him not to judge until he had heard both sides. ‘Ali said: “After that I never had doubt in judging” (Sunan Abi Dawud 3582; graded hasan by al-Albani).

HADITH: GHADIR KHUMM

On the way back from the Farewell Hajj, at a place called Ghadir Khumm, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said about ‘Ali: ***“Whoever I am his wali, ‘Ali is his wali.”***

The reason for these words was that some Companions returning from Yemen with ‘Ali had complained about his strictness in dividing the spoils. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ made clear ‘Ali’s standing so that they would love him and not oppose him (Sahih al-Bukhari 4350). The scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah understand *wali* here as ***one who is loved and supported***, not as a text appointing a caliph.

Grade: SAHIH — Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi 3713; at-Tirmidhi graded it hasan, and al-Albani graded it sahih.

LESSONS

‘Ali was trusted with tasks that needed knowledge and firmness: announcing the law of Allah before thousands of pilgrims, and judging a whole land. The prayer of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ stayed with him all his life. ‘Ali’s work with Abu Bakr at Mina also shows that the Companions worked as one team.

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ABU TURAB: A SIMPLE LIFE IN ‘ALI’S HOME

The title ‘Ali loved most was not Amir al-Mu’minin, but ***Abu Turab*** — “Father of Dust”. It was given to him by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself, in a moment full of affection:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3703

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مَسْلَمَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْعَزِيزِ بْنُ أَبِي حَازِمٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، أَنَّ رَجُلاً، جَاءَ إِلَى سَهْلِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ فَقَالَ هَذَا فُلاَنٌ ـ لأَمِيرِ الْمَدِينَةِ ـ يَدْعُو عَلِيًّا عِنْدَ الْمِنْبَرِ. قَالَ فَيَقُولُ مَاذَا قَالَ يَقُولُ لَهُ أَبُو تُرَابٍ. فَضَحِكَ قَالَ وَاللَّهِ مَا سَمَّاهُ إِلاَّ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم، وَمَا كَانَ لَهُ اسْمٌ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِنْهُ. فَاسْتَطْعَمْتُ الْحَدِيثَ سَهْلاً، وَقُلْتُ يَا أَبَا عَبَّاسٍ كَيْفَ قَالَ دَخَلَ عَلِيٌّ عَلَى فَاطِمَةَ ثُمَّ خَرَجَ فَاضْطَجَعَ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ، فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم " أَيْنَ ابْنُ عَمِّكِ ". قَالَتْ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ. فَخَرَجَ إِلَيْهِ فَوَجَدَ رِدَاءَهُ قَدْ سَقَطَ عَنْ ظَهْرِهِ، وَخَلَصَ التُّرَابُ إِلَى ظَهْرِهِ، فَجَعَلَ يَمْسَحُ التُّرَابَ عَنْ ظَهْرِهِ فَيَقُولُ " اجْلِسْ يَا أَبَا تُرَابٍ ". مَرَّتَيْنِ.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hazim narrated that a man came to Sahl ibn Sa‘d and said: “So-and-so — meaning the governor of Madinah — is speaking about ‘Ali from the pulpit.” Sahl asked: “What does he say?” The man said: “He calls him Abu Turab.” Sahl laughed and said: ***“By Allah, no one gave him that name except the Prophet ﷺ, and no name was dearer to him than that.”*** I (Abu Hazim) asked Sahl to tell me the Hadith, and I said: “O Abu ‘Abbas, how did it happen?” Sahl said: ‘Ali went in to Fatimah, then came out and lay down in the mosque. The Prophet ﷺ asked (Fatimah): “Where is your cousin?” She said: “In the mosque.” So he went out to him and found that his upper garment had slipped off his back and dust had stuck to his back. He began wiping the dust off his back, saying: ***“Sit up, O Abu Turab!”*** twice.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from ‘Abdullah ibn Maslamah, from ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ibn Abi Hazim, from his father, Abu Hazim, from Sahl ibn Sa‘d رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Virtues of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ, Hadith No. 3703.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: sunnah.com/bukhari:3703

The governor used “Abu Turab” to insult ‘Ali, but Sahl explained that the name was in fact a loving memory from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. What was meant as an insult turned out to be an honour.

THE TASBIH OF FATIMAH

The life of ‘Ali and Fatimah was very simple. Fatimah ground grain with her own hands until her hands were blistered. When they asked for a servant from the captives of war, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave them something better:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3705

حَدَّثَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ بَشَّارٍ، حَدَّثَنَا غُنْدَرٌ، حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنِ الْحَكَمِ، سَمِعْتُ ابْنَ أَبِي لَيْلَى، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيٌّ، أَنَّ فَاطِمَةَ، عَلَيْهَا السَّلاَمُ شَكَتْ مَا تَلْقَى مِنْ أَثَرِ الرَّحَا، فَأَتَى النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم سَبْيٌ، فَانْطَلَقَتْ فَلَمْ تَجِدْهُ، فَوَجَدَتْ عَائِشَةَ، فَأَخْبَرَتْهَا، فَلَمَّا جَاءَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم أَخْبَرَتْهُ عَائِشَةُ بِمَجِيءِ فَاطِمَةَ، فَجَاءَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم إِلَيْنَا، وَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا مَضَاجِعَنَا، فَذَهَبْتُ لأَقُومَ فَقَالَ " عَلَى مَكَانِكُمَا ". فَقَعَدَ بَيْنَنَا حَتَّى وَجَدْتُ بَرْدَ قَدَمَيْهِ عَلَى صَدْرِي وَقَالَ " أَلاَ أُعَلِّمُكُمَا خَيْرًا مِمَّا سَأَلْتُمَانِي إِذَا أَخَذْتُمَا مَضَاجِعَكُمَا تُكَبِّرَا أَرْبَعًا وَثَلاَثِينَ، وَتُسَبِّحَا ثَلاَثًا وَثَلاَثِينَ، وَتَحْمَدَا ثَلاَثًا وَثَلاَثِينَ، فَهْوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمَا مِنْ خَادِمٍ ".

TRANSLATION:

‘Ali رضى الله عنه narrated that Fatimah complained of the effect of the hand-mill (on her hands). Then some captives were brought to the Prophet ﷺ. Fatimah went (to see him) but did not find him, so she met ‘A’ishah and told her. When the Prophet ﷺ came, ‘A’ishah told him that Fatimah had come. So the Prophet ﷺ came to us when we had already gone to bed. I was about to get up, but he said: “Stay where you are.” He sat between us until I felt the coolness of his feet on my chest. He said: ***“Shall I not teach you both something better than what you asked me for? When you go to bed, say Allahu akbar 34 times, Subhan Allah 33 times and al-hamdu lillah 33 times. That is better for you both than a servant.”***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn Bashshar, from Ghundar, from Shu‘bah, from al-Hakam ibn ‘Utaybah, from ‘Abd ar-Rahman ibn Abi Layla, from ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Virtues of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ, Hadith No. 3705.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: sunnah.com/bukhari:3705

‘Ali said that he never abandoned this remembrance after hearing it from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, not even on the night of the Battle of Siffin (Sahih al-Bukhari 5362).

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LESSONS

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not give a servant even to his own daughter, because others were in greater need. Instead, he gave a remembrance that became a spiritual strength. The remembrance before sleep — 33 Subhan Allah, 33 al-hamdu lillah, 34 Allahu akbar — is a legacy from the home of ‘Ali and Fatimah for every Muslim worn out by the affairs of this world.

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LOVE FOR ‘ALI IS A SIGN OF FAITH

Among the greatest virtues of ‘Ali is the promise the Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave him about those who love him and those who hate him. ‘Ali himself narrated it under oath:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 78

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا وَكِيعٌ، وَأَبُو مُعَاوِيَةَ عَنِ الأَعْمَشِ، ح وَحَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ يَحْيَى، - وَاللَّفْظُ لَهُ - أَخْبَرَنَا أَبُو مُعَاوِيَةَ، عَنِ الأَعْمَشِ، عَنْ عَدِيِّ بْنِ ثَابِتٍ، عَنْ زِرٍّ، قَالَ قَالَ عَلِيٌّ وَالَّذِي فَلَقَ الْحَبَّةَ وَبَرَأَ النَّسَمَةَ إِنَّهُ لَعَهْدُ النَّبِيِّ الأُمِّيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم إِلَىَّ أَنْ لاَ يُحِبَّنِي إِلاَّ مُؤْمِنٌ وَلاَ يُبْغِضَنِي إِلاَّ مُنَافِقٌ .

TRANSLATION:

Zirr (ibn Hubaysh) said: ‘Ali said: ***“By the One who split the seed and created the soul, the unlettered Prophet ﷺ made a promise to me that none would love me except a believer, and none would hate me except a hypocrite.”***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya ibn Yahya, from Abu Mu‘awiyah, from al-A‘mash, from ‘Adi ibn Thabit, from Zirr ibn Hubaysh, from ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Faith (al-Iman), Hadith No. 78.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, one of the two most authentic books of Hadith (as-Sahihayn).

Source: sunnah.com/muslim:78

A similar Hadith is also reported about the ***Ansar***: “The sign of faith is love for the Ansar, and the sign of hypocrisy is hatred of the Ansar” (Sahih al-Bukhari 17). So loving ‘Ali, loving the Ansar, and loving all the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ are signs of faith.

THE TEN PROMISED PARADISE

‘Ali is also among the ten Companions whom the Messenger of Allah ﷺ named as people of Paradise in a single Hadith: Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthman, ‘Ali, Talhah, az-Zubayr, ‘Abd ar-Rahman ibn ‘Awf, Sa‘d ibn Abi Waqqas, Sa‘id ibn Zayd and Abu ‘Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah (Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi 3747; graded sahih by al-Albani).

LESSONS

Love for ‘Ali is not only a feeling, but a measure of faith. Yet true love follows the guidance of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: loving ‘Ali without hating Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman; loving the Ahl al-Bayt

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without reviling the Companions. A believer loves them all, because the Messenger of Allah ﷺ loved them all.

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THE KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM OF ‘ALI

‘Ali grew up with the Qur'an from the time it began to be revealed. He was among the scribes of the revelation, and one of the most learned of the Companions. ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab رضى الله عنه himself said: ***“The best reciter (of the Qur'an) among us is Ubayy, and the best judge among us is ‘Ali”*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 4481).

After the death of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, some people imagined that ‘Ali held secret knowledge not given to anyone else. ‘Ali clearly denied this:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 111

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ سَلاَمٍ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا وَكِيعٌ، عَنْ سُفْيَانَ، عَنْ مُطَرِّفٍ، عَنِ الشَّعْبِيِّ، عَنْ أَبِي جُحَيْفَةَ، قَالَ قُلْتُ لِعَلِيٍّ هَلْ عِنْدَكُمْ كِتَابٌ قَالَ لاَ، إِلاَّ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ، أَوْ فَهْمٌ أُعْطِيَهُ رَجُلٌ مُسْلِمٌ، أَوْ مَا فِي هَذِهِ الصَّحِيفَةِ. قَالَ قُلْتُ فَمَا فِي هَذِهِ الصَّحِيفَةِ قَالَ الْعَقْلُ، وَفَكَاكُ الأَسِيرِ، وَلاَ يُقْتَلُ مُسْلِمٌ بِكَافِرٍ.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Juhayfah رضى الله عنه said: I asked ‘Ali: “Do you (the Ahl al-Bayt) have any book (other than the Qur'an)?”

He said: ***“No, except the Book of Allah, or understanding given to a Muslim man, or what is in this sheet.”*** I asked: “What is in this sheet?” He said: “(The rulings on) blood money, the freeing of captives, and that a Muslim is not killed for (killing) a disbeliever.”

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn Salam, from Waki‘ ibn al-Jarrah, from Sufyan ath-Thawri, from Mutarrif ibn Tarif, from ash-Sha‘bi, from Abu Juhayfah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Knowledge (al-‘Ilm), Hadith No. 111.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: sunnah.com/bukhari:111

This Hadith is important because ‘Ali himself rejected the claim that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed special knowledge to the Ahl al-Bayt that the Ummah did not know. The sources of knowledge are the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the understanding that Allah grants to whoever strives to learn.

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NOTE: THE HADITH “I AM THE CITY OF KNOWLEDGE AND ‘ALI IS ITS GATE”

The Hadith ***“I am the city of knowledge and ‘Ali is its gate”*** is very popular. It is narrated by al-Hakim, while at-Tirmidhi narrates it with the wording “I am the house of wisdom and ‘Ali is its gate” (Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi 3723).

But many Hadith scholars grade it ***weak***, and some even grade it fabricated, including at-Tirmidhi himself, who called it *gharib munkar*. ‘Ali’s wide knowledge is already well proven by authentic reports.

REFERENCES:

At-Tirmidhi, al-Jami‘ (No. 3723); Ibn al-Jawzi, al-Mawdu‘at; al-Albani, Silsilat al-Ahadith ad-Da‘ifah, No. 2955.

LESSONS

‘Ali teaches us that knowledge is not inherited through lineage, but through hard study and the understanding that Allah grants. He also teaches scholarly honesty: denying what is untrue even when it would honour him. A true scholar does not let others believe something untrue about him.

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WITH THE THREE CALIPHS

After the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed away in 11 AH, ‘Ali and the Prophet’s family took care of washing and burying his body. The Muslims then pledged allegiance to ***Abu Bakr as-Siddiq*** رضى الله عنه as the first caliph.

‘Ali delayed his pledge for some months, while Fatimah was ill and until she passed away. Then ‘Ali himself asked to meet Abu Bakr, acknowledged his virtue, and pledged allegiance to him before the people in the mosque. The Muslims rejoiced at this reconciliation (Sahih al-Bukhari 4240).

ADVISER TO THE CALIPHS

Throughout the time of Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman, ‘Ali was an adviser and a reference in matters of law. ‘Umar often sought his opinion on difficult questions. ‘Ali gave his daughter ***Umm Kulthum*** in marriage to ‘Umar. When ‘Umar was stabbed, he named ‘Ali among the six members of the council (shura) to choose the next caliph (Sahih al-Bukhari 3700).

‘Ali’s respect for the caliphs before him is clear in the following Hadith, narrated by his own son:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3671

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ كَثِيرٍ، أَخْبَرَنَا سُفْيَانُ، حَدَّثَنَا جَامِعُ بْنُ أَبِي رَاشِدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو يَعْلَى، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ ابْنِ الْحَنَفِيَّةِ، قَالَ قُلْتُ لأَبِي أَىُّ النَّاسِ خَيْرٌ بَعْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ. قُلْتُ ثُمَّ مَنْ قَالَ ثُمَّ عُمَرُ. وَخَشِيتُ أَنْ يَقُولَ عُثْمَانُ قُلْتُ ثُمَّ أَنْتَ قَالَ مَا أَنَا إِلاَّ رَجُلٌ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ.

TRANSLATION:

Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah said: I asked my father (‘Ali): “Who are the best of people after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ?” He said: ***“Abu Bakr.”*** I asked: “Then who?” He said: ***“Then ‘Umar.”*** I feared he would say ‘Uthman, so I said: “Then you?” He said: ***“I am nothing but a man among the Muslims.”***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn Kathir, from Sufyan ath-Thawri, from Jami‘ ibn Abi Rashid, from Abu Ya‘la al-Mundhir ath-Thawri, from Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Virtues of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ, Hadith No. 3671.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: sunnah.com/bukhari:3671

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‘ALI AND THE SIEGE OF ‘UTHMAN

At the end of the rule of ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan رضى الله عنه, rebels from Egypt, Kufah and Basrah besieged his house in Madinah. The history books mention that ‘Ali sent his two sons, ***al-Hasan and al-Husayn***, to guard the door of ‘Uthman’s house. But ‘Uthman did not want blood to be shed for his sake, and he was killed unjustly in Dhul-Hijjah, 35 AH.

LESSONS

The Companions respected one another and acknowledged one another’s virtues. ‘Ali, noble and learned as he was, named Abu Bakr and ‘Umar as the best, and called himself “only a man among the Muslims”. This is true humility. Allah teaches us to pray for them all:

SURAH AL-HASHR 59:10

وَٱلَّذِينَ جَآءُو مِنۢ بَعۡدِهِمۡ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا ٱغۡفِرۡ لَنَا وَلِإِخۡوَٰنِنَا ٱلَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِٱلۡإِيمَٰنِ وَلَا تَجۡعَلۡ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلّٗا لِّلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ رَبَّنَآ إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٞ رَّحِيمٌ ١٠

And [there is a share for] those who came after them, saying, "Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts [any] resentment toward those who have believed. Our Lord, indeed You are Kind and Merciful.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/59:10

THE FOURTH CALIPH AND THE TIME OF FITNAH

After ‘Uthman was martyred, the Muslims in Madinah pledged allegiance to ***‘Ali ibn Abi Talib*** as the fourth caliph in Dhul-Hijjah, 35 AH. He ruled for about ***four years and nine months***, in the most difficult circumstances in the history of the Muslims.

NOTE: THE WAY OF AHL AS-SUNNAH REGARDING THE TIME OF FITNAH

Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jama‘ah hold that ***‘Ali was the rightful caliph*** and that his side was closer to the truth. At the same time, the Companions who differed with him — such as ‘A’ishah, Talhah, az-Zubayr and Mu‘awiyah — were exercising ijtihad. The one who was right in his ijtihad receives two rewards, and the one who erred receives one.

Ahl as-Sunnah ***hold back their tongues*** from reviling any Companion, because the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “Do not revile my Companions” (Sahih al-Bukhari 3673). Many historical reports about this period are mixed with weak and fabricated ones, so they must be read with care.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Taymiyyah, Minhaj as-Sunnah; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah; al-Qadi Abu Bakr ibn al-‘Arabi, al-‘Awasim min al-Qawasim.

EVENT	BRIEF EXPLANATION
The Battle of the Camel (36 AH)	Took place near Basrah between the side of ‘Ali and the side of ‘A’ishah, Talhah and az-Zubayr. Both sides set out seeking reconciliation, but fighting broke out. Afterwards ‘Ali sent ‘A’ishah back to Madinah with full honour
Move to Kufah	‘Ali made Kufah in Iraq the centre of his government
The Battle of Siffin (37 AH)	On the banks of the Euphrates, between the side of ‘Ali and the side of Mu‘awiyah in Syria; it ended in arbitration
The Arbitration (37 AH)	Abu Musa al-Ash‘ari represented ‘Ali and ‘Amr ibn al-‘As represented Mu‘awiyah
The Battle of Nahrawan (38 AH)	‘Ali fought the Khawarij, who declared the Companions disbelievers and killed Muslims

THE KHAWARIJ AND THE PROPHECY OF THE MESSENGER ﷺ

The ***Khawarij*** were originally followers of ‘Ali who broke away from him because they rejected the arbitration. They said: “Judgement belongs to Allah alone.” ‘Ali answered with his famous words: ***“A word of truth by which falsehood is intended”*** (Sahih Muslim 1066).

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had foretold this group before they appeared. Abu Sa‘id al-Khudri رضى الله عنه narrates that he said: “A group will break away when the Muslims are divided, and they will be fought

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by ***the nearer of the two parties to the truth***” (Sahih Muslim 1065). The scholars say this Hadith is proof that ‘Ali and his side were nearer to the truth.

THE PEACE OF AL-HASAN

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also said of his grandson al-Hasan: ***“This son of mine is a sayyid (leader), and perhaps Allah will make peace through him between two great groups of the Muslims”*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 2704). These words came true in 41 AH, after the death of ‘Ali, when al-Hasan handed the caliphate to Mu‘awiyah to unite the Ummah. That year is known as ***‘Am al-Jama‘ah***, the Year of Unity.

LESSONS

In these Hadith the Messenger of Allah ﷺ called both sides ***Muslims***. The disputes of the Companions are a test for the Ummah, not an excuse to revile them. The greatest lesson of the time of fitnah is the danger of division and extremism, as shown by the Khawarij, who recited the Qur'an but did not understand it.

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MARTYRDOM IN KUFAH

After Nahrawan, three of the remaining Khawarij plotted to kill three leaders on the same night: ‘Ali in Kufah, Mu‘awiyah in Syria, and ‘Amr ibn al-‘As in Egypt. Only the plot against ‘Ali succeeded.

SIRAH NOTE: THE LAST DAWN OF THE COMMANDER OF THE FAITHFUL

In ***Ramadan, 40 AH*** (January 661 CE), ‘Ali went out at dawn towards the mosque of Kufah, waking people for the prayer. ***‘Abd ar-Rahman ibn Muljam***, one of the Khawarij, attacked him with a poisoned sword and struck his head.

‘Ali instructed that Ibn Muljam be treated well as long as he himself was alive. If he recovered, he would decide himself whether to forgive or to seek retribution. If he died, Ibn Muljam was to be killed with a single blow only, and ***was not to be mutilated***.

‘Ali passed away two days later, at about ***63 years of age***. He was washed by his sons al-Hasan and al-Husayn, and al-Hasan led the funeral prayer. The location of his grave was kept secret for fear that the Khawarij would dig it up; historians differ about where it lies.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Sa‘d, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra (biography of ‘Ali); at-Tabari, Tarikh ar-Rusul wal-Muluk; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah.

HADITH: THE MOST WRETCHED OF PEOPLE

‘Ammar ibn Yasir رضى الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to ‘Ali and ‘Ammar while they were asleep on the ground during an expedition: “Shall I tell you about the two most wretched of people? The man of Thamud who slaughtered the she-camel (of the Prophet Salih عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ), and the one who will strike you, O ‘Ali, here — placing his hand on ‘Ali’s head — until this is soaked with blood — taking hold of his beard.”

Grade: HASAN according to some scholars because of its many routes — Musnad Ahmad No. 18321; al-Hakim, al-Mustadrak; al-Albani, Silsilat al-Ahadith as-Sahihah, No. 1088.

LESSONS

‘Ali was killed by a man who believed he was defending the religion. This is the danger of extremist thinking: it turns the murder of a great Companion into an “act of worship”. ‘Ali himself, on the other hand, while dying, still instructed that his killer be treated justly and not mutilated. Justice was not lost even before an enemy.

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THE CHARACTER OF ‘ALI

The biographies of the Companions describe ‘Ali as brave, learned, ascetic, just and generous. We have seen these qualities in the earlier chapters. The following table sums them up:

QUALITY	EVIDENCE IN THE STORY OF ‘ALI
Courage	Sleeping in the place of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ on the night of the Hijrah; single combat at Badr; the banner of Khaybar
Knowledge	“The best judge among us is ‘Ali” (Sahih al-Bukhari 4481); the prayer of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when sending him to Yemen
Trustworthiness	Returning the trusts of the people of Makkah; writing the Treaty of Hudaybiyah
Love for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ	Refusing to erase the words “Messenger of Allah” (Sahih al-Bukhari 2699)
Simplicity	A dowry of a single coat of mail; sleeping on the floor of the mosque (Abu Turab)
Humility	“I am only a man among the Muslims” (Sahih al-Bukhari 3671)
Justice	Instructing that his killer not be mutilated
Constancy in remembrance	Never abandoning the tasbih of Fatimah, even on the night of Siffin (Sahih al-Bukhari 5362)

LESSONS

The greatness of ‘Ali lies not in a single quality, but in their combination: a hero who was a scholar, a leader who was ascetic, a judge who was humble. Allah gathered in him qualities that are rarely found together in one person.

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SOURCES OF THE STORIES OF ‘ALI

The following table shows the source of each main story in this eBook and its level of strength, so that the reader can tell the authentic apart from the merely famous.

STORY	SOURCE	STATUS
First child to embrace Islam	Ibn Ishaq; books of sirah	Well known
Sleeping in the Prophet’s place	Ibn Ishaq; Musnad Ahmad	Well known
The Hutamiyyah coat of mail as dowry	Sunan Abi Dawud 2125	Sahih
Single combat at Badr	Sahih al-Bukhari 3965, 3969	Sahih
Duel with ‘Amr ibn ‘Abd Wudd	Ibn Ishaq	Well known
Writing the Treaty of Hudaybiyah	Sahih al-Bukhari 2699	Sahih
The banner of Khaybar	Sahih al-Bukhari 3701	Sahih
Killing Marhab	Sahih Muslim 1807	Sahih
Lifting the gate of Khaybar	Ibn Ishaq (unknown narrator)	Weak
The standing of Harun to Musa	Sahih al-Bukhari 4416	Sahih
The verse of Mubahalah	Sahih Muslim 2404	Sahih
The Hadith of the Cloak	Sahih Muslim 2424	Sahih
Announcing Bara’ah	Sahih al-Bukhari 4656	Sahih
Ghadir Khumm	Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi 3713	Sahih
Abu Turab	Sahih al-Bukhari 3703	Sahih
The tasbih of Fatimah	Sahih al-Bukhari 3705	Sahih
Love for ‘Ali as a sign of faith	Sahih Muslim 78	Sahih
“I am the city of knowledge and ‘Ali is its gate”	Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi 3723	Weak
Abu Bakr and ‘Umar as the best	Sahih al-Bukhari 3671	Sahih
The Khawarij and the party nearer to the truth	Sahih Muslim 1065	Sahih
The most wretched of people	Musnad Ahmad 18321	Hasan

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PEOPLE IN THE STORY OF ‘ALI

PERSON	ROLE
Abu Talib ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib	Father of ‘Ali; uncle and protector of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in Makkah
Fatimah bint Asad	Mother of ‘Ali; embraced Islam and emigrated
Ja‘far ibn Abi Talib رضى الله عنه	Elder brother of ‘Ali; leader of the emigrants to Abyssinia; martyred at Mu’tah
Fatimah az-Zahra’ رضى الله عنها	Daughter of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and wife of ‘Ali
al-Hasan and al-Husayn رضى الله عنهما	Sons of ‘Ali and grandsons of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ
Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah	Son of ‘Ali; narrator of Sahih al-Bukhari 3671
Hamzah ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib رضى الله عنه	Uncle of ‘Ali; with him in single combat at Badr (Series 1)
‘Ubaydah ibn al-Harith رضى الله عنه	Cousin of ‘Ali; martyred from his wounds at Badr
Zayd ibn Harithah رضى الله عنه	Disputed with ‘Ali and Ja‘far over the custody of Hamzah’s daughter
‘Amr ibn ‘Abd Wudd	Qurayshi champion killed by ‘Ali at the Trench (report of sirah)
Marhab	Jewish champion of Khaybar killed by ‘Ali (Sahih Muslim 1807)
Sahl ibn Sa‘d رضى الله عنه	Narrator of the Hadith of the banner of Khaybar and of Abu Turab
Sa‘d ibn Abi Waqqas رضى الله عنه	Narrator of the Hadith of the standing of Harun to Musa
Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman رضى الله عنهم	The three caliphs before ‘Ali; ‘Ali was their adviser
Mu‘awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan رضى الله عنه	Governor of Syria; differed with ‘Ali over retribution for ‘Uthman
‘Abd ar-Rahman ibn Muljam	The Khariji who killed ‘Ali in Kufah

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PLACES IN THE STORY OF ‘ALI

PLACE	EVENT	CHAPTER
Makkah	Birth of ‘Ali; embracing Islam; the night of the Hijrah	1–3
Madinah	Marriage to Fatimah; staying behind at Tabuk; pledge as caliph	4, 8, 15
Badr	Single combat with Hamzah and ‘Ubaydah	5
Hudaybiyah	Writing the peace treaty	6
Khaybar	The banner given to ‘Ali; Marhab killed	7
Mina	Announcing Surah Bara’ah	10
Yemen	Sent as a judge	10
Ghadir Khumm	The words “Whoever I am his wali…”	10
Basrah	The Battle of the Camel	15
Siffin (banks of the Euphrates)	The Battle of Siffin and the arbitration	15
Kufah	Centre of government; place of ‘Ali’s martyrdom	15–16

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TIMELINE OF ‘ALI’S LIFE

The following dates are estimates based on the books of sirah. Common Era years are given as a guide.

TIME	EVENT
About 600 CE	‘Ali is born in Makkah, about ten years before the prophethood
Childhood	Taken in by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when Quraysh were struck by drought
610 CE	Embraces Islam at about ten years of age
622 CE (1 AH)	Sleeps in the place of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ on the night of the Hijrah; follows him to Madinah
2 AH (624 CE)	Battle of Badr; marriage to Fatimah
3 AH (625 CE)	Battle of Uhud; birth of al-Hasan
5 AH (627 CE)	Battle of the Trench
6 AH (628 CE)	Writes the Treaty of Hudaybiyah
7 AH (628 CE)	The banner of Khaybar
9 AH (630 CE)	Stays in Madinah during Tabuk; announces Bara’ah at Mina
10 AH (632 CE)	Judge in Yemen; the Farewell Hajj and Ghadir Khumm
11 AH (632 CE)	Death of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and of Fatimah; pledge to Abu Bakr
13–35 AH	Adviser to Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman
Dhul-Hijjah 35 AH (656 CE)	Pledged allegiance as the fourth caliph
36 AH (656 CE)	Battle of the Camel; moves to Kufah
37 AH (657 CE)	Battle of Siffin and the arbitration
38 AH (658 CE)	Battle of Nahrawan against the Khawarij
Ramadan 40 AH (661 CE)	Struck by Ibn Muljam in Kufah and dies a martyr

LESSONS

The life of ‘Ali spans the whole early history of Islam: from the first revelation in Makkah to the time of the caliphate in Kufah. He was a witness to the birth of the Ummah, its defender on the battlefield, and its leader in its hardest trial.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ‘ALI

This chapter answers questions often asked about ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib رضى الله عنه. The answers are brief; details are in the earlier chapters.

1. WHAT WAS ‘ALI’S RELATIONSHIP TO THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ?

His cousin (the son of his uncle Abu Talib) and his son-in-law (the husband of Fatimah). He was also raised in the home of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

2. IS IT TRUE THAT ‘ALI WAS BORN INSIDE THE KA‘BAH?

This story is mentioned in some books, but it is not established with an authentic chain. The one better known in the history books as having been born inside the Ka‘bah is Hakim ibn Hizam.

3. AT WHAT AGE DID ‘ALI EMBRACE ISLAM?

According to the well-known view, at about ten. He was the first child to believe.

4. WHAT DOES THE TITLE ABU TURAB MEAN?

“Father of Dust”. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ called him that when he found dust stuck to his back as he slept in the mosque. It was the title ‘Ali loved most (Sahih al-Bukhari 3703).

5. WHAT WAS ‘ALI’S DOWRY TO FATIMAH?

His Hutamiyyah coat of mail (Sunan Abi Dawud 2125).

6. IS THE STORY OF ‘ALI LIFTING THE GATE OF KHAYBAR AUTHENTIC?

No. Its chain is weak. What is authentic is that the banner was given to ‘Ali and that Allah opened Khaybar through his hands (Sahih al-Bukhari 3701; Sahih Muslim 1807).

7. WHAT DOES “AS HARUN WAS TO MUSA” MEAN?

The closeness and trust of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ towards ‘Ali, just as Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ left Harun عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ to look after his people. He himself stressed: “Except that there is no prophet after me” (Sahih al-Bukhari 4416).

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8. WHO ARE THE AHL AL-BAYT?

The wives of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ are included in the Ahl al-Bayt according to the context of verse 33:33, and the Hadith of the Cloak shows that ‘Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn are also included (Sahih Muslim 2424).

9. IS THE HADITH “I AM THE CITY OF KNOWLEDGE AND ‘ALI IS ITS GATE” AUTHENTIC?

Many Hadith scholars grade it weak, and some even grade it fabricated (Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi 3723).

10. WHAT WAS ‘ALI’S VIEW OF ABU BAKR AND ‘UMAR?

He named them as the best of people after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr before the people (Sahih al-Bukhari 3671, 4240).

11. WHAT SHOULD OUR ATTITUDE BE TO THE DISPUTE BETWEEN ‘ALI AND MU‘AWIYAH?

Ahl as-Sunnah hold that ‘Ali was the rightful caliph and nearer to the truth, while all the Companions involved were exercising ijtihad. We hold back our tongues from reviling them and pray for them all (Al-Hashr 59:10).

12. WHO KILLED ‘ALI, AND WHEN?

‘Abd ar-Rahman ibn Muljam, one of the Khawarij, at dawn in Ramadan, 40 AH, in Kufah.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

The story of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib رضى الله عنه begins with a child who believed in the home of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and ends with a caliph martyred on his way to the mosque for the dawn prayer. Between those two points lie fifty years of a life filled with faith, knowledge, jihad and trial.

LESSON	FROM THE STORY OF ‘ALI
Faith from childhood	The seed of tawhid planted early grows the strongest
Courage that aims at guidance	“That one man is guided through you is better than red camels”
Knowledge and honesty	Denying claims of secret knowledge; knowledge comes from the Qur'an and the Sunnah
Simplicity	A coat of mail as dowry, a home without a servant, remembrance before sleep
Humility and respect	Acknowledging the virtue of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar
The danger of extremism	The Khawarij killed ‘Ali in the name of religion
Justice to the end	Instructing that his killer not be mutilated

‘ALI IN OUR LIVES

Every time we say Subhan Allah 33 times, al-hamdu lillah 33 times and Allahu akbar 34 times before sleeping, we inherit the gift of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to ‘Ali and Fatimah. Every time we choose simplicity, respect those who came before us, or reject extremism in religion, we follow in the footsteps of ‘Ali.

His story also teaches us to love all the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Loving ‘Ali does not mean hating others; indeed, ‘Ali himself respected his fellow Companions most of all. A heart that is clean towards them all is the heart that Allah praises in Surah Al-Hashr.

In sha’ Allah, the Heroes of Islam series will continue with the next figures. May Allah be pleased with ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib, Abu al-Hasan, Abu Turab, and gather us with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, his family and his Companions in His Paradise.

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SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

SURAH SABA’ 34:39

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39

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HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank.”

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa‘id and ‘Ali bin Hujr, from Isma‘il bin Ja‘far, from al-‘Ala’ bin ‘Abd al-Rahman, from his father ‘Abd al-Rahman bin Ya‘qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship (Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab), chapter on the encouragement of forgiveness and humility, Hadith No. 2588.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: sunnah.com/muslim:2588

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him.”

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa‘id and ‘Ali bin Hujr, from Isma‘il bin Ja‘far, from al-‘Ala’ bin ‘Abd al-Rahman, from his father ‘Abd al-Rahman bin Ya‘qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

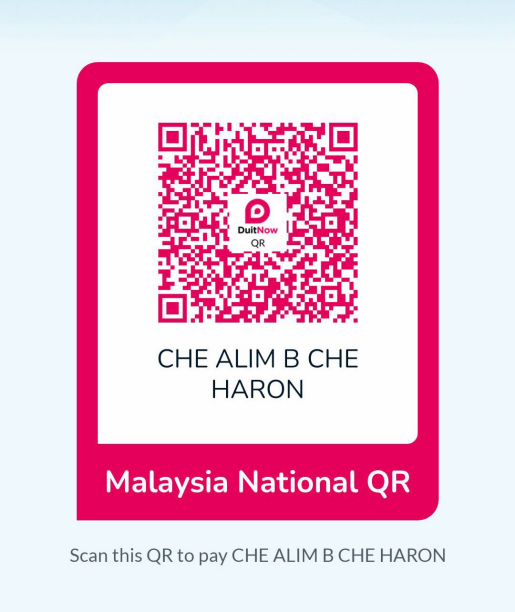
REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Wills (Kitab al-Wasiyyah), chapter on the reward that reaches a person after his death, Hadith No. 1631.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: sunnah.com/muslim:1631

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