

Hazrat Ali Ibn-e-Abi Talib

karram Allahu ta'ala wajhahu

The following are excerpts from the book '**Hadrat Ali, r. a.**' by Prof. Masud-ul-Hasan.

His birth

Parentage

Hadrat Ali was the son of Abu Talib, a prominent Quraish chief and custodian of the Holy Ka'bah. Abu Talib was so-called because he was the father of "Talib," the eldest brother of Hadrat Ali. The real name of Abu Talib was 'Abd Manaf.' However, he was more popularly known by his surname than by his real name. Abu Talib was the son of Abdul Muttalib. Abdul Muttalib was also a surname, his real name being Shaybah. Abdul Muttalib was the son of Hashim. Hashim was a great man of his line, and his descendants came to be known as Hashimites.

The mother of Hadrat Ali was Fatima. She was the daughter of Asad who was a son of Hashim. Fatima was a cousin of Abu Talib. Thus, both the father and mother of Hadrat Ali were Hashimites, and that was a great honour.

Ancestry of Hadrat Ali and the holy Prophet

The holy Prophet was the son of Abdullah who was the son of Abdul Muttalib. Abdullah and Abu Talib were real brothers. Abu Talib was thus the real paternal uncle of the holy Prophet of Islam. Hadrat Ali was the first cousin of the holy Prophet. The holy Prophet and Hadrat Ali had a common grandfather who was Abdul Muttalib.

Abdul Muttalib was the son of Hashim, who was the son of Abd Manaf, who was the son of Qusay, who was the son of Murrah, who was the son of Kaab, who was the son of Luayy, who was the son of Ghalib, who was the son of Fihir, who was the son of Malik, who was the son of Nadr, who was the son of Kannah. Beyond Kannah, the ancestry extended to Hadrat Ismail, and Hadrat Ibrahim, who flourished some 2,500 years earlier.

Date of birth

The exact date of birth of Hadrat Ali is not known with any degree of certainty. According to Traditions, Hadrat Ali was born on the 13th of *Rajab* in the 28th year of the Elephant era. The Elephant era, according to the annals of Arabia commenced when Abraha, the Christian Viceroy of Yemen, invaded Mecca with the intention of destroying the Ka'bah, and shifting the centre of pilgrimage to Yemen. The invasion failed, the Christian army had to beat a retreat without achieving its object. That marked the retreat of Christianity from the heartland of Arabia and paved the way for the rise of Islam.

The holy Prophet of Islam was born in the 'Year of the Elephant'. According to scholars, 'The Year of the Elephant' corresponds to the year 571 of the Christian Era [CE]. On this basis, the year of the birth of Hadrat Ali would have to be placed around 599 or 600 CE. In any case, Hadrat Ali was at the junction of two centuries, the sixth and the seventh.

Birth of Hadrat Ali

Hadrat Ali was born in unusual circumstances. On the 13th day of the holy month of *Rajab*, Fatima, the mother of Hadrat Ali, visited the Ka'bah to perform the pilgrimage. During the course of the pilgrimage and while circumambulating the Ka'bah, Fatima felt the pangs of childbirth. She retired to a secluded place in the precincts of the holy Ka'bah, and there Hadrat Ali was born. Hadrat Ali has thus had the unique honour to be born in the House of God. This unparalleled honour had endowed Hadrat Ali with a halo of sanctity that has become the subject of many legends. A hundred years later, Zain-ul-Abidin, a grandson of Ali (son of Hadrat Hussein), met an Arab woman at Najaf who told him that her

grandmother had helped Fatima on the occasion of Hadrat Ali's birth. She narrated that according to the account of her grandmother, the child was beautiful; a smile played on his lips; he did not cry like other children; and his birth did not cause any pain to his mother.

His name

Fatima wanted to name her child "Asad" after her father and Abu Talib wanted to name him Zaid. When both mother and the child returned home, the holy Prophet, and Hadrat Khadijah came to see her newborn child. Since his birth, he had not opened his eyes, and that worried both Fatima and Abu Talib. However, when the holy Prophet took the child in his lap, then he opened his eyes. So the first person that Hadrat Ali saw after his birth was the holy Prophet. When the holy Prophet was asked whether he approved of the child being named either Asad or Zaid, he said that since the child was born in the House of God, he should be named Ali (the word Ali being a derivative of Allah). Hadrat Ali had thus had the distinction of being named after Allah. No one before him had ever been so named. Furthermore, the name acquired more sanctity because it was suggested by the holy Prophet.

His Life

The biographer and his hero

A biographer can be considered the alter-ego of the hero, whose biography is written. There is a common bond between the biographer and the hero which transcends the considerations of time and space. In writing this biography of Hadrat Ali, I have had some communion with the soul of Hadrat Ali, and in some mysterious way, I had the necessary guidance in appreciating such events in the life of Hadrat Ali which were otherwise obscure. Just as a lover locks the image of his beloved in his heart, thus the biographer locks the image of his hero in his heart, and he can enter into a dialogue with such image.

Biography and history

There are differences in the approach between a biographer and a historian. A biography is usually an exercise in hero worship and the biographer is prone to paint the picture of his hero in bright colours. On the other hand, the approach of a historian is for the most part objective and constructively critical. Every hero of a biographer may not necessarily be a great

men from the viewpoint history. Where the hero is a great man in history, his biography has to be projected in the context of history. Hadrat Ali is indeed a great man in the history of mankind in general and the history of Islam in particular. In undertaking this study in the life of Hadrat Ali, I have had to act not only as a biographer, but as a historian as well. This means that besides narrating the main events in the Hadrat Ali's life, I must examine the impact of such events on history. As such, I must critically examine the main events in Hadrat Ali's life in order to ascertain their causes and effects. Of course such criticism has to be constructive.

Greatness of Hadrat Ali

Greatness is a phenomenon in which specially gifted persons who are endowed with extraordinary qualities appear on the world stage from time to time. History is the science which studies this phenomenon of greatness. Usually every person who scales the heights of greatness and acquires a place in history is a success from the worldly point of view. Here there is a peculiarity in the greatness of Hadrat Ali. He was great, indeed very great, but he was not a success from the worldly point of view in the conventional sense that the word 'success' is understood. We have thus to undertake a study to probe into the causes that militated against the success of Hadrat Ali from the worldly point of view in spite of his greatness. We will also have to consider how he is great when he did not succeed in the worldly sense.

Periods in the life of Hadrat Ali

The life of Hadrat Ali can be divided into three distinct periods. The first period comprises the first 32 years of his life and extends from 600 to 632 CE. I call this period the period of the education and action. It was during this period that he received his education under the loving care of the holy Prophet; imbibed with values of Islam; and acquired all the attributes that contribute to greatness. In the post-Hijri years, he emerged as the greatest warrior of the age. He distinguished himself as a great warrior in the battles of Badr, Uhud and the Ditch. His crowning success was his conquest of the Khhyber. In battle he killed more men [through hand-to-hand combat] than any other single man in history. All those who fought in the duels against him were invariably killed. He came to be known as the

"Lion of God."

He acted as a Justice, and acquired fame for his wise and well reasoned judgments. He acted as the Governor of Yemen, and acquired a good deal of experience as administrator. He had the honour of announcing the verses of the Holy Qur'an about the "Declaration of Immunity" to the people on behalf of the Holy Prophet on the location of the *Hajj*. When the holy Prophet died, Hadrat Ali was in the prime of his youth and he was enlightened, experienced, wise, valiant - the embodiment of virtue. He had expected that because of his outstanding qualities and his relationship to the holy Prophet, he would be chosen as the Caliph. He was however, passed over, and this state of affairs continued for 24 years when the office of the caliphate was held by Hadrat Abu Bakr, Hadrat Umar and Hadrat Othman.

This period constitutes the second period of the life of Hadrat Ali. During this time, although Hadrat Ali acted as the Counsellor to Caliphs, he generally kept aloof from active politics. I call this period as the period of inaction and contemplation. It was a period of inaction from the political point of view, because he kept aloof from politics. It was the period of contemplation from the spiritual point of view, for this period was spent by Hadrat Ali mostly in prayer, religious exercises and dialogue with God. The further he went from the world, the nearer he got to God.

The third period began when Hadrat Ali was elected as Caliph. This period only lasted for five years. I call this period the period of frustration. Hadrat Ali found the caliphate to be a bed of thorns. During those five years, he fought three battles: (i) the Battle of the Camel, (ii) the Battle of Siffin, and (iii) the Battle of Nahrawan. All three battles were fought against the Muslims and led to considerable bloodshed. It was a matter of the great shock for him, that instead of fighting against non-Muslims, he had to fight against Muslims. During this period, Hadrat Ali had to suffer from frustration because of repeated and continuous betrayals, even by men close to him. At the outset of his caliphate, he was betrayed by Banu Umayya when Muawiyah defied him and accused him of involvement in the murder of Hadrat Othman. He was betrayed by the people of Medina who did not respond to his call to undertake '*jihad*' against Muawiyah. He was betrayed by Talha and Zubair, who took the oath of allegiance to him and later defected. He was betrayed by Hadrat A'isha his mother-in-law, who took top arms against

him. He was betrayed by the people of Basra who had taken the oath of allegiance to him but later defected. At Siffin he was betrayed by his own army who would not fight when the victory was in sight. In the matter of arbitration, he was betrayed by his umpire Abu Musa Ashari, who instead of defending his cause, deposed him. He had to face the succession of the Kharijites who had originally fought on his side at the battle of Siffin. He was betrayed by Khurrity b. Raashid who had been his ally, but later revolted against him, and created trouble in Basra. He was betrayed by his own brother Aquil who was not satisfied with the allowance that Hadrat Ali gave him, and joined Muawiyah who rewarded him handsomely. He was betrayed by his cousin Abdullah b. Abbas when he had appointed as the Governor of Basra, and who left his post after misappropriated heavy fines from the Bait-ul-Mal. The final active betrayal came when Hadrat Ali was marred heard by a fanatic Kharijite.

Causes for the failure of Hadrat Ali from the worldly point of view

The usual phenomenon of greatness is that men succeed in life, and because of such success may acquire greatness. The usual law is that greatness is the consequence of success. *Nothing succeeds like success and nothing fails like failure*. This means that if you succeed, you become great, but if you fail, you are pushed aside and are forgotten. In Hadrat Ali's case we come across an extraordinary exception to this law of success and greatness. Hadrat Ali's greatness was of a different species. His greatness did not flow from success in life. Such greatness was inherent in him. It preceded his encounter with the world and it outlived his death, although he did not *succeed* in his worldly life as the word *success* is usually understood. Instead Hadrat Ali became more famous after death than when he was alive.

We will now consider the causes which militated against Hadrat Ali's success in spite of his greatness. His greatness was of such a dimension that he towered extremely high above the people around him. It was a case of Gulliver in the land of dwarfs. He was so high that he could not bend to meet the people, and that people were so low that they could not rise to meet him. As such a proper equation could not be established between Hadrat Ali and the people around him, and this was the main cause as to why he was frequently betrayed, and

why he did not succeed in the worldly affairs like ordinary people. Hadrat Ali very much ahead of his time and the people in that era simply could not keep up with him.

By the time Hadrat Ali came to office, a generation had passed since the death of the holy Prophet. During this period the Muslims had made large conquests. That had brought great wealth, and wealth had changed people's lives. A capitalist class sprang up among the Muslims. Hadrat Ali, a great Muslim of the old type, wanted to enforce the austere discipline of the original Islam. He himself led a very simple life, and aimed to follow in the steps of Hadrat Umar. Hadrat Ali, however, lacked the harshness of Hadrat Umar, and could not enforce the reforms he had in view. There was a gulf between Hadrat Ali and the capitalist class who wielded considerable influence. Hadrat Ali was very parsimonious in the spending of public funds while Muawiyah, who himself had led a luxurious life, was quite liberal in the spending of public funds. The capitalist class among the Muslims preferred Muawiyah to Hadrat Ali as they were given to the worldly way of life. While Hadrat Ali was more concerned with the Hereafter than this world, people around him were more concerned with the world than the Hereafter. This difference in outlook could not be bridged, and that is why there were many betrayals in the camp of Hadrat Ali. These betrayals weakened his position considerably for he was a man of strong principles and would not compromise with those principles. The people who were opposed to him were masters in propaganda and they did not hesitate to adopt any means, whether fair or foul, to gain their ends. Hadrat Ali lost the game because he would not abandon his principles at any cost.

Opposition of the Quraish

The Quraish had played the leading role in the extension of the Muslim dominion. Although Hadrat Ali was a Quraish, he could not win their support. In his book *Ali, the Superman*, Dr. Mohyuddin observed the following about the Quraish's opposition to Hadrat Ali:

"Hadrat Ali hoped to establish a world-Islamic Empire, a kingdom of God on earth, where peace was to reign supreme and mankind could move steadily towards perfection. That he failed so completely, is one of the and enigmas of Islamic history. The student is perplexed, and indeed despondent, when he discovers that the entire tribe

of the Quraish gave wholehearted support to the first two Caliphs, Abu Bakr who belonged to the tribe of Banu Adi, but not to their two successors, who also belonged to the Quraish tribe. It is baffling indeed that they obeyed Abu Bakr and Umar blindly, but deserted Othman and Ali, whom they bitterly opposed and finally murdered. From the moment that Ali came to power, he was resisted and obstructed by the Quraish, in spite of the fact that the aristocratic Quraish knew that Ali had noble blood in his veins, blood which had flowed in the veins of the holy Prophet, and that in addition he had those personal traits of character, which made him unique amongst all the people of his age. Ali's knowledge, piety, bravery, generalship, services for the propagation of Islam, and his achievements on the battlefield for the defence of Islam, made him superior to the first two Caliphs. He was superbly equipped to fill the office of the Caliph, yet the entire race seems to have taken up arms against him. In spite of his qualities of mind and spirit, he seems to have been sacrificed to the prevailing tribal spirit of his countrymen. Perhaps it was his superiority, more than anything else which led to his downfall. He knew himself to be superior to his contemporaries and he hated the petty tribal chiefs of the Quraish who were interested only in their self aggrandizement. What is more, he let them know his contempt for them, and frequently acted independently of them, in defiance of established custom."

Hadrat Ali, The Man

Physical appearance

Hadrat Ali was of medium-high height. He had a superb head with a face as noble as the man himself. His nose was straight, and his mouth was beautifully formed. His eyes were most commanding, being full of light and luster. There was a note of music in his voice. There was an aura of spirituality, and a strong personal magnetism about him. In his youth he was handsome and full of fiery vigour. When he was older he became corpulent and bulky. His gray hair gave way to baldness. His beard, however, remained thick and luxuriant, and he often dyed it red. He was stout, genial, charitable, meditative, reserved, and he was a man who towered the high above the people around him because of his intellectual and spiritual attainments.

Hadrat Ali, the man

Hadrat Ali was endowed with all the qualities that make a man great. He was not only great, he was regarded as a superman, an ideal man. He was the paragon of virtue. He enjoyed fame for his piety, and religious devotions. He was the embodiment of Islamic values. In his love of God and His Messenger, he was second to none. When praying to God, his absorption was so intense that he often lost consciousness. His mind was so sure that he could hold communion with God. He had learned the Holy Qur'an by heart, and he could quote appropriate verses to suit every occasion. He was most truthful and honest. He was most humble. He was simple in his habits. He avoided display and luxury. He lived the life of an ascetic. Even when he was Caliph, he lived in an ordinary house. The door of his house remained open to everyone at all times. He was most generous. He was most liberal in giving charity. He always came to the help of those who were distressed and involved in any difficulty. He looked after widows and orphans as if they were members of his own household. He was a warrior, a general, and a man conspicuous for his bravery and valour. Indeed he was braver than any other man in history. He fought hundreds of duels in his lifetime, and in all such encounters, his rivals were worsted. In the various battles, he killed a record number of enemies. He was skilful swordsman and his sword never missed its mark. In the various battles that he fought, he never turned his back. In the battle of Uhud, he received so many wounds that the nurses were unable to dress them. He bore the pain with great patience. The people around him misunderstood him, yet he did not lose patience. He was most chivalrous, and forgiving. He would forgive even his worst enemies. He was a great scholar. His book *Nahj ul-Balagha* is a living proof of his scholarship and erudition. There was a sense of humour about him, and sometimes he said things in a lighter vein to bring home the point he had in mind. He was a master of the simile and metaphor, and when bringing home a point he always illustrated it with appropriate metaphors and similes. He was a great philosopher, and there was great depth in his thoughts which were expressed in his writing. He was known for his wisdom. He was indeed wiser than Solomon. Most of his wise sayings have attained the dimensions of proverbs. He was a great orator. His sermons were most impressive. He was a master of rhetoric. He is regarded as the father of Islamic learning. He has left a deep mark on Islamic

theology. He was the founder of Arabic grammar. He was a great poet. He was the father of Sufism. He was the father of Islamic jurisprudence. He was an impartial judge and his famous judgments are the most valuable assets of Islamic jurisprudence. He was a skilful administrator. He introduced numerous reforms. He was an eminent political thinker for his political thought had an air of modernity about it. The greatness of Hadrat Ali as a man is multi-dimensional in character, and after the holy Prophet, he was the greatest Muslim whose memory is honoured by Muslims all over the world.

Wives and children of Hadrat Ali

The principal wife of Hadrat Ali was Hadrat Fatima, the favourite daughter of the holy Prophet. During the lifetime of Hadrat Fatima, Hadrat Ali at one stage proposed to marry a daughter of Abu Jahl. When the holy Prophet came to know of this proposal, he became annoyed and declared that if Hadrat Ali wanted to marry another wife, he should divorce Hadrat Fatima first. Thereupon Hadrat Ali abandoned the idea of marrying another wife. Hadrat Fatima was the mother of three sons and two daughters. The sons were Hasan, Hussain, and Mohsin. Mohsin died during childhood. The daughters were Zainab and Umm Kulthum.

After the death of Hadrat Fatima, Hadrat Ali married a number of wives. They were:

- (1) Umm-ul-Bunian who was the daughter of Hazam b. Khalid. Hadrat Ali had five sons from her, namely: Abdullah, Jafar, Abbas, Othman, and Umar. All of them except Abbas were martyred in the battle of Karbala along with Hadrat Hussain.
- (2) Khaula was the daughter of Jafar Hanfayah. She was the mother of the son known as Muhammad b. Hanfayah.
- (3) Umm Habib who was the daughter of Rabiah. She gave birth to a son Umar, in the daughter Ruqiya.
- (4) Asma who was the daughter of Umair. She was in the first instance married to Hadrat Jafar, an elder brother of Hadrat Ali. On the death of Hadrat Jafar, Hadrat Abu Bakr married her. After the death of Hadrat Abu Bakr she married Hadrat Ali. She had two sons from Hadrat Ali, namely: Yahya and Muhammad Asghar.
- (5) Laila who was the daughter of Masud. She was the mother of two sons, namely Ubaidullah and Abu Bakr.
- (6) Umama who was a daughter of Abi Al Aa's and

Hadrat Zainab and elder sister of Hadrat Fatima. Her son from Hadrat Ali bore the name of Muhammad Awsat.

(7) Umm Saeed who was a daughter of Urwa. She bore Hadrat Ali two daughters, namely: Umm-ul-Hasan and Rumia.

(8) Muhyat was a daughter of the famous Arab poet Imra-ul-Qais. She gave birth to a daughter who expired in infancy.

Hadrat Ali married nine wives in all including Hadrat Fatima. The number of wives at a time however did not exceed four. He had a few slave girls of whom Humia and Umm Shuaib bore him 12 daughters, Nafisa, Zainab, Ruqiya, Umm-ul-Karaam, Humaira, Umm Salma, Sughra, Khadija, Umm Hani, Umm Kulthum Jamana and Maimuna. Hadrat Ali was, in all, the father of 15 sons and 18 daughters. [total = 33 children]

Distinctions

Man of many distinctions

Hadrat Ali was a man of many distinctions. He owed his distinctions to his relationship with the holy Prophet, his valour, his knowledge and his spiritual attainments.

His birth

- He had the distinction of being a Hashimite both on the side of his father as well as his mother.
- He had the distinction of having a name which was derivative of the name of Allah. No other person before him bore the name of Ali.

His relationship with the holy Prophet

- On opening his eyes after his birth, the first person who he saw was the holy Prophet.
- The holy Prophet gave him his name.
- As an infant he had the honour of sucking the tongue of the holy Prophet.
- He was the first cousin of the holy Prophet. He became a ward of the holy Prophet, and was brought up as a family member of the household of the holy Prophet.
- He received his training under the loving care and guidance of the holy Prophet.
- When the holy Prophet declared his mission, he was the first teenager to be converted to Islam.
- Hadrat Khadijah and Hadrat Ali were the first two persons to pray behind the holy Prophet.
- When the holy Prophet invited the Hashimites to

a dinner, and asked them to aid him in his mission, Hadrat Ali was the only person to respond to the call of the holy Prophet.

- He risked his life for the sake of the holy Prophet and slept on his bed when the holy Prophet left for Medina and the Quraish youth besieged the house with a view to killing the holy Prophet.
- When the holy Prophet left for Medina, he entrusted to Hadrat Ali the task of returning the belongings of the people. They had placed their belongings in the custody of the holy Prophet for safekeeping.
- When the holy Prophet joined the Muhajirs and the Ansars in fraternity in Medina, he allied himself in fraternity with Hadrat Ali.
- The holy Prophet married his beloved daughter Fatima Zahra to Hadrat Ali.
- He was commissioned by the holy Prophet to write the agreement which came to be known as the Hdaybia Pact.
- After the conquest of Mecca, he had the unique distinction of standing on the shoulders of the holy Prophet and destroying the idols in the Ka'bah.
- He was entrusted by the holy Prophet with the special mission of announcing the Quraish Sura "*Al Bara'at*" (Immunity) to the people on the occasion of the pilgrimage.
- He was the only person to whom the holy Prophet referred to as the "*Maula*" [Master] of the Ummah
- When the holy Prophet proposed "*Mubahala*" [a special kind of debate] with the Christians and the Najran, he chose Hadrat Ali as his "second man."
- The progeny of the holy Prophet descends through Hadrat Ali.
- He was the only person to whom the holy Prophet imparted "inward knowledge."
- The holy Prophet conferred many appellations on Hadrat Ali such as *Hidar-iKarrar*, *Abu Turab*, *Asad-ullah*, *Syedul Arab*, etc.
- The holy Prophet declared his relationship to Hadrat Ali as that of Moses and Aaron.
- When the holy Prophet died, Hadrat Ali washed him and prepared his dead body for burial.

His valour

- He participated in all the wars of early Islam which were fought under the command of the holy Prophet.
- In all the battles, Hadrat Ali was the flag bearer

for the forces of the Muslims.

- He was the greatest man among the Muslims. For his unusual bravery, he won such titles as "*Asad Allah*," (the Lion of God) or "*Haidar-e-Karrar*" (the warrior who nobody could match.)
- During his lifetime, he killed over 1000 enemies. In the Battle of Badr alone killed two dozen people.
- He fought over a hundred duels and in all the duels, his adversaries, however strong, were killed.
- He was the conqueror of the Khyber.

His knowledge

- He was the most learned man of his age. He was a living encyclopaedia of knowledge and learning.
- After the holy Prophet, he was the most eloquent person of the age.
- Because of his knowledge and wisdom he is known as the "Second Solomon."
- His wise sayings and aphorisms have attained the status of classical proverbs.
- He was the first person to write a grammar of the Arabic language.
- Among the early Muslims, he was the only person whose collections of writings have come down to us and this collection are preserved under the title of *Nahj-ul-Balagha*.

He was a distinguished poet.

- He enjoys fame as the "father of rhetoric."
- He was an authority on Mathematics.
- He was a master of the science of Physics.
- He had a deep medical knowledge.
- After the holy Prophet, he is regarded as the greatest philosopher of Islam.
- He was a calligrapher and wrote in a beautiful hand.

His spiritual attainments

- He was the first person to learn the Qur'an by heart.
- According to the commentators, there are at least 300 verses in the holy Qur'an which have an implied reference to Hadrat Ali
- After the holy Prophet, he was the Chief Judge among the early Muslims. He is regarded as the "father of *fiqh*." [jurisprudence]
- He is the first revivalist among the Muslims. He interpreted the doctrines of Islam and

systematized them.

- He is regarded as the "father of Sufism." All schools of *Tasawwuf* [authentic Sufism] trace their origin to him.

His Appellations

Because of his multidimensional greatness and outstanding qualities, Hadrat Ali is known by many appellations, and each appellation illuminates one particular aspect of his excellence.

Some of these appellations are as follows:

- (1) *Murtada* - he with whom God is pleased
- (2) *Maula* - the master
- (3) *Haidar-i-Karrar* - the brave warrior against whom no one could stand
- (4) *Asad Allah* - the lion of God
- (5) *Al-Ghalib* - the victorious
- (6) *Sher-i-Yazdan* - the bravest man of the age
- (7) *Mushkil Kusha* - wine whom resolves the

- difficulties of the people
- (8) *Shah-i-Awlia* - the king of saints
 - (9) *Shah-i-Mominin* - the king of the pious
 - (10) *Abu Turab* - father of the earth
 - (11) *Amir-ul-Momineen* - leader of the faithful
 - (12) *Amin-ul-Momineen* - the trustee of the faithful
 - (13) *Imam-ul-Muttaqeen* - the leader of the God-fearing
 - (14) *Sayyid-ul-Arab* - the chief of the Arabs
 - (15) *Al Wasi* - the beneficiary under the Prophet's 'testamentary statement'
 - (16) *Al Hadi* - the guide
 - (17) *Al Zahid* - the chaste
 - (18) *Al Abi* - the pious
 - (19) *Al Salah* - the reformer

Hadrat Ali in the Holy Qur'an

References to Hadrat Ali in the Qur'an

According to the commentators of the Holy Qur'an, there are numerous verses in the Holy Qur'an which have implied references to Hadrat Ali. According to the Shi'ah commentators there are as many as 300 verses in the Holy Qur'an which have an implied reference to Hadrat Ali. According to the Sunni commentators this number is much smaller. According to the consensus of commentators, some of the verses which refer to Hadrat Ali are as follows:

Verse 33, Sura 33

"Allah's wish is but to remove uncleanness far from you, O Folk of the Household, and cleanse you with a thorough cleansing."

Hadrat Ali is obviously included in the expression "Folk of the Household."

Verse 61, Sura 3

"And whoso disputeth with thee concerning him, after the knowledge which hath come unto thee, say (unto him): Come! We will summon our sons and your sons, and our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves, then we will pray humbly (to our Lord) and (solemnly) invoke the curse of Allah upon those who lie."

This verse alludes the deputation of the Christians of Najran who came to Medina to hold a discussion with the holy Prophet about the truth of Islam. In this verse, the reference to "our sons, and our women"

includes references to Hadrat Ali, Hadrat Fatima, Hasan and Hussain.

Verse 3, Sura 9

"And a proclamation from Allah and His messenger to all men on the day of the Greater Pilgrimage that Allah is free from obligation to the idolaters, and (so is) His messenger. So, if ye repent, it will be better for you; but if ye are averse, then know that ye cannot escape Allah. Give tidings (O Muhammad) of a painful doom to those who disbelieve."

In pursuance of this verse, the holy Prophet commissioned Hadrat Ali to go to the 'Greater Pilgrimage' to announce the verses of the Sura "Immunity" wherein God absolved the Muslims from all obligations under treaties previously concluded with the idolaters.

Verse 23, Sura 42

"Say O Muhammad to mankind: 'No reward do I ask of you for this except the love of those near of kin.' "

According to Traditions, when the holy Prophet was asked as to who were the relatives alluded to in the verse, the holy Prophet said, "Verily, the reference is to Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Hussain."

Verse 21, Sura 45

"Do those who commit evil deeds suppose that We shall treat them like those who believe and do good deeds - that their lives and their deaths shall be equal. No, bad is their judgment."

According to Ibn Abbas, "the doers of good" cited to in this verse, refer to to Hadrat Ali, Hadrat Hamza and Hadrat Ubaydah b. Harith.

Verse 17, Sura 11

"Is he to be counted equal with those who rely on a clear proof from his Lord and the witness from Him recites it, and before it was the Book of Moses, and example and a mercy? Such believe therein. Whoso disbelieves therein, the Fire is his appointed place. So be not you in doubt concerning it. Lo, it is the truth from your Lord, but most of mankind believe it not."

One day, in one of his sermons, Hadrat Ali said that

there was hardly a man from among the Quraish who had not been referred to in the Holy Qur'an. Hadrat Ali was asked to recite some verse which alluded to him. Thereupon he recited the above verse.

Verse 4, Sura 66

"Now if both of you turn to Allah repentant, it will be better for you as your hearts are already so inclined. But if you backup each other against him, surely Allah is his helper, and Gabriel and the righteous among the believers, and furthermore, all other angels too are his helpers."

According to Ibn Abbas, the holy Prophet said that the "righteous men" alluded to as "helper" in this verse, refers to Hadrat Ali.

Verse 18, Sura 32

"Is he who is a believer like him who is an evil doer? Verily they are not equal."

According to Ibn Abbas, "believer" in this verse refers to Hadrat Ali, and "evil doer" refers to Walid b. Utba.

Verse 54, Sura 25

"And He it is Who created man from water, and has appointed for him kindred by blood, and kindred by marriage, and your Lord is all powerful."

According to the Traditions, "kindred by blood and kindred by marriage" refers to Hadrat Ali.

Verse 36, Sura 24

"The lamp of light is lit in houses which Allah has allowed to be exalted so that His name be remembered in them. Therein He is glorified in the mornings and evenings."

According to the Traditions, the holy Prophet said that the "houses" referred to in this verse include the house of Hadrat Ali and Hadrat Fatima.

Verse 55, Sura 5

"Your friend is only Allah and His Messenger, and the believers who observed prayer and pay the poor rate."

According to the Traditions, "the believers" referred to in this verse includes a reference to Hadrat Ali.

Verse 12, Sura 58

"O ye who believe! When you consult the Messenger in private, give alms before your consultation. That is better and purer for you. But when you do not find the wherewithal, Lo! Allah is Forgiving and Merciful."

According to the Traditions, when this verse was revealed the holy Prophet wanted to fix an amount which every person who consulted the holy Prophet should pay. Hadrat Ali contended that since the people were generally poor no amount should be fixed and the option should rest with the person concerned, to pay whatever alms he could.

Verse 181, Sura 7

"And of those We have created, there are people that guide men in the truth, and do justice therewith."

According to the Traditions, the reference to "people that guide men with truth" includes a reference to Hadrat Ali.

Verse 57, Sura 43

"And when the son of Mary is cited as an example, lo, the people jeer thereat."

According to the Traditions, the holy Prophet is said to have told Hadrat Ali that one day his example would be like that of Jesus Christ. A section of the people would love him so much that they would willingly die for him, whereas there would also be other people who would fight against him.

Verse 29, Sura 48

"Muhammad is the Apostle of God. And those with Him are firm against the disbelievers, and Merciful amongst themselves. Thus see them bowing down, and prostrating themselves in prayer, seeking grace from Allah and His pleasure. Their mark is upon their faces, being the traces of prostrations. Such is their description in the Torah. And their description in the gospel is like a seed that sends forth its sprout, then makes its strong; it then becomes thick, and stands on its stem, delighting the sowers, and causing the disbelievers to burn with rage at the sight of them. Allah has promised to those of them who believe and do good works, forgiveness and a great We reward."

According to the commentary of Imam Abu Musa, this verse was revealed in favour of Hadrat Ali

Verse 43, Sura 13

"And those who disbelieve say 'you are not a Messenger' say to them, 'sufficient is Allah as the witness between me and you, and so is he who possesses knowledge of the Book."

According to commentators, the phrase "*whosoever has the knowledge of the Book*" alludes to Hadrat Ali.

Verse 64, Sura 8

"O Prophet! Allah is sufficient for you and for such of the followers as follow you."

According to commentators, the phrase "*such of the followers as follow you*" alludes to Hadrat Ali.

Assessment of Hadrat Ali by Eminent Muslims

Abdullah b. Masud used to say that throughout Arabia there was not a more impartial judge than Ali. He also said that Hadrat Ali was the founder of Arabic grammar.

Abu Saeed Khudiri held that he could easily detect a hypocrite by his enmity towards Ali.

Imam Hanbal said: "Ali had numerous enemies, and all of them tried to find fault with him, but they searched in vain, and could not find any flaw in him. At long last the joined hands with Muawiyah, and declared war on Ali. When they failed to defeat him by fair means, they took to treacherous and defeat folk courses to defeat him."

Ibn Athir, the great biographer held: "Ali was the first Caliph and both of his parents were pure Hashimites. He was so judicially minded that he could not put up with the dishonesty of his relations or friends, and was so much engrossed in piety that at the time of his marriage with Fatima, he did not possess anything save a camel skin on which he fed his camels in the day, and which he converted into a bed sheet at night. The Prophet in his table talk has not extolled anyone of his Companions as much as he had Ali. Surely, Ali never spoke a lie in his lifetime."

Dareema was a sharp tongued Arab lady who was very loud in the praise of Hadrat Ali and the denunciation of Muawiyah. After the death of Hadrat

Ali, Muawiyah summoned her to his court and inquired of her why she had supported Ali. She said that she had done so because Hadrat Ali was a lover of justice, who honoured the pious and sympathized with the poor.

Umar b. Abdul Aziz, the Umayyad Caliph was asked who he considered to be the most pious man in the world. He said: "Ali excelled mankind in piety. Not only did he practice its virtues, but he tried zealously to reform his friends, associates, acquaintances, and all those who came into contact with him."

Masudi, the great historian wrote, "If the glorious name of being among the first Muslims, a comrade of the Prophet in exile, his faithful Companion in the struggle for the faith, his intimate friend in life and his kinsman, is he truth knowledge of his teachings and of the Book, if self abnegation and practice of justice, if honesty, purity and love of truth, if the knowledge of law and science constitutes a claim to pre-eminence, then all must regard Ali as one of the foremost Muslims."

Shah Wali Ullah observed: "Chivalry and strength of character, humanity and sincerity which are the attributes of great men were represented in abundance by Hadrat Ali. He is the father of Islamic learning, and his intellectual attainments were due to the ideal training of the holy Prophet. He was a *Hafiz* and a great authority on the Qur'an."

Syed Amir Ali assessed the achievements of Hadrat Ali in the following terms: "His bravery won him the title of the "Lion of God," and his learning that of the "Gate of Knowledge." Chivalrous, humane, forbearing to the verge of weakness as a ruler, he was a man before his time. Most of the grand undertakings initiated by Umar for the welfare of the people were due to his counsel. Always ready to succour the weak and to redress the wrongs of the injured, the accounts of his valorous deeds are recited with enthusiasm from the bazaars of Cairo to those of Delhi. With his dying breath he inculcated lessons of charity, love, humility and self abnegation to his sons. He expressly ordered them that no harshness should be shown towards his murderer, who should be executed with one blow."

Ata Mohyuddin: In his book, *Ali, the Superman*, Dr. Ata Mohyuddin assessed Hadrat Ali in the following terms: "Ali meant many different things to many generations, each of whom has found something to inspire it out of the diverse wealth of his mind. During his lifetime, he was

thought of primarily as a warrior fighting at first in the battles of God, and later for a decade against schismatics. He was also respected for his knowledge and learning, and in later years many thought of him as a saint. But it was not until after his death that the effect which he had exercised over the ethical life of his time began to be appreciated. He was the founder of the movement which aimed to rejuvenate the ethical life of the Muslims. The Arabs had begun to forsake the unity of Islam in favour of the tribal laws of the "Days of Ignorance." Ali had to fight against the disintegrating social forces that were everywhere around him and attempted almost singlehandedly to restore the religious policy of Islam. That he succeeded as well as he did was due to moral earnestness of his own character, and to the colossal store of spiritual knowledge from which he drew his strength. In subsequent ages, his ethical pronouncements which fell largely on deaf ears during his lifetime, were to have an invigorating effect on the Islam that he served so well. The influence of Ali, was to continue to make itself felt long after his death, and to recreate earnestness among the believers. It still makes itself felt today.

Allama Iqbal In his poem "*Asrar-i-Khudi*," Allama Iqbal paid tribute to Hadrat Ali in the following terms:

**"Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet was a man of many qualities.
He gave fresh vigour to Faith.
And brought honours to the community of the faithful.
He developed self-disciplines and killed avarice.
A person who knows and controls himself rules the world."**

Assessment of Hadrat Ali by Western Scholars

Philip Hitti In his book *History of the Arabs*, Professor Hitti assessed the character of Hadrat Ali as follows: "Valiant in battle, wise in council, eloquent in speech, true to his friends, magnanimous to his foes, Ali became both the paragon of Muslim nobility and chivalry, and the Solomon of Arabic tradition around whose name, poems, proverbs, sermonettes and anecdotes innumerable have clustered. He had swarthy complexion, large black eyes, bald head, a thick and long white beard, and was opulent and of medium stature. His sabre *Dhul Fiqar*, which was

wielded by the Prophet on the battlefield of Badr, has been immortalized in the words of this verse found engraved in many medieval Arab records, "**no sword can match *Dhul Fiqar*, and no young warrior can compare with Hadrat Ali.**" A later Fidayan movement which developed ceremonies and insignia savouring of medieval European chivalry and the modern scouts movement, took Ali for its father and model. Regarded as wise and brave by all the Islamic world, as the idealistic and exemplary by many Fidayan and dervish fraternities, as sinless and infallible by his partisans, and even held to be the incarnation of the deity by the Ghulah (extremists) among them, he whose worldly posthumous influence was second only to that of the holy Prophet himself. The throngs of pilgrims that still stream to his Mashhad at Najaf and to that of his son Husain, the Shi'iah arch-saint and martyr at nearby Karbala, and the passion-play enacted annually on the tenth of Muharram through the Shi'iah world, testify to the possibility that death may avail a Messiah more than life."

Sir William Muir In his book, *The Caliphate, its Rise, Decline and Fall*, Sir William Muir paid his tribute to Hadrat Ali in the following words: "In the character of Ali, there are many things to commend him for. Mild and beneficent, he treated Basra when prostrate at his feet with a generous forbearance. Towards theocratic fanatics, who wearied his patience by incessant intrigues and senseless rebellion, he showed no vindictiveness. Excepting Muawiyah, the man of all others whom he ought not to have estranged, he carried the policy of conciliating his enemies to a dangerous extreme. In compromise indeed and in procrastination lay the future of his caliphate. With greater vigour, spirit, and determination, he might have averted the schism which for a time threatened the existence of Islam, and which has never ceased to weaken it. Ali was wise in counsel and many an adage and astute proverb have been attributed to him. But like Solomon, his weakness was for others more than himself.

Charles Mills In his book *A History of Muhammadanism*, Charles Mills assessed Hadrat Ali as follows: "As the chief of the family of Hashim, and as the cousin and son-in-law of him whom the Arabians respected almost to idolatry it is apparently incredible that Ali was not raised to the caliphate immediately after the death of Muhammad p.b.u.h. In the advantage of his birth and marriage was

added the friendship of the Prophet. The son of Abu Talib was one of the first converts to Islam, and was Muhammad's favourite appellation of him, the Aaron of a second Moses. His talents as an orator, and his intrepidity as the warrior commanded to a nation in whose judgment courage was virtue and eloquence was wisdom. But the pride and loftiness of his spirit endured not to caution inseparable from the schemes of policy, and continually precipitated him into rashness. His opposition to Abu Bakr would not have ceased if Fatima had lived. But upon her death, six months after that of her father, the Companions of Muhammad relaxed in their friendship to his family. In the reign of Abu Bakr, Umar and Othman, a dignified independence was preserved by Ali. On the invitation of the Caliphs, he assisted in the councils of Medina, but he was principally occupied in the tranquil pursuits of domestic life and the various duties of his religion. On the murder of Othman the Egyptians who were at Medina offered him the caliphate. Indignant that the power of nomination should be usurped by the strangers, Ali declared that the suffrages of the inhabitants of Mecca and Medina alone could be available. The public voice soon echoed the opinion of the murderers, and the scruples of Ali were soon removed. In apprehension of the enmity of A'isha, his relentless fall, and of the whole family out of Muawiyah, he declined to receive in private the proffered allegiance of the chiefs. With his accustomed simplicity, he proceeded to the mosque clad in a cotton gown, a coarse turban on his head, his slippers were in one hand, and a bow instead of a staff, occupied the other."

Professor Nicholson In his book *A Literary History of the Arabs*, Nicholson remarked: "Ali was a gallant warrior, a wise counsellor, a true friend and generous foe. He excelled in poetry and in eloquence. His verses and sayings are famous throughout the Muhammadan East, though few of them can be considered authentic. He can be compared with Montrose and Bayard in the fineness of spirit. He had no talent for the stern realities of statecraft and was overmatched by unscrupulous rivals who knew that war is the game of deceit. Thus his career was in one sense a failure - his authority as Caliph was never admitted while he lived, by the whole community. On the other hand he has exerted down to the present-day a posthumous influence only second to that of Muhammad himself. Within a century of his death, he came to be regarded as the

Prophet's successor *jure divine*; as a blessed martyr, sinless and infallible, and even by some as an incarnation of God. The Ali of the Shi'ite legend is not a historical figure glorified, rather he symbolizes in a purely ethical fashion, the religious aspirations and political aims of a large section of the Muslim world."

John J. Pool In his book *Studies in Muhammadanism*, John J. Pool observed: "The fact is that Ali was too mild a man for the stirring times in which he lived. He was too slow to resolve and too undecided in action. At any time he preferred compromise and delay to energy and promptness, and with fatal results. The death of Ali was an epoch-making event. We come now to the parting of ways. Henceforward the Commanders of the Faithful ceased to be elected by the votes of the people of Medina and Mecca. Arabia was no longer to be the seat of temporal power. For the future, in Islam, might was to take the place of right."

Edward Gibbon In his book *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Edward Gibbon observed the following about the assassination of Hadrat Othman and the succession of Hadrat Ali: "A tumultuous anarchy of five days after the martyrdom of Othman was appeased by the inauguration of Ali. His refusal would have provoked a general massacre. In this painful situation, he supported the becoming pride of the chief of the Hashimites; declared that he would rather serve than reign; rebuked the presumption of the strangers and required the formal, if not the voluntary, assent of the chiefs of the nation. He has never been accused of promoting the assassination of Othman, though Persia indirectly and secretly celebrates the festivals of that holy martyr. The quarrel between Othman and his subjects was assuaged by the early mediation of Ali, and Hasan, the eldest of his sons, was insulted and wounded in the defence of the Caliph."

While commenting on the failure of Hadrat Ali and matters pertaining to statecraft, Gibbon observes as follows: "A life of prayer and contemplation had not chilled the martial activity of Ali, but in a mature age, after a long experience of mankind, he still betrayed in his conduct the rashness and indiscretion of youth."

Thomas Carlyle In his book *On Heroes and Hero Worship*, Thomas Carlyle observed: "As for this young Ali, one cannot but like him. A noble minded creature, as he shows himself, now and always afterwards, full of affection, of fiery daring

something chivalrous in him, brave as a lion, yet with a grace, truth and affection worthy of Christian knighthood. He died by assassination in the mosque at Kufa, death occasioned by his own generous fairness, confidence in the fairness of others. He said: if the wound proved not unto death, they must pardon the assassin, but if it did, they must slay him straightaway, so that the two of them in the same our might appear before God, and see which side of that quarrel was the just one."

Dr. Henry Stubbe In his book *An Account of the Rise and Progress of Muhammadanism*, Dr. Henry Stubbe observed: "Ali was of a brown complexion, a little man with a somewhat large belly, he had a contempt of the world, its glory and pomp. He feared God much, gave many alms, was just in all his actions, humble and affable, of an exceedingly quick wit, and of an ingenuity that was not common. He was exceedingly learned, not only in those sciences that terminate in speculation, but those which extend to practice."

Major Price In his book *Memoirs of the Principal Events of Muhammadan History*, Major Price observed: "His virtues and extraordinary qualities have been the subject of voluminous panegyrics, and his war-like exploits from his youth upwards have been particularly celebrated in the "*Khawer Nama*," a poem well-known in the East and which may perhaps contend in extravagance with the wildest effusions of European romance. With his acknowledged talents and magnanimity, it is however, difficult to account for the train of civil mischief and perpetual discontent which continued to disturb him for the whole of his reign. His gallant spirit was probably incapable of bonding to the ordinary shifts of political craft, and it is perhaps true that the Arabian chiefs were not yet sufficiently disciplined to see the sovereign authority quietly monopolized by any particular family."

J.J. Saunders In his book *A History of Medieval Islam*, J.J. Saunders observed: "His moral qualities were respectively recognized. He was a brave fighter and an eloquent orator and a loyal friend. Many things of his are quoted to prove his mastery of proverbial wisdom, a gift highly honoured among the Semites. He displayed towards his foes a patience and magnanimity expressive of a humane and generous disposition. His religion was founded on genuine piety. He was shocked by the growing luxury and corruption of the age, and to his many doubts whether Othman was an upholder or a violator

of the law may be attributed to the hesitating and ambiguous attitude he adopted towards the regicides, which proved so fatal to his rule and reputation. As his temper was indolent, he drifted rather than led. He was easily outmatched by the astute and the forceful, and he lacked the commanding personality to impose his will on a turbulent society. His authority was challenged by the political shrewdness of Muawiyah, and the furious zealotry of the Kharajites, his inability to overcome either delivered Islam to schism and grave believers were driven to see in a reunion of the Empire under the Umayyads the only escape from tribal and sectarian anarchy. Yet he has been raised by a powerful sect little below that of Muhammad himself, the Shi'ah or party of Ali laid down as an article of faith that he was designated by God and the Prophet to be the lawful Caliph and Imam of the Islam, his three predecessors being treated as usurpers, and that Divine Revelation continued to be interpreted by his descendants, and his supposed grave at Najaf, a sandhill on the edge of the desert six miles west of Kufa, is annually visited by thousands of devout pilgrims who curse his supplanters and revere him as the friend of God and the first of Imams."

The Sayings of Hadrat Ali

Hadrat Ali was the embodiment of knowledge and wisdom. Some of the Sayings of Hadrat Ali, which breathe wisdom and have attained the dimension of aphorisms are on record. Some of these are:

- Fear God and you will have no cause to fear anyone.
- Resignation to the Will of God is the cure for the disease of the heart.
- The word of God is the medicine of the heart.
- Lead such a life that when you die people will mourn you, and while you are alive they long for your company.
- The days of your life pass away like clouds, so do good while you are alive.
- Of all the follies, the greatest is to love the world.
- Opportunity is swift of flight but slow to return.
- Pride, cowardice and miserliness are bad for man but good for women.
- The most happy is he to whom God has given a good wife.
- He who knows himself knows God.
- Do not sell your conscience for anything but

- heaven.
- The disease of the heart is worse than the disease of the body.
 - To fight against one's desires is the greatest of all fights.
 - The strongest among you is he who subdues himself.
 - Wealth and greed are the roots of all evil.
 - Riches without faith are the greatest poverty.
 - A man's worth depends upon the nobility of his aspirations.
 - Knowledge enlivens the soul.
 - The learned lives although he dies.
 - The sum total of excellence is knowledge.
 - To respect the learned is to respect God.
 - Generosity hides shortcomings.
 - The wealth of a miser is as useless as a pebble.
 - Desire is one's most inveterate enemy.
 - Those who walk on the surface of the earth shall one day be interred in it.
 - Every breath of man brings him nearer to death.
 - People are asleep as long as they are alive, they are awakened when they die.
 - Patience is the fruit of faith.
 - Virtue never dies.
 - A man's glory from his virtue is greater than the glory of his pedigree.
 - No shelter is safer than piety.
 - A man's behaviour is the index of his mind.
 - Courtesy costs nothing but buys everything.
 - Clemency graces power.
 - Jealousy devours virtue as fire devours fuel.
 - He that lends a listening ear to reproach is one of those that deserve reproach.
 - Forgiveness is the crown of greatness.
 - Carnal appetites are nets spread by the devil.
 - Every arrow does not hit the mark, nor is every prayer granted.
 - Ostentatiousness spoils prayers.
 - Fear none but your sins.
 - He who praises you murders you.
 - A man who praises himself displays his deficiency of intellect.
 - Honour your parents and your sons will honour you.
 - A man is hidden under his tongue.
 - The tongue of a wise man lies behind his heart.
 - The tongue pierces deeper than the spear.
 - He who purifies his heart from doubt is a believer.
 - The opinion of a wise man is an oracle.
 - To seek council is to go to the fountain of guidance.
 - Association with a fool is tyrannical to the soul.
 - God hastens the fall of tyrants.
 - Tyranny leads to moral cowardice.
 - A tyrant's success is his moral defeat.
 - It is better to die than to beg.
 - When a man begs, he loses his faith.
 - Hajj is the *jihad* of every believer in faith.
 - A wise enemy is better than a foolish friend.
 - Silence is the best reply to a fool.
 - The best speech is one that is short and reasonable.
 - Speech is like a medicine, a small dose will cure but an excess will kill.
 - He that has no courage has no religion.
 - His grief is long whose hope is short.
 - The right of freedom of speech consists in speaking the truth.
 - Repentance washes away sins.
 - Folly is an incurable disease.
 - To assist the wrong is to oppress the right.
 - Sinning is a disease, repentance is its medicine, and abstinence from it is a sure cure.
 - Sorrow makes a man old before his time.
 - Pride impedes progress and mars greatness.
 - To forgive is the crown of greatness.
 - He who understands humanity seeks solitude.
 - Right is the best argument.
 - Misrepresentation spoils narration.
 - As a man's wisdom increases so his desire to speak decreases.
 - He who seeks to do justice with men, let him desire for them what he desires for himself.
 - The greatest sin is the sin which the sinner considers to be ordinary.
 - Contentment is the asset which is never exhausted.
 - Governments are a trial for man.
 - He who fights against the truth, the truth will defeat him.
 - Finding fault with others is one's greatest fault.
 - Haste is a species of madness.
 - Greed is perpetual enslavement.
 - He who does not know his own worth, is doomed to destruction.
 - The best investment is one with which duties are performed.
 - Anger is a fire kindled, he who restrains anger extinguishes the fire; he who gives vent to it is the first to be consumed by it.

- *Jihad* is the highway of prosperity.
- None is more solitary than a miser.
- Knowledge is the ornament of the rich and the riches of the poor.
- Knowledge is the sum total of excellence; he who teaches you a letter binds you with a fetter of gratitude.
- As long as we do not hope we do not fret.
- He who indulges in jokes and loose talk loses a part of his wisdom.
- Truth is bitter, but its result is sweet; falsehood appears to be sweet but it is poisonous in its effect.
- Miserliness is the root of many evils.
- Knowledge and practice are twins, and both go together for there is no knowledge without practice, and no practice without knowledge.
- He who dissembles, plays with his honour.
- When God wants to humiliate a person, He deprives him of knowledge.
- When your power increases, decrease your desires accordingly.
- He who listens to a backbiter loses a friend.
- It is not justice to decide a case on mere conjecture.
- He who does not know his own worth is shameful.
- He who practices thrift will never be in want.
- He who does not know should not be ashamed to learn.
- Patience is to faith what the head is to the body. When patience goes, faith goes; when the head goes, the body goes.
- The grace of God is the best guide.
- A good disposition is the best companion.
- Wisdom is the best friend.
- Good breeding is the best inheritance.
- There is nothing more hateful than pride.
- Be among men like a bee among birds.
- Mix with the people with your tongue, but be separate from them in your deeds.
- Be generous, but do not be a spendthrift.
- Do not run after the world, let the world to run after you.
- A wise man is he who does not despair of the bounty and mercy of God.
- He who is aware of his own faults is oblivious to the faults of others.
- What the eye sees the heart preserves.
- The vision of the eye is limited; the vision of the heart transcends all barriers of time and space.
- Do not be misled by appearances for these are apt to be deceptive.
- Do not have too many irons in the fire; concentrate on one thing at a time.
- What you do not like for yourself, do not like it for others either.
- Contentment is the treasure which is never exhausted.
- The advice of old men is dearer than the bravery of young men.
- That knowledge is superficial which is merely on the tongue; that knowledge is real which demonstrates itself in your practice.
- To waste time is one's greatest loss.
- He who knows to keep his secret, knows the way to success.
- Foresight is the way to safety.
- No relationship is stronger than the relationship that exists between man and God.
- Enlighten the heart with prayers.
- Strengthen your heart with faith.
- Suppress all lust with piety.
- Do not sell the Hereafter for the world.
- Do not speak in a state of ignorance.
- Refrain from unnecessary talk.
- Do not tread the path from which you can apprehend the danger of running astray.
- In the affairs of God, do not be afraid of the accusations of evil mongers.
- In all that you do, seek the protection of God.
- Do not covet what is undesirable.
- If you seek the truth, neither straight from the right path nor be assailed by doubts.
- Do not become a slave to your desires.
- That wealth is no wealth which brings dishonour.
- Whatever harm accrues of silence can be remedied, but whatever harm is done because of speech cannot be remedied.
- It is better to restrain your desires than to stretch your hand before others.
- A little that is burned because of honest labour is better than a larger amount gained through dishonest means.
- Guard well your secret.
- He who seeks more than what is necessary indulges in error.
- To oppress the weak is the worst tyranny.
- Do not bank on false hope for that is the capital of the dead.
- A wise man takes a lesson even from a minor lapse.

- Overpower desire and suspicion by patience and faith.
- He who does not take the middle course strays.
- A stranger is he who has no friends.
- When hopes are frustrated despair becomes the way of life.
- He who trusts the world the world betrays him.

Similes of Hadrat Ali

Hadrat Ali had the peculiar skill to explain things by giving appropriate similes. In his various addresses and sermons, we come across many instances of his brilliance of expression that brings home the truth through these interesting examples.

The world: The world is like a serpent which was outwardly very soft-skinned but poisonous within.

Falsehood: Like the feathers of a peacock, falsehood might look very attractive, but was as ugly as of feet of a peacock. Falsehood has no legs to stand upon.

The unbelievers: Unbelievers are like bats who can see in the dark, but who are blinded by daylight and cannot see.

The people who did not respond to his call: When Hadrat Ali exhorted the people of Iraq to respond to his call for war against Muawiyah, they did not respond to his call. He said, "You are like a pregnant woman who undergoes the ordeal of childbirth, but gives birth to a dead child."

The tree and the fruit: When after the death of the holy Prophet, the Quraish based their claim to the caliphate on the grounds that they belonged to the same tree as the holy Prophet. Hadrat Ali said, "It is strange that they look to the tree, but neglect its fruit."

The people of Basra: When the people of Basra, who had originally taken the oath of allegiance to him, but later chose to fight against him, Hadrat Ali said that these people were near the water but far from the sky.

People of the age of ignorance: Referring to the people of the age of ignorance in the pre-Islamic era, Hadrat Ali said that they were like an egg which is broken in the nest.

The people of Kufa: Addressing the people of Kufa, Hadrat Ali said: "When I invite you to fight, your eyes begin to move in their sockets as if you are in the agony of death. You are like camels whose herdsman have disappeared, and when these animals are collected on one side, they scatter on

the other side."

Mughira b. Shu'aba: Mughira was regarded by the Quraish as a wise man. When Mughira favoured Muawiyah, Hadrat Ali said, "Mughira has profited from Islam only to the extent of seeking worldly gains. He is oblivious to the Hereafter."

The people who run after the world: About the people who run after the world, Hadrat Ali said, "Those people who chase after the world are like beasts who lunge at one another, with the strong oppressing the weak."

The people who are not deceived by the world: About the people who are not deceived by the world, Hadrat Ali said, "Those who have understood the deceptive character of the world, do not feel distressed on death. They are like the people who migrate from a famine-struck land to a land of plenty."

Hadrat Ali's complaint against the Umayyads: During the caliphate of Hadrat Othman, Hadrat Ali had a complaint that the Umayyads were withholding from him what was due to him. He said, "The Umayyads are withholding what is due to me just like the camelman, who milks the she camel, withholds milk from the young one of the camel."

Falsehood of Muawiyah: Referring to the falsehood of Muawiyah, Hadrat Ali said that falsehood had appeared in his case like the horns on the head of a young goat.

Shedding of sins through prayer: In a sermon, Hadrat Ali said that through prayer the sins of a man are shed just as a tree sheds its leaves.

Cleanliness and prayers: In another sermon, Hadrat Ali said, "Prayer is like a hot spring of water which flows at your door and provides you with the wherewithal for cleanliness."

Crumbs after meals: In a sermon, Hadrat Ali said that the world had run its course, and nothing had been left of it except the crumbs after the meals.

The people who did not respond to his call: Hadrat Ali compared the people who did not respond to his call to a camel who ran away from the herd shrieking with pains in its belly.

Hearts of the people: Hadrat Ali prayed for the hearts of the people to melt at the mention of the Word of God just like salt dissolved in water.

Ignorant persons: Hadrat Ali said that ignorant persons were like a person riding on a beast of burden which could not see. He deplored that such ignorant people dealt with the injunctions of Islam as wind scattered straw.

Ashas b. Qais: Hadrat Ali said that among his companions, Ashas b. Qais was what Abdullah b. Abi Sahi was in the time of the holy Prophet.

Patience and faith: Patience and faith bear the same relation in a human being where the head is attached to the body - a body cannot be without a head, and likewise there can be no faith without patience.

Disease and sins: Disease sheds sins just as the tree sheds its dead leaves.

Death of the virtuous: Hadrat Ali compared the death of the virtuous to the migration journey of the people from a famine-struck land to a land of plenty.

Days of life: The days of life pass like clouds in the sky.

Devotion to the world: Those who are devoted to the world are like barking dogs and ferocious animals who lunge at one another and where the strong devour the weak.

Seekers of the world: Those who seek the world are like a loose camel roaming about causing mischief.

Virtue of silence: Hadrat Ali advocated the virtue of silence by advancing the simile that water can be preserved in a waterskin only when its mouth is tied.

Thirsty camels on a water pond: When the people flocked to him and urged him to accept their allegiance, Hadrat Ali compared them to thirsty camels who flocked to a water pond when their strings are untied.

The caliphate of Hadrat Umar: When Hadrat Abu Bakr died, and still ignored his claims, Hadrat Umar became the Caliph. Hadrat Ali held that the second Caliph was like a person riding a camel, whose reins, if tightened would injure the camel, and if loosened would endanger the rider.

Umayyad use of the Bait-ul-Mai: Referring to the appropriation of the funds of the Bait-ul-Mai by the Umayyads for personal ends during the caliphate of Hadrat Othman, Hadrat Ali held that they ate away the public funds, just as the camel eats away the grass.

Withholding the milk of the she camel from its young: Hadrat Ali had the complaint that during the caliphate of the Hadrat Othman, the Umayyads withheld from him what was his right just like the camelman who, while milking the she camel, withholds its milk from its young one.

Handle of the grinding stone: When Hadrat Abu Bakr became the Caliph, Hadrat Ali held that Hadrat Abu Bakr had assumed the mantle of the

caliphate forcibly while he knew that he (Hadrat Ali) was as essential for the caliphate as a handle was necessary for turning the grinding stone.

The simile of a sinner: A sinner is like a person riding on an animal over which he had no control, and which is running fast to hurl him into a precipice.

Drops of rain: The injunctions of God descend like drops of rain.

Summer clouds: When the people of Kufa did not respond to the call of Hadrat Ali to meet the challenge of Muawiyah, Hadrat Ali said that he longed for warriors who in their action and speed would be like summer clouds.

The goat and the lion: Addressing the people of Kufa, Hadrat Ali said, "I want you to tread the path of the truth, but you run from it like a goat runs away when hearing the roar of the lion."

Taking the thorn out of the foot with a thorn: On another occasion Hadrat Ali said that the people of Kufa were like a person who picked out the thorn from his foot with a thorn.

Solution of salt in water: With reference to the people of Kufa, Hadrat Ali prayed "O God, melt their hearts like salt dissolves in water."

Bull with crooked horns: When Talha defected after taking the oath of the allegiance to him, Hadrat Ali compared him to a bull with crooked horns.

Shaking plants: Referring to the piety of the Companions of the holy Prophet, Hadrat Ali said that they shuddered at the mention of the Hereafter as plants shake when a strong wind blows.

Pregnant woman separating from the child: Addressing the people of Kufa, Hadrat Ali said that they were not dependable and that they were likely to leave him like a pregnant woman is separated from the child at childbirth.

Households of the holy Prophet: Hadrat Ali described the household of the holy Prophet to be like stars in that if one star sets another star rises.

Foaming waves of the sea: While addressing Hadrat Othman, Hadrat Ali said that treason was likely to rage like the foaming waves of the sea.

The Father of Sufism

Hadrat Ali is acclaimed as the father of Sufism. Most Sufi orders claim their descent from Hadrat Ali. According to Hadrat Ali Hajwari, the rank of Hadrat Ali is very high in the lineage of Sufis. According to Hadrat Junaid of Baghdad, Hadrat Ali is the Shaikh

as regards to the principles and practices of Sufism.

The holy Prophet and Sufism

The roots of Sufism lie embedded in Islam itself. There are numerous passages in the Holy Qur'an which are of a mystical character. The holy Prophet of Islam p.b.u.h. himself displayed mystical inclinations and he very often retired to the cave known as Hirah for the purpose of devotions, meditation and contemplation. The holy Prophet was the recipient of two types of revelations, one embodied the Holy Qur'an, and the other illuminated his heart. The former was meant for all, the latter for those selected few whose hearts could be illuminated with the Divine Light. The knowledge of the holy Prophet was thus both book knowledge (*Ilm-i-Safina*) and heart knowledge (*Ilm-e-Sina*). Hadrat Ali received his heart knowledge from the holy Prophet. It is related that after the Ascension, the holy Prophet awarded a mantle to Hadrat Ali which led to the illumination of his heart.

Gnosis of God

According to Hadrat Ali the base of religion is the gnosis of God. He held: "The height of gnosis is His confirmation. The height of confirmation is *tawhid*. The height of *tawhid* is the acknowledgement of the supremacy of God in all matters. He is beyond all attributes. No particular attribute can give an idea of His exact nature. He is not bound by anything; all things are bound by Him. He is Infinite, limitless, boundless, beyond time, beyond space, beyond imagination. Time does not affect Him. He existed when there was nothing. He will exist forever. His existence is not subject to the law of birth or death. He is manifest in everything, yet He is distinct from everything. He is not the cause of anything, yet everything is because of Him. He is unique and He has no partner. He is the Creator. He creates as well as destroys. All things are subject to His command. He orders something to be and it is."

Hadrat Ali enjoined the severance of the heart from all things save God. Hadrat Ali was asked what was the purest thing that could be acquired, and he said, "It is that which belongs to a heart made rich by God." When Hadrat Ali was asked about gnosis, he said, "I know God by God, and I know that which is not by God by the light of God." When asked whether he had seen God, he said that verily he had seen God for he could not worship Him unless the knew Him.

Prayers to God

When Hadrat Ali used to pray, his hair would stand on end. He would tremble and say, "The hour has come to fulfill a trust which the heavens and the earth were unable to bear." Abu Darda an eminent Companion of the holy Prophet said, "**None in this world has excelled Ali in prayer.**" While praying, so great was the intensity of his emotions that he would fall into a swoon. It is related that on one occasion, Abu Darda found Hadrat Ali lying rigid on the prayer mat, and touching his cold body thought that Ali had breathed his last. When he broke this news to Hadrat Fatima, she said that Hadrat Ali often became unconscious while praying. Abu Darda wept profusely, and then sprinkled some water on Hadrat Ali's face and he regained consciousness. Seeing tears in the eyes of Abu Darda, Hadrat Ali said: "Why are you crying? You shed tears when you see me in this state. Imagine what will happen to me when the Angels dragged me into the presence of God, and I am forced to render an account of my deeds. They will blind me with fetters of iron, and present me before God, and those of my friends who will happen to be witnesses will be powerless to help me. They will lament my unhappy plight, but none save God will be able to help me on that day."

Communion with God

Very often, Hadrat Ali would sob all night in his prayers to God, and God would reward him with a glimpse of Inner Vision. According to Hadrat Ali, the highest purpose of knowledge is the awakening of latent spiritual faculties whereby one is enabled to discover his true and inner self. It is to this inner self that God reveals Himself when the self disappears in the vision of the "All Absorbing Reality." Hadrat Ali often observed that man could have the joy and wonder of communion with God if one abandoned pride, disciplined the flesh, overcame lust and submitted to the Will of God. He exhorted people in his various sermons to not indulge in gross licentiousness which had characterized Arab society in the "Days of Ignorance." But should instead live in piety and simplicity as enjoined by Islam. Hadrat Ali said, "Man is a wave in the boundless Sea of God. As long as man's vision is clouded by ignorance and sensuality he will consider himself to be a separate entity, different from God. But when the veil between him and God is lifted, he will then know what he really is. The

wave will then merge with the ocean." Hadrat Ali held that enlightenment is needed so that one can first get to know himself. Only then would he get to know God. Hadrat Ali held that to this end religious exercises must be practised. The Sufism for which Hadrat Ali stood, derived its strength from the *Shari'ah*. Hadrat Ali preached that any form of knowledge which failed to show the Infinite Reality in man was useless, because it could not fill that vacuum in which the aching soul in every individual was so pathetically conscious. Hadrat Ali wanted men to be virtuous as virtues purify the soul, and it is only the purified soul that can be the recipient of spiritual enlightenment. This is the doctrine of Inner Light which was the enunciated by Hadrat Ali as the core of Sufi thought. Accordingly, Hadrat Ali is acknowledged as the "father of Sufism" and the prince of saints.

Doctrine of preference

Hadrat Ali also enunciated the doctrine of preference. He stood for and preferred the claims of others to his own claims. He gave an outstanding demonstration of this doctrine when he slept on the bed of the holy Prophet on the night of the holy Prophet's migration from Mecca, when the infidels were seeking to slay him. Hadrat Ali risked his life for the sake of the holy Prophet, because of the preference that Hadrat Ali gave to the life of the holy Prophet as compared with his own life. After the death of the holy Prophet, Hadrat Ali considered that he was the most deserving person to be elected as the Caliph. Yet, when his claims were overlooked and other persons were elected as Caliphs, he offered them and allegiance in pursuance of the doctrine of preference. It was this spirit of preference that motivated Hadrat Ali to plunge in the thick of battle to meet the challenge of the enemy regardless of his own personal safety. It is related that after the Ascension, when the holy Prophet gave Hadrat Ali a mantle, he asked him how he would use the mantle. Hadrat Ali said that he would use it to cover the faults of others. The true Sufi way lies in covering the faults of others.

Fasting

According to Hadrat Ali, fasting was not a mere formality or a ritual; it was an exercise for the purification of the soul. Because of his constant fasting, Hadrat Ali earned the epithets of "*Qa'im-ul-Lait*" (praying most of the night without sleep); and "*Sa'im-ul-Nahar*" (fasting mostly during

the day). Hadrat Ali held that hunger sharpens the intelligence and improves both the mind and health. Hunger involves some affliction for the body, but it illumines the heart, purifies the soul, and leads the spirit to the presence of God. One who cultivates a his spiritual nature by means of hunger in order to devote himself entirely to God and detach himself from worldly ties, is at a much higher level than the person who cultivates his body by means of gluttony and lust. Hadrat Ali acted on the advice of the holy Prophet, "**Fast so that perchance your hearts may seek God in this world.**" And indeed, because of his fasting and other spiritual exercises, Hadrat Ali did see God in this world. The holy Prophet had enjoined, "**When you fast, let your ear, your eye, your tongue, your hand, and your every limb fast.**" Hadrat Ali followed this advice to the letter as well in spirit. Through the discipline of fasting, Hadrat Ali was able to subordinate the physical senses to spiritual requirements in such a way that they could respond only to what was pure and became dead to what was impure. Hadrat Ali thus led a purified life.

Zakat

Hadrat Ali held: "Of the most meritorious acts of a believer, and one of the most acceptable things to God is *Zakat*. It behoves everyone to give charity, because from amongst the acts of worship, this is the most pleasing to God."

In his sermons, Hadrat Ali exhorted the people in the following terms: "O ye people, send a part of your wealth to God so that it may stand you in good stead in the next world. Do not leave your entire wealth here so that it will become a source of annoyance to you in the next world."

In the annals of Arabs, Hatim Tai enjoys fame for his munificence and generosity. Hadrat Ali outclassed Hatim in the matter of generosity.

Pilgrimage

Hadrat Ali was born in the Ka'bah. He had, therefore a strong emotional attachment for the Ka'bah. Hadrat Ali observed that the holy Ka'bah was located in a territory known for its stony wastes and wilderness and where no water was available. God had ordained the Muslims to bear the hardships involved in a journey through such an inhospitable land cheerfully so that those very privations might ultimately become a source of salvation. The pilgrimage is symbolic of the fact that whatever hardship one bears in the trials of life and endeavours to fulfill the will of God, he acquires

goodness and righteousness by them. The darkest thing in the world is the beloved's house without the beloved. What is really important for a lover is the beloved and not the house of the beloved. According to Hadrat Ali the spirit of pilgrimage did not lie in a bare visit to the Ka'bah, it lay in developing the inner vision whereby one could see God, the Lord of the Ka'bah.

Jihad

Hadrat Ali held that *jihad* is the gateway to Paradise. He said: "God has opened this gate for His friends. It is the mantle of piety. It is the shield of faith. He who avoids it, God subjects him to disgrace."

Hadrat Ali held that *jihad* did not lie in merely taking up arms in the cause of God, it means incessant struggle against falsehood in all spheres of life. *Jihad* is the main pillar on which Islam rests.

Repentance

The first stage in the path of Sufism is repentance. Repentance is described as the awakening of the soul from the slumber of heedlessness so that the sinner becomes aware of his evil ways and feels contrition for past disobedience. Hadrat Ali repeatedly prayed for God's forgiveness. His typical prayer was: "O God, forgive me my sins of which you are more aware than me. And if I commit these sins again, even then forgive me and whatever promises I have made with myself to follow Your commands that have not been fulfilled. I seek Your forbearance. If I have sought Your proximity with my tongue, but my heart has not kept pace with my tongue, then overlook my lapse. O God, forgive me for my futile talk, vain desires and lapses of tongue."

Detachment

Hadrat Ali admonished that while living in the world, one should not renounce the world, still he should not have an undue attachment for it because detachment from the world (*Zuhd*) is a means of attaining God. It is related that someone begged Hadrat Ali to give him a precept. Hadrat Ali said: "Do not let your wives and children be a cause of concern for you, for if they be the friends of God, He will look after His friends, and if they are the enemies of God, why should you take care of God's enemies?"

Patience

In the mystic way, the traveller will meet many trials and tribulations. God subjects His lovers to severe

testing, and only he will pass such tests who his patient. Hadrat Ali was the personification of patience, and for this he acquired the epithet of "Job, the Second." In the battle of Uhud, Hadrat Ali received as many as 61 wounds on his person so that his whole body looked like one massive wound to which the nurses were unable to dress. Although Hadrat Ali was in mortal agony, he said: "May God Grant me the patience to bear this suffering. Is it not a favour of God that He gave me the courage to stand and fight, and not to leave the field?"

About the patience of Hadrat Ali, Dr. Ata Mohyuddin writes as follows in his *Ali, the Superman*: "Ali used to say that at no time in his life had he ever known peace and tranquillity. From the time of infancy when he was taken into the home of the holy Prophet, Ali felt the ferment of turbulence and turmoil. The holy Prophet was constantly persecuted by the Meccan pagans. And from adolescence onwards, Ali was constantly fighting in *jihad*, and after the death of the holy Prophet, he was embroiled against his wish, in the political intrigues of others. Even when elected Caliph, the implacable enemies of Islam arose and rebelled against him, yet he bore all these afflictions with patience, thanking God that he had acquitted himself well in the tests and trials to which the Almighty had thought fit to subject him."

Hadrat Ali, The Gate of Knowledge

Hadrat Ali was the most learned man of the age. He was a living encyclopaedia of knowledge. The holy Prophet said, "**If I am the City of Knowledge, verily Ali is the Gate of it.**" He was the first person to have learned the Holy Qur'an by heart. He possessed a prodigious memory and he was a keen observer; he was a deep thinker; he had an enlightened mind and he carried a vast storehouse of knowledge in his brain. He was a versatile genius and he exhibited extraordinary talents in all disciplines of knowledge. He was a master of philosophy and rhetoric. He was a distinguished poet. He was a great teacher and preacher. His knowledge extended to such disciplines as logic, mathematics, physics, astronomy, medicine and history.

His concept of Knowledge

Hadrat Ali held that the principal aim of knowledge was the inculcation of virtue, promotion of faith, and understanding of God. He held that knowledge enlivens the soul, for it kills ignorance. He defined

knowledge as the sum total of excellence. He held that the pursuit of knowledge is better than the pursuit of riches, that knowledge is the ornament of the rich and the riches of the poor and that knowledge is better than riches. He held that the learned live even after their death. He maintained that the learned were the living ones in the dead mass of ignorance. He observed that to respect the learned was to respect God. With regards to the respect of the teacher, he held that one who teaches you a letter binds you with the fetter of gratitude. He maintained that the talk of the learned man carried within it the fragrance of the garden of Paradise.

Superiority of knowledge over wealth

It is related that once ten learned men approached Hadrat Ali. They wanted to know how knowledge was better than wealth and they requested that each one of them be given a separate answer. Hadrat Ali answered them as follows:

- (1) Knowledge is the legacy of the Prophet, whereas wealth is the inheritance of the Pharaohs. As the prophets are superior to the Pharaohs, so knowledge is better than wealth.
- (2) You have to guard your wealth, but knowledge will guard you. Therefore, knowledge is better than wealth.
- (3) When knowledge is distributed it increases. When wealth is distributed it decreases. As such knowledge is better than wealth.
- (4) A man of wealth has many enemies, while a man of knowledge has many friends. Therefore knowledge is better than wealth.
- (5) A learned man because of his wider outlook is apt to be generous, while a rich man because of his love for money is apt to be miserly. As such knowledge is better than wealth.
- (6) Knowledge cannot be stolen, but wealth is constantly exposed to the danger of being stolen. Accordingly, knowledge is better than wealth.
- (7) With the lapse of time, knowledge gains in depth and dimension. Hoarded coins get rusty or cease to be legal tender. Therefore knowledge is better than wealth.
- (8) You can keep account of wealth because it is limited, but you cannot keep account of knowledge because it is boundless. That is why knowledge is better than wealth.
- (9) Knowledge illuminates the mind, while wealth is apt to darken it. Therefore knowledge is better than wealth.

(10) Knowledge is better than wealth, because knowledge induced the holy Prophet to say to God "**We worship Thee as we are Thy servants**," while wealth engendered and Pharaoh and Nimrod caused the vanity that made them claim godhead.

For more information, the reader is advised to purchase the book **Hadrat Ali r.a.**, by Prof. Madud-ul-Hasan, Published by **Islamic Publications (Pvt) Limited**, 13-E Shah Alam Market, Lahore, Pakistan ©1988