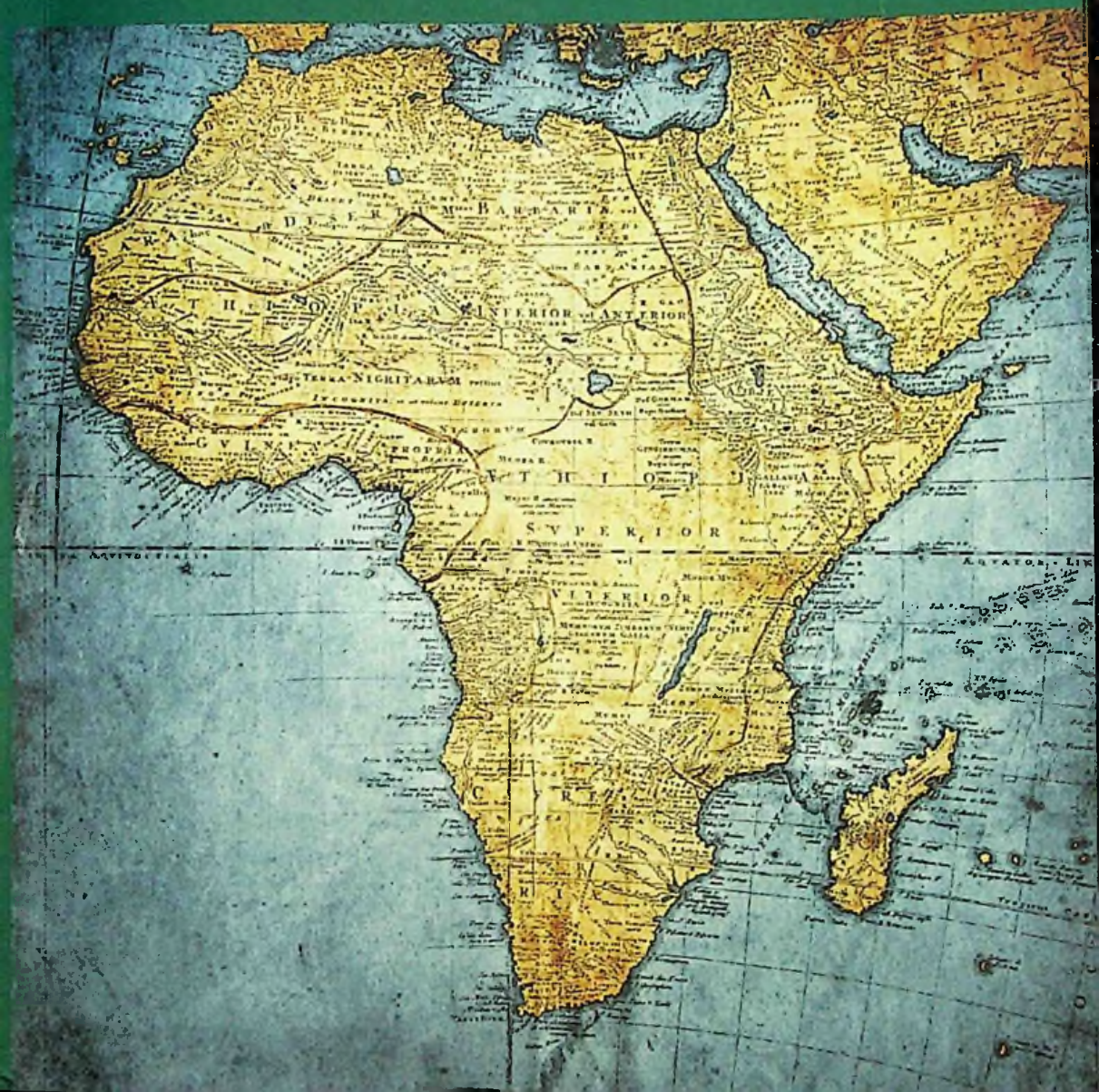
CENTERING BLACK NARRATIVE

Ahl al-Bayt, Blackness & Africa

co-authored by
Ahmad Mubarak &
Dawud Walid



CENTERING BLACK NARRATIVE: AHL AL-BAYT, BLACKNESS & AFRICA

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Introduction to Centering Black Narrative: Ahl al-Bayt, Blackness & Africa

Our first publication, *Centering Black Narrative: Black Muslim Nobles Among the Early Pious Muslims*, was written in the tradition of great polymaths such as al-Jahiz, ibn al-Jawzi and as-Suyuti (may Allah have mercy upon them) in focusing on the relationship between *blackness* and Arabness within the Era of Ignorance proceeding the revealing of the Qur'an and afterwards. Within volume one, the primary focus was to establish that blackness in terms of skin tone along in many cases blended with hair texture and Arabness were not mutually exclusive. Indeed, the book established that given race dynamics in 21st century America, a large percentage of early Arabs would be seen as or confused to be African Americans if walking the streets in Eurocentric attire or even donning dashikis in urban areas ranging from Southside Chicago, Detroit, Harlem, etc. A range of source material was drawn upon such as the words of Arabic etymologists like ibn Manzur to hadith critics like an-Nawawi who articulated that it was well-known that the predominant complexion of Arabs in their eras and before were brown to dark brown.[1] In essence, those Arabs of the past most closely resemble the Arabs who currently dwell in the Aswan region of Egypt and the northern portion of Sudan.

The secondary focus of *Centering Black Narrative: Black Muslim Nobles Among the Early Pious Muslims* was to highlight a few personalities from the early generations of Muslims who would by today's standards appear phenotypically black. Some of them being both from Arabs and Abyssinians were already well-known to Muslims among the generality. Men such as Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah ennoble his face) and Sumayyah bint Khayyat (may Allah be pleased with her), the first martyr among the Sahabah, are famous personalities that are commonly invoked in Islamic weekend school classes to Friday sermons in the West. Others who were briefly written about in which many laymen continue to be unaware of

provided a glance into the breadth of early Muslims who were of Abyssinian and Nubian lineage. The Master of the Prayer-Callers Bilal ibn Rabah (may Allah be pleased with him) was specifically omitted from volume one, not out of disrespect, but to highlight some of the other early Muslims who were black. Moreover, Bilal was not mentioned due to the sense of many Muslims who are Black that he is often discussed as the token or default black Muslim when non-black Muslims speak of social egalitarianism or to prove that Islam is free of racism.

These two focus areas within volume one were written about with a greater objective at heart which was to use knowledge within Islamic tradition to implicitly address anti-black racism in the West and to subtly debunk claims that Islam by nature subjugates blacks. It is a common experience among American and British Muslims who are black that they are made to feel subservient by lighter skin Arabs and South Asians. The by-products of these for Black Muslims can manifest as inferiority complexes or internalized oppression, crises of faith and/or countertransference of pain by being unjustly hostile towards individuals who are lighter skin Arabs and South Asians who are not racists and seek to be true allies in the fullness of Islamic construct of al-Walaa (loyalty).

Pertaining to those who propagate "Black Orientalism" as termed by Dr. Sherman Jackson in this seminal work *Islam and the Blackamerican: Looking Toward the Third Resurrection*, the notion that Islam is inherently anti-black completely does not hold water not only because of the number of noble blacks who were scholars and military leaders in the early generations but also due to the fact that many Arabs were as dark or even darker than those from African who they had contact with. But of course, the framework that Arabia had little to no historical connection to Africa until the so-called Arab slave trade is ironically a Eurocentric discourse that was absorbed by many Pan Africanists who have read history written by Europeans in their languages, not source material written in Semantic languages that pre-date European discourse. Such historical narratives originating from written sources in European languages severed Arabian society from civilization in Horn of Africa, not just Kemet or Ancient Egypt from blackness.

Centering Black Narrative: Ahl al-Bayt and Blackness continues on the path of volume one by addressing misconceptions about mutually exclusivity between blackness and Arabness. Unlike the prior book however, far less attention is paid to providing conceptual framework and simply presenting a series of different personalities. What is put forward in this second volume

which is perhaps more controversial to some Muslims are the issues of Ahl al-Bayt, the Family of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) and their relationship with blackness.

On the one hand with many Muslims, the mentioning of Ahl al-Bayt is controversial in and of itself or is viewed as contentious. The history of the marginalization of Ahl al-Bayt is an unholy legacy that dates back thirteen centuries. An-Nasibah (enmity towards Ahl al-Bayt) roots are found in those who believe "that Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, assassinated Uthman [bin Affan, the 3rd khalifah], or was a helper to them [the assassins]."[2] This similar enmity then expressed itself by "those who disassociate from Ali and do not find affinity nor love for him."[3] During the rule of Bani Umayyah beginning in era of Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan, the reviling of Ali became standard on the pulpits during Khutbah al-Jumu'ah. This practice then spread to cursing of Ali and his family every Friday until the righteous Umawi leader Umar bin Abdil Aziz (may Allah's mercy be upon him) put a stop to this practice started by his forefathers. In the era of Bani Abbas, the enmity towards the descendants of Ali became subtler without having outward cursing from rulers and their viziers but instead marginalizing them and instituting intellectual terrorism by labeling those who mentioned them often as being ar-Rafidah (Shi'ah who are known to revile Abu Bakr and Umar). For example, Muhammad ibn Idris as-Shafi'i (may Allah have mercy upon him) who was a student of Imam Yahya bin Abdillah bin al-Hasan bin al-Hasan bin Ali bin Abi Talib (may Allah's blessings be upon them) was accused during the Abbasi era of being Rafidi. Ash-Shafi'i famously wrote in a line of poetry in response, "If it is rejection to have love for the Family of Muhammad, certainly I bear witness to the two weighty realms that I am a Rafidi."[4] Many other scholars of the sunnah besides ash-Shafi'i were accused of being "deviant shi'ah" afterwards. The prolific hadith master Ahmad bin Shu'ayb an-Nasa'i was not only accused but was murdered as a consequence after writing the work *Khasa'is Amir al-Mu'min Ali bin Abi Talib*, compilation of virtues and merits of Ali.

In the past century into the current era, the intellectual terrorism towards those who venerate the Family of Ali seems to have been reinvigorated. In Friday sermons among non-Shi'ah, the mention of Ahl al-Bayt is a rarity. If one mentions them with some regularity, their orthodoxy gets called into question, or they literally get labeled as deviants. Thus, contemporary Sunni scholars in the Arab world such as Ali al-Jifri and Hasan as-Saqqaf, both being descendants of Ali, to scholars in the West like Adnan Ibrahim

and Muhammad bin Yahya an-Ninowy, who are also from Ahl al-Bayt, have been accused as being from the Rawafid. Such intellectual terrorism causes Muslims to stay aware from the veneration of Ahl al-Bayt out of fear of being labeled and has caused younger generations who were not raised in particular Muslim lands where such veneration is common to view Ahl al-Bayt as non-essential to focus upon. It has gotten to the point that in certain pockets that simply to name one's children Haydar, Husayn or Zahra may make one suspected of being Rafidi, much less naming masajid with these names.

As it is a touchy subject among many who call themselves Sunnis to be engaged in frequent discourse about Ahl al-Bayt, discussing blackness among them is also controversial. As we were writing volume one and mentioned that Ali ibn Abi Talib was the first personality mentioned among the early Black Muslim nobles, we earned the ire among some followers of the Ja'fari aka 12ver Shi'ah school of thought who viewed describing him as having been black to be an insult. When Dr. Rudolph Ware at the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor led a book talk with co-author Dawud Walid on March 8, 2017 at the university, the majority of the questions were posed by 12vers relating to Ali and Ahl al-Bayt's blackness. The students' statements ranged from proclaiming that their parents said that "Ali was white" to referencing a 12ver scholar stating that the narrations calling Ali dark in skin color were fabrications of Bani Umayyah to insult him.

Of course, to accept such a notion that Ali was pasty white like Northern Europeans and that calling him black is an insult typifies the emotionalism that pervades anti-black thought. Not only does such colorism go against the dominant description of Arabs being brown and dark brown at that time period including those from Bani Umayyah but describing him as resembling Europeans also counters the description of Ali in non-Sunni sources. [5] That Bani Umayyah would use a description among and about Arabs including themselves to insult Ali is illogical. There are enough demerits among most of the rulers of Bani Umayyah without stating that blackness was a tool used by them to insult Ali. Such also not so subtly implies that those who view calling him black as being an insult also see whiteness as being more noble and handsome than blackness.

We hope that *Centering Black Narrative: Ahl al-Bayt, Blackness & Africa* serves both as a bridge to cultivate a love for the Prophetic Household as well as continue where volume one left off of in dispelling misconceptions relating to blackness among Arabs and the relationship that pious Muslims who were Arabs had with Muslims from Africa.

ENDNOTES

[1] Ibn Manzur, Lisan al-Arab, Volume 4, Page 209
[2] Muhammad bin 'Aqil al-Hadramii, Al-'Atb al-Jamil 'ala Ahl al-Jarh wa at-Ta'dil, Page 54
[3] Ibn Taymiyyah, Minhaj as-Sunnah, Volume 5, Page 44
[4] Muhammad bin Idris ash-Shafi'i, Diwan ash-Shafi'i, Page 26
[5] Al-Qadi an-Nu'man, Sharh al-Akhbar, Juz 2, Page 427; Ibn Shar Ashub, Manaqib Aali Abi Talib, Juz 3, Page 91; Al-Majalisi, Bihar an-Anwar, Juz 35, Page 2; Ibn Mansur al-Mu'ayyidi, At-Tuhf Sharh az-Zalaf, Page 24

Ahl al-Bayt & Their Virtues

Ahl al-Bayt, meaning People of the Prophetic Household, hold a high status within normative Islam. A plethora of virtues and merits about them are expounded upon in the Qur'an, the Prophetic traditions, sayings of the first three generations of pious Muslims, and Islamic scholars who followed the first three generations in excellence. There are varying opinions, however, regarding the parameters of those within Ahl al-Bayt.

In the widest understanding of the actual family of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) among the People of the Sunnah is that it consists of the Mothers of the Believers, the families of the male believing children of Abu Talib and the family of al-'Abbas. This is per a Prophetic tradition relayed by Zayd bin Arqam (may Allah be pleased with him) and his interpretation. After leaving pilgrimage on the way back to al-Madinah, the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) gave a sermon at Ghadir Khumm. After praising Allah (Mighty & Sublime), he stated:

> And what follows. Oh people! I am but a mortal. I am about to receive a messenger (the Angel of Death) from my Lord, and I will respond to the call. I am leaving among you two weighty things, the first of them is the Book of Allah (al-Qur'an) in it is guidance and light, so take the Book of Allah and hold on to it. And [the second weighty thing} is the People of my Household. Remember Allah concerning the People of my Household. Remember Allah concerning the People of my Household. Remember Allah concerning the People of my Household.

When asked later by a man that this was narrated to, "Who are the People of his Household, oh Zayd? Are not his wives from the People of his Household?" Zayd replied, "His wives are from the People of his Household, but his Household is also who sadaqah has been made forbidden after him." The man then asked, "Who are they?" He responded, "They are the Family

of Ali, the Family of 'Aqil, the Family of Ja'far, and the Family of 'Abbas." The man then inquired, "For all of them sadaqah has been forbidden?" He then said, "Yes."[1]

Thus, a characteristic of Ahl al-Bayt is those whom which sadaqah was made forbidden per the statement, "Surely, we the Family of Muhammad, it has not been made permissible for us to accept sadaqah." Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Malik (may Allah have mercy upon them) both held the opinion relating to this narration that it meant exclusively those from Bani Hashim.[2]

Ahl al-Bayt is also understood to be the offspring of the male believing children of Abu Talib from the generation of the Sahabah and beyond. At the Farewell Sermon on Mt. 'Arafat, the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) stated, "Surely I am leaving you that which if you hold on to them, you will never go astray after me: the Book of Allah (al-Qur'an) and the Mantle ('Itrah) of the People of my Household."[3] Several scholars in the classical Arabic such as Hibatullah ash-Shajari al-Hasani (may Allah's mercy be upon him) understood 'itrah to mean a person's close kin from one's children to his children to his children.[4] Thus the 'Itrah Ahl al-Bayt would include those from the generation of the early generations of Muslims such as Imam al-Kamil Abdullah bin al-Hasan bin al-Hasan bin Ali bin Abi Talib, Imam Zayd bin Ali bin al-Husayn bin Ali bin Abi Talib and Sayyidah Nafisah bint al-Hasan bin Zayd bin al-Hasan bin Ali bin Abi Talib (may Allah's blessing be upon all of them) to those of later generations like Sayyid Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani al-Hasani al-Husayni and Sayyid Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhili al-Hasani (may Allah sanctify their spirits).

The heart of Ahl al-Bayt as explicitly stated by the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) are, however, Ali bin Abi Talib, Fatimah bint Muhammad, al-Hasan bin Ali and al-Husayn bin Ali (may Allah's blessings be upon them.) In widespread narrations with slightly different wording yet all giving similar detail, the Mother of the Believers A'ishah stated that the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) left one morning and had with him a cloak which was black from Khaybar. In the home of Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with her), the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) entered with along with his grandson al-Hasan, then al-Husayn, then Fatimah then Ali. Wrapping them together in the cloak, he then recited, "Allah desires but to remove filth from you, People of the Household, and to purify you with a thorough purification."[5] The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his

family) then prayed, "Oh Allah! These are the People of my Household, so remove from them filth and thoroughly purify them."[6] This event which took place in the home of Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with her) is also narrated in the books of tafsir of the Ibadis, Zaydis and the 12ver shi'ah. For six months after this morning, the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) went to the door of Fatimah's home at the time of Fajr prayer and said, "As-Salah, oh People of the Household! Allah desires but to remove filth from you, People of the Household, and to purify you with a thorough purification."[7] The Shafi'i jurist ibn al-Haytami (may Allah have mercy upon him) stated, "The vast majority of the scholars of interpreting the Qur'an hold that this ayah was revealed concerning Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn."[8]

Imam Malik bin Anas, whom madhhab Maliki derives, stated that Fatimah was the most virtuous person in the Ummah after the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family).[9] The majority of gnostic men and women among the People of Tasawwuf (Sufism) also agreed that the supreme spiritual axis (Al-Qutbaniyyah al-'Uzma) after the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) was Fatimah.[10]

In madhhab Ibadi, the predominant school of thought presently in Oman, Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn do not hold a special meritorious rank over the pious Sahabah.

In madhhab Zaydi, the predominant school of thought historically in Northern Yemen, Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn are held to be the most virtuous of the Muslims after the Prophet (prayers & peace be upon them & his family). The 12ver shi'ah or madhhab Ja'fari also consider them to be the most virtuous of the Ummah after the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family). Zaydis and 12ver shi'ah differ afterwards as to what defines Ahl al-Bayt. In Zaydi thought, Ahl al-Bayt consists of Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn along with the descendants of al-Hasan and al-Husayn; however, they do not hold those descendants to be guarded from error or infallibles. In Ja'fari thought, Ahl al-Bayt are exclusively Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn then 9 of his male descendants whom are believed to have been infallible. These 9 as listed in several texts of 12vers including Dala'il al-Imamah by ibn Rustam at-Tabari (not the Sunni scholar at-Tabari); they are Ali Zayn al-Abidin bin al-Husayn, Muhammad al-Baqir bin Ali, Ja'far as-Sadiq bin Muhammad, Musa al-Kazim in Ja'far, Ali at-Rida bin Musa, Muhammad al-Jawad bin Ali, Ali al-Hadi bin Muhammad, Hasan al-Askari bin Ali and Muhammad al-Mahdi bin Hasan.

From the Qur'an, Prophetic narrations and statements of the righteous among the early generations of Muslims, there are a copious amount of merits ascribed to Ahl al-Bayt in general and the People of the Cloak meaning Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn more specifically.

> *Say [to the people Oh Muhammad!]: I ask no reward from you except love for my close kin.* (Surah ash-Shura, Ayah 23)

According to Sahih Muslim, Abdullah ibn Abbas said that this ayah means, "Close kin is the Family of Muhammad." Sa'id ibn Jubayr (may Allah have mercy upon him), a black scholar from the 2nd generation who was a student of Abdullah ibn Abbas, relayed the same[11] More explicitly pertaining to those in the family whom this love should be centered, the Sahabah asked the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family), "Oh Messenger of Allah! And who are your close kin, those who it is obligatory upon us to love?" He replied, "Ali, Fatimah and their two sons."[12]

> *Surely Allah and His angels send prayers upon the prophet. Oh you who believe, send prayers upon him and salute him repeatedly with peace.* (Surah al-Ahzab, Ayah 56)

When Sahabah asked how to send prayers upon the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family), he replied

> Oh Allah! Send prayers upon Muhammad and the Family of Muhammad just as you send prayers upon Ibrahim and the Family of Ibrahim. Surely You are Praised, Magnified. Oh Allah! Send blessings upon Muhammad and the Family of Muhammad just as you send blessings upon Ibrahim and the Family of Ibrahim. Surely You are Praised, Magnified.

The only mutawattir form of sending prayers and peace upon the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) explaining the ayah is to also mention Ahl al-Bayt at the same time. This narration is mentioned in all of the books of ahadith within all schools of thought, and the mentioning of Ahl al-Bayt during the 5 daily prayers is also among all schools of thought, Sunnis, Ibadis, Zaydis and 12ver shi'ah.

Peace be upon Il Yasin. (Surah as-Safat, Ayah 130)

At-Tabari, ibn 'Ajibah and scholars of interpreting the Qur'an state that Il Yasin read or understood as Al Yasin means the Family of Yasin meaning Ahl al-Bayt. This jibes with the opinion of Ali and ibn Abbas.

Then who argues with you concerning it after what came to you after the knowledge, then say: "Come and let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves then let us invoke the curse of Allah the liars." (Surah Aali Imran, Ayah 61)

When the Christian clergy from Najran came to meet the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) at the revealing of this ayah, he brought Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn with him and said, "Oh Allah! These are my family."[13] There is no dispute among the scholars of tafsir that those referred to in this ayah were Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn.

Hold on tightly all of you to the Rope of Allah, and do not divide yourselves. (Surah Aali Imran, Ayah 103)

Ath-Thalabi in his tafsir on this ayah mentioned that Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (may Allah's blessings be upon him) said, "We are the Rope of Allah which Allah speaks of in this [ayah]."

Oh those of you who believe, be regardful of Allah and be with the truthful. (Surah at-Tawbah, Ayah 119)

Ath-Thalabi narrated pertaining to this ayah that ibn Abbas said this meant "with Ali and his companions." In the same book of tafsir, Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (may Allah's blessings be upon him) stated that its meaning is "with the Family of Muhammad."

They fulfil their vows and fear a day whose evil will be widespread.

And the give food beyond the love for it to the needy, the orphan and the captive. (Surah al-Insan, Ayatayn 7 & 8)

Some of the commentators of the Qur'an including as-Samarqandi, az-Zamakhshari and Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (may Allah sanctify their spirits) mentioned that these verses refer to Ahl al-Bayt. Ibn Abbas stated that al-Hasan and al-Husayn fell very ill then the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) and a group came to visit at the home of Fatimah. It was suggested to Ali and Fatimah to make a vow to Allah (Mighty & Sublime) that if He cured them that they would fast for 3 days. Once al-Hasan and al-Husayn were cured, Ali, Fatimah and their Nubian servant Fiddah (may Allah be pleased with her) began to fast and planned on having for iftar nothing but barely bread and water. Just before the end of the first day

of fasting, a needy man knocked on the door and asked for food, so they gave away their bread for that day. The next day just before iftar time, an orphan knocked at the door and asked for food, so they gave away their second ration of bread. On third day just before the time to break the fast, a captive knocked at the door asking for food, so they gave away their bread 3 consecutive days not having eaten any food. This is a recorded occasion of the revelation for the opening ayat of Surah al-Insan.

The Prophet said regarding Ahl al-Bayt:

- The similarity of the People of my Household is like the Ark of Nuh, whoever boards will be safe, and however does not will sink.[14]
- The People of my Household are safety for the people of the earth just like the stars are safety for the people of the heaven.[15]
- Love Allah for how he nourishes you out of His bounty, love me because of the love for Allah, and love the People of my Household of love for me.[16]
- Every lineage and connection [on the Day of Judgment] will be cut off except my lineage and my connection.[17]
- He said to Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn: I am at war with whoever fights you and at peace with whoever is peaceful with you. [18]
- After taking by the hands al-Hasan and al-Husayn, he said: Whoever loves me and loves these two, their father [Ali], and their mother [Fatimah] shall be with me in my rank on the Day of Resurrection.[19]
- These two are my sons, al-Hasan and al-Husayn. Oh Allah! Love them both, and love whoever loves them.[20]
- Learn from Quraysh, and do not attempt to teach them.[21]
- Al-Mahdi will be from my offspring of the children of Fatimah.[22]
- A man will come at the end of time from my children. His name will be my name, and kunya will be my kunya. He will fill the earth with justice just like it will be filled with tyranny, and that will be al-Mahdi.[23]

The chief of Ahl al-Bayt after the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) is Imam Ali. Ahmad bin Hanbal stated that there were

no amount of sound Prophetic statements of virtue narrated about anyone from the generation of the companions than Ali.[24] This was also the opinion of an-Nasa'i.[25]

Ali was born in al-Ka'bah, raised in the house of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) and was the first male to accept his message. According to ibn Abbas, there is not an ayah in the Qur'an that says, "Oh you who believe" except that Ali is the head, noble and leader of them.[26] Regarding his mastery of the Arabic language, the tabi'i Aamir ash-Sha'bi stated, "Abu Bakr was a poet, 'Umar was a poet, and Ali says poetry. But the most rhetorically poetic of them is Ali peace be upon him."[27]

Some of the virtues stated about Ali per Prophetic narrations are:

- When he proposed to his daughter Fatimah to marry Ali, he said: "And are you not pleased that I marry you to the foremost of my Ummah in submission, the most knowledge them and the one among them with the most forbearance?"[28]
- I am the City of Knowledge, and Ali is its gate. Whoever desires knowledge, he should go from its gate.[29]
- Allah commanded me to love four and informed me that He loves them, Ali, Abu Dharr, al-Miqdad and Salman.[30]
- A hypocrite will not love Ali, and a believer will not despise him.[31]
- Whoever loves Ali, certainly loves me, and whoever despises Ali, certainly despises me.[32]
- Whoever loves Ali, certainly loves me, and whoever loves me, certainly loves Allah. But whoever hates Allah, certainly hates me, and whoever hates me, certainly hates Allah.[33]
- Whoever obeys me, certainly has obeyed Allah, and whoever disobeys me, certainly has disobeyed Allah. And whoever obeys Ali, certainly has obeyed me, and whoever disobeys Ali, certainly has disobeyed me.[34]
- Are you not please that you are to me in a position as Harun was to Musa except that there is no prophet after me?[35]
- Whoever curses Ali, certainly curses me[36] And whoever curses me, certainly curses Allah Most High.[37]

- Ali is with the truth. Whoever follows him, follows truth, but whoever leaves him, leaves the truth.[38]
- Ali is with the Qur'an, and the Qur'an is with Ali. They will never be separated until they return to me at the basin.[39]
- Oh Allah! Whoever I am his master, then Ali is his master. Oh Allah! Be allied with whoever allies with him, and be averse whoever shows aversion to him.[40]*

ENDNOTES

[1] Muslim, Sahih Muslim, Hadith #2408; Bin Hanbal, Fada'il as-Sahabah, Hadith #1167; al-Hakim, al-Mustadarik, Volume 3, Number 109; ad-Darimi, Sunan ad-Darimi, Volume 2, Number 431; ibn Hibban, Sahih ibn Hibban, Hadith #2205; al-Bazzar, Kashf al-Astar, Volume 3, Number 189; at-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, Volume 5, Number 185

[2] An-Nawawi, Sharh an-Nawawi 'ala Muslim, Hadith #1069

[3] At-Tirmidhi, Sunan at-Tirmidhi, Volume 5, Number 662; an-Nasa'i, Sunan al-Kubra, Volume 5, Number; Ibn Abi Shaybah, al-Musannaf, Volume 6, Number 309; at-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Awsat, Volume 3, Number 374; Ahmad, Musnad Ahmad, Volume 3, Number 14; Abu Ya'la, Musnad Abi Ya'a, Volume 2, Number 303; at-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, Volume 3, Number 65; Ibn Abi 'Asim, as-Sunnah, Volume 2, Numbers 350 – 351, al-Haythami, Majmu' al-Zawa'id, Volume 9, Number 163

[4] Ibn ash-Shajari, Ma Ittafaq Lafzahu wa Ikhtilafa Ma'nahu, Page 199

[5] Surah 33, Ayah 33

[6] At-Tirmidhi, Sunan at-Tirmidhi, Volume 5, Number 351; Bin Hanbal, Musnad Ahmad, Volume 7, Numbers 292, 298, 304 & 322

[7] At-Tirmidhi, Sunan at-Tirmidhi, Volume 5, Number 352; Bin Hanbal, Musnad Ahmad, Volume 3, Number 259 at-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, Volume 3, Number 56; Ibn Abi Shaybah, Musannad ibn Abi Shaybah, Volume 7, Number 527; Abu Ya'la, Musnad Abi Ya'la, Volume 7, Number 59; al-Hakim, Al-Mustadrik, Volume 3, Number 172

[8] Ibn al-Haytami, as-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, Volume 2, Number 321

[9] As-Suyuti, Al-Hawi, Volume 2, Page 294; Al-Qari, Al-Mirqat al-Mafatih, Volume 9, Hadith #3965; Ahmad at-Tijani, Jawahir al-Ma'ani wa Bulugh al-Amani, Page 502

[10] Ahmad at-Tijani, Jawahir al-Ma'ani, Page 502

[11] Al-Bukhari, Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith #4541

[12] Bin Hanbal, Fada'il as-Sahabah, Volume 2, Number 669; at-Tabarani, Al-Mu'jam

al-Kabir, Volume 3, Number 47

[13] At-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, Volume 11, Number 444

[14] Al-Bazzar, Kashf al-Astar, Volume 3, Number 2615; at-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, Volume 3, Number 2628 and Volume 12, Number 12388

[15] At-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, Volume 7, Number 22,

[16] Al-Hakim, al-Mustadrik, Volume 3, Number 162; al-Bayhaqi, Shu'b al-Iman, Volume 1, Number 366 and al-'Itiqad, Volume 1, Number 328; Abu Nu'aym al-Asbahani, Hilyah al-Awliya, Volume 3, Number 211

[17] Al-Hakim, al-Mustadrik, Volume 3, Number 152; al-Bazzar, Kashf al-Astar, Volume 1, Number 397

[18] At-Tirmidhi, Sunan at-Tirmidhi, Volume 5, Number 699; Bin Hanbal, Musnad Ahmad, Volume 2, Number 442; at-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, Volume 3, Number 40; ibn Hibban, Sahih ibn Hibban, Volume 15, Number 433

[19] At-Tirmidhi, Sunan at-Tirmidhi, Volume 5, Numbers 642 - 643

[20] At-Tirmidhi, Hadith #3769; Bin Hanbal, Musnad Ahmad, Volume 2, Number 446 and Fada'il as-Sahabah, Hadith #1371; ibn Abi Shaybah, al-Musannaf, Volume 12, Number 197; al-Bukhari, at-Tarikh al-Kabir, Volume 2, Number 286; at-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Saghir, Volume 1, Number 199; al-Bazzar, Kashf al-Astar, Volume 3, Number 226

[21] Ibn Abi Shaybah, Al-Musannaf, Volume 6, Number 402; ibn Abi 'Asim, as-Sunnah, Volume 2, Number 636; Abu Nu'aym al-Asbahani, Volume 9, Number 64

[22] Abu Dawud, Sunan Abi Dawud, Volume 4, Number 174; ibn Majah, Volume 2, Number 1368; al-Hakim, al-Mustadrik, Volume 4, Number 601

[23] Al-'Abad, 'Aqidah Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Athar fi al-Mahdi al-Muntazar, Number 13

[24] Ibn al-Jawzi, Manaqib al-Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, Page 163

[25] At-Tirmidhi, Sunan at-Tirmidhi, Volume 5, Number 642; an-Nasa'i, Sunan al-Kubra, Volume 5, Number 44; Bin Hanbal, Musnad Ahmad, Volume 4, Number 368 ibn Abi Shaybah, al-Musannaf, Volume 8, Number 449; al-Hakim, al-Mustadrik, Volume 3, Number 147

[26] At-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, Volume 11, Number 264; bin Hanbal, Fada'il as-Sahabah, Volume 3, Number 654; Abu Nu'aym al-Asbahani, Ma'rifah as-Sahabah, Volume 1, Number 85

[27] Bin Hanbal, Kitab al-Amr bil Ma'ruf wa an-Nahy 'an al-Munkar, Page 133

[28] Bin Hanbal, Musnad Ahmad, Volume 5, Number 26; ibn Abi Shaybah, al-Musannaf, Volume 7, Number 505; at-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, Volume 20, Number 229

[29] At-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, Volume 11, Number 65; al-Hakim, Al-

Mustadrik, Volume 3, Number 137; at-Tabari, at-Tahdhib al-Athar – Musnad Ali bin Abi Talib, Number 105

[30] At-Tirmidhi, Sunan at-Tirmidhi, Volume 5, Number 635, ibn Majah, Sunan ibn Majah, Volume 1, Number 53; Bin Hanbal, Musnad Ahmad, Volume 5, Number 356; al-Hakim, Volume 3, Number 141

[31] At-Tirmidhi, Sunan at-Tirmidhi, Volume 5, Number 635; Abu Ya'la, Musnad Abi Ya'la, Volume 12, Number 362

[32] Al-Hakim, al-Mustadrik, Volume 3, Number 141

[33] At-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, Volume 33, Number 380

[34] Al-Hakim, al-Mustadrik, Volume 3, Number 130

[35] Al-Bukhari, Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith #3706 & Hadith #4416; Muslim, Sahih Muslim, Hadith #2404

[36] Bin Hanbal, Musnad Ahmad, Volume 6, Number 323; an-Nasa'i, Sunan al-Kubra, Volume 5, Number 122

[37] Al-Hakim, al-Mustadrik, Volume 3, Number 130

[38] At-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, Volume 23, Number 239

[39] Al-Hakim, al-Mustadrik, Volume 3, Number 124; at-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam as-Saghir, Volume 2, Number 28

[40] An-Nasa'i, Sunan al-Kubra, Volume 5, Number 136; al-Bazzar, Kashf al-Astar, Volume 3, Number 191

*Note – The following hadith is mutawattir with slight differences in wording through different men in many hadith collections

Ali bin Abi Talib: Commander of the Faithful

Imam Ali bin Abi Talib (may Allah ennoble his face) was born in Makkah in the Ka'bah during the Era of Ignorance. His father was Abu Talib, the paternal uncle and protector of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) in Makkah, and his mother was Fatimah bint Asad, the woman who also raised the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) like a son.

The majority description of Imam Ali which reside in varying texts among Sunnis as well as Isma'ili and 12ver shi'ah is that he was extremely dark (adam shahid al-udmah) or black in skin color.[1] Other texts including from the Zaydi school of thought describe him as being closest in skin color to brown.[2]

Ahmad bin Hanbal (may Allah's mercy be upon him) stated that there were no more virtues narrated with sound chains of narrations about any from among the generation of the Prophet's companions than for Imam Ali.[3] He is the 4th rightly guided khalifah and Commander of the Faithful according to Sunni Muslims. Shi'i Muslims consider him to be the 1st Imam guarded from error from the Prophetic Household. His theological positions on the transcendency of the Divine and his interpretations of verses of the Qur'an are quoted in books of madhhab Ibadi, a school of thought practiced in Oman, Tanzania and parts of North Africa that is mistakenly made synonymous with Khawarij, a deviant sect in Islamic history which declared fellow Muslims as miscreants and disbelievers. Moreover, virtually every spiritual (Sufi) order including the An-Naqshabandi al-Aliyyah traces their methods of spiritual purification through chains of narration to Imam Ali.

There is no other Islamic personality who has been written about more than Imam Ali except for Prophet Muhammad (prayers and peace be upon him & his family). It is safe to say there is no proper spiritual practice of Islam void of the Prophetic tradition as lived and taught by Imam Ali. Given the breadth of information about is life being so expansive, Here are some aspects of his life that widely narrated:

He was raised in the household of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family), which includes before and at the initial revelation of the Qur'an.

He was the first male to accept Islam and the first to pray with the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him and his family).

He lied in the bed of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) the night of his fleeing along with Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) from Makkah to Al-Madinah. Quraysh assaulted him once finding him in bed as he spoiled their assassination plot.

When the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) paired off companions in Al-Madinah to be best friends, he left Imam Ali for himself and said, "Oh Ali! You are my brother in this world and the next-life."[4]

When the Prophet (SAWS) left Imam Ali in charge of the affairs of Al-Madinah before heading off to Ghazwah Tabuk, he told him, "You are to me in the position of Harun to Musa though there is no prophet after me."[5]

After the Farewell Pilgrimage of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family), he stood before group of his companions at a location known as Ghadir Khumm and told them, "Whoever I am his master (Mawla) then Ali is his master."[6] He then prayed, "Oh Allah! Be allied with whoever has affinity for him, and be at odds with whoever is an enemy to him."[7]

Upon the passing of the Prophet, Imam Ali performed the ghusl as well as the funeral prayer.

During the governments of Abu Bakr and Umar, Imam Ali gave them the wisest of council. Umar famously said, "'Umar would have been ruined if it were not for Ali."

During the revolt against Uthman while he was the khalifah, Imam Ali sent his sons to his home to protect him. During a siege, 'Uthman was later killed.

Imam Ali was the fourth khalifah and was given allegiance by the majority of the Ummah including the People of the Hijaz, Yemen and Iraq.

He is credited with being the first to systematize the grammar of the Arabic language and was the teacher of the top scholars of the second generation of Muslims including Abu Al-Aswad Ad-Duwali, Al-Hasan Al-Basri and Mujahid bin Jabr.

He was martyred during the month of Ramadan at the time of Fajr prayer in Al-Kufah, Iraq by the deviant Muslim from the Khawarij named Abdur Rahman bin Muljam.

Here are a few of the many statements of wisdom and legal rulings of Imam Ali:

- There is no heritage except with humility, no honor except with regardfulness for Allah (Taqwa), no deed except with intention, and no worship except with certitude (Yaqin).[8]Do not be a slave to another, for certainly Allah made you free.[9]
- Do not be one who hopes for the hereafter without deeds, and hopes to repent with false hope. Speak in the world the speech of those detached [from the world,] and act in it the work of one desiring [excellence]. If you are given from it, do not get full, and if you are not given it, do not be complacent.[10]
- "Oh son! Beware the companionship of a loudmouth fool, for surely he will seek to benefit you but will harm you."[11]
- Knowledge is better than wealth. Knowledge guards you while you guard your wealth.[12]
- When asked if the People of al-Jamal & Siffin (patrons of Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan) and an-Nahrawan (the Khawarij) were disbelievers, he replied that they are our brothers who rebelled against us and that we will fight them until they return to the command of Allah Might and Sublime.[13]
- It is not in the Qur'an the saying "Oh you who believe" except that in the Torah mentioned "Oh you impoverish."[14]
- Your friends are three and your adversaries are three. Your friends are your direct friend, the friend of your friend, and the adversary of your adversary. Your adversaries are your direct adversary, the adversary of your friend, and the friend of your adversary.[15]
- Surely the rich is the rich in his heart...The rich is not is not the rich in his wealth
- And thus the generous is the honorable in his character...The generous is not just with his people and family
- And thus the comprehending is knowledgeable of his condition... The comprehending is not just with his discourse and speech.[16]
- The one who is pleased with the action of a people is like the one who enters into it with them.[17]
- When you see the black flags, remain where you are and do not move your hands nor feet. Thereafter there shall appear a feeble people to

whom no concern is given. Their hearts will be like fragments of iron. They are the representatives of the state (ad-Dawlah). They will not fulfill their covenant and their agreement. They will call to the truth though they are not from its people. Their names will be a kunya [i.e., Abu Such and Such], and their ascriptions will be to towns [i.e. Al-Baghdadi]. Their hair will be long like that of women. [They shall be so] until they dispute among themselves, then Allah will bring forth the truth from whomever He wills.[18]

- Know that patience is from faith in the position of the head of a body; there is no good in a body without it having a head.[19]

ENDNOTES

[1] Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, Tarikh al-Baghdadi, Juz 1, Page 145

Al-Mizzi, Tahdhib al-Kamal, Juz 20, Page 480

Ibn al-Athir, Al-Kamal fi at-Tarikh, Juz 3, Page 396

Adh-Dhahabi, Tarikh al-Islam, Juz 3, Page 624

Ibn al-Jawzi, Sifahas-Safwah, Page 116

Ibn Sa'ad, At-Tabawat al-Kubra, Juz 3, Page 27

Al-Qadi an-Nu'man, Sharh Al-Akhbar, Juz 2, Page 427

Ibn Shar Ashub, Manaqib Aali Abi Talib, Juz 3, Page 91

Al-Khawarizmi, Al-Manaqib, Page 45

Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Juz 35, Page 2

[2] Ibn Mansur al-Mu'ayyidi, At-Tuhf Sharh az-Zalaf, Page 24

[3] Ibn al-Jawzi, Manaqib al-Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, Page 163

[4] Al-Hakim, Al-Mustadrak 'ala as-Sahihayn, Hadith #4345

[5] Muslim, Sahih Muslim, Hadith #2404; An-Nasa'i, Sunan an-Nasa'i, Hadith #8117; Al-Bazzar, Musnad al-Bazzar, Hadith #976; At-Tabarani, Mu'jam al-Kabir, Hadith #339

[6] Bin Hanbal, Musnad Ahmad, Volume 5, Page 370; Al-Hakim, Al-Mustadarak 'ala As-Sahihayn, Volume 3, Page 116; At-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Kabit, Volume 3, Page 20; At-Tahawai, Muskhil al-Athar, Volume 2, Page 308; Ibn Abi Shaybah; Al-Musanaf; Volume 12, Page 78

[7] Ibn Majah, Sunan ibn Majah, Hadith #117; Bin Hanbal, Musnad Ahmad, Volume 1 Page 219, Volume 4, Pages 281 368, 370 & 373, Volume 5, Page 370; Ibn 'Asakir, Tahdhib Tarikh Dimashq, Volume 7, Page 87; At-Tabarani, Mu'jam al-Kabir, Volume

5, 231, Volume 12, Page 122; An-Nasa'i, Tahdhib Khasa'is Ali, Hadith #41, Hadith #44, Hadith #49, Hadith #74

[8] Al-Quda'i, Dustur Ma'alim al-Hikam wa Ma'thur Makarim as-Shiyam min Kalam Amir al-Mu'minin Ali bin Abi Talib Karram Allah Wajhah, Page 91

[9] Ibid., Page 148

[10] Ibid, Pages 153 - 154

[11] Ibid., Page 170

[12] Ibn al-Jawzi, Sifwah as-Safwah, Page 122

[13] Zayd bin Ali, Musnad al-Imam Zayd, Pages 395 - 396

[14] Ali bin Musa, Sahifah al-Imam ar-Rida, Page 70

[15] Az-Zamakhshari, Rabi'a al-Abrar wa Fusus al-Akhbar fi al-Muhadarat, Juz 1, Page 191

[16] Ali bin Abi Talib, Diwan al-Imam Ali bin Abi Talib, Page 114

[17] Ash-Sharif ar-Radi, Khasa'is Amir al-Mu'minin Ali bin Abi Talib, Page 88

[18] Nu'aym bin Hammad, Kitab al-Fitan, Hadith Number 573

[19] Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, Tadhkirah al-Khawass, Page 123

Lady Fidda, Servant of Ahl al-Bayt

Lady Fidda was originally from Ethiopia, it has been narrated that she was of royal blood but was captured and brought to Arabia. She was freed by the Holy Prophet ﷺ and afterwards served Sayyidna Fatimah ؑ as her maid-servant. Sayyidna Fatimah ؑ divided her house work equally between herself and Lady Fidda and they would take turns to do the chores. She remained faithful to the household of the Prophet ﷺ and even accompanied them to Kerbala and to prison of Syria. She also had the honor of taking part in the "Three Days Fast". Once, when Imam Hasan and Imam Husain ؑ fell sick, the Prophet ﷺ suggested that Imam Ali ؑ make a vow to fast for three days when the children recovered. When they were better, Imam Ali, Sayyida Fatimah , Imam Hasan, Imam Husain and Lady Fidda all fasted to fulfil the vow.

However, on each of the three days, when they sat to break their fast, a hungry person came to their door pleaded for food. The first said he was poor, the second said he was an orphan and the third said he was a freed captive. Each time, the big-hearted members of the house, including Lady Fidda, gave away their food and broke their fast with water. In praise of this selfless action Allah revealed the 76th Chapter of the Holy Qur'an. The incident is described as follows:

They who fulfil their vows, and fear the day, the woe of which stretches far and wide. And they give away food, out of love for Him, to the poor and the orphan and the captive, (saying), "We feed you only for the sake of Allah, we do not want anything from you, not even thanks. Verily we fear from our Lord a stern day of distress." So Allah will guard them from the evil of that day and give them freshness and pleasure. (Surah Dahr (Insaan), 76 : 7 - 11)

Abdullah Mubarak has related a very interesting dialogue between himself and Lady Fidda.[1] He states, "I saw a woman passing through the desert

1 Muhammad Baqir Al-Majlisi *Bihar al-anwar al-jami at li-durar akhbar Al-aimmat Al-athar*(Beirut:Wafa) Vol 45 pg 169

who had fallen behind the caravan and asked her, "Who are you and where are you from?" She replied: And say, "Salaam" for they shall soon know! (Surah Zukhruf, 43 : 89) I learned that she expected me to greet her and say "Assalaamu Alaykum" first, before any question. I did as she reminded, and then enquired why she was in the desert. She answered: And whomsoever Allah guides, there can be none to lead astray! (Surah Zumar, 39 : 37) On hearing her reply, I asked her, "Are you from mankind or from the jinn?" She replied: O Children of Adam! Be adorned at every time of prostration. (Surah A'raf, 7: 31) I understood that she was human and then asked her, "Where are you coming from?" She replied: Those who are called to from a place far off. (Surah Ha Mim 41:44)

I asked her, "Where are you intending to go?" She said: And (purely) for Allah, is incumbent upon mankind, the Pilgrimage of the House. (Surah Al-Imran, 3 : 97) I asked her how many days she had been travelling. She told me: And indeed We (Allah) created the heavens and the earth and what is between them two, in six days. (Surah Qaaf, 50: 38) I asked her, "Do you feel hungry?" She replied: We (Allah) did not make them such bodies that ate no food. (Surah Anbiya, 21 : 8)

I gave her food and asked her to hurry up to catch the caravan but she replied:

Allah does not task any soul beyond its ability. (Surah Baqarah, 2: 286)

I suggested that she sit on the camel behind me, but she said:

Had there been gods therein besides Allah, there would have been disorder in both (the heavens and the earth). (Surah Anbiya, 21: 22)

I realized that, because we were not husband and wife, it was Haraam for both of us to ride the camel. So I got off and mounted her on it. As she sat on the camel, she said:

Glory to Him Who subjected this to us. (Surah Zukhruf 43: 13)

When we reached the caravan, I asked her, "Do you know anyone among them?" She called out in reply:

O Dawud, Verily, We have appointed you a vicegerent in the earth. (Surah Saad, 38: 26)

And Muhammad is not but a Messenger." (Surah Al- Imran, 3 : 144)

O Yahya! Hold the book with firmness!" (Surah Maryam, 19 : 12)

O Musa! Verily I am Allah, the All-Mighty. (Surah Naml, 27: 9)

I began to call out these four names at which four youths came out of the caravan and ran towards Lady Fidda. I asked her who they were and she replied:

Wealth and children are the adornment of the world. (Surah Kahf, 18: 46)

I realized that they were her sons. The woman turned to the youth and said:

O my Father, employ him, verily the best of those who you can employ is the strong man and the trusted one. (Surah Qasas, 28 : 26)

She thus made them understand that I had helped her. Then she told them:

And verily God increases manifold to whosoever He wills. (Surah Baqarah, 2: 261)

The sons understood their mother's hint and paid me well. I asked them who this noble lady was, and they replied, "She is our mother, Fidda, the maid-servant of Lady Fatima. She has conversed in nothing but the Holy Qur'an for the last 20 years."[2]

2 Ayatullah Mirza Mahdi Pooya, *Essence of the Holy Quran: The Eternal Light* (Imam Sahab-uz-Zaman Association, 1990)

Al-Abbas bin Ali & His Descendant Who Mirrored Imam Ali

One of the noble sons of Imam Ali bin Abi Talib (may Allah ennoble his face) was Al-Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) who was known as the Moon of the Hashimites (Qamr Bani Hashim). Al-Abbas unlike his older brothers al-Hasan and al-Husayn (peace be upon them) was not from the lineage of Fatimah az-Zahra (peace be upon her). His mother was the honorable Umm al-Banin bint Hazam (may Allah be pleased with her).[1]

Al-Abbas who was described as an extremely handsome and brave man accompanied his brother al-Husayn at Karbala in which he achieved martyrdom. His martyrdom was by the army of Yazid bin Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan which chased then murdered several descendants of the Prophet Muhammad (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) including Al-Abbas who refused to pay allegiance to Yazid.[2] Other sons of Imam Ali who were martyred at Karbala by the treacherous army include Ja'far, 'Uthman, Muhammad al-Asghar, and Abu Bakr.[3]

Though Al-Abbas was martyred, he had three sons who then carried on his lineage. One of those descendants who was a scholar as well as very handsome was Hamzah bin al-Hasan bin 'Ubaydillah bin al-Abbas bin Ali bin Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with them). It is narrated that upon the Abbasid sultan Abdullah "Al-Ma'mun" first seeing Sayyid Hamzah that he was so astounded by his inward and outward beauty that he gave him 50,000 dirham.[4] Sayyid Hamzah was thus known as Ash-Shabih (The Resemblance) due to him, according to the Hashemites, having strong likeness to the dark complexioned Imam Ali.[5]

ENDNOTES

[1] Yahya bin al-Hasan al-'Aqiqi, Kitab al-Mu'qibin min Walad al-Imam Abi al-Hasan Ali bin Abi Talib Amir al-Mu'minin, Page 227

[2] Abu al-Faraj al-Asbahani, Maqatil at-Talibin, Pages 89 - 90

[3] Ibid., Pages 88 - 91

[4] Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi, Ash-Shajarah at-Talibin fi Ansab at-Talibiyyah, Page 198

[5] As-Samarqandi, Tuhfah bi Ma'rifah Man Yantisb ila Abdillah wa Abi Talib, Page 104

Abu Niyzar and Nasr: Devotees to the Prophetic Household

Abu Niyzar (may Allah be pleased with him) was a companion of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) from Abyssinian heritage. He was a son of Annajashi (may Allah have mercy upon him) who was the king of Abyssinian whose proper name was Ashamah bin Abhar.[1]

Abu Niyzar was raised as a Christian then embraced Islam along with his father in Abyssinia. Abu Niyzar was among 72 Abyssinians including his uncle Dhu Mikhbar (may Allah be pleased with him) and 2 of his siblings, Armaa and Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with them both), who migrated to al-Madinah to join Prophet Muhammad (prayers and peace be upon him & his family).[2] Once reaching al-Madinah, Dhu Mikhbar and Abu Niyzar loyally served the Prophet. After the passing of the Prophet, Abu Niyzar attached himself to serving Fatimah Az-Zahra (may Allah's blessings be upon her) then serving Imam al-Hasan bin Ali (may Allah's blessings be upon him) after her passing away.

Abu Niyzar became the caretaker of a garden owned by the Prophetic Household named al-Bughayghah upon the instruction of Imam Ali bin Abi Talib (may Allah ennoble his face). From it one day, Abu Niyzar prepared a meal in which Imam Ali ate and drank from it. Imam Ali then stated that a condition of the garden was that it be an endowment and what came forth from it would provide for the needy and wayfarers in al-Madinah, unless Imam al-Hasan bin Ali or Imam al-Husayn bin Ali (may Allah's blessings be upon him) needed to sell it.[3]

After the martyrdom of Imam Ali, Imam al-Husayn was in need of repaying a debt, and this news reached Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan. Mu'awiyah then offered Abu Niyzar a large sum of money to sell the garden, but was refused because it was to remain as an endowment for the poor in al-Madinah.

Once Mu'awiyah died and his son Yazid came into power, Abu Niyzar's son Nasr (may Allah be pleased with him) like the Hashemites and the

companion Abdullah bin az-Zubayr refused to give allegiance to Yazid. According to the Hanbali scholar al-Mubarrid, Nasr accepted Islam at a young age and later gave his service to Imam Ali and Imam al-Hasan before attaching himself to Imam al-Husayn.[4] Nasr, who was described as a courageous and valiant person, accompanied Imam al-Husayn from al-Madinah to Makkah and then to Karbala.[5] Just as his father was among 72 men who migrated for the sake of Allah (Mighty & Sublime) to al-Madinah, Nasr was among the 72 souls with his imam who achieved martyrdom for sake of truth at Karbala due to the treachery of the army of Yazid.[6]

ENDNOTES

[1] Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, Al-Isabah, Vol. 7, Page 323

[2] Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, Al-Isbah, Vol. 2, Number #2471

[3] Al-Asbahani, Hilyah al-Awliya, Vol. 1, Page 86,

[4] Al-Hamawi, Mu'jam al-Buldan, Vol. 3, Page 175

[5] Az-Zanjani, Wasilah ad-Dariyn, Page 199

[6] As-Samawi, Ibsar al-'Ayn, Page 72; An-Namazi, Mustadrikat 'Ilm ar-Rijal, Vol. 8, Number #10029

Qanbar: Companion of Imam Ali

Abu Hamdan Qanbar (may Allah have mercy upon him) was a man who faithfully served Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah ennoble his face). Outside of the name of his father, books of Islamic history do not detail his lineage. He was freed from slavery by Imam Ali but stayed in his company to serve him.

Qanbar is listed among those who were considered upright students of Imam Ali. His name appears as a narrator of Prophetic traditions in Sunni and 12ver shi'ah books. One such narration relates to his being taught the proper manner of making wudu per the manner that Ali was taught by witnessing the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family).[1]

During the government of Imam Ali, Qanbar looked after the wealth of the Islamic treasury or Bayt al-Mal. He was present at the Battle of Siffin in the army of Imam Ali along with thousands of men including 70 of the Sahabah from the Battle of Badr. He was a witness to many upright Muslims being martyred during this civil war including the renowned Uways al-Qarani (may Allah have mercy upon) who was also in the army of Imam Ali.

After Siffin and the subsequent arbitration between the two sets of opposing Muslims, Qanbar returned to al-Kufah in Iraq with Imam Ali which was the seat of his khilafah. From this point, some of the Muslims who were in the army of Imam Ali rebelled and declared that he had committed an act of heresy for entering into a proverbial ceasefire with the opposing army which was under the control of Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan, an army which they professed had wrongfully rebelled against the rightful khilafah of Imam Ali. Qanbar along with prominent companions such as Abdullah ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) stayed loyal while the rebels, who are known as khawarij, proclaimed that they would fight Imam Ali as well as Mu'awiyah.

Qanbar was in al-Kufah on the 19th of month of Ramadan in 40 AH. when Imam Ali was stabbed with a poisoned tip weapon in the masjid at the time of Fajr prayer. The assailant was one of the khawarij named Abdur

Rahman ibn Muljam. Imam Ali's martyrdom was achieved on the 21st day in that blessed month.

After the martyrdom of the Imam, Qanbar pledged his allegiance to al-Hasan bin Ali (may Allah's blessings be upon him) when the people of Iraq recognized him to be the next rightful khalifah. Due to his proximity with Ahl al-Bayt and his noncompliance to oppression from Bani Umayyah after the martyrdoms of Al-Hasan and his brother al-Husayn (may Allah's blessings be upon him), Qanbar was targeted by governmental authorities. Qanbar was subsequently martyred by the brute governor of Bani Umayyah in Iraq named al-Hajjaj bin Yusuf, who was also responsible for the martyrdom of another great former slave and black man who was a student of Ahl al-Bayt, Sa'id ibn Jubayr (may Allah have mercy upon him).[2]

ENDNOTES

[1] Abd ar-Razzaq as-Sana'na'i, al-Musannaf, Hadith #122, al-Mizzi, Ikmal Tahdhib al-Kamal; Volume 8, Page 313

[2] Ibn Muhammad al-Baghdadi, al-Irshad, Volume 1, Page 2

Jawn bin Huway: Martyr of Karbala

Abu Malik Jawn bin Huway was a man of Abyssinian lineage from the 2nd generation of Muslims. His name as a title or laqab in the Arabic language means one with black skin.[1] Other sources mention that his name was simply Huway, thus making jawn a description of his blackness.[2]

Jawn was client of the companion Abu Dharr al-Ghiffari (may Allah be pleased with him). After Abu Dharr passed away in al-Rabadah, after leaving Syria due to a dispute with Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan over the neglect of the rights of the poor, Jawn came to al-Madinah where he connected himself to Imam Ali bin Abi Talib (may Allah ennoble his face). Jawn later pledged allegiance to Imam Ali then left with him from al-Madinah to al-Kufah, Iraq which became the seat of the khilafah.

After the martyrdom of Imam Ali, he then pledged allegiance to his son al-Hasan (may Allah's blessings be upon him). After al-Hasan was martyred due to being poisoned in al-Madinah during the era of the government of Mu'awiyah, Jawn then attached himself to al-Husayn (may Allah's blessings be upon him). When Mu'awiyah passed away, his son Yazid immediately declared his khilafah.

Jawn accompanied al-Husayn and his family upon their leaving al-Madinah to Makkah. The journey was made in the middle night to sneak away as Yazid's henchmen were attempting to coerce Bani Hashim to pledge allegiance to the new government. Upon reaching Makkah, the group only stayed there temporarily then fled to al-Kufa, Iraq after a plethora of letters were sent by its people pledging to support al-Husayn. Al-Husayn and the Bani Hashim were betrayed by the people of al-Kufah, then left for Karbala, the land of pain and affliction.

Once reaching Karbala, al-Husayn along with his family and companions were surrounded by the army of Yazid during the month of Muharram in 61 AH. The night before the attack against Bani Hashim on the 10th of Muharram, known as Yawm 'Ashura, Jawn prepared the weapons for defense against aggression. When the army of Yazid attacked, Jawn stood in front

of al-Husayn to defend him which caused him to achieve martyrdom. After Jawn's blood was spilled, al-Husayn prayed, "Oh Allah, enlighten his face, make fragrant his scent, and resurrect him with the righteous."[3]

Al-Husayn was later martyred on that same day, Yawm 'Ashura, along with 72 of his companions including Jawn. The only male survivor that day was Zaynul 'Abideen Ali bin al-Husayn. He was sick on that day and did not fight, and his life was spared along with the women from Bani Hashim.

Peace be upon you, oh al-Husayn. Peace be upon you, oh Martyrs of Karbala. Peace be upon you, oh Jawn ibna Huway Mawla Abi Dharr al-Ghiffari.

ENDNOTES

[1] Ar-Razi, ash-Shajarah al-Mubarakah fi Ansab at-Talibiyyah, Page 20

[2] Al-Khawarizmi, Maqtal al-Husayn, Volume 1, Page 237; at-Tabari, Tarikh at-Tabari, Volume 5, Page 420

[3] Al-Ha'eri, Tasliyah al-Majalis wa Ziynah al-Majalis, Volume 2, Pages 292 - 293

Muhammad Baqir

He is Abu Jafar Muhammad, the son of Ali known as Zayn-ul-Abideen, the son of Hussain the son of Ali ibn Abi Talib and Sayyidna Fatimah Zahra the daughter of the Messenger of Allah Sayyidna Muhammad ﷺ. He was born around 56 AH/676 CE. He was described as: "*asmar al-lawn*" or brown complexion. [1]

The name Baqir is short for Baqir-ul-ilm which means *"he who opens knowledge", or "he who dives deep for knowledge."* It was also said that the title meant "ample." Like his pious predecessors he was raised in a home of piety and knowledge. His father, the avid worshipper Ali ibn Hussain, who survived Karbala never rebelled against the Ummayads and spent his life in constant worship. As a result of his ascetic and gnosis he earned the title "the adornment of the worshippers." There is narration about him narrated on the authority of Jabir bin Ansari. The Prophet ﷺ said to Jabir: " Surely you will live until you meet a man from my descendants, his name will be the same as mine. He will possess in-depth knowledge. When you meet him convey my salaams to him." When Jabir met Muhammad al-Baqir he conveyed the salaams of the Prophet ﷺ to him and died shortly after.

Imam Baqir was a sagacious scholar whose wisdom was sought in all affairs including that of government. Up until this time the Ummayad Government had till then no currency of its own. They were still a nomadic people who weren't skilled in the intricacies of government and centralized administration. This created a contrast of sorts because now the Ummayads were ruling over parts of Byzantine empire. The Byzantines had more knowledge and experience in the details of governing and commerce. The Byzantine currency of the Eastern Roman Empire was valid tender in Damascus as well. But during the reign of Walid Ibn Abdul Malik, a dispute broke out between him and the Byzantine ruler when the later decided to stamp a new currency with a phrase which was considered derogatory to the Holy Prophet.

This created uneasiness in the Muslim Ummah. Walid convened a committee in which prominent Muslim scholars participated. Imam Baqir expressed his opinion that the Government ought to create its own currency on one side of which it should stamp the statement "La Ilaha Illallah and on the other side "Muhammad Rasul Allah".

The opinion of the Imam was unanimously approved and for the first time an Islamic coin was minted. Some of these coins were exhibited at the British Museum in 1988 at the event of the Islamic Art exhibition in London and a note shown that these coins were minted at the time of Walid Ibn Abdul Malik on the advice of Imam Baqir.

During the reign of Umar bin Abdul Aziz much of the nasibi practices were discontinued and property which was previously confiscated from the Ahl Bait was returned to them. Imam Baqir set up a school and taught many students. He was later infected by a poisoned saddle. It was said to have been at the behest of Abdul Malik bin Marwan. The Imam succumbed to the poisoning and died on the 7th of Dhul-Hijjah 114 AH/733 CE.

Wise Sayings of Imam Baqir

- Never does pride enter a man's heart except that his intelligence decreases by the same amount.
- In his love for the world, the greedy is like the silkworm, the more it wraps in its cocoon, the less it has of escaping it, until it dies of grief.

ENDNOTE

[1] Muhammad Hussain As-Samarqandi, *Tuhfatul-Talib bi Marifa man yanasab ila Abdullah Wa Abi Talib*(Madinah Munawara:Darul Mujtaba 1997) pg.45

Imam Jafar as-Sadiq

He is Jafar The son of Muhammad Baqir the son of Zayn-ul-Abideen, the son of al-Husayn, the son of the Chief of the Believers Ali ibn Abi Talib and his wife the leader of the women of paradise Fatimah Zahrah, who was the daughter of the beloved of Allah and the leader of mankind Sayyidna Muhammad ibn Abdullah ﷺ. He was described as:

> A mild and dark color, he wore a ring which was engraved with the words: What Allah wills, there is no power nor might except by Allah, I seek forgiveness in Allah.[1]

He is universally accepted as an Imam and erudite scholar, who combined outward knowledge with gnosis by both Sunnis and Shia. The Imam was born in either 80H/699-700 CE or 83H/703-704 CE in the blessed and illuminated city of the Prophet. ﷺ He is also a descendent of Abu Bakr Siddiq. Ibn Sa'ad said in his *Tabaqat*: "His mother's name is Um Farwa bint Al-Qassim bin Muhammad bin Abi Bakr Al-Siddiq." Al-Tusi also states: "His (Jafar's) mother is Um Farwa bint Al-Qassim bin Muhammad the generous bin Abi Bakr."

Growing up in the prophetic household, he like his pious ancestors became a repository and citadel of knowledge. He studied all of the Islamic sciences with his father, Imam Muhammad Baqir. Imams such as Malik ibn Anas[2], and Abu Hanifa, both progenitors of madhhabs bearing their names were students of Imam Jafar and praised his knowledge and piety. Ibn Hajar al-Makki (d. 1566 CE) confirmed this in his *Sawaiq Muhriqa*. Abu Zahra records a very famous narration in which Abu Hanifa stated:" If it wasn't for the two years that I spent with Jafar then Numan(Abu Hanifa) would have perished." Imam Malik is reported to have said about him: "Verily he (Imam Jafar) was from the scholars of worldly abstinence and who feared Allah."[3] Imam Jafar was amongst the teachers of Wasil ibn Ata (d.700 CE, the founder of the Mutazila.

The Imam was a paragon of prophetic knowledge, justice,and racial and ethnic equality. There is a famous story about him which illustrates this. A man from the people of Iraq went to him (al-Sadiq) frequently, then he broke away from him, so he (the Imam) asked some people about him. To detract from him, one of them said: "He is Nabati." So, he (the Imam), said: "The origin of the man is his intellect, his ancestry is his religion, his generosity is his piety, and men are equal in Adam (Adam)."

When the various branches of Bani Hashim (Bani Abbas, Bani Ali, Bani Jafar, Bani Aqil) decided to rebel against the Ummayads he was chosen to be the Caliph but he refused. Muhamad Nafs-Zakiyah accepted the position but was later betrayed by Bani Abbas and martyred in 762 CE/145 AH. Imam Jafar himself was arrested and summoned to Baghdad by the Abbasids on different occasions. Being a charismatic leader and a brilliant scholar with an impeccable lineage, he was perceived as a threat to the Abbasids. This is despite the fact that at the outset of the Hashimi uprising, he burnt the letter of Abu Muslim's letter of invitation. The Imam died at the age of 64 or 65 in 765 CE/148 AH. Some sources say that it was due to poisoning at the behest of Mansur. May Allah have mercy on the Imam and admit him to the highest levels of paradise.

Wise Sayings of Imam Jafar

- Verily, with his justice, Allah has put comfort and ease in certainty and satisfaction, and put worry and sorrow in doubt and anger
- The richest riches is he who is not captive for greed
- Three (things) are of the noble acts of here and hereafter: Forgive him who has wronged you, visit him who has abandoned you, and be patient when you are treated with ignorance.

ENDNOTES

[1] Amr Ghareeri, *Imam Jafar as-Sadiq Wa-Arau-Fiqhiya* (Beirut: Dar-ul-Kutub Iliya 1971) Pg.16

[2] Umar F. Abd-Allah, *Mālik and Medina: Islamic Legal Reasoning in the Formative Period*, p 44.

[3] Abu Nu'am Ahmad Isfahani, *Hilyat al-awliya Wa Tabaqat al-Asfiya* (Cairo: Maktabat Khanji Matba'at al-Sa;adah,1938) Vol 3. Pg. 114

An-Nafs az-Zakiyyah: The Pure Soul

He is Muhammad the son of Abdullah Kamil, the son of Hasan Muthanna, the son of Amir-ul-Mumineen Hasan, the son of Amir-ul-Mumineen Ali ibn Abi Talib and Sayyidna Fatimah Zahra, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He was born in the illuminated city of Madinah in either 92 AH/710 CE or 100 AH./718 CE. His physical description was that he was: "ادم اللـون شـديد الادمـة"[1] Black in color, very black. The intensifier here is the word "shadid". It is worthy to point out here as noted in other parts that this is the exact description given to Sayyidna Bilal ibn Rabah ﷺ, yet he is often thought of as being the lone or part of a few black sahaba who all were coincidentally slaves. If this is the same description given to members of Ahl Bait then why aren't they depicted in the same manner as Bilal in media, murals or in the minds of Muslims?

He was also called "al-Mahdi" or the Guided one as many held the belief that he was the awaited Mahdi prophesied by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ who was to come and lead the entire Muslim world at the end of time. He was known to be upright, pious and of pure disposition, hence he was nicknamed "The Pure Soul." Because of the oppression of the Bani Ummayah, the Bani Hashim met in secrecy to overthrow them. The various strands of Bani Hashim who were the descendants of: Aqil, Ali, Abbas, etc) selected Muhammad the son of Abdullah Kamil as the caliph upon the success of the revolt. Imam Jafar-As-Sadiq was initially chosen but turned down the appointment.

After the success of the revolution the Abbasids reneged on their pact and imprisoned the Alids.

There is a series of letters which were written between Mansur and Muhammad Nafs az-Zakiyya in regards to who was more fit for the office of Caliph. Part of Muhammad Nafs az- Zakiyyah's argument was that he was a pure Arab and descendant of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ whose lineage was not diluted with non-Arab blood or bond women. We don't find any rebuttal to Muhammad's claim of ancestry because he was black!

Muhammad wrote: "You well know that no one who has lineage, nobility and status equal to ours has laid claim to this office. By the nobility of our fathers, we are not the sons of the accursed [*al-lu'uana*], the outcast [*al-turada*], and those who were freed from captivity [*al-ta'alaqa*]. No one from Bani Hashim has the sort of bonds that we can draw upon through kinship, precedence, and superiority. We are the descendants of [fore] mother of Allah's Messenger ﷺ, Fatima bint Amr, in the jahilliyya, and the descendants of his ﷺ daughter Fatima (upon her be peace) in Islam."[2]

As a matter of fact, when Mansur answers Muhammad he states: "You are indeed the descendants of Fatimah, which is a close kinship but does not legitimate inheritance, nor does it confer *imama* from her."[3] Muhammad gathered an army and took Makkah and Yemen. He was besieged and killed outside of Madina in 763 CE by the Abbasid forces. Some of his followers refused to believe that he was martyred and believed that he would return. His brother escaped the Abbasid imprisonment and murder of his family and fled to Morocco where he is credited with establishing the Sharifan Kingdom of Morocco.

ENDNOTES

[1] Majd al-Din bin Muhammad bin Mansur Muyadi, *Tahful Sharh Zalif* (Muassa Ahl Bait lilRiaya al-ijtimaia: Sanaa, 2017) pg 52

Imam Nadhir bil Haqq Abu Talib, *Ifadat Fi Tarikh Al-Immatu Saadat (Maktab Ahl Bait)pg 48*

[2] Al-Tabari 3:209-210 (l. 18 to l.4)

[3] Al-Tabari 3:213 (ll.5-7)

Yahya bin Abdillah Sahib ad-Daylam

Imam Yahya bin Abdillah bin al-Hasan bin al-Hasan bin Ali bin Abi Talib (may Allah's blessings be upon them) was a scholar and mujahid with a very traveled history.

There is a difference of opinion regarding the name of Imam Yahya's mother, but it is established that she was from Quraysh. He was physically described as being short in stature, brown (adam) in skin color and handsome.[1] His only son was known as Muhammad al-Uthaybi (may Allah be pleased with him).[2] His son Muhammad had five sons by his wife Fatimah the daughter of Mawlay Idris (may Allah be pleased with them both).

Imam Yahya lived through extremely turbulent times within the Ummah. The descendants of Imam Ali (may Allah ennoble his face) suffered persecution under Bani Umayyah and witnessed a new form of tyranny during the reign of Bani Abbas. During this era, scholars were persecuted for not submitting to the tyranny and were in fact punished and imprisoned for having closeness in proximity to Ahl al-Bayt.

Imam Yahya gave himself to learning sacred knowledge at a young age and was a transmitter of the Prophetic tradition narrating from his brother an-Nafs az-Zakiyyah Muhammad and his cousin Ja'far as-Sadiq (may Allah's blessings be upon them). He passed on his knowledge to his students including his son Muhammad al-Uthaybi and al-Hasan bin Salih bin Hayy as well as the renowned imam of fiqh Muhammad bin Idris ash-Shafi'i (may Allah's mercy be upon him).[3]

Due to oppression, there were several uprisings against Bani Abbas led by the offspring of Imam Ali. Imam Yahya was a witness to the uprising of his brother an-Nafs az-Zakiyyah and his cousin Imam al-Husayn bin Ali bin al-Hasan bin al-Hasan bin al-Hasan bin Ali bin Abi Talib al-Fakhi (may Allah's blessings be upon them). An-Nafs az-Zakiyyah and Imam al-Husayn al-Fakhi were both martyred in the process. In the case of the latter, the slaughter of the Hashimites due to revolting was so brutal that the Tragedy of Fakh was considered to be like the second coming of Karbala which

was the martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn bin Ali bin Abi Talib (may Allah's blessings be upon them) and 72 of his companions including descendants of Ja'far bin Abi Talib and 'Aqil bin Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with them). In fact, Imam Ali ar-Rida bin Musa al-Kathim bin Ja'far as-Sadiq (may Allah's blessings be upon them) stated that the massacre at Fakh was the worse calamity that had befallen the Prophetic Household since Karbala.

Based upon his witnessing these events and the pressure upon the offspring of Imam Ali, Imam Yahya made a series of retreats to different lands for safety and to regroup the supporters of Ahl al-Bayt. There are varying reports about where he first retreated to. One account relays that he went to Abyssinia (Ancient Ethiopia) and the Hijaz before going to Yemen while others state that he went to Yemen firstly before heading to Abyssinia.

Imam Yahya was given bay'ah (pledge of allegiance) by the people of Makkah and al-Madinah, the people of Yemen and of Egypt in defiance of the rule of Harun al-Abbasi also known as Harun "ar-Rashid." Ash-Shafi'i also pledged his allegiance in support of his teacher.[4] Moreover, Ash-Shafi'i called people to support him.[5]

Ash-Shafi'i was subsequently arrested upon the accusation of being a deviant Shi'i (Rafidi) and taken back to Baghdad to face Harun al-Abbasi. Regarding this marginalization of the Prophetic Household, ash-Shafi'i composed the famous poem which is in his Diwan:

> Oh Family of the Household of the Messenger of Allah love for you
> is obligatory from Allah in the Qur'an which He revealed.
> He suffices you in the magnitude of your honor that for you
> whoever does not send prayers upon you, there is no salah for him.
> [6]

Imam Yahya later went to Daylam, which is located today in Iran. He was subsequently arrested and taken to prison in Baghdad in which he was beaten then martyred due to starvation and dehydration as the prison guards of Harun al-Abbas denied him food and drink. His son Muhammad al-Uthaybi was martyred the same way in prison.

ENDNOTES

[1] Abu al-Faraj al-Asbhani, Maqatil at-Talibin, Page 389; Majid ad-Din al-Mu'ayydi, at-Tuhf Sharh az-Zalaf, Page 63

[2] Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi; as-Sharajah al-Mubarak fi al-Ansab at-Talibiyyah, Page 31

[3] Ahmad bin Sahl ar-Razi, Akhbar Fakh wa Khabar Yahya bin Abdillah wa Akhihi Idris bin Abdillah, Page 61

[4] Madelung, Wilfred, Akhbar al-A'immah az-Zaydiyyah fi Tabaristan wa Daylam wa Jiylan, Page 55;

[5] Al-Hadi bin Ibrahim al-Harun, Hidayah ar-Raghibiyyin ila Madhhab 'Itrah at-Tayyibiyyin, Page 104

[6] Majd ad-Din al-Mu'ayyidi, At-Tuhfah Sharh az-Zalaf, Page 64

Musa al-Jawn

He is the venerable Imam Sayyid Musa al-Jawn, son of Imam Sayyid 'Abdu'llah al-Mahd, son of Imam Sayyid al-Hasan al-Muthanna, son of Amirul-Muminin Sayyid al-Hasan as-Sibt, son of our chief and our patron, the Commander of the Believers, Abu 'l-Husain 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be well pleased with them all) and the lady of paradise Sayyidna Fatima az-Zahra the daughter of the Succor of creation and Seal of the Prophets Muhammad ibn Abdullah ﷺ. He was the brother of Muhammad Nafsul Zakiyyah and Mawla Idris. He was nicknamed 'the Black" (al-jawn) because of his complexion. He was described as "أبا عبد الله، وكان أسود اللون" He was black in color.[1] The ashraf tribe called "Al-Akhaidar" found in modern Oman and Saudi Arabia are said to be descended from him.

According to Abdullah bin Ahmad bin Hanbal , Musa Al-Jawn was a righteous man. Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi and Adh-Dhahabi stated that Yahya bin Ma'in viewed him as trustworthy pertaining to his narrations of ahadith. Ibn Khaldun states that Musa Al-Jawn participated with his brother Imam Muhammad Nafs az-Zakiyyah in an uprising against the first Abbasid caliph Abu Ja'far Al-Mansur. It is also narrated by Al-Bayhaqi that he was imprisoned, beaten and martyred in prison during the uprising.

ENDNOTE

[1] Ibn Unaba, *Umdat al-Talib*

Imam Musa al-Kazim: Spiritual Master from Ahl al-Bayt

Imam Musa al-Kazim bin Ja'far as-Sadiq bin Muhammad al-Baqir bin Ali as-Sajjad bin al-Husayn as-Sibt bin Abi al-Murtada bin Abi Talib (may Allah's blessings be upon them) was one of the spiritual masters of Ahl al-Bayt.

Imam Musa was born in al-Madinah in 128 AH. during the reign of Bani Umayyah. His mother, Hamidah, was African from the Amazigh people.[1] He was described to be black (Aswad) in skin color.[2] One of his notable characteristics was of being extremely generous. Relating to his worship, he would stand most of the night in prayer. He was well-known to be upright and trustworthy in narrating Prophetic traditions and as being "from the Imams of the Muslims."[3] Al-Kazim was his nickname due to his ability to control his anger and hold his temper despite being excessively wronged.

Regarding spiritual paths within Sunni Islam, Imam Musa is the 7th imam in the Qadiri order and in the golden chain of an-Naqshabandi al-Aliyyah. In 12'ver shi'ah belief, he is the 7th of the 12 infallible imams. To Zaydis, al-Kazim is considered an imam of knowledge who also possessed high spirituality as reflected in his well-known supplication Du'a al-Jawshan.[4]

While residing in al-Madinah, Imam Musa was a witness to his cousin Imam Husayn bin Ali al-Fakhi (may Allah's blessing be upon them) calling the people for allegiance to rise up against the tyranny of Bani Abbas. After the Tragedy of Fakh, Imam al-Kazim was asked to come to Iraq by the Abbasi ruler Harun "ar-Rashid" in 164 AH. While in Iraq, people began to gravitate towards him and became his disciples based upon his gnosis and illuminated character.

A well-known story relates to al-Kazim's disciple Bishr bin Harith al-Hafi (may Allah sanctify his spirit). Bishr was born in Persia but later settled in Baghdad. One night while Bishr was having a loud party with music and alcohol consumption, Imam al-Kazim walked by his house and saw a slave girl coming out with rubbish that she cleaned up. The imam asked

her, "Is the resident of this home a freeman or a slave?" She replied, "Of course, he is free!" He then said, "You're correct because if he was a slave, he would fear his Master." She then went inside the home while Bishr was drinking at the table, then he asked her what was her delay. She told him about the brief interaction that she had with the imam, and Bishr became stunned. Taken by the power of the story which was told to him, he run out of the house barefoot behind the imam and caught up with him. Bishr then repented from his sinful behaviors and did not return to loud parties and consuming wine. From then on after becoming a discipline of Imam al-Kazim, he didn't wear shoes again hence he became known as al-Hafi, the Barefooted One.[5]

Due to the spiritual attraction of the offspring of Imam Ali (may Allah ennoble his face) and the people pledging allegiance to them instead of fully submitting to Abbasi rule, Imam Musa was imprisoned by Harun. While in jail, he achieved martyrdom due to consuming poisoned rations. After his passing away, his corpse was hung from a bridge in Baghdad for the people to see. Harun sought to relay a message to those that were thinking of resisting him or becoming too close to the Alawis that they could suffer the same fate.

Succeeding him in leading the family after his martyrdom was his son Imam Ali ar-Rida (may Allah's blessings be upon him). He also had other sons who were scholars. One of his son was Ahmad al-Aswad (The Black Man) who became the chief noble of his time in Tus, Persia.[6] Another one of his sons who became infamous in how he resisted Abbasi tyranny was Zayd an-Nar (The Fire). Zayd an-Nar's anger over oppression after the martyrdom of his father drove him one day to perform the mean act in Basrah of torching the homes of Bani Abbas which also had women and children in them.

Imam al-Kazim has numerous descendants throughout the Arab world, Persia and Africa to this day though the majority of them still reside in Iraq.

Imam Musa al-Kazim's grave in Baghdad has been a location in which people have traveled to for inspiration and to obtain blessings since his martyrdom. Ash-Shafi'i (may Allah have mercy upon him) who was a contemporary of Imam al-Kazim encouraged people to visit his grave and said that it was a remedy and means for supplications to be answered.[7] One of his notable siblings paternally and maternally, Sayyidah A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), is buried in Cairo and is also frequently visited.[8] The majority opinion historically from the classical era to contemporary times

of Sunnism and Shi'ism has been that visiting the graves of the righteous such as Imam al-Kazim brings benefit to believers.

ENDNOTES

[1] Ibn as-Sabbagh al-Maliki, al-Fusul al-Muhimmah, Page 229

[2] Ibn 'Inabah, Kitab 'Umdah at-Talib fi Ansab Aali Abi Talib, Page 156

[3] Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, Tahdhib at-Tahdhib, Volume 3, Number 173

[4] Muhammad bin Mansur al-Mu'ayyidi, Zub al-A'daiyyah, Pages 90 - 95

[5] Abbas al-Qummi, al-Kunya wa al-Aqab, Volume 2, Number 168

[6] Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi, Ash-Shajarah al-Mubarakah fi Ansab at-Talibiyyah, Page 109

[7] Kamal ad-Din ad-Damiri, Hayat al-Hayawan al-Kubra, Juz 1, 432

[8] Mu'min ash-Shablanji, Nur al-Absar fi Manaqib Aali Bayt an-Nabi al-Mukhtar, Page 387

Those Who Achieved Martyrdom in Africa

In the early generations of the Muslims, enmity expressed towards Ahl al-Bayt from governmental authorities was commonplace. Some of this related to old tribal animosity dating back to the Era of Ignorance (al-Jahiliyyah), while another portion related to insecurities due to the descendants of Ali (may Allah ennoble his face) having low tolerance for corruption and oppression. Furthermore, hostility towards those men was related to their spiritual magnetism as well as them calling Muslims to follow them instead of the status quo. A mixture of these led to the martyrdom of prominent members of Ahl al-Bayt in varying lands, beginning in Iraq with the murders of Muslim bin Aqil bin Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) then al-Husayn bin Ali bin Abi Talib and his companions (may Allah be pleased with them) to the killing of Yahya bin Zayd ash-Shahid bin Ali as-Sajjad (may Allah's blessings be upon them) in Persia. As Ahl al-Bayt left out of those areas heading into other areas of the world, they also achieved martyrdom due the machinations of Abbasi leaders. According to Maqatil at-Talibin by Abu al-Faraj al-Asbahani, close to 200 men from Ahl al-Bayt were martyred during the governments of Abbasi leaders. The following is a list of descendants of Abu Talib who were martyred in Africa during the Abbasi era:

During the Reign of Harun "ar-Rashid"

Mawlay Idris bin Abdillah al-Kamil (may Allah's blessings be upon them) Poisoned while governing as the first imam of Ahl al-Bayt in the Maghrib, North Africa. The current resting place of Mawlay Idris is Zerhoun, Morocco which is a frequently visited shrine.
8 other members of Ahl al-Bayt were martyred during Harun's government which includes poisonings and being beaten to death while incarcerated.

During the Reign of Ja'far "al-Muqtadir billah"

- Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Sulayman bin Abdillah al-Kamil (may Allah's blessings be upon them). Was killed in the area of present-day Sudan.
- Ja'far bin Salih bin Ibrahim bin Muhammad bin Ali bin Abdillah (may Allah's blessings be upon them., Was also killed in the area of present-day Sudan.
- Al-Qasim bin Ahmad bin Abdillah bin al-Qasim bin Ishaq bin Abdillah bin Ja'far bin Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with them). Was killed in al-Habashah, the land which currently is Eritrea and Ethiopia.
- Ayyub bin al-Qasim bin al-Hasan bin Muhammad bin Abdir Rahman al-Qasim bin al-Hasan bin Zayd bin al-Hasan bin Ali (may Allah's blessings be upon them). Was killed in Nubia.

Besides these 4, 72 additional men from Ahl al-Bayt were martyred during this era.

Ali Rida

He is Ali, the son of Musa Kadhim, the son of Jafar as-Sadiq, the son of Muhammad Baqir the son of Ali Zayn-ul-Abidin, the son of the leader of the youth of paradise Imam Husayn the son of Amir-ul-Muminin Ali ibn Abi Talib and Sayyidna Fatima a-Zahrah the daughter of the Seal of the Messengers Muhammad ibn Abdullah ﷺ. He was born 148 AH./766 CE in Madinah Munawarra. His father's mother was Nubian and his own mother Najmah was also Nubian. This would make the Imam ¾ Nubian. He was physically described as "*aswad mu'tadil*" or moderately Black.[1]

Ali Rida was a great scholar and knower of Allah. Unfortunately, due to his charisma and noble lineage he was viewed as a threat by the Abbasids as were his forefathers before him. After the death of Harun ar- Rashid, a civil war rocked the Abbasid dynasty as his two sons Amin and Mamun fought over the throne. This internecine feud is often framed in terms of Arabs vs Persians as Amin's mother was an Arab and thus he had the support of the Arabs and Mamun's mother was Persian and he had the support of the Persians. Mamun succeeded and his reliance on the Persian and non-Arab supporters defined the rest of the dynasty, as the dynasty from that time relied on non-Arabs for their support.

Seeking to quell internal strife and any possible uprisings, Mamun offered the caliphate to Ali Rida. Ali Rida turned it down recognizing the overture to be a possible ruse to accuse of him wanting power. Mamun then offered Ali the position of successor. Ali again refused to which Mamun said: "Your ancestor Ali was chosen by the second caliph to be in a six-member council to elect the third caliph, and ordered to kill any one of the six who didn't comply. If you do not accept the position of Crown Prince in my government, I will follow through on the same threat."

Ali reluctantly accepted the position with the condition that he not have any official duties and have no say in actual policy. Despite this position the Imam lived simply. Once someone suggested that the descendants of the Prophet ﷺ eat separately from other people to which the Imam respond-

ed: "All are created by Allah, Adam is their father and Eve is their mother. Everyone will be dealt with by Allah according to his deeds. Why should there be any discrimination in this world?"

The appointment of Ali Rida as the prince didn't abate the political problems of Mamun and a party of Arabs gave the pledge of allegiance to Mamun's uncle Ibrahim al Mahdi who was also the son of a Black woman named Shakla. Ali Rida advised Mamun to just dismiss him from his post but Mamun refused. Mamun's vizier was assassinated in Sarkhs(Khorasan, modern day Iran)and Ali Rida was poisoned in Tus. Mamun was suspected of Ali Rida's poisoning despite Mamun ordering the Imam to be buried next to his own father and publicly mourning the death of the Imam.

Works

- Al-Risalah al-Dhahabiah- A medical treatise said to have been commissioned by Mamun. It was said to have been written in golden ink, hence the title The Golden Epistle."
- Sahifah-is a collection of hadith about various topics attributed to Ali al-Rida which was transmitted by Abdallah ibn Aḥmad ibn Amer, who heard them from his father Aḥmad, who was said to have heard it from Ali al-Rida in 194 AH (809–10 CE) in Madinah.

Sayings

- "Everyone's friend is his reason; his enemy is his ignorance."
- "Worship is not abundant prayer and fasting; rather it is abundant reflecting on the affair of Allah, the Great and Almighty."
- "Man is not worshipful unless he is clement."
- "Faith is a degree above Islam; fear of Allah is a degree above faith; and nothing less than fear of Allah has been divided among men."
- "Faith is four pillars: trust in Allah, satisfaction with Allah's decree, submission to Allah's command, and entrusting (affairs) to Allah."

ENDNOTE

[1] Muin bin Hassan Mumin Shablanji, *Nur al Absar fi Manqib Ahl Bait al-Mukhtar* (Darul Kutub Ilmiya: Beirut) pg 233

Muhammad al-Jawad: Youthful yet Wise

Imam Muhammad al-Jawad bin Ali ar-Rida bin Musa al-Kazim bin Ja'far as-Sadiq bin Muhammad al-Baqir bin Ali as-Sajjad bin al-Husayn as-Sibt bin Ali al-Murtada bin Abi Talib (may Allah's blessings be upon them) is one of the well-known spiritual inheritors of Prophet Muhammad (prayers and peace be upon him & his family).

Imam al-Jawad was born in al-Madinah during the month of Ramadan in 195 AH. He was born during the reign of Muhammad bin Harun al-Abbasi. His mother was a Nubian woman who was freed from enslavement.[1] Her name was reported to be Sukaynah.[2]

He was predominantly described as dark brown (shadid al-udmah) in skin color.[3]

Imam al-Jawad's merits are well-documented, and his name has remained on the tongues of the People of Gnosis for centuries. He was named al-Jawad due to his always giving in charity to those whom asked as well as giving to those whom did not ask for assistance.[4] He was also known as at-Taqi due to his regardfulness towards the commandants of Allah (Mighty & Sublime).[5] The gnostic ibn 'Arabi stated that Imam al-Jawad was "the carrier of the secret of the Messenger" (prayers and peace be upon him & his family).[6]

Imam al-Jawad is the 9th imam in the spiritual chain of the Qadiri order and the golden chain of the Naqshandiyyah Aliyyah as well as the 9th infallible imam according to the 12ver shi'ah. He is also considered to be an imam of knowledge according to the Zaydi school of thought.

At a young age, al-Jawad witnessed political intrigue and felt the consequences of it. When his father Imam Ali ar-Rida (may Allah's blessings be upon him) was summoned by the Abbasi ruler Abdullah "al-Ma'mun" bin Harun to leave al-Madinah for Iraq, Imam al-Jawad was left behind with his mother. After his father left Iraq for Tus, he died due to poisoning thus making Imam al-Jawad into an orphan. Years after the death of his father, Abdullah al-Abbasi insisted that he marry his daughter.

After Abdullah al-Abbasi died, he was succeeded by his younger brother

Muhammad "al-Mu'tasim" bin Harun who Imam al-Jawad was not in the favor of. Muhammad al-Abbasi summoned Imam al-Jawad from al-Madinah to come to Baghdad. As Imam al-Jawad had been left behind by his father with his mother in al-Madinah, Imam al-Jawad left his son Ali behind with his mother as he was brought to Iraq. At the young age of 25 years old, Imam al-Jawad like his father passed away due to being poisoned. He is buried in Baghdad, and his grave is a popular destination for visitation among the Sufis and the 12ver shi'ah. He left behind him 3 sons, his son Ali al-Hadi being his spiritual successor in the golden chain, and 5 daughters, his daughter Hakimah being a prominent narrator of hadith in the books of the 12ver shi'ah.

Some of his sayings of wisdom are:[7]

- Whoever benefits a brother for Allah's sake, certainly he will be bequeathed a house in paradise.
- Reliance upon Allah is salvation from every evil and protection from every enemy.
- There are 4 qualities that assist a person in their actions: Sound health, richness, knowledge and ability.
- Chastity is the adornment of poverty, gratitude is the adornment of the richness and patience is the adornment of affliction.
- The scholar working for tyranny, the aider of it and the one who is pleased with it are all partners.
- The Day of Justice upon an oppressor will be much more severe than a day of injustice upon the oppressed.
- Whoever applauds obscenity is an associate of it.
- Every noble is one who dignifies his actions.

ENDNOTES

[1] Ibn as-Sabbagh al-Maliki, Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah, Page 262

[2] Ash-Shablanji, Nur al-Absar fi Manaqib Aal Bayt an-Nabi al-Mukhtar, Page 245

[3] Ibn Rustam at-Tabari, Dala'il al-Imamah, Page 197

[4] Ibn Taymiyyah, Majmu'a al-Fatawa, Volume 4, Number 487

[5] Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi, Ash-Shajarah al-Mubarakah, Page 91

[6] Al-Marash'ii, Sharh Ihqaq al-Haqq, Volume 21, Number 29
[7] Ibn as-Sabbagh al-Maliki, al-Fusul al-Muhimmah, Pages 269 - 271

Abu Muhammad al-Hasan bin Ali: The Helper of Truth

Imam al-Hasan bin Ali bin al-Hasan bin Ali bin Umar al-Ashraf bin Ali as-Sajjad bin al-Husayn bin Ali bin Abi Talib (may Allah's blessings be upon him) was one of the illustrious scholars of Ahl al-Bayt in the early generations of Muslims. He is also known as Imam an-Nasir lil Haqq, the Helper of Truth.[3]

Imam an-Nasir lil Haqq was born in al-Madinah in 225 AH from a Persian mother who was brought to the Hijaz then freed from slavery.[4] His birth took place during the rule of the Abbasi sultan Abu Ishaq Muhammad "Al-Mu'tasim" bin Harun. He was described as tall in stature and dark brown (al-Udmah) in skin color.[5] He later became known as al-Utursh (The Deaf) after losing his hearing due to being tortured while imprisoned in Persia.

Imam an-Nasir lil Haqq was known for his piety, bravery and extensive knowledge. Ibn Jarir at-Tabari said, "People did not see anyone similar to the justice of al-Utursh, excellence in his deportment and his establishment of the truth."[6] It is estimated that he wrote up to 300 treatises and books on theology, exegesis of the Qur'an and jurisprudence which also illustrated his mastery of the Arabic language and poetry. Very few of those works, however, are in existence today. Of those writings that remain is the concise work of Kitab al-Bisat which contains answers to theological issues and meanings of words according to the eloquence of Arabic. He also was engaged in refuting the theological deviance of al-Mujabbarah, a group which

3 Ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil, Volume 6, Page 144; ibn Khaldun, Tarikh ibn Khaldun,Volume 4, Page 25

4 Abu al-Abbas al-Hasani, al-Masabih, Page 602

5 Majd ad-Din al-Mu'ayyidi, at-Tuhfah Sharh az-Zalaf, Page 114; al-Mahatwari, al-Hada'iq al-Waradiyyah fi Manaqib A'immah az-Zaydiyyah, Volume 2, Page 55; Abu al-Abbas al-Hasani

6 Ibn Jarir at-Tabari, Tarikh at-Tabari, Volume 8, Page 257

held that all actions of human beings are compelled by Allah (Mighty & Sublime) leaving them without any agency.

Imam an-Nasir lil Haqq left the Hijaz and eventually resided in Tabaristan. After coming into political conflict there, he set off for Daylam, a mountainous area within Persia that had yet to accept Islam. Through the blessings of Allah (Mighty & Sublime), the Persians of that region left Zoroastrianism and came into Islam through the da'wah of an-Nasir lil Haqq.[7] His call to them was:

> Oh People! Be regardful of Allah and be upright servants of justice exactly as Allah has commanded you to be. Enjoy the good (al-Ma'ruf), forbid the evil (al-Munkar) and struggle, may Allah have mercy upon you, for Allah's sake as should be rightfully struggled. Restore good relations with your parents and children and your brothers [in faith] for Allah's sake.

While coming into Islam, they also naturally accepted Zaydism as their school of thought and accepted an-Nasir lil Haqq as their imam from Ahl al-Bayt.[8]

An-Nasir lil Haqq later passed away in 304 AH. His tomb in Amul became a frequent site for visitation by the people of Jilan and remains a location in which the people of Iran go to salute him, the man who brought Islam to that region.



The Shrine of an-Nasir lil Haqq

7 Ibn Hazm, Jamharah al-Ansab al-'Arab, Page 54

8 Madelung, Wilfred, Akhbar A'immah az-Zaydiyyah fi Tabaristan wa Dalaman wa Jiylan, Page 71

A few selections from his work Kitab al-Bisat are:

> The first worship is the gnosis of Allah the Most High that He is the Creator, the Subtle, the Merciful, the Sustainer, and foundation of your gnosis of the Creator is proclaiming His oneness, glorifying His being free of error and recognizing His uniqueness from having any sort of resemblance, rival or peer.
>
> In a hadith mursal, Muhammad al-Baqir stated that the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family said, "*You will not find a believer to be cowardly nor stingy.*"
>
> In a hadith mursal, Ja'far as-Sadiq stated that the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) said, "*Whoever performs ritual ablution, makes excellent his Salah, gives Zakah from his wealth, guards his tongue, controls his anger, and fulfills the advice coming from the People of the Household of his Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family), he will have perfected the reality of faith and the gates of paradise will be opened for him.*"
>
> Abu Bakr said, "*Beware of lying, for lying is far away from faith.*"
>
> Umar bin al-Khattab said, "*A slave will not reach the reality of faith until he repels lying in making fun [of people] and repels deriving pleasure from it even if liked in small talk.*"

Ali al-Hadi

He is Ali the son of Muhammad the son of Ali the son of Musa Kadhim the son of Jafar the son of Muhammad the son of Ali Zaynul Abidin the son of the leader of the youth of paradise Imam Husayn the son of Amir-ul-Muminin Ali ibn Abi Talib and the lady of paradise Sayyidna Fatima az-Zahra, the daughter of the beloved of Allah, the Seal of the Prophets Muhammad ibn Abdullah ﷺ. He was born in 214 AH/829 CE in a village outside of Madinah called Sorayya. He was described as "*asmar al-lawn*", or dark in color. [1] This description of being dark should be see in the context of his lineage as it is already documented that many of grandmothers were of African descent, and even his Hassani cousins of pure Arab blood having such nicknames such as "jawn" and coal etc. His own mother, Lady Samanah was of Amizikh origin.

Ali was known by many nicknames: Naqi(the pure one), Faqih(the jurist), Aalim(knowledgeable), Tayyib(good natured) and Al-hadi(the guide). Ali al-Hadi lived during a tumultuous time. The period coincided with the decline of the power of the Abbasid Empire. They were threatened by the Turks and had to move the Capital from Baghdad to Samarrah. Upon the ascension of Mutawakkil to the throne, Ali al-Hadi was called to Baghdad. This happened in 236 AH/847 CE. When the caliph's soldier came to get the Imam they found him prayer. Upon arrival to Baghdad he had an audience with the caliph but was placed on house arrest. In an irony of fates Mutawakkil died presumably at the hands of his Turkish bodyguards who held the caliph as essentially a palace prisoner. His own son Muntasir billah was also implicated in the assassination. Muntasiir billah succeeded the throne but only reigned for six months. On his death Musta'een was enthroned. But soon he was also beheaded and succeeded by Mu'ta'z Billah.

Ali al-Hadi was now under house arrest in Samarrah, which was a military outpost not far from Baghdad. He lived his last days there under house arrest, and like his forefathers before him succumbed to poisoning at the hands of an agent of Mu'ta'z Billah in 254 AH/868 CE.

Sayings

- He, who claims that Allah is a body, is not from us, and we are free from him in this world and the after-world...body (substance) is created, and it is Allah Who has created and embodied it.
- Faith is that which hearts acknowledge and deeds prove, and Islam is that which tongues witness and marriage becomes lawful with."
- al-Hadi narrated from his forefathers that the Prophet said, "Love Allah for the blessings He gives you, and love me for the love of Allah, and love my household for my love!"
- It suffices for you to have good manners by giving up what you hate of others.
- He, who is certain of recompense (from Allah), will give generously.
- If one of you gives (charity) with his right hand, let him conceal that from his left hand, and if he prays, let him conceal that.

ENDNOTES

[1] Mumin bin Hassan bin Mumin Shablanji, *Nur-ul-Absar fi Manaqib Ahl Bait Mukhtar*(Darul-Kutub Ilmiya:Beirut) pg251

Hasan al-Askari

He is Hasan, the son of Ali, the son of Muhammad, the son of Ali, the son of Musa,the son of Jafar, the son of Muhammad, the son of Ali, the son of the leader of the youth in paradise Imam Husayn, the son of Amir-ul-Muminin Ali ibn Abi Talib and the lady of paradise Sayyidna Fatima Zahra, the daughter of the Seal of the Prophets our liege-lord Muhammad ibn Abdullah ﷺ.

He was born in Madinah in 232 AH/846 CE. He was also described as being dark "*asmar*"[1]. He is known by the name "Askari" because he spent most of life in Samarrah, Iraq which was a military instillation. Askari means "army" in Arabic. He lived his entire life under house arrest. Periodically he was be summoned to Baghdad and put in prison. Despite this the Imam had many students. One of them was Abd Masih Ishaq al-Kindi. He was initially a Christian, and decided to write a book on the supposed contradictions in the Quran. Hasan al-Askari invited Kindi's students to his own classes on tafsir. These students confronted Kindi with the knowledge imparted to them by al-Askari and he was defeated.

He then asked them where had they received this knowledge and they told him about Hasan al-Askari. Kindi then became one of al-Askari's students and abandoned Christianity and skepticism. He in turn wrote treatises on Islam. Another of Askari's students was Abu Hasan Ali ibn Khalid, who wrote a commentary on the Quran. Ibn Jawzi cites the Imam al-Askari as a trustworthy narrator.

During the reign of Al-Mu'tamid, poison was given to the Imam mixed in some fruit and he died on 8th Rabi-al-Awwal 260 AH. It is disputed as to how many sons he had. The Ithna Ashari's say that he only had one son named Muhammad who they believe to be the Mahdi. Other genealogist say that he had another son named Sayyid Ali Akbar. Sages such as: Maudood Chishti and Bahauddin Naqshband. Khwaja Khawand Mahmud, Sayyid ul Sadaat Sayyid Mir Jan Sayyid ul Sadaat, and Sayyid Mahmud Agha, are all said to be descendants of Imam Askari via Sayyid Ali Akbar.

The Caliph Al- Mu'tamid himself attended the funeral prayer. When they all lined up and were ready to commence the prayers, Imam Hasan al-Askari's brother Jaafar stood in front of the people to lead the prayer. There is a discrepancy as to what happened next. The Ithna Ashari sources say that five year old Muhamad stepped up and lead the prayer and then went into his minor occultation and later his great occultation Others doubt that this happened and point to Jaafar dividing the estate as if Hasan Askari didn't have any male heirs as proof that Imam Askari didn't have male heirs. This split in regards to heirs isn't strictly along sectarian lines as some Sunnis affirm the existence of Muhammad al-Mahdi.

Sayings

- "There are two qualities that no quality is over; the faith in God and the serving of brothers."
- "Humbleness is a blessing that is not envied."
- "Had all people of this world been intelligent, the world would have been ruined. (Because they only spend their life for the Day of Judgement.)
- "The weakest of enemies in cunning, is he who shows his enmity."
- "Vices have been put in a house whose key is lies.

ENDNOTE

[1] Muhammad Haidari Uwaisi Husayni, *Duraru Bahaiya fi Insab Haidariya Wa Uwaisiya*(Ahmad Izz-ul-Din Wais:Aleppo) pg 73

Abdul Qadir al-Jilani: The Rose of Baghdad

He is Abu Muhammad Abdul Qadir, The son of Abu Salih Musa Jonki Dost, the son of Abdullah, the son of Yahya al-Zahid, the son of Muhamad, the son of Dawud, the son of Musa, the son of Abdullah, the son of Musa al-Jun, the son of Abdullah Kamil, the son of Hassan Muthanna, the son of Amir-ul-Mumineen Hassan al-Sibt, leader of the youth of paradise, the son Amir-ul-Mumineen Ali ibn Abi Talib and Sayyidna Fatima Zahra, lady of the women of paradise and daughter of the Seal of the Prophets our liege-lord Muhammad ibn Abdullah ﷺ.

From his mother's side, he is the son of Fatimah Umm Khayr, who was the daughter of Abu Abdullah al-Sawma'I, the son of Abu Jamal-ul-Din Muhammad, the son of Mahmud, the son of Abu al-Ata Abdullah, the son of Isa Kamal-ul-Din, the son of Abu Ala'a Din Muhamad Jawwad, the son of Ali Rida, the son of Musa Kadhim, the son of Jaafar as-Sadiq, the son of Muhaad Baqir, the son of Zayn-ul-Abidin, the son of the leader of the youth of paradise al-Husayn, the son of Amir-ul-Mumineen Ali ibn Abi Talib, and Sayyidna Fatimah Zahra, the lady of the women of paradise and daughter of the Seal of the Prophets Muhammad ibn Abdullah ﷺ.

He was born in a place called Neef which is in Jilan(Persia), There are a couple narrations as to the exact date of his birth. Some say that it was the 1st of Ramadan while others say that it was the 2nd. Most scholars give more weight to the narration of the 2nd of Ramadan in the year 470 AH corresponding to Nov 1, 1077 CE. It has been narrated that his mother was 60 years old at the time of his birth. As an infant he also wouldn't suckle from his mother's breast during the fasting hours of Ramadan. His father died while the shaykh was young and he passed in to the care of his grandfather Abdullah Sawma'i. In regards to his appearance the shaykh was described as "*asmar al-lawn*".[1] or Dark in color.

His grandfather enrolled him in a madrassah and after the passing of his grandfather his mother took care of his education.

He arrived in Baghdad when he was 18 in order to complete his studies

but not before he caused some vagabonds and highway robbers to repent from their crimes. His caravan was attacked and after searching the young scholar the robbers found nothing. One of them asked him did he have any money to which the young sharif answered in the affirmative. The robber asked where the money was and the shaykh told them that it was 40 dinar stitched into the inside of his garment/cape. The robber looked and lo and behold the money was there. The criminal then asked why Shaykh Abdul Qadir had informed him where the money was after they had already searched him and found nothing. The shaykh responded that he had made a promise to his mother to never tell a lie. The criminals fell down into a swoon out of embarrassment and repented at the hands of Shaykh Abdul Qadir.

The Shaykh took the khirqa of Abu Saeed Mukharimi and studied and mastered both the Shafi and Hanbali madhhabs, but himself was a practicing Hanbali scholar. His erudition and strict obedience to the sharia is an exemplary example of traditional tassawuf (Sufism) as practiced by the paragons of the science. Modern day detractors often forget or simply don't know that although the Hanbali school itself is considered to be the strictest in terms of following a literal methodology when it comes to extrapolating rulings, it was also a school of mystics and gnostics. There was no dichotomy between the outward and the inward in antiquity.

That is not to say that there were never any disagreements in regards to extremes of either approach, rather when these divisions did occur it was because of outlier interpretations in either spectrum. The sufic/ sharia compliant approach of Shaykh Abdu Qadir Jilani is an example of the wholistic medium of orthodox Islam and mysticism. Many karamah(miracles) were attributed to the shaykh, some true and other spurious reports. Shaykh Abdul Qadir took over his teacher's post and taught the Hanbali madhhab in addition to tafsir, hadith and other sciences. He was concerned with spiritual education(tarbiyah) all of his life and didn't marry until he was 51. The shaykh had forty-nine children; twenty-seven sons and twenty-two daughters. Many of his sons became famous for their erudition, piety and learning, and they and their descendants spread Islam in other parts of the world:

- Shaykh Saifuddin Abdul Wahab
- Shaykh Sharfuddin Abu Muhammad Isa
- Shaykh Hafiz Abdul Razzak Tajuddin

- Shaykh Abu Bakr Abdul Aziz
- Shaykh Sirajuddin Abdul Jabbar
- Shaykh Yahya
- Shaykh Musa
- Shaykh Abul Fazl Muhammad
- Shaykh Abu Ishaq Ibrahim
- Shaykh Abdullah
- Shaykh Abdur Rehman
- Shaykh Abu Nasir Musa

When the shaykh fell terminally ill his son Shaykh Abdul Aziz reported that his father said: "Surely no one, neither any man nor any jinn, nor any angel knows or understands my disease. The knowledge of Allah is not diminished by the command of Allah. The command changes but the knowledge does not change. The command may be abrogated but not knowledge. Allah causes to pass away and establishes what He pleases, and with Him is the basis of the Book,

He cannot be questioned for His acts, but they will be questioned (for theirs)."

He returned to his lord in 561 AH/1166 CE.

Books by Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani:

- Futuh al-Ghaib (Revelations of the Unseen) – 78 discourses, fairly short and to the point but very powerful.
- Al-Fath ar-Rabbani (The Sublime Revelation) – 62 discourses definitely longer, given in the Ribaat and Madrasa in Baghdad AH 545-546.
- Jala' al-Khawatir (The Removal of Cares) – 45 discourses, also in the same locations, given in the year AH 546.
- Kitab Sirr al-Asrar wa Mazhar al-Anwar (The Book of the Secret of Secrets and the Manifestation of Lights)
- Malfuzat (Utterances) – This is a collection of various sayings of Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani. it is found at the end of the hand copied Arabic manuscripts of Fath ar-Rabbani.

- Al-Ghunya li-Talibi Tariq al-Haqq (Sufficient Provision for Seekers of the Path of Truth) – also known in the Indian sub-continent as Al-Ghunya li-Talibin. These five volumes, written by the Shaykh, at the request of one of his murids, is a comprehensive guide to all aspects of Islam, both the inward and the outward.
- Khamsata ‹Ashara Maktuban (Fifteen Letters) – These are 15 letters originally written in Persian by Shaykh Abdul Qadir to one of his murids.
- Al-Fuyudat al-Rabbaniyya (Emanations of Lordly Grace)
- Bashair al-Khairat (Glad Tidings of Good Things) – A Salawat by Shaykh Abdul Qadir.
- Answers to Various Important Questions – Contains many concise answers to very important questions regarding a variety of topics.
- Special Prayers – Contains many special invocations taught to us by the Shaykh for their special blessings.
- Gate of Poverty – Contains the story excerpted from Necklaces of Gems of the Shaykh's spiritual struggles.

Quotes of Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani

Three things are indispensable for a believer in all conditions of life. He should keep those commandments of God: he should abstain from the forbidden things; and he should be pleased with the decree of Providence.
Wealth is your servant and you are the servant of the Lord.
Do not run away from God for He will overtake you.

ENDNOTE

[1] Abdul Majid bin TaHa alDaheebi Al-Za'abi Jilani *Itihaf Akabir Fi Seerah wa Manaqib Al-Imam Muhi-Deen Abdul Qadir Jilani al-Hassani* (Beirut: Darul Kutub Ilmiyah) 396

Shehu Uthman don Fodio

He is Uthman the son of Muhammad the son of Uthman Salih the son of Harun the son of Muhammad Ghurtu the son of Muhammad Jubba the son of Muhammad Sanbu the son of Maasiraan the son of Ayyub the son of Buuba Baaba the son of Abu Bakr the son of Musa Jokolli.

From his mother, his lineage is thus: Hawwa the daughter of Muhammad the son of Uthman the son of Hamm the son of `Aal the son of Muhammad Jubba the son of Muhammad Sanbu the son of Maasiraan the son of Ayyub the son of Buuba Baaba the son of Abu Bakr the son of Musa Jokolli. It is

through this line that the Shehu traces his origin back to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Hawwa' s paternal grandmother was Fatima the daughter of Muhammad ibn Abd's-Samad the son of Ahmad as-Shareef the son of Ali ibn Abd 'r-Razaaq the son of as-Saalih the son of al-Mubaarak the son of Ahmad the son of Abi 'l-Hassan as-Shadhili the son of Abdallah the son of Abd 'l-Jabaar the son of Tamim the son of Hurmuz the son of Haatim the son of Qusay the son of Yusuf the son of Yushu`a the son of Wardi the son of Bataal the son of Ahmad the son of Muhammad the son of `Isa the son of Muhammad the son of al-Hassan the son of `Ali ibn Abi Taalib and Faatima bint Muhammad ﷺ [1]

The shaykh was born on the 3rd of Safar in the year 1158, corresponding to Dec 15, 1754 CE. in a land called Maratta in modern day southern Niger in a village called Maradi 1. He belonged to a scholarly and saintly class of Turdbe. His son Muhammad Bello said about him: "He was my father. The protected friends of Allah (al-awliya) foretold of his coming before his appearance"... From that is what was related from sound narrators on the authority of Umm Hani al-Fulani, the righteous saintly women when she said:

"There will appear in this region of the land of the Blacks, a wali from among the protected friends of Allah. He will renew the deen, revive the Sunna and establish the religion. The fortunate people will follow him and his remembrance will be spread throughout the horizons. The common

people and the elite will obey his commands. Those connected to him will be known as the Jama`aat. Among their signs is that they will not heard cattle, as is the custom of the Fulani. Whoever encounters that time should follow him."

He was taught the Quran by his father the erudite jurist Muhamad ibn Uthman. He was also taught the sahih of Bukhari and ancillary Islamic sciences by his uncle the upright and erudite Jibril bin Umar. The shehu was established in Hausa land and criticized the corrupt practices and heavy taxation by the rulers of Gobir upon the people. In 1797 CE. the Shehu wrote to his students to wear the turban, the veil and to prepare weapons in defiance of an edict by Nafata which forbade: the wearing of turbans, veils, conversion to Islam and demanded that all who had converted to Islam return back to their previous religion.

Although outmanned and ill-equipped, the shehu and his forces overcame Yunfa and the forces of disbelief. He established the Sokoto caliphate in 1804. From 1804-1808 he consolidated Hausaland under his rule and retired to leave the administration to his son Muhammad Bello and his brother, the erudite scholar Abdullahi don Fodio. The shehu consigned himself to mostly writing about the functions of the state, and his clairvoyant abilities from which he penned his "Zaman an-Nasara" or the Hour of the Christians, where he predicted that the caliphate would only last 100 years. At the end of 100 years Christians would invade and conquer Hausaland. This would trigger a mass exodus or Hijra wherein the government in exile would resettle along the Blue Nile until the coming of the awaited Mahdi. Just as he foresaw the British entered and subjugated the Hausaland in 1903 and Lord Lugard installed another sultan, while the 12th Sultan Muhammad Tahiru made his hijra to the East.

The shehu Uthman don Fodio returned to his lord on Sunday night April 20, 1817. May Allah be pleased with him.

ENDNOTE

[1] Abdullahi Don Fodio, trans. Muhammad Shareef, Lid'n'-Nusukh(1812, Sultan Abu Bakr Muhammad at-Taahir, Maiurno Sennar, Sudan, 8 folios.)

Shaykh Ahmadu Bamba-Khadimu-Rasul ﷺ

Paternal lineage: Ahmad the son of Muhammad, the son of Habibullah, the son of Ibn al-Khair.
Maternal Lineage: He is Ahmad the son of Marya Bouso, who was the daughter of Ahmad, the son of Hamad, the son of Ali, the son of Isa, the son of Uthman, the son of Ibrahim, the son of Ismail, the son of Zakariyya, the son of Ismail, the son of Sulaiman, the son of Hassan, The son of Ibrahim, the son of Abdullah, the son of Jundu, the son of Abdul Fattah, the son of Muhammad, the son of Ali Bukar, the son of Muhammad, the son of Abi Bakr, the son of Ali, the son of Muhammad, the son of Yakub, the son of Abu Bakr, the son of Ali, the son of Ahmad, the son of Abdul Karim, the son of Musnab, the son of Damb, the son of Ali Muhammad Amin, the son of Sulaiman, the son of Hamdri, the son of Amin, the son of Bashr, the son of Muhammad, the son of Ahmad, the son of Muhammad, the son of Musa, the son of Muhammad, the son of Husayn, the son of Musa Kaylani, the son of Abdullah, the son of Yahya, the son of Muhammad, the son of Dawud, the son of Musa the second, the son of Abdullah, the son of Musa Jur, the son of Abdullah, the son of Hassan Muthana, the son of Hassan, the son of lady of paradise, the daughter of the seal of prophets, Muhammad the messenger of Allah ﷺ.[1]

The shaykh was born in 1852-53 CE/1270 AH in the village of Mbacke-Baol, which was founded by his paternal grandfather. This was a long standing African tradition of scholars migrating and starting their own villages/towns in order to create environments conducive to the spread and practice of Islam. They created environments where the sharia and haqiqa meet in a harmonious vibe the served as beacons to spiritual aspirants.

His father's name in Wolof was Mor Anta Sali, even though they were Fulani by heritage. His father was an advisor to King Qaki of Cayor. His mother remarked that she didn't feel any pain when carrying him. When she took him to weddings and celebrations where there was music and dancing he would cry. After they left he would stop crying so she stopped taking

him to those kind of places. His father was a qadi (judge) and advisor to the Wolof states of Saalum and Kajur. When the shaykh was 12, he accompanied his father while he carried out his administrate duties to said kingdoms. His father died in 1883, and Shaykh Ahmadu inherited the school which his father previously ran. Shaykh Ahmadu was a very charismatic shaykh with extreme jadhb(spiritual attraction), and he called for the people to abandon their lowly desires and aim for a higher purpose. He emphasized hard work and resilience in the face of opposition.

Multitudes of people heeded his call and his following grew considerably in the provinces of Kajur and the French authorities became alarmed and afraid. In 1895 he started to build a school and religious community in the village of Tuba which was strategically located along the borders of the kingdoms of: Bawol, Kajur, Jolof, and Saalum. The French became paranoid despite the fact that Shaykh Ahmadu Bamba didn't advocate for an armed struggle against them. Their paranoia reached a peak and they exiled him to Gabon starting in 1895. He was exiled for 7 years, 7 months and 7 days. He was allowed to return to Senegal in 1902. His popularity increased so they decided to send him to Mauritania (1903-1907) as a way of abating his influence as the Mauritanians tended to look down upon the Senegalese. But to their astonishment many Mauritanians accepted Shaykh Ahmadu Bamba as their spiritual guide!

Shaykh Ahmadu Bamba kept his non-violent struggle and literally wrote tons of works on every aspect of Islam ranging from: theology, law, tassawuf, litanies and eulogies of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The shaykh said that the Prophet Muhammad gave him the title of "

Khadi-ul=Rasul or servant of the Messenger during a wakeful vision. This title was bestowed upon him as a honor and recognition of his tireless work and calamities that he suffered in service of sunnah. The shaykh passed away in 1927 after the establishment and flourishing of his spiritual capital Touba, Senegal.

ENDNOTE

[1] Ubaidul-Rahman Al-Luhi, Saydatul Jaratulullah: Maryam Bouso(Touba, Maktabul Muridiyya)pg.3

Notable Members of Ahl al-Bayt Buried in Cairo

Outside of al-Madinah al-Munawwarah, there is no city which contains more graves of notable members of the Prophetic Household than Cairo, Egypt. Cairo became a refuge for Ahl al-Bayt during the reign of the Abbasi empire which led to members relocating then passing away there as well as the Fatimi Empire later moving the remains of others to protect from desecration.

A list of those who lived during the eras of Sahabah, Umawi empire and the Abbasi empire whose remains are located in Cairo:

1. Al-Husayn bin Ali bin Abi Talib
   Master of the Martyrs whose head was reportedly relocated and currently resides in Masjid al-Husayn in Cairo

2. Zaynab bint Ali bin Abi Talib
   Witness of the massacre of Ahl al-Bayt at Karbala

3. Fatimah bint al-Husayn bin Ali bin Abi Talib
   Witness of the massacre at Karbala

4. Sukaynah bint al-Husayn bin Ali bin Abi Talib
   Witness of the massacre at Karbala

5. Zayd bin Ali Zayn al-Abidin bin al-Husayn bin Ali bin Abi Talib
   Martyred during the era of the Umawi sultan Hisham bin Abdil Malik in Iraq. His body was burned and ashes dumped in the Euphrates river. His head was reportedly relocated and now resides in Masjid Zayn al-Abidin in Cairo.

6. Ibrahim bin Zayd bin Ali Zayn al-Abidin bin al-Husayn bin Ali bin Abi Talib

Martyred during the era of the Abbasi sultan Abu Ja'far al-Mansur. His head was reportedly relocated to Masjid al-Kharij in Cairo.

7. Ibrahim bin al-Hasan bin Ali bin Abi Talib
   Martyred while imprisoned during the time of Abbasi sultan Abu Ja'far al-Mansur

8. Al-Hasan al-Anwar bin Zayd al-Ablaj bin al-Hasan bin Ali bin Abi Talib

9. Nafisah bint al-Hasan al-Anwar bin Zayd al-Ablaj bin al-Hasan bin Ali bin Abi Talib
   Performed Janazah over Imam ash-Shafi'i based upon his request per his will.

10. Muhammad al-Ja'fari bin Ja'far as-Sadiq bin Muhammad al-Baqir bin Ali Zayn al-Abidin bin al-Husayn bin Ali bin Abi Talib
    Ja'far as-Sadiq said of him, "He is my resemblance and the resemblance of the Messenger of Allah."[1]

11. A'ishah bint Ja'far as-Sadiq bin Muhammad al-Baqir bin Ali Zayn al-Abidin bin al-Husayn bin Ali bin Abi Talib

12. Kulthum bint al-Qasim bin Muhammad al-Ja'fari bin Ja'far as-Sadiq bin Muhammad al-Baqir bin Ali bin al-Husayn bin Ali bin Abi Talib
    She memorized everything written by her father going back to Ja'far as-Sadiq.[2]

13. Ruqayyah bint Ali ar-Rida bin Musa al-Kazim bin Ja'far as-Sadiq bin Muhammad al-Baqir bin Ali Zayn al-Abidin bin al-Husayn bin Ali bin Abi Talib

14. Fatimah bint Ali ar-Rida bin Musa al-Kazim bin Ja'far as-Sadiq bin Muhammad al-Baqir bin Ali Zaynul al-Abidin bin al-Husayn bin Ali bin Abi Talib

ENDNOTES

[1] Khusrushani, Ahl al-Bayt fi Misr, Page 343

[2] Ibid, Page 357

List of Prominent Black Descendants of Abu Talib

The following is a list of prominent descendants of Abu Talib, the uncle of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family), in early Islamic history described as being Black Arabs according to contemporary standards for having brown (Asmar or Adam) or black (Aswad or Adam Shadid al-Udmah) skin color, with some having kinky (Ja'd) hair, or having had African mothers:

1. Ali bin Abi Talib, Commander of the Faithful
2. Abu al-Fadl Al-Abbas bin Ali bin Abi Talib
3. Muhammad al-Hanafiyyah bin Ali
4. Muhammad al-Baqir bin Ali as-Sajjad bin al-Husayn bin Ali, teacher of Abu Hanifah
5. Hamzah bin Ubaydillah bin al-Abbas bin Ali
6. Ja'far as-Sadiq bin Muhammad al-Baqir, teacher of Abu Hanifah, Malik bin Anas and Sufyan ath-Thawri
7. Muhammad an-Nafs az-Zakiyyah bin Abdillah al-Kamil bin al-Hasan bin al-Hasan bin Ali
8. Ibrahim al-Ghamr bin Abdillah al-Kamil
9. Yahya bin Abdillah al-Kamil, teacher of Muhammad bin Idris ash-Shafi'i
10. Musa al-Jawn bin Abdillah
11. Musa al-Kazim bin Ja'far as-Sadiq
12. A'ishah bint Ja'far as-Sadiq
13. Muhammad bin Ibrahim al-Ghamr

14. Ja'far bin Ibrahim al-Ghamr
15. Idris al-Azhar bin Idris bin Abdillah al-Kamil, 2nd imam of the Idrissid dynasty in North Africa
16. Ali ar-Rida bin Musa al-Kazim, author of first treatise on Prophetic medicine
17. Muhammad bin al-Qasim bin Ali bin Umar al-Ashraf bin Ali as-Sajjad
18. Yahya bin Umar bin al-Husayn bin Zayd ash-Shahid bin Ali as-Sajjad
19. Muhammad al-Jawad bin Musa al-Kazim
20. An-Nasir lil Haqq al-Hasan bin Ali bin al-Hasan bin Ali bin Umar al-Ashraf
21. Muhammad bin Idris al-Azhar, 3rd imam of the Idrissid dynasty
22. Ja'far bin Isma'il ad-Dibaj bin Musa al-Kazi
23. Ubaydullah bin Hamzah bin Musa al-Kazim
24. Ali al-Hadi bin Muhammad al-Jawad
25. Hasan al-Askari bin Ali al-Hadi
26. Ahmad al-Aswad bin Muhammad bin al-Qasim bin Hamzah bin Musa al-Kazim
27. Muhammad al-Aswad bin Ahmad al-Aswad
28. Muhammad al-Mahdi bin Hasan al-Askari, the 12th imam who is in occultation according to the 12ver shi'ah and 12th imam in the spiritual chain of an-Naqshabandiyyah al-Aliyyah.

    There are conflicting reports pertaining to the background of his mother.

Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhili: Gnostic and Mujahid

One of the prolific masters of Sufism was Sayyid Abu al-Hasan Ali bin Abdillah bin Abdil Jabbar al-Hasani (may Allah have mercy upon him).

Ash-Shadhili was born in present day Morocco in 593 AH. Though from Ahl al-Bayt, his lineage is also connected to the Ghamarah tribe of the Amazigh people.[9] He was described as being brown (adam) in skin color, thin and tall with long fingers on his hand like he was a Hijazi Arab.[10] He adhered to the Ash'ari school of theology and followed the Maliki school of jurisprudence which included his making salah with hands hanging to the side (irsal or sadl) as was the tradition of his ancestors.

Ash-Shadhili first went to Tunis at a very young age where he acquired knowledge. He later studied underneath the Iraqi Sufi master Abu al-Fath al-Wasiti (may Allah have mercy upon him), a discipline of the famou Ahmad bin ar-Rifa'i (may Allah have mercy upon him). Afterwards, ash-Shadhili traveled back to Morocco to study under the master Abdus Salam bin Mashish who was known to be the Pole (qutb) of the Maghrib. He later left with his bin Mashish to Tunis where they eventually went their separate ways.

Abu al-Hasan thus became known as ash-Shadhili due to the enlightenment which he received through going into khalwah (seclusion) on a mountain in Tunisia in the area called Shadhilah. After his spiritual experience on the mountain, ash-Shadhili then departed for Egypt to teach.

Ash-Shadhili, like his ancestors from Ahl al-Bayt as well as the saintly people (awliya), relayed having visions of seeing Prophet Muhammad (prayers and peace be upon him & his family). In one dream which changed the life of ash-Shadhili, the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) reportedly said to him, "Oh Ali! Go to the land of Egypt (al-Masriyyah) and raise up in it 40 true followers (siddiqan)." It was summer and

9 As-Sabbagh, Durrah al-Asrar wa Tuhfah al-Abrar, Page 24

10 Mahmud, Manahij al-Mufassirin, Page 161

very hot, so ash-Shadhili replied, "Oh my Master (sayyidi), Oh Messenger of Allah, the heat is tremendous." The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) then said, "Surely the clouds will give you shade." He then complained to him, "I fear thirst." The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) said, "Surely the sky will send rain every day ahead of you."[11]

Ash-Shadhi'i later had another vision of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) in which he was informed that he now a saint (wali) of Allah and that he was to walk upon the path which was chosen for him. Ash-Shadhili then set off for Alexandria where he established a zawiyah. Ash-Shadhili later fought against the Crusaders when the army of Louis IX laid siege upon al-Mansurah.[12] His fighting against Crusaders was miraculous from the standpoint that by this stage of his life, ash-Shadhili had gone blind. After fighting the Crusaders, he later passed away in a small town in Egypt close to the Red Sea named Humaythirah while on his way to perform Hajj in 656 AH.

Ash-Shadhili left behind a spiritual path which is adhered to by millions of Muslims today stretching from Egypt and Sudan to American and the United Kingdom; it is known as at-Tariqah ash-Shadhiliyyah. The first successor of his path was Abu al-Abbas al-Mursi (may Allah have mercy upon his soul). American Shaykh Nuh Ha Mim Keller who is based in Jordan is one of the prominent Islamic scholars who follows this spiritual path.

Passed down by ash-Shadhili's disciples were discourses of his elucidating upon proper manners, importance of inward reflection, reliance upon Allah (Mighty & Sublime), love (al-Muhabbah), scrupulousness (al-Wara') and having sincerity. His litanies including the famous Hizb al-Bahr (Litany of the Sea) are often recited by those inside and outside of his tariqah.

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11 As-Sabbagh, Durrah al-Asrar wa Tuhfah al-Abrar, Page 31

12 Neale, Harry, Jihad in Premodern Sufi Writings, Page 126

Imam Husayn: Master of the Martyrs

One of the most remembered personalities in Islamic history is Imam Husayn bin Ali (may Allah's blessings be upon them), the grandson Prophet Muhammad (prayers and peace be upon him & his family). His earthly life from beginning to end is a story about tidings from angels and the fulfillment of prophecy.

He is Husayn bin Ali bin Abi Talib bin Abd al-Muttalib bin Hashim whose mother was the illuminated and chaste Fatimah (may Allah's blessings be upon her), the blessed daughter of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family). He was born in the month of Sha'ban in the year 4 AH. in al-Madinah.[13] It was the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) who named Husayn as well as his elder brother Hasan (may Allah's blessings be upon him).[14] Both of their names mean handsome reflecting their physical appearance as well as the beauty of the characters due to their upbringing. The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) also slaughtered two sheep when naming both Hasan and Husayn.[15]

It is narrated by Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (may Allah's mercy be upon him) that Imam Ali said, "Al-Hasan most resembled the Messenger of Allah between his chest to his head, and al-Husayn most resembled him from below that." Husayn was described as having been "brown (Asmar) with a handsome face, thus most resembling his father from his chest to the top of his head."[16]

The authentic as well as widely known Prophetic sayings about Hasan and Husayn are numerous. Some of them include[17]:

13 Bin Ali al-Aydarus, Zafarat al-Qalb al-Mumtali fi Tarjamah Sayyidina al-Husayn bin Ali min Kitab al-Mashru' ar-Rawi, Page 12

14 At-Tabarani, Al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, Hadith #2780

15 Abu Dawud, Sunan Abi Dawud, Hadith #2839

16 Abd al-Majid az-Zu'bi, Ithaf al-Akabir fi Sirah wa Manaqib al-Imam Muhyi ad-Din Abd al-Qadir al-Jiylani al-Hasani al-Husayni, Page 136

17 Al-Aydarus, Zafarat al-Qalb al-Mumtali, Pages 13 - 14

- The most beloved of the people from my household are al-Hasan and al-Husayn.
- These are my two [grand]sons and sons of my daughter; Oh Allah, I love these two, so love these two and whoever loves them.
- Whoever loves me then loves these two.
- Surely al-Hasan and al-Husayn are my sweet fragrances in the world.
- Al-Hasan and al-Husayn are masters of the youth of the people of paradise.
- Husayn is from me, and I am from Husayn. Allah loves whoever loves Husayn.

The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) used to show public consideration and affection for his two grandsons. It is narrated that during prayer, Hasan and Husayn would climb on his back and that he would prolong his prostrations as not to disturb them.[18] One day, Aqra' bin Habis saw the Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) kiss his grandson and stated, "I have ten sons, and I have not kissed one of them" in which the Messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) replied, "Surely whoever does not show mercy shall not receive mercy."[19] Due to the expressed love shown by the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) towards his grandsons, it instilled a deep love for Hasan and Husayn among the pious companions.

After the passing of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) while Bilal bin Rabah (may Allah be pleased with him) resided in Greater Syria, Bilal had a dream in which the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) appeared to him. The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) said, "Oh Bilal, why have you not visited me?" Bilal awaken in grief to then prepare himself to travel to al-Madinah. Upon standing in front of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family), he began to weep while placing his head on the burial site then Hasan and Husayn came before him in which he then embraced and kissed them both. Hasan and Husayn then asked Bilal to call the adhan. When Bilal began the call to prayer from al-Masjid An-Nabawi "Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar," the people of al-Madinah came alive with excitement. When he proclaimed, "Ashhadu an la ilaha ill Allah," the feeling in the city

18 Ibn Abi Shaybah, Al-Musannaf, Hadith #4729

19 Muslim, Sahih Muslim, Hadith #2318

increased. When cried out, "Ashhadu anna Muhammadan Rasulullah," the people exclaimed, "Has the Messenger of Allah been resurrected?!" It was said that after this that the people in al-Madinah had not wept as much since the day of the passing away of Prophet Muhammad (prayers and peace be upon him & his family).[20]

Upon Imam Ali assuming political leadership, Hasan and Husayn joined their father as he moved the seat of political rulership from al-Madinah to Kufah, Iraq and later accompanied his father's army that fought against those who rebelled against his rule at the battles of Jamal and Siffin. When Imam Ali was martyred in Iraq, Hasan became his successor. After Hasan later abdicated political authority to Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan to keep the peace so that Muslims would not fall into another civil war, Hasan was later martyred in al-Madinah through poison. These events set into motion the eventual martyrdom of Husayn which had been foretold.

According to an authentic narration, Imam Ali walked in on the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) while seeing his eyes flooded with tears, "Oh Prophet of Allah, has anyone angered you? What concern has your eyes flooded?" He then told him that Jibril (peace be upon him) informed him that Husayn would be murdered by the Euphrates River.[21] From this narration and others, it was well-known among the Hashmites as well as the senior companions that Husayn would one day achieved martyrdom.

Before the passing of Mu'awiyah, he appointed his son Yazid to be his successor. For the first time among Muslims, the governmental authority would be passed down to a man not based upon spiritual and intellectual merit but only due to lineage. Once Yazid became king, he sent one of his supporters among his kin to get allegiance from Husayn at night. It was beneath the spiritual station of Husayn, however, to swear allegiance to Yazid, a man whom the people of al-Madinah saw as "a person with no religion that drank wine"[22] and would "stay drunk to the point of refusing to make prayer."[23] Seeing the state of the leadership within the Ummah stooping to such a level, he cried out in prayer at night, "O Allah! Surely, I love good

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20 Ibn 'Asakir, Tarikh Madinah Dimashq, Volume 7, Page 137

21 Bin Hanbal, Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal, Hadith #613

22 Ibn al-Jawzi, Ar-Radd 'ala al-Muta'assib al-'Anid al-Mani' min Dhamm Yazid, Page 64

23 Ibn al-Athir, Al-Kamil, Volume 4, Page 103; Ibn Kathir, Al-Bidayah wa An-Nihayah, Volume 8, Pages 216 - 218

and despise evil."[24] He also said, "It cannot be fitting for a believing soul to see one who openly disobeys Allah but does not find it despicable."[25] Hence in the duty of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil and for reforming the Ummah, Al-Husayn simply could not swear allegiance to a man such as Yazid.

Husayn along with his family except for his brother Muhammad bin al-Hanafiyyah set out for Makkah that night. Upon reaching Makkah, he decided to leave for Iraq after letters reached him from Kufa stating that 10,000 Muslims there wanted his spiritual leadership instead of the rule of Yazid. He clearly declared, however, that his stance against Yazid's leadership was seeking a political chair when he stated:

> I have not risen up to do mischief nor adventure, nor to cause corruption and oppression. I have only risen up to seek reform of the Ummah of my grandfather. I seek to enjoin good, forbid evil and follow the tradition of my grandfather and my father Ali bin Abi Talib.[26]

Husayn was betrayed by the people of Kufah, withdrawing their promises to support his reform of the Ummah. This caused him to flee the partisans and acolytes of Yazid until he and his followers came upon the land known as Karbala in which his grandfather foretold would be the location of his martyrdom. Before his martyrdom, he proclaimed to the army which killed most of his family, "Never will we accept humiliation."[27]

Husayn was then martyrdom and decapitated on the 10th of Muharram 61 AH. Thus, Husayn fulfilled the prophecy of "the master of martyrs is Hamzah bin Abd al-Mutallib and a man who stands up to an unjust leader, enjoins [good] and forbids [evil] then is killed."

Among the other Hashemites who achieved martyrdom at Karbala were[28]:

1. Ali al-Akbar bin al-Husayn bin Ali bin Abi Talib
2. Abdullah bin Ali bin Abi Talib
3. Ja'far bin Ali bin Abi Talib
4. 'Uthman bin Ali bin Abi Talib

24 Al-Khawarizmi Al-Hanafi, Maqtal al-Husayn, Volume 1, Page 186
25 Ibn Abd al-Malik al-Hindi, Kanz al-'Ummal, Volume 3, Page 85
26 Bin Shahr Ashub, Al-Manaqib, Volume 4, Page 89
27 Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Volume 64, Page 162
28 Abu al-Faraj al-Asbahani, Maqatil al-Talibin, Pages 86 - 98

5. Al-'Abbas bin Ali bin Abi Talib
6. Muhammad al-Asghar bin Ali bin Abi Talib
7. Abu Bakr bin Ali bin Abi Talib
8. Abu Bakr bin al-Husayn bin Ali bin Abi Talib
9. Al-Qasim bin al-Hasan bin Ali bin Abi Talib
10. Abdullah bin al-Hasan bin Ali bin Abi Talib
11. Abdullah bin al-Husayn bin Ali bin Abi Talib
12. 'Awn bin Abdillah bin Ja'far bin Abi Talib
13. 'Ubaydullah bin Abdillah bin Ja'far bin Abi Talib
14. Abd ar-Rahman bin 'Aqil bin Abi Talib
15. Ja'far bin 'Aqil bin Abi Talib
16. Muhammad bin Muslim bin 'Aqil bin Abi Talib
17. 'Abdullah bin Muslim bin 'Aqil bin Abi Talib
18. Muhammad bin Abi Sa'id al-Ahwal bin 'Aqil bin Abi Talib

Ali bin al-Husayn: Adornment of the Worshippers

Ali bin al-Husayn (may Allah's blessings be upon them), the grandson of Fatimah az-Zahra (peace be upon her), is from the generation of Muslims after the Sahabah. He was born in al-Madinah in 38 AH. during the era of the government of his grandfather Imam Ali bin Abi Talib (may Allah ennoble his face). His mother was a non-Arab who was freed from slavery. He was described as brown in skin color, short and slim.[29]

Ali bin al-Husayn is most known by the title Zayn al-Abidin meaning Adornment of the Worshippers – Imam Malik bin Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) stated that he was named this due to the abundance of his worship.[30] His son Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (may Allah's blessings be upon him) stated that every day and night, Zayn al-Abidin would pray up to 1,000 rak'ah.[31]

He is also known to be a sound source of narration of the Prophetic traditions to the point that his statements of saying the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him & his family) said such and such are accepted as valid even when he did not mention the individuals before him who said that he such and such. When the companion Abdullah bin Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) used to see Zayn al-Abidin, he would say to him, "Welcome Beloved son of the Beloved."[32]

Zayn al-Abidin was a witness to the calamity at Karbala where his father al-Husayn, his brothers, cousins and followers of his father were massacred.

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29 As-Samarqandi, Tuhf at-Talib, bi Ma'rifah man Yantisbu ila Abdillah wa Abi Talib, Page 45; Ash-Shablanji, Nur al-Absar fi Manaqib Aal Bayt an-Nabi al-Mukhtar, Page 212

30 Ash-Shablanji, Nur al-Absar fi Manaqib Aal Bayt an-Nabi al-Mukhtar, Page 212

31 Abu al-Faraj bin al-Jawzi, Siffah as-Safwah, Page 327

32 Sibt bin al-Jawzi, Tadhkirah al-Khawas al-A'immah fi Khasa'is al-A'immah, Page 274

He was unable to defend himself that day on the 10th of Muharram due to severe illness. He was the only male who survived that day and was arrested along with his aunt Zaynab (may Allah be pleased with her) and his sisters who were carried in chains to Damascus by the soldiers of the Umawi leader Yazid bin Mu'awiyah.

Zayn al-Abidin had impeccable character which shown through including during the most difficult situations. Once getting to Damascus, he was engaged in a discourse with a Syrian shaykh which went on as:

Syrian shaykh: *Praise be to Allah who killed and annihilated you, and for the spirits of the* men who assailed you, and for the Commander of the Faithful [Yazid bin Mu'awiyah] who became strong over you.

Zayn al-Abidin: *Oh shaykh, do you read the Qur'an?*

Syrian shaykh: *Yes, I read it.*

Zayn al-Abidin: *Do you recognize this ayah "Say [Oh Prophet], Surely I do not ask any reward from you except love for my blood-kin"?*[33]

Syrian shaykh: *I have read that.*

Zayn al-Abidin: *We are the blood-kin, oh shaykh! Have you read "And give to the kin their right"?*[34]

Syrian shaykh: *Certainly, I have read this.*

Zayn al-Abidin: *We are those kin, oh elder! But have you also read the ayah "And know that what you obtain from the spoils of war that a fifth are for Allah, the Messenger and his kin"?*[35] *We are those kin, oh shaykh! But have you in addition recited this ayah, "Allah desires not but to remove filth from you People of the Household and thoroughly purify you"?*[36]

Syrian shaykh: *Indeed, I have recited that.*

Zayn al-Abidin: *We are the People of the Household those who are specified in the*Ayah of Purification.

The shaykh cried and threw down his turban then looked to the sky and prayed:

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33 Al-Qur'an, Surah ash-Shuraa, Ayah 23
34 Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Isra, Ayah 26
35 Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Anfal, Ayah 41
36 Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Ahzab, Ayah 33

Oh Allah, Surely, I turn to you disassociating myself from the enemies, jinn and men, of the Family of Muhammad, prayers of Allah be upon him and his family.

Then the shaykh said to Zayn al-Abidin: *Do you accept my repentance?*

Zayn al-Abidin: *Yes, if you sincerely repented, Allah gave repentance to you, and and you are with us [in having your repentance accepted.]*

Syrian shaykh: *I repent.*

Once the story of the event concerning the shaykh reached Yazid, he ordered him to be executed.[37]

After being in the marquee of Yazid, Zayn al-Abidin was sent to al-Madinah in which he was under surveillance by the Umawis. He then devoted himself to teaching the Islamic sciences and serving the poor within the city.

One day, Zayn al-Abidin walked in on Muhammad, the son and grandson of the famous black companions Usamah bin Zayd, while he was gravely ill. Upon seeing Zayn al-Abidin, he started to weep. Zayn al-Abidin asked him what was troubling him then he replied that he had a debt over him of 15,000 dinar. Muhammad bin Usamah did not want to die with this enormous sum around his neck. Zayn al-Abidin took away his worries by telling him that he would assume the debt and pay it.[38]

While the inhabitants of al-Madinah were asleep, Zayn al-Abidin would go to hundred poor homes and leave bread at their doorsteps every night. The People of al-Madinah did not know that it was Zayn al-Abidin doing this until he passed away in which they noticed that their bread was no longer coming.[39] It is said by those who washed Zayn al-Abidin's blessed body for the funeral prayer saw the marks on his back from the many nights of lugging heavy bags of fresh bread on his back to deliver to the indigent.

Zayn al-Abidin was reportedly martyred at the age of 57 in al-Madinah due to poisoning by the Umawis.[40] He was buried in al-Baq'i cemetery where his remains reside to this day. The masjid named after him in Cairo does not contain his remains but is believed to be the location of the head of his martyred son Imam Zayd who was also killed by the Umawis.[41]

Zayn al-Abidin left behind many words of wisdom, poems and supplica-

37 Ash-Sha'wari, Ana min Sulalah Aal al-Bayt, Pages 84 - 85
38 Sibt bin al-Jawzi, Tadhkirah al-Khawas, Page 289
39 Abu al-Faraj bin al-Jawzi, Siffah as-Safwah, Pages 325 - 326
40 Ash-Shablanji, Nur al-Absar, Page 217
41 Muhammad Zaki Ibrahim, Maraqid Ahl al-Bayt fi al-Qahirah, Page 122

tions which have been passed down orally as well as are in books. A book of his supplications named as-Sahifah as-Sajjadiyyah is frequently referenced by Zaydis and 12ver shi'is in which portions of it exist within collections of different Sufi orders including the Ba'Alawis based in Tarim, Yemen.

From the words of wisdom of Zayn al-Abidin:

- When Nafi'i bin Jubayr told Zayn al-Abidin that he was sitting with lowly people, he responded, *"I go to whomever gatherings benefit me in my deen."*[42]
- *Oh People of Iraq, Loving us [Ahl al-Bayt] is love of al-Islam, and not loving us is love of Idols.*[43]
- *Surely Allah loves the repentant sinner.*[44]
- *Surely giving charity in the black of night extinguishes the anger of the Lord.*[45]
- It is bizarre [to see] every self-absorbed person who works for the home that will end and leaves the home of the hereafter.

42 Adh-Dhahabi, Siyar A'alam an-Nubala, Volume 4, Page 388

43 Al-Asbahani, Hilyah al-Awliya, Volume 3, Page 136; Ibn Sa'ad, at-Tabaqat, Volume 5, Page 214

44 Adh-Dhahabi, Siyar A'alam an-Nubala, Volume 4, Page 393

45 Ibn 'Asakir, Volume 12, Page 21