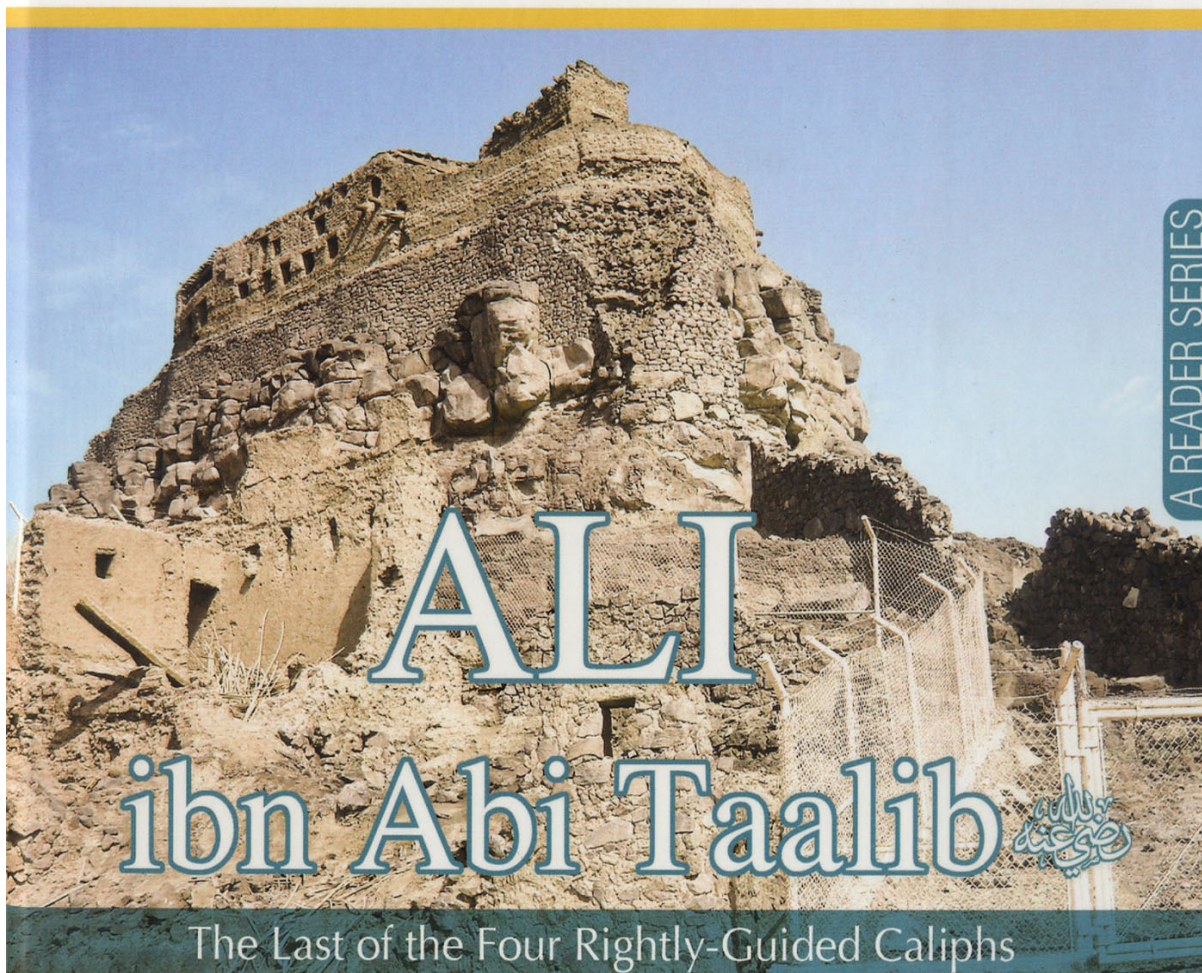


HISTORY OF ISLAM

The Age of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs
AL-KHULAFÄ AR-RASHIDÜN



A READER SERIES

ALI ibn Abi Taalib

The Last of the Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs



Maulvi Abdul Aziz

History of Islam “A Reader Series” The Age of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs:

Al- Khulafa Ar-Rashidun

Ali ibn Abi Talib

(May Allah be pleased with him)

The Last of the Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs

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Publisher's Note



In the Name of Allah, the Lord of Grace, the Ever Merciful.

For many years, I have been looking for textbooks on the History of Islam for English-speaking students, yet I have found very few. Most did not overcome a common problem: they did not go beyond the era of the Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs, may Allah be pleased with them all.

Bearing this in mind, we at Darussalam have resolved to present the entire History of Islam to our youth in language that appeals to them, in a simple yet lucid manner. The first four volumes in this series explore Islamic history during the period of the first Four Rightly Guided Caliphs. Later volumes will be devoted to the History of Islam, down through the ages to modern times, In Sha'Allah.

Our past, present, and future are interconnected and interdependent. Therefore, knowing and understanding our history is not optional; it is essential.

This is the fourth volume from this series, which deals with the life of the fourth of the Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs, Ali ibn Abi Talib. He was the first male to accept Islam at the young age of approximately nine years. He was the Prophet's cousin, the son of Abu Talib, the Prophet's supportive and loving uncle who protected him during the worst trials of his early Prophethood.

Ali's devotion to the Prophet is best evidenced during the Hijrah (migration) when he acted as the Prophet's decoy in Makkah while the Prophet left under the cover of night and migrated to Madinah, accompanied by Abu Bakr.

We would like to thank the author, Maulvi Abdul Aziz; the editor, Umm Khadijah Kathrada; and the designer, Mr. Shahzad Ahmed for their diligent efforts in preparing this volume. We hope this work will inspire our youth to form a personal relationship with Ali ibn Abi Talib and encourage them to commit their lives sincerely to his mission of selflessness and unparalleled courage, which he has left behind as our common heritage.

Abdul Malik Mujahid

Darussalam, Riyadh

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Chapter 1: Ali ibn Abi Talib (The Last of the Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs)



The Oath of Allegiance to Ali (May Allah be pleased with him)

The rightly-guided Caliph Uthman ibn Affan was martyred on Friday, 18 Dhul Hijjah 35 AH/ 656 CE, at the hands of rebels. These men had come to Madinah from various regions and different tribes. They were not known for any service to Islam or any good achievements in this world; and for political reasons, they cruelly murdered Uthman (May Allah be pleased with him) unlawfully and without any just cause.

After this, all the Companions of the Messenger of Allah who were present in Madinah gathered together to consider who would make the best caliph after Uthman. They unanimously agreed that there was no one better than Ali (May Allah be pleased with him) at that time, and they all swore allegiance to Ali as the new Khalifah (Caliph).

Ali, the father of the Prophet's grandsons, was not eager for this position of leadership. He only accepted it after strong urging from those of the Companions who were present in Madinah. They feared that the turmoil would increase and spread further.

The Companions of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) came to Ali and said, 'The Commander of the Faithful has been killed, and the people must have a leader. We do not know of anyone who is more deserving of that than you; or who is more senior in Islam, or close to the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).'

Ali demurred, 'Do not do it. I would rather be an adviser to you than a leader.'

They insisted, saying, 'No, by Allah, we will not do anything until we swear allegiance to you.'

Ali replied, 'Then do it in the Mosque. Allegiance to me should not be hidden. It should only be with the approval of the Muslims.'

When Ali entered the mosque, the Muhajirun (Emigrants) and the Ansar (Helpers) came and swore allegiance to him, as did the rest of the people.

Ali had defended Uthman most strongly during the time of the siege, and he never sought out or desired the Caliphate, even though he was the most deserving of it. The Muhajirun and the Ansar, including the decision-makers and most prominent of the Companions, all recognized that Ali was most qualified to be the next Caliph. They went to him and insisted that he accept their oaths of allegiance until he finally relented. The only reason Ali accepted the loyalty and allegiance of the people was because he felt that the position had become an obligation upon him, in order to prevent greater harm from coming to the Ummah.

Ali was indeed the best suited and most deserving of the Caliphate at the time. In fact, if the people had not hastened to swearing allegiance to him, it would have led to further disorder and division throughout the Muslim regions. It was in the best interests of the Muslims for Ali to accept the oath of allegiance. None of the Companions who were present in Madinah held back from swearing allegiance to him. All the Companions in Madinah elected Ali as Ameer Al-Mu'minin, the Commander of the Believers.

The four men most deserving to be Caliphs were Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and finally, Ali ibn Abi Talib. This fact was recognized not only by the other Companions, but was predicted by the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) himself.

It is important to realize that the Caliphate of Ali came about as a result of the general agreement of the community, and by the consensus of the Companions. After the death of Uthman, Ali was the natural choice for the position of Caliph. He was one of the earliest Muslims and one of the first emigrants. He showed exemplary courage on the battlefield and exhibited great intelligence in every situation. He was knowledgeable and possessed rare wisdom in judgment. He was able to tackle new situations and emergencies while being also far-sighted in handling his affairs. He was firm in adhering to the truth.

These were all factors which made Ali the only suitable candidate to lead the Muslims during the crucial period of their history.

Ali ibn Abi Talib (May Allah be pleased with him) in Makkah



His Names, Titles, Kunya, and Lineage

He was Ali ibn Abi Talib ibn Abdul Muttalib. His father was Abu Talib, who was in turn the full brother of Abdullah, the father of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Thus, Ali was a paternal first cousin to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).

Fatimah bint Asad ibn Hisham was Ali's mother, and at birth, she named him 'Asad' in honour of her father. However, Abu Talib referred to him as 'Ali' and he became known by that name.

Ali was born ten years before the Prophet's mission began, and had the distinctive honour of being born inside the structure of the Ka'bah. He belonged to Banu Hashim, which was one of the most prominent clans of Quraysh.

Kunyah

In the tradition of the Arabs, Ali was known as ‘Abul-Hasan,’ after his oldest son Al-Hasan. Al-Hasan was one of the children born to Ali’s first wife, Fatimah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).

Abu Turab: Father of Dust

Ali was also known by the Kunyah ‘Abu Turab,’ which meant ‘Father of Dust’ or ‘He who is of Dust.’ The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) is the one who bestowed this nickname upon him, and it was the name most dear to Ali.

There was a special story behind this name: Once, when Allah’s Messenger May the peace and blessing of Allah be on him came to Fatimah’s house, he found Ali absent. He asked his daughter where her husband was, and she replied, ‘In the Mosque.’ It turned out that the two of them had quarrelled, and so Ali intended to spend the night in the Mosque instead of at home.

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) went off to the Mosque in search of his son-in-law, and found him lying down. His upper garment had fallen from his shoulders, and his back was covered with dust. Smiling, Allah’s Messenger May the peace and blessing of Allah be on him helped Ali get up and wiped the dust from his back, saying ‘Get up, O Abu Turab (father of the dust)!’

Siblings

Ali ibn Abi Talib had three brothers: Talib, from whom Ali’s father Abu Talib took his *Kunyah*; Aqil, and Ja’far. He also had two sisters: Umm Hani and Jumanah. They were all the children of Fatimah bint Asad.

Physical Features

Ali was of average height. He had a handsome face, with wide black eyes. His face shone like the full moon. He had broad shoulders and large hands. He was almost completely bald, with no hair on his head, except at the back. His beard was large and thick. The bones of his shoulders were like the bones of a strong lion. If he held the arm of a man, the man would not be able to breathe. When he walked in battle, he almost ran. He was strong and brave.

The Prophet’s Household

Ali was the first cousin of the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). He was thirty years younger than the Prophet, who brought his nephew up like his own son. Ali’s father, Abu Talib, was a powerful and respected Quraysh leader, but was poor and had a large family.

When Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was young and his grandfather Abdul-Muttalib passed away, Abu Talib had taken care of him and raised him as one of his own. Now, seeing his uncle in a difficult situation, the Messenger of Allah May the peace and blessing of Allah be on him wanted to reciprocate the kindness shown to him previously. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) brought Ali into his household at an early age, and from then on, Ali became a member of the Messenger’s close family.

This was one of the greatest blessings that Allah bestowed upon Ali: to be raised and educated by the Messenger of Allah May the peace and blessing of Allah be on him himself; to be looked after and taken care of by the man whose character was a living version of the Qur’an.